

Message #34**I Samuel 15:12-35**

One of the most fatal mistakes that a believer may make is the mistake of thinking they are getting away with their sin and rebellion. There are those believers who are living a cover-up lie and they think they are getting away with it. They are not. Their sin will find them out and there will be consequences.

At this point, Saul had been King for about 25 years. We could say that he had been a believer and leader for the past 25 years. He just drifted along in life thinking I am okay and everything is okay. But at about the 25 year point, God pulled the plug. God said, "I have seen enough" and "I have had enough." Saul had been fooling people, but he was not about to fool God and God decided to judge him and put a stop to him.

Most people want to think about God as being one of total forgiveness, love and toleration. But the same God who is that is also a God of conviction, confrontation and judgment. God will not ever permit a believer to get away with a pursuit of evil. He will put a stop to it. Sooner or later He will punish it and that is clearly seen in this text:

DISOBEDIENCE FOR A BELIEVER WILL ALWAYS END IN JUDGMENT DISASTER.

Saul is one of the most tragic stories in the O.T.. But it is also a convicting story because any believer can end up like Saul. As a chosen King, Saul had the opportunity to take off and really accomplish great things for God. But every single test ended in failure and finally God got fed up with him and pulled the plug on his ministry and his life. God can do exactly the same thing with us.

There are nine historical observations we want to make out of this text:

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #1 – Samuel confronts Saul. 15:12-14

According to **verse 12**, Samuel learned that Saul had erected a victory monument to himself at Carmel, which was a city of Judah, which was located about 7 miles SE of Hebron.

What this immediately shows us is that people who are not in fellowship with God portray themselves as being great victorious people. They parade themselves as being great giants and victorious people for all to see. In all reality they are spiritual duds. Saul's main concern was not how God saw him but how people saw him. He put up a monument for everyone to see.

According to **verse 13**, when Samuel came to Saul, he gave him a wonderful greeting in an attempt to cover his tracks of rebellion. He flattered Samuel by telling him that he was blessed by the LORD and then he followed that up by saying he had carried out the command of the LORD.

We learn another important lesson here and that is when one is out of fellowship with God, they flatter others and try to throw them off track by saying how much they love the Lord and obey the word.

According to **verse 14**, Samuel had a simple response to Saul's phony charade; what is that that I hear. I hear bleating sheep and lowing oxen. Where did you get them? You are claiming you fully obey God, then why is it I am hearing this? Sin will be found out. God can and will use an animal to disclose it if he must. He can use a sheep or an oxen or a horse.

I know a story of a man who was pretending he was right with God and he and his wife were in total rebellion and sin against God. He walked behind a horse and that horse kicked him and shattered his knee. Do you think that was a coincidence? I don't think so.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #2 – Saul gives an explanation to Samuel. 15:15

When Saul was confronted by Samuel, he does not say, like David, I am the man who has done wrong. He responds in two ways:

Response #1 - Saul blames the people. 15:15a

People love to blame others for their sin. Saul immediately blamed the people. One of the real marks of a spiritual deadbeat is that he will not take responsibility for his own failure and sin. Saul blamed the people. He said well the people brought them from the fight with the Amalekites.

Response #2 - Saul defends the people. 15:15b

Not only did he blame the people but he defended them. He said well the real reason they did this is because they wanted to worship God and sacrifice this to God. In other words, their disobedience is for the purpose of honoring God. **God is never honored by disobedience. No disobedience to God's word ever honors God.**

God does not accept anything that is offered because of sin. Years ago, a major Mafioso figure gave a huge sum of money to the Catholic Church and the church honored the man. The man made the money thru drugs, prostitution and gambling. This was a stench in the nostrils of God, but the church is making it look like it is honorable worship.

There are people who gamble their money in Casinos and justify it by saying well if we win, we can give money to God. No spiritually-minded person I know of goes to a Casino and gambles their money. It is all a charade of double talk for those not right with God.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #3 – Samuel gives God’s revelation to Saul. 15:16-19

Samuel and heard enough and in **verse 16**, he tells Saul to shut up. He tells Saul you quit talking because I have something to say. I have three messages for you from God:

Message #1 - God made you a king when you were nothing. 15:17

So many people forget about this. They forget about the fact that it was God who chose us and God who saved us. We were no big shot worth saving; we were a sinner worth condemning.

Message #2 - God’s assignment to you was to completely exterminate the Amalekites. 15:18

God’s assignment to Saul was not some partial extermination; it was total extermination. God wanted enemies completely eliminated and He still does.

Message #3 - God’s word was disobeyed by you. 15:19

Here is the crux of the problem for Saul’s life; he would never fully obey the word of God. Saul was disobedient. He never really did fully commit himself to obeying the word of God.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #4 – Saul tries to justify himself to Samuel. 15:20-21

Saul was squirming, but instead of coming clean, his heart was so out of fellowship with God that he would not even admit the truth that had just been revealed to him by God. He tries to justify his disobedience. There are three phony defenses that he gives:

Defense #1 - He claims he did obey God. 15:20

This is tragically funny. He claims in the first part of the verse that he did obey God and in the second part of the verse he admits he brought back Agag the king. His assignment from God was to exterminate everyone (15:2-3). God did not say exterminate everyone except for Agag and bring him back with you.

People out of the will of God get very confused about reality. People heading to the judgment of God believe lies, promote lies and cannot remember truth. They’ll say, “You said that” or “You did this” when you didn’t.

Defense #2 - He blames the people for taking the spoils. 15:21a

His defense is well the people did take some of the spoils, but they only took the best things. This was not the assignment God gave them.

Defense #3 - He makes an excuse for the people by saying their rebellions is for worship.
15:21b

Saul is so out of step with God that he defends their rebellion saying we did this for God. We want to offer wonderful sacrifices to God at Gilgal.

I want you to carefully notice the pronoun Saul uses at the end of **verse 21**. Do not miss this. Saul says God is “your God”; he does not say, “my God.”

Here is the crux of Saul’s problem. Saul did not have a real heart for God. Time and time again David talks about God being his God. For example, the Lord is MY shepherd. This was never true with Saul. Truth is Saul was his own god. He made an idol out of himself.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #5 – Samuel condemns Saul. **15:22-23**

This rebuke is addressed to a believer who is a leader. This is not given to an unbeliever and the rebuke here should be considered carefully by every believer in every dispensation. This is not designed to tickle ears. This is a hard hitting warning comprised of four facts:

Fact #1 - Obedience to the word of God is more important than external religious actions. **15:22**

Nothing in God’s mind is more important than obedience to God’s word. It is more important than offerings and sacrifices. One commentator observed that it is not uncommon for people who are living a sinful life to be zealous and diligent in their religious worship.

Fact #2 - Blatant rebellion against the word of God is as serious as witchcraft. **15:23a**

There is a devilish character to blatant rebellion. It will actually be Saul’s rebellion that will literally lead to him consulting a witch. Blatant rebellion against God’s word can take you down into the dark depths of Satan.

Fact #3 - Blatant rejection of God’s word is as serious as iniquity and idolatry. **15:23b**

Fact #4 - Blatant rejection of God’s word will ultimately lead to God’s rejection and removal.
15:23c

If you are a believer and you know you are living in blatant rebellion against God’s word, you are heading to very serious consequences even if it takes 25 years.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #6 – Saul is convicted and confesses to Samuel. **15:24-25**

Saul’s sin and rebellion had found him out and he was sorry that he got caught. But as you read these verses, it is obvious he is still blaming the people for his failure. He admits he sinned but he blames the people and asks that his sin be forgiven. This is not true conviction and confession.

The context of this confession is this:

- 1) He makes this confession after his sin is discovered-he does not freely deal with this sin.
- 2) He makes this confession because he has been confronted by Samuel-not personal conviction.
- 3) He makes this confession because of a threat of severe consequences-not to be right with God.
- 4) He makes this confession to Samuel, not God-his real problem was with God.
- 5) He makes this confession but still tries to blame others-real confession takes responsibility.
- 6) He makes this confession with a desire for public honor-real confession is not for public honor.

This is not real conviction nor is it real confession.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #7 – Samuel rejects Saul. 15:26-29

Samuel listened to Saul and then said, “It’s too late and it is all over.” You are done. In **verse 26**, he says I will have nothing more to do with you. You have rejected the word of God once too often so God has rejected you.

As Samuel turned to leave, Saul grabbed his robe and it tore, so Samuel said to him God has torn the kingdom away from you and God will not change His mind about this **(15:27-28)**.

God’s nation is at stake; God’s glory is at stake and you aren’t the guy. Even though it would be about 15 more years until Saul would die, God was taking away his power and His hand was no longer on him.

You can be a big leader for God and end up a spiritual dud. You can sit on top of your religious world for 15-40 years and end up good for nothing. That is the story of Saul.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #8 – Saul pleads with Samuel. 15:30-31

Well as you can imagine, Saul was an emotional wreck. He knows he has sinned and he knows he has blown it, but he says please honor me in front of the elders and the people.

This man has totally sinned against God and he is more concerned about what the people think than what God thinks.

People out of fellowship with God want people to look at them and esteem them. They love that.

Samuel went with Saul and he did worship God.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #9 – Samuel’s final contact with Saul. 15:32-35

Samuel told them to bring Agag to him and he brought out his sword and cut him to pieces. God is a God of ferocious judgment and payback.

The Amalekites had hurt the people of God and God never forgot that. God is a God of payback vengeance. God will send people to hell and God will take rewards away from people.

Samuel left and never saw Saul again until the day he died, which would be about 15 years later. The one man Saul needed in his life was gone. Samuel was done babysitting this loser and so was God.

When a true man of God stops fellowshiping with people, there are four results:

- 1) That person is deprived of incalculable benefits.
- 2) That person will drift further and further away from real fellowship and restoration.
- 3) That person will fall deeper and deeper into sin.
- 4) That person is heading to a judgment day of great regret.

Learn the lesson - disobedience to God will always end in a disaster from God.