

“Saul Loses the Kingdom”
1 Samuel 15:27-35
(Preached at Trinity, April 30, 2017)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we entered **Chapter 15** Samuel again charges Saul to obedience.
1 Samuel 15:1 NAU - "listen to the words of the LORD."
Literally it means, "Heed the Word of the Lord."
This was God's charge to Israel from the beginning and it did not change after their request for a king. (See **Deut. 6**)
1 Samuel 12:24-25 NAU - "Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. ²⁵
"But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away."
 - A. After giving Saul the charge to obey, Samuel gives the command of God,
1 Samuel 15:3 NAU - "Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."
 - B. The Amalekites were a nomadic people to the south and southeast of Israel. During the exodus from Egypt they attacked Israel and brought themselves under God's condemnation. The Day of Judgment had come and Saul was to be God's agent for judgment.
2. God's charge was clear. Nothing was to be spared—not the livestock; not even the women, children or infants.
Saul was not obedient. He thought more about his own desires and fulfilling his own lusts than the glory of God.
1 Samuel 15:9 NAU - "But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed."
3. God's response was immediate and clear.
1 Samuel 15:10-11 NAU - "Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, ¹¹ "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all night."
1 Samuel 15:16-19 NAU - "Then Samuel said to Saul, "Wait, and let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak!" ¹⁷ Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were *made* the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel, ¹⁸ and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.' ¹⁹ "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?"

1 Samuel 15:23 NAU - "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from *being* king."

A. In **Chapter 13** Saul's disobedience resulted in the perpetual kingdom being stripped from him. Saul would lose the dynasty.

1 Samuel 13:13-14 NAU - "Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. "But now your kingdom shall not endure."

B. Now Saul has lost the crown. God rejects him as king.

C. There are questions which come to mind. We find once again the troubling expression that God changed His mind regarding Saul:

1 Samuel 15:11 NAU - "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands."

God is bringing judgment upon Saul. But why did God make him king to begin with if He knew Saul would fall?

4. We can see several things here about the sovereign judgments of God.

I. God's sovereign judgments find their source in eternity

A. We must not dismiss the justice of God's actions

1. It is right that God stripped the kingdom from Saul. Saul was receiving the just consequence of his actions.

1 Samuel 12:24-25 NAU - "Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. ²⁵ "But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away."

2. God was reacting against the sinful rebellion of Saul

1 Samuel 15:23 NAU - "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from *being* king."

3. This verse displays a simple result clause.

"Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from *being* king."

B. On the other hand God does not react. He simply acts.

1. We find here another case of God apparently changing His mind

1 Samuel 15:11 NAU - "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands."

2. The word for "regret" is נָחַם (*nacham*) – It can be translated in various ways including: "changed mind" and "repent" The KJV translates it "repent."

3. There are 29 such statement in Scripture where God appears to change His mind due to the circumstances before Him.
 - a. We saw it in Jonah regarding God’s declaration of judgment upon Nineveh. The same word is used.
Jonah 3:10 NAU - "God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do *it*."
 - b. It is also the word used to God’s judgment upon the earth during the days of Noah.
Genesis 6:7 NAS - "And the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them."
KJV - "for it repenteth me that I have made them."
- C. This is what we know theologically as a Anthropopathism – attributing to God the emotion of a man. It is a condescension to help finite man understand infinite God.
1. The Bible describes God repenting. This seems to be an expression of regret which is an emotional response. We also know God as having anger, pity, joy, pleasure, love, jealousy, and hatred. These are human characteristics that cannot be applied equally to God.
 - a. When the Bible says God changes His mind it cannot be understood in the same way as when we change our mind.
 - b. Michael Horton describes it well.
 “When one says that God is good and Sally is good the predicate ‘good’ is used neither univocally (i.e. identically) or equivocally (i.e. with no actual similarity), but analogically. Analogical thinking identifies certain aspects of the unknown in terms of the known and familiar.”
 2. The Bible affirms that God isn’t like man
Isaiah 55:8-9 NAU - "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. ⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts."
 3. God is unchanging – He is immutable. Samuel states it well:
1 Samuel 15:29 NAU - "Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."
 - a. There is nothing that can bring about a change in God. He can neither increase nor decrease.
 - b. Human beings are ever changing. We are born and then go through a lifetime of change. Our state of mind is continually changing. Our emotions are continually being stirred either negatively or positively.

- c. God cannot undergo change. It is contrary to His essence.
Numbers 23:19 NAU - "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"
1 Samuel 15:29 NAU - "Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."
 - d. Samuel Renihan – "God is not subject to time and succession, addition and subtraction, mutation and corruption. For this reason, nothing happens to God. He is not living the roller coaster of time that we do. Thus, when God displays love or shows mercy, or does anything in time and space, it was decreed immutably from all eternity."
- D. God's actions toward Saul were determined before the world began
- 1. God foreknew that Saul would reject His commands and that He would strip the kingdom from Saul.
 - 2. Foreknowledge with God is more than merely knowing before.
 - a. Things do not happen because God knows them but because He has decreed them – He has willed them to come to pass
 - b. God's foreknowledge demands that every event is necessarily fixed in time. They are fixed because God fixed them. This is called God's divine decree.
 - c. Robert Haldane – "God foreknows what will be, by determining what shall be."
 - 3. God decreed the actions of Saul. Yet, the sinful acts of Saul were all his own. He was satisfying the desires of his sinful heart.
 LBC 3:1 – "God hath decreed in Himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin, nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature . . ."
 - 4. Saul is accountable for his sinful actions. He chose to reject God's commands and his actions resulted in his loss of the kingdom.
- II. God's sovereign judgments take place according to His timing
- A. God has determined to strip the Kingdom from Saul and yet Saul would continue to reign
- 1. Samuel declares that the kingdom has been torn from Saul
1 Samuel 15:28 NAU - "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you."
 - 2. But the kingdom wasn't immediately stripped from him. Saul reigned for a total of 42 years
 - a. In the next chapter we will find the anointing of David but he doesn't immediately become king.
1 Samuel 16:1 NAU - "Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons."

- b. We will witness David's defeat of Goliath while just a boy
 - c. We will witness Saul's uncontrollable jealousy towards David and his attempts at taking David's life.
- 3. All of this is by God's design and by His eternal decree. Saul was already judged of God although it would be years before it would be displayed
 God knows all things at once, He sees all things at once
 We can only think in a linear fashion – one thought following another.
 God knows all things at once.
- B. God's ultimate judgment is reserved until the end
 - 1. There are multitudes who are storing up God's wrath who are living today as if there is no judgment. Some are outwardly doing quite well. They presume that God must be pleased with them.
Romans 2:5-6 NAS - "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, ⁶ who will render to every man according to his deeds"
 - 2. Delayed judgment does not imply that God's wrath is not a present reality. God judged Saul because of Saul's stubborn and unbelieving heart although the display of the judgment was not immediate.
 - 3. This was also true of the Amalekites. They came under God's judgment when they attacked Israel in the wilderness many years before but God's delayed display of judgment did not take place until the reign of Saul.
1 Samuel 15:2-3 NAU - "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. ³ 'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

Conclusion:

- 1. Trying to comprehend our incomprehensible God is full of difficulty for us. To say that God is immutable and unaffected by anything external to Himself is not to say that His wrath isn't fiery against all wickedness. Nor is it to say that His love towards His people isn't infinitely passionate.
- 2. Just because His judgment is delayed doesn't mean that His wrath isn't already kindled.
 - a. God's wrath should cause us to tremble and flee from all iniquity and turn towards Him in full and total obedience.
 - b. And God's love for us should cause us to embrace Him in love and devotion.
- 3. Such love stirred God to send His only Son to redeem those upon which He chose to bestow His infinite love. And for those who embrace this by faith they will experience this love for all eternity.