

DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD

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Scripture: 1 Samuel 15

1 Samuel 15

15 Then Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the LORD. ² 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.'"

⁴ Then Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, 200,000-foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah. ⁵ Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley. ⁶ Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites, so that I do not destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. ⁷ So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is ^[e]east of Egypt. ⁸ He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. ⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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. ¹² Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal." ¹³ Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have carried out the command of the LORD." ¹⁴ But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" ¹⁵ Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed." ¹⁶ 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?"

²⁰ Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. ²¹ But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal." ²² Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. ²³ "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.””*

Then in verse 35 it says...

“³⁵ Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.”

Our loving Heavenly Father, speak to us Lord, for these are sobering words to hear. Help us to see what You want us to take from this passage and apply in our own hearts, so that we are able to walk in Your steps and in complete obedience. In Your name, Lord Jesus, we pray. Amen.

When you read this passage of scripture, you wonder at the severity of the punishment God wanted to mete out to the Amalekites. Why was it so important for God to completely exterminate them? For that, we have to understand the history. The Amalekites were descendants of Amalek, who was the grandson of Esau. They were a fierce nomadic tribe that lived in the desert region around the Dead Sea. They made part of their livelihood by conducting frequent raids on travelers and unsuspecting people; and they killed for pleasure. That was the type of people they were. One of the greatest insults in Israeli culture was to call someone ‘a friend of Amalek’. When the Israelites entered the region after Egypt and the wilderness, the Amalekites thought that they were prime targets, and they attacked them.

Exodus 17 tells us:

“⁸ The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. ⁹ Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.”

¹⁰ So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. ¹¹ As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. ¹² When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. ¹³ So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.”

If I can transgress just a little bit and point out something here. Always, when God wants to do something in our world, in our sphere of things, when He’s working unilaterally in the things that are going on with us, something that He wants to do – He always looks to us to join Him and to be proactive. It was God’s will that they would win the war, but Moses had to hold up his hands. Every time he got tired and put his hands down, the Amalekites started winning. So Aaron and Hur came alongside and held up his arms; and the Amalekites were defeated.

Sometimes, we think if God’s going to do this, I’ll just sit back and relax. When He’s done, I’ll get up and start moving. But ask the question: What does God want me to do even in this situation? If it is His will to do this in my life, how am I to be proactive in it?

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven.

The children of Israel were just coming out of the wilderness. They had nothing. Literally, they are a group of nomads coming into the Promised Land. And the Amalekites thought that this was rich fodder for them. That was the reason that God was going to have them exterminated.

¹⁵ Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner. ¹⁶ He said, "Because hands were lifted up against the throne of the LORD, the LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."

And that promise to fulfil was given to Saul. Years later, God commissions Saul to render this judgment in 1 Samuel 15:2 – *² This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. ³ Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them;*

⁹ But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs— everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

Psalm 40:6-8 reminds us how important it is to do God's will.

*⁶ Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—
but my ears you have opened—
burnt offerings and sin offerings^[b] you did not require.*

*⁷ Then I said, "Here I am, I have come—
it is written about me in the scroll.*

*⁸ I desire to do your will, my God;
your law is within my heart."*

God takes acts of disobedience against Him very seriously. When we disobey Him, God takes that very seriously. And there are ramifications and consequences for disobedience. We can see this in the way in which He dealt with Moses himself, one who had served God so faithfully. At one point, the children of Israel turned against him and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? To die here in the wilderness? There's no water, there's nothing." And Moses goes and talks to God about it. and God says, "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink.

⁹ So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. ¹⁰ He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" ¹¹ Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank.

¹² But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."

Moses was not allowed to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. Why? Because instead of speaking to the rock as God had told him to, he hit the rock twice out of his anger with the people of Israel. And God says, "You did not honor Me as holy in the sight of the people of Israel."

Partial disobedience is same as complete disobedience.

God takes disobedience very seriously. Partial obedience is the same as complete disobedience. That's what Saul did. He took Agag, king of the Amalekites, alive. He slayed all the people with the sword. But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle. Everything that God had said: "Go up against the Amalekites; kill them." He did, but he kept the king alive. He didn't kill the king and he brought the fat of that land back with him.

Sometimes we listen to what God is saying, and then we say, “Well Lord, I’ll do this because beyond this point it gets inconvenient for me to do it, or it gets difficult.” So we obey only partially. But partial obedience is complete disobedience in the eyes of the Lord. And we justify ourselves by saying: I’ve done what God wants me to do. The question is: Have we done everything that God wants us to do? Or have we left out some parts of it? Partial obedience is complete disobedience.

Disobedience to God is the same as rebellion to God.

Also, we see in this passage that disobedience to God is the same as rebellion to God. Why do we rebel against God? Because at some point we think we understand the situation better than God. At some point we think we have the wisdom to make this decision. At some point we realize that we don’t need God to go through what we need to do. And also, because we crave the approval of others more than the approval of God.

²⁴Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I violated the Lord’s command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them. Fear of what they would do; would they reject me as king?”

All those fears came in, and he listened to the voice of the people rather than what God had spoken to him. Disobedience to God is equal to rebellion as far as God is concerned.

Rebellion is compared to divination.

Also, rebellion is compared to divination. What does that mean? Deuteronomy 18:9 says, ⁹“When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. ¹⁰Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination (which is fortune-telling) or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, ¹¹or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. ¹²Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord; because of these same detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. ¹³you must be blameless before the Lord your God.”

It's so important as we go through our life, that we don't resort to these kind of things – playing the Ouija board for instance. It's just fun; we don't really believe in it. Yet, it's something that is forbidden in the Bible. We trust our future to God. God reveals to us through His Spirit what He wants us to know about the things that are coming. Everything that we need to know before we take that step, God already knows and reveals to us. We don't need to take things into our own hands to find out what is in the future.

Disobedience is the same as insubordination.

It's being insubordinate to God. We are citizens of God's kingdom. This means that we are subjects in God's kingdom. We owe our allegiance to the King of kings. God is our King, and we are citizens. We listen to the rules and the laws that God has placed before us. and when we disobey, we are being insubordinate to the King of kings and the Lord of Lords. If there are things that the Spirit of God is putting in your heart and your mind and saying: Check that one out, whether it's falling into this category of disobedience, hold that truth. We'll deal with it as we come to the close.

Insubordination is the same as iniquity and idolatry.

Why? Insubordination is sin because we are putting our will before the will of God. Therefore it is sin. When we take our will, go after the flesh rather than obey God's Spirit, we're committing sin. Iniquity is sinning against God.

Why is it idolatry? Because instead of listening to God, we have pushed God aside, and we have replaced Him on the throne. God is no longer the throne of our lives, but we are. I shall have no other gods before me; not even ourselves. So every time that we are being disobedient to God, we're actually committing the sin of idolatry.

God takes disobedience very seriously.

Sometimes we cheapen the whole idea of grace by thinking grace will cover all of that. Grace covers a multitude of sins. And yet, when you look at scriptures like this, you realize that God has a standard that He is not willing to compromise on. He didn't compromise that standard with Moses. And as sons and daughters of the Most High God, we too need to be careful. We need to be very careful if we are being completely obedient to the will of God.

Pride.

What's the truth for us this morning? I think when pride grows, reliance on God recedes. Why pride? Because at the heart of everything that happened to Saul that led to disobedience was pride. Look at these two scriptures how he started.

1 Samuel 10:22, They were looking for Saul. They wanted to anoint him king.

²²So they inquired further of the Lord, "Has the man come here yet?"

And the Lord said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies."

Saul was that kind of person coming from the tribe of Benjamin. He thought he was a nobody. How could he ever have the stature of a king? So he was hiding. That's the kind of person he was.

Fast forward not to 1 Samuel 15:12 when Samuel was going to meet Saul.

¹²Early in the morning, Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, "Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal."

In such a short time, from someone who was hiding, wondering whether he was worth it, all of this, he has come to the point where he thinks so much of himself that he has built a monument to himself. Pride came in and caused him to think that everything rested on him, that he had what it took to lead Israel, forgetting that the actual king of Israel was God.

If we could pick things that Saul did wrong, we would see disobedience, we would see arrogance, we would see lack of faith and trust, refusal to trust in the Lord. and because of all that, Saul was rejected by God as king, and David was chosen. But the sad line is at the end. "And the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel." I read that line and thought: My goodness! I hope it never happens that the Lord regrets what He has invited me to do. That because of our disobedience, we are not doing the things that we ought to do as sons and daughters of the Most High God. That, somewhere along the line, something else has usurped that position. That now God is a God of convenience. When I have time for Him, when it's convenient for me to do the things that He wants me to do, then I will do it, but never out of discomfort.

Beloved, I wonder whether today we need a realignment to put God back on the throne, hand back the reins that maybe you took from Him. There used to be a one-liner some time back – a sticker that said, "God is my co-pilot." And somebody came up with another sticker that said, "If God is your co-pilot, you're in big trouble." Because you don't want Him sitting in the Co-pilot seat. You want Him sitting in the pilot's seat. But sometimes, that's where we are most comfortable. I've got it. I'll take care of it.

So the question for us is: Are we charting our own course thinking that we've got it all together? We started feeling proud about achievements, forgetting that it was God who gave those things to us. or even: Are we obeying Him only partially, like a buffet table. We take what we want from the offering

that God has made, and then we walk away. But God's ask of us is totality, complete obedience to His word. Where pride increases, faith in God recedes.

Heavenly Father, we don't want to go down that path. And if we have Lord, would You hear us confess before You that we have done wrong, that we have been disobedient, that we have usurped Your throne. Lord, would You bring that rich grace to impart on our behalf? We don't seek to cheapen it. we know exactly what we have done, Lord. and we know how costly that grace was for You to offer to us. Would You set us free today? Would You take our wills that are saying 'realign me'? and would You fill us with Your Spirit so that we can walk in Your path, and be completely obedient to You. We ask this Lord Jesus, in Your name. Amen.
