

Obedience is better than sacrifice!

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, and it's good to be back. I told Joanna when we were heading east when we about got to, I think it was North Dakota, I told her I was pretty much ready to go home.

But it's for the people that we go back, and it was good. It was good to go back, but, yeah, we, I don't know.

It's just not quite like being here. But anyway, and thank you all for sharing those verses, especially y'all younger ones.

You probably won't realize it until you get a little older how much that means. Already a sermon has been preached if we just were listening to the verses, and it's so beautiful how when you share like that, different ones, you get a whole spectrum.

With one person, you're just, you're going to tend to get something, you know. But with y'all sharing, it was a whole spectrum, and it's just encouraging. And, yeah, probably shows that I'm getting a little older, too.

[1 : 14] I don't know. But it just, it's a real blessing. And I think, well, I know, I know God is, his heart's blessed when we care enough about his word to learn it, and to, especially when we care enough to memorize his word that he, it is precious to him.

And so that's something that we need to focus on. It brought back memories of me as just a small, and I don't know how young I was, Margie, when you did Psalm 23.

I don't know how young I was, but I think, I don't think I could even read yet. And I wanted a Bible really bad. I wanted a, I think I had just a little New Testament, but I wanted to be a big boy, and I wanted to have a Bible.

And my dad told me, he said, you learn Psalm 23, and I'll get you a Bible. And I'll never forget that. It made it more precious to me, the Bible.

I had to do something for it, and it made it more precious to me. It just, I forgot that memory from a long time ago, but when you quoted that, it brought it back to me.

[2 : 33] And, yeah, thanks again for all the different verses you quoted, especially when it comes from the younger ones. Y'all might think, you know, you're here, and does anybody notice?

But it does, and you're needed, and it's important. And anyway, for sharing this morning, and thank you, like I said, it takes the pressure off of me, too, because basically, in my opinion, I'm going to have like an extended devotional.

But anyway, so it makes me, we heard a lot of the word this morning already. But I'm going to be looking some out of 1 Samuel 15, some on the life of Saul.

Now, this has just really, I was going through, I'm going through a Bible reading that gets through the whole Bible in a year, and the New Testament twice.

And when I read over, this was being read, this chapter, and it just really struck me. And I think especially because it was soon after the thing of my brother had come out and the different things there with that.

[3 : 50] And it just really struck me here that we cannot use a, we cannot do a wrong to make a right.

Like, we cannot convince ourselves that we can do something over here wrong to do something that's for God, that's a right. And God is not impressed by our works.

God wants us, we do as Christians, we do have works, and we have good works. But God is not impressed by our works.

He wants a heart that's after Him and following Him. Then our works are going to follow. Those things are going to follow. But anyway, I think hopefully it will become more clear what I'm trying to say here as we go through.

I'm just going to start reading here in the beginning of the chapter of 1 Samuel 15. And God has come here and He asked Saul, He told Saul to go and destroy the Amalekites.

[4 : 56] And it sounds harsh, but they were a wicked people. They had been persecuting, and it says, as they come up out of Egypt. They had been trying to harass the Israelites and destroy them.

I believe the Amalekites knew what they were doing. And God could not tolerate, this is another thing too, to see. He cannot tolerate sin. And anyway, in verse 1, let's start reading.

Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel. Now therefore, hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt.

Now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

[6 : 06] And Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Temelan, 200,000 footmen and 10,000 men of Judah.

And Saul came to the city of Amalek and laid wait in the valley. And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go depart, get thou down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them.

For ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And we see here that there was a line drawn from the ones that had shown kindness to the ones that had, to the ones that had fought against them.

And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havil until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. And he took Agag, the king of the Amalekites, alive and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

And see, we see here already, we haven't gone very far, and already Saul is disobeyed. God said to utterly destroy them. And here he had already disobeyed.

[7 : 21] But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen, of the fatlings of the lambs and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them.

But everything that was vowed and refused, that they destroyed utterly. Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.

And it grieved Samuel, and he cried unto the Lord all night. You know, here was a man of God, and it grieved him, these things that were happening with Samuel.

And I think that's the way it is for us today. If we're godly people, if we're men of God, these things that we see in the world, and the sad thing is actually in the churches.

It's creeping into the churches. And it will grieve us. And he cried unto the Lord all night. Then Samuel rose up early to meet Saul in the morning.

[8 : 29] It was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set him up a place, and is going about, and is passed on, and going down to Gilgal.

And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, Blessed be thou, the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord. You know, this was just really interesting to me.

Right here, Saul boldly told him, I have performed the commandment of the Lord. And how often do we see that today? I mean, and it can be for ourselves.

We have done something part ways, or we want to partially obey God. But then here he is, and he's boldly saying, Saul knew that he hadn't obeyed.

But he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord. And another thing to take notice as we're going down through here that really struck me is, always when Saul is speaking to Samuel, he talks about thy God.

[9 : 40] Saul, you can tell it's not personal to Saul. It's always thy Lord or thy God. And Samuel saith, What meaneth then the bleating of the sheep in mine ears and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen for sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

Right away, he didn't take responsibility. It was the people. The people spared them. Saul here is king.

His word, if he says a man's to die, that man's to die. It would be like somebody with a small child, and you say, Well, my child told me that I feared for what my child would think.

You're supposed to be the one in charge. Saul was the one ultimately in charge here. He knew the responsibility rested with him. But what's he do? He says, The people. The people.

[10:48] For the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen to sacrifice. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord has said unto me this night.

And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made head of the tribe of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel.

This is another thing that stood out to me here too. Saul, when he first was made king, he was little in his own sight. That's when God can use us.

When we get arrogant, when we get puffed up in our own conceit, God can't use us anymore. And that's what happened to Saul. He tried to blame it all on the other people and all these things.

But he says here, When thou wast little in thy sight, that's when they were made head of the tribes of Israel. God could use him at that point. But now Saul is to the point where God can't use him.

[11:50] And I'm convinced that can be with us too. We can come to that point where God can't use us anymore. And the Lord sent thee on a journey and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners of the Amalekites and fight against them until they be consumed.

Wherefore, then did thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord.

That verse makes it sound like that, that to me, that was a greedy people. They really, they flew upon the things that they wanted and took them.

And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord. Again, here he is, directly going, I mean, saying, he knew that he hadn't, and he's directly saying, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way of the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

He's in his same sentence, I mean, in the same verse here that he's saying, I have obeyed the Lord, he's admitting he brought the king back, and God had said to utterly destroy them.

[13:05] He knew it. But he utterly destroyed the rest of them. It's the way, I'm just convinced that this is the way, why we need others.

We need other people. This is the way that our human minds can work. We can convince ourselves that I have done, I've done okay, I've done right, but this little place over here, he wasn't willing to kill.

For what reason, I don't know that it, I don't see that it ever makes clear, but he wasn't willing to kill this king for some reason. He wanted to spare him.

Verse 21, But the people took the oil, the sheep and the oxen, the chief of things, which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord, and here again, the Lord thy God in Gilgal. He doesn't, Samuel, it's different places through here. Saul, it's never the Lord our God, or it's the Lord thy God, or when he's talking to Samuel. It's obvious that he wasn't, he was out of relationship with God.

[14:14] He didn't have the spirit of God on him at this point anymore. And there again, here he is in this verse again too, the people took the spoil. And this is the verse here that really stood out to me and struck me, and I want us to really take this verse home with this verse 22.

And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

You know, this is a pretty big saying if we understand how important sacrifice was back then.

Sacrifice was their way to God.

We now have Jesus. So, sacrifice was important. It was a very important thing. But he's saying here that to obey is better than sacrifice.

They were wanting to take and disobey God over here and keep something that he had said not to keep. But then, oh, we'll go over here and we'll sacrifice, and I'm sure they wouldn't have sacrificed all of them, but we'll come over here and we'll sacrifice to you, God.

[15:24] And they wanted that to appease God. But God had strictly told them. It wasn't miscommunication. He had said destroy them all and destroy them.

But he says here that to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Verse 23, this is another verse here. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

You know, we so often don't want to take rebellion as such a big thing, you know, especially when we're rebellious to each other.

But rebellion to God, he can't tolerate. God can't tolerate it. You know, we would probably all here say, yeah, I would never be a part of witchcraft or anything like that.

[16:28] You know, that's kind of far out there to us. But if I'm a rebellious person, he's comparing it to witchcraft. You know, we want to, at least I often do, I want to kind of weigh things out.

But he's comparing it here to witchcraft. He says, rebellion and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. And idolatry is worshipping another God.

You know, if we're not, if our heart isn't truly after God and us fully worshipping God, we might as well be worshipping elsewhere. We can't be here trying to be partially in the camp, but then, you know, out somewhere else.

And, but it just, that just really stuck to me. And I just hope that, and I'm going to be reading the rest of the chapter, but those two verses, I hope can really stick with us.

That's the biggest thrust that I have today for myself in obeying is better than sacrifice. And then when he talks about rebellion is as a sin of witchcraft and stubbornness.

[17:33] God, God can't use us when we become rebellious and stubborn people. They're, God cannot use us anymore. The, the person that God can use is a broken and contrite person.

As I said earlier, you know, our works are important. And, and you'll, the, the verse that I end up with, we'll, we'll see that our works are important, but they're showing what's in the heart.

And when there's stubbornness and, and rebellion in there, God, God can't use us anymore. And that's what we'll see here with Saul. Um, as sad as it was, um, God could not use him anymore.

Verse 24. And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned, for I've transgressed the commandment of the Lord and thy words, because I have feared the people and evade thy voice.

And I don't know Saul's heart. I, but it, it's apparent that he was wicked. I mean, you know, here in the end, but here he is admitting he had sinned.

[18:31] And, and, you know, saying quotes, repenting, but it's because of the people. I feared the people again. Here he is not taking full responsibility. And how often do we do this?

Like, Oh, I'm sorry. I've done this wrong, but it's because of this or that, you know, somebody, I feared something. And, and that's not true. Saul's, I don't believe that was true repentance.

He, he's right here. He's, you know, quotes, repenting, but it was because I feared the people and their voice. And here he is king over these people.

He's supposed to be the leader. He's supposed to be the one leading them. But I feared the people. Now, therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin and turn again unto me that I may worship the Lord.

You know, I believe this is the repentance of just sorrow. Like he didn't, he wasn't willing to turn from his sin. This is what we call today. You know, like you can be, so I think Saul was sorry for his sin here, but he wasn't willing to turn from it and, and, and, and humble himself before God.

[19:36] This is a case of that where he was sorry in the human perspective, but he wasn't to the point of turning back to God. Um, and so now here he is wanting Samuel to pray for him and, and turn again with me that I may worship the Lord.

And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee for thou has rejected the word of the Lord and God hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And Samuel turned up to about to go away and he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle and rent it.

You know, I don't know for sure. It doesn't really say here, but I'm taking probably Saul was on his knees there before Samuel, you know, begging him and he grabbed his, his garment then in it and rent it.

So, you know, he was probably there pleading with him. That's the, the imagery I would get. And Samuel said unto him, the Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou.

And also the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, nor is he a man that he should repent. Then he said, I have sinned. This is Saul again. I have sinned.

[20:48] Yet honor me now, I pray thee before the elders of my people and before Israel and turn again with me that I may worship thy God. See again, here he says that I'm a worship thy God.

So Samuel turned again after Saul and Saul worshiped the Lord. But, you know, he doesn't say here that I want to worship my, the Lord, my God, he's thy God.

But, in verse 30 gives me the appearance that he wanted Samuel to make him look better in the eyes of the people. You know, that he wanted him to turn with him and because the people of Israel knew that Samuel was a man of God and that he wanted to gain their respect back.

But, once he had lost his right to the kingship through God, he could not gain that back.

But, here he is. He, you know, he tried to, he's wanting to worship God again. But, it looks, to me, it's on his own terms. Verse 32, Then Samuel, then said Samuel, Bring ye thither to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites.

[21 : 59] And Agag came unto him delicately, different translations would say different. I think he came boldly. It sounds more like he came out boldly because he, well, here it says, And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.

He thought, Oh, by now, you know, I'm not going to be destroyed anymore. He thought that that was past. And, verse 33, And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made childish, so shall thy mother be childish among women.

And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord, in Gilgal. And, you know, here is an example too, of Saul. If he would have truly repented, I believe Saul would have took care of this, and he would have took care of all the cattle, and oxen, if he would have truly, but here is, quotes, which the man of God, Samuel, is having to finish what God had asked Saul to do.

Saul, Saul couldn't even finish what God, and why, I'm not sure, I'm not sure what his, why he, like I said earlier, spared Agag, but, but, it's just, it's, it's, God could not tolerate sin, and still can't, God can't, and this was his way, at that time, of taking care of sin, and destroying these Amalekites, and, he had to use his man of God, Samuel, to finish the job, that he had sent Saul out, to, to do.

Then Samuel went to Ramah, and, Saul went up to his house, in Geboah, of, of Saul, and Samuel came no more, to see Saul, until the day of his death, nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord repented, that he had made Saul, king, over Israel.

[23 : 47] You know, I just, to me, I see that, as, I don't know how to say it, a precious thing, or whatever, but Saul, Samuel, he mourned for Saul, he, he truly wanted Saul, to do right, and, that's where, so often today, you know, if you speak out, and speak against, things that are wrong, people are going to try to, to, make it like, as though you hate them, that you're against them, but, Samuel, he had to say, what God, told him to say, and, it, it, it was, he, his, his, his, reason for it, was, is to turn Saul, and, to turn him from his wickedness, and his, and his evil ways, but, but Saul, did not turn, and, and, he, he kept on, headlong, and, and, and, ended up losing his life, you, in later chapters, that you can read, but,

Samuel did have a heart, for him, and, and he, he, he truly, wanted Saul, to repent, I want to look also, at a verse, in a couple verses, in Titus, Titus chapter one, verses 15, and 16, unto the pure, all things are pure, but unto them that are fowled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure, but even their mind, and conscience is defiled, they profess to know God, but in their works, they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, unto every good work, reprobate, in some translations, it would say in that, but in their works, it would say, forget how, how it puts it now, I had it in my mind earlier, but, and this is where I wanted to, to point out, that it, that it is important here, our, our works, but they show, what is in our heart, our works, will never,

I mean, are never, or will never impress God, but, they do show, and God of course, knows what's in our hearts, but they show to others, well, you know, we can, we can try to, to fool others, but, but our works, in, in the end, will show, and, it says here, they profess to know God, that they know God, but in their works, they deny him, that, that, that is what I'm, I guess, was on my heart here, that, this morning, that's been kind of going through my mind, and, and, I never felt like, I quite had this all put together, like I wanted, but, that's okay, I, I believe God can speak to you, and, and, through that, but, through this whole, thing, of, and, and, like I say, I don't, I don't know, and I don't need to know, well, yeah, probably wouldn't ever know, what all took, um, my brother to the place he is, but, it's, it's this thing to me, just has become, very important, that I see, and that, that we, need each other, because, we cannot, justify, and it is, it's a very slippery slope, we start justifying, saying something, and, to, because I'm going to do something good, over here, and it just, it leads to something else, and something else, and, there, it's a never ending, never ending slippery slope, and, um,

God wants our heart, he wants our heart, and our, our full surrender, and following him, more than he wants, us to, go do, do something big for him, we think, you know, in our own minds, would be what, what I would equate to, the sacrifice, you know, we think, well, if I could only just go do

something big for God, we're not going to impress God that way, if he calls us to do something, then, yes, we need to go do it, but, it's only as we're small, in our own minds, and, and don't think big of ourselves, that's when God can use us, and bless us, and, um, so yeah, that's my, um, heart's cry this morning, is that we, those, those verses, that we really take them to heart this morning, and just, and just remember, that, that God wants, God wants our heart, and he wants our obedience, true, wholehearted obedience, um, and, and not, that we, that we do something, but, not quite obey him, and then, then in our minds, we can go tell our, we can deceive ourselves, that, well,

I obeyed God, but, we didn't obey him fully, and, uh, that, that's just, we're, we're never gonna be blessed, by God, in that, in that position, but, um, yeah, I just hope and pray, that y'all are stirred this morning, hopefully y'all have some more thoughts here, this morning on this, maybe this stirred up some thoughts, so, that's what I had to share.

[29 : 01] Thank you. Thank you.