

INTRODUCE

Good Morning Church! My name is Kyle Knight, if I haven't met you yet, I'm the Youth Minister and one of the Elder Candidates here at Fathom Church. If you have your Bibles please go ahead and open them up to 1 Samuel chapter 15. Open up a phone or tablet, or you can grab one of the black Bibles underneath each chair and open it up to page **237**. If you're online with us you can click the Bible tab and it'll open up for you. 1 Samuel chapter 15 is where we are going to be this morning.

INTRODUCTION

So believe it or not, I know this is going to be sad for all of us, but this is our last week in the book of 1 Samuel...for now at least.

We are wrapping up our 1 Samuel series today after 11 weeks in it to start this year. But don't worry, we will jump back into 1 Samuel at the start of next year when we finally get to the story of Saul and King David.

CONTEXT

Saul has been through a lot!

- after being anointed as the first King of Israel
- after not really believing it himself but especially having his own people of Israel not believe that he was the one chosen to be king.
- after going to war against the Philistines where every time he and the Israelites were the underdogs.

- and after struggling being the militaristic leader that Israel needed at the time

I feel like this is a good time to see Saul's time as King come to a good end...

But that ain't happenin.

Not in this story.

TRANSITION

Sauls' kingship has been rejected, and today, *Saul will be rejected.*

This is it, this really is the end of King Saul. And I'll tell you up front, this is definitely not a happy ending for Saul.

In fact, this chapter we're about to read here is dark.

It's brutal. Very tough to read through and even imagine this all happening.

So not only does Saul's time come to a not so happy end...it comes to a very disturbing, brutal, uncomfortable end.

So let's get right to it shall we!!

We've got a lot of text to get through today so let's start reading at

1 Samuel 15 with verse 1. Follow along with me.

1 SAMUEL 15:1-3

[1] And Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the LORD. [2] Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. [3] Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

EXPLAIN: GOD'S DECISION

These first few verses we are introduced to a new enemy of God's people, actually not too new, as you'll see, but new to Saul...the Amalekites.

Ok so we have to acknowledge something here.

As much as I would love to just skip over what is being commanded here of Saul, we have to address it. I feel like it's the elephant in the room.

God is telling Saul to go and wipe out an entire group of people.

- Kill everyone and everything.
- Not just all the men of the Amalekites,
- but all the women,
- children and infants,
- and every living animal.
- EVERYTHING. He wants absolutely everything completely destroyed!

Now that sounds absolutely crazy that God would want this.

I mean, how could God do this, right?

EXPLAIN: IT'S GOD'S COMMAND

So really quickly something we have to understand is that again,

- *we are not God.*

I'll get to why this is justified in God's eyes to completely destroy the Amalekites in just a second,

But we have to remember that God's ways are higher than ours.

- God's reasons are above ours.
- We cannot fully understand God's ways.
- And at the end of the day, God is God, and we as Christians need to trust in HIS ways and respect his sovereignty and his just decision making even if it doesn't make any sense to us.
- God comes from a perfect place, with his loving and perfectly pure heart that this decision *must* be the right and just thing to do, even if it sounds completely horrible to us.

I just can't understand it. It's hard to read something like this.

But God commanded it.

So, let's try and understand even just a little where God is coming from and what the Amalekites have done in the past to warrant such an unspeakable act done to them by God.

EXPLAIN: THE AMALEKITES

From this text, we don't really know much about these Amalekites.

But, we do hear about them elsewhere in scripture.

The Israelites were supposed to have completely wiped them out from the face of the earth back in Exodus and Deuteronomy.

But up until now, in 1 Samuel chapter 15, that still hasn't happened.

Here's the deal with this group...

The Amalekites were a very cruel and wicked people.

- Earlier in Exodus chapter 17 it talks about how the Amalekites would fight.
- They ambushed Israel,
- They went after the defenseless first.
- they would find the weak,
- and the sick,
- and all the children
- and they would kill them all first.
- They were truly a wicked people,

And God *was going to act justly towards them and their sin*

- and promised to wipe them out completely
- from this earth because of that.

So, this is important for us to understand

- *Because as hard as this command is from God to Saul*
- as hard as it is for us today to read this

- And try to understand God's actions and his justifications for something like this...

God's ways are higher than ours, AND God is fair and just.

Now, all this changes at the cross of Christ! Because that just judgment was on Jesus. But this is the Old Testament.

So now that we know a little more about the Amalekites and their history with Israel, let's continue and see how Saul responded to the command from the Lord...verse 4

1 SAMUEL 15:4-9

[4] So Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah. [5] And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley. [6] Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. [7] And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt. [8] And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword. [9] But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.

EXPLAIN: GOD'S CLEAR COMMAND

Saul disobeys!

Of course he disobeys!

Cause that's not the Saul we know!

He never does it God's way!

We see Saul defeats the Amalekites, *but* he spares their king Agag,

- takes him alive
- and the people of Israel keep the best of all the sheep
- and oxen
- and fattened calves
- and lambs for themselves.

Now, to us today we might think,

- *Oh he spared someone's life!*
- *And they didn't kill all the animals!*
- *Good! That's too much death!*

And this is where I want to make my first point today.

MAIN POINT #1:

Obedience to God is all or nothing!

SLIDE ALL OR NOTHING

It's All or Nothing.

When it comes to God giving clear cut instructions to Saul what to do with the enemies of God,

The instructions were pretty clear.

- Kill them all.

As harsh as that is,

- God's command was clear!

And they disobey!

Saul partially obeyed the command of God.

Saul showed *Selective Obedience.*

They showed partial obedience...

Which ultimately means THEY DISOBEYED GOD.

EXAMPLE: AUSTIN'S ROOM

Parent's, this might trigger you a little bit, right?

- The sort of *half* obedience thing.
- The *kind of* followed directions.
- The "*well I did most of my chores...*"

My son Austin, who's 5, is really really good at this selective obedience thing! (*and I know...he's only 5. I've got all the great teenage years ahead of me still!*)

I mean, he excels at it!

- I tell him
 - *"Hey buddy, go upstairs and clean your room, ok?"*
 - *And don't come down until your room is totally clean, got it?"*
- So he'll go upstairs, and maybe 5 minutes later he comes down and is like
 - *"Ok dad, I'm done."*
- And of course I'm skeptical because it's been 5 minutes...
- The kid can't do anything in 5 minutes, let alone clean his entire room...
- Well, that's because he doesn't clean his entire room.
- I go in there and see that sure he's cleaned
 - I can now see a 3 ft square patch of carpet!
 - That piece of floor is all cleared and cleaned up
 - But there's still toys and clothes everywhere else!
- And he'll say to me after I've said dude you did not clean your room...he'll say
 - *"Yeah I did dad! I cleaned!"*
 - *You mean I need to clean the whole room???"*
- No...you know that little patch is good enough. Way to go man!
- YES! Of course I meant clean your *whole room!*
- You only did part of it!
- You didn't listen to what I told you to do!

God gave a clear command and they disobeyed.

APPLICATION

Church,

The thing we can learn from this is

- Partial Obedience is Disobedience.
- Selective Obedience is Disobedience

It's all or nothing when it comes to obeying God.

And hey at times, I believe our lives look a lot like this.

- Being selective with how we obey God's commands.
- Picking and choosing the things we believe God is calling us to do.
- We say we like to obey God and what he has called us to do,
- but sometimes we don't totally obey him.

And hear me, I know that sometimes God tells us to do some pretty hard things!

I get that!

Just look at what he told Saul and the Israelites to do!

God's commands are not always easy to obey!

- Sometimes they're challenging
- Sometimes they'll push you,
- maybe make you feel a bit uncomfortable

- *They might test your patience, they might test your strength, they might test your faith*
- *They might even test a friendship or a relationship...*
- *And sometimes they are just downright brutal!*

But it's easy to partially obey.

It's easy to have *selective obedience* when it comes to God's will and calling on your life...

- *We can tend to obey God with the easy things.*
- But when God commands us *to get rid of those* difficult things...that's too hard for us, so we might keep them around.

What are those in your life?

What are those things that God has been telling you, commanding you to get rid of...

- But you kind of like them
- They'd be too hard to give up
- They feel really good to you...so why give them up?

Where are you being selective in obeying God?

It's All or Nothing.

BLANK SLIDE

Let's move on, we're going to read a lot for this next section so just stick with me and follow along...starting in verse 10...

1 SAMUEL 15:10-16

[10] The word of the LORD came to Samuel: [11] "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments." And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the LORD all night. [12] And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal." [13] And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed be you to the LORD. I have performed the commandment of the LORD." [14] And Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?" [15] Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God, and the rest we have devoted to destruction." [16] Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! I will tell you what the LORD said to me this night." And he said to him, "Speak."

TRANSITION

Ok, the first thing in this section is...

God felt *regret*

- The word actually used here in verse 11 for "*regret*" can also be translated as "*to be grieved*"
- So it's possible to read it as "God was grieved over the fact that he made Saul king"

- **Hear me! God is not saying he made the wrong choice...**
- Remember, God said all along that this choice of Israel wanting a King instead of God would go very poorly!
- Now he's showing them that it went exactly how God said it was going to go
- And still God is "*grieved*" over that!

God's grief does not negate God's sovereignty!

- **For example, Jesus knew Lazarus was going to die, and he still weeps at his grave! He weeps even though he knew he would raise him from the dead!**
- **God grieves with us even though He's completely in control of things!**

Second thing, Samuel went to meet Saul and it says Saul had set up a monument for himself in his victory.

- After he had clearly disobeyed God's command,
- In his victory he builds a statue of himself...an idol.

OF COURSE HE DOES!

Saul was so proud of himself that he *thinks* he obeyed everything God commanded of him.

Again...

- *it's all about himself...*
- *he's taking all the credit...*

- *he's not understanding what wrong he has done...*
- *he just thinks he's the man!*

But Samuel knows the truth. So Samuel says,

- *Hey what are those animal noises I hear?*
- *Uh weren't you commanded to destroy every single animal?*
- *What is going on?*

I feel like this is another...*What have you done?* moment for Saul...yet again.

And Saul responds to getting called out on his disobedience by defaulting back to how he usually responds to being confronted on his sin...

- more lies and excuses.

And this time again, like previous times, he blames everyone else!

- He says,
 - *Well the people brought all the good animals back, I didn't. It wasn't me, it was them!*
 - *But hey they brought them back alive so that they could be sacrifices to the Lord! So...it's all good, right?*
- NO. No Saul it's not all good!

MAIN POINT #2: SOONER OR LATER

And this is the second point I want to make today

- Listen, Saul can defend his actions, deflect responsibility for his actions, and deny his sin all he wants...
- But sooner or later, his sin will catch up to him!

SLIDE SOONER OR LATER

Sooner or later, Saul's sin will catch up to him.

And at this point in Saul's journey, it's sooner!

Yet again Saul doesn't take responsibility for his own actions, for his own sins, and he deflects them

- Saul's trying again to cover up his disobedience by throwing others under the bus.

But sooner or later, your sin catches up to you.

At some point there's no more hiding from your sin.

Especially if you're like Saul and your sin and disobedience keeps getting

- called out
- and you keep Denying it
- and Deflecting it towards someone else
- or you try to Defend yourself and justify your sin...

It will come to light.

And for Saul it's all about to come to light and catch up with him again!

ILLUSTRATION: FALL FROM GRACE

You see these examples all the time, of celebrities' lives just blowing up in the public eye so everyone can see...

- Like an athlete who gets in trouble for doing something they shouldn't be doing and then come to find out...
- It's actually been going on for years
- They're caught in a lie or caught doing something wrong
- And it's not just a one-time thing...more and more things keep coming out.
- And it just snowballs, it just keeps rolling out and piling up and getting bigger and worse.

We see this unfortunately with big well-known pastors and see their "*fall from grace*" right?

- When all the sudden their sin is put out in the open and you think this has got to be the first time this has happened
- But come to find out, more and more things start coming to light
- Their sin finds them out!
- Sin always catches up to you

APPLICATION

Are you in a place like that?

Where you continually haven't dealt with your sin that it just keeps snowballing...and maybe it hasn't caught up with you yet!

- Maybe you've been able to keep it hidden
- Or suppressed it

- Or you've done a pretty good job at covering it up

But it *will* find you out!

And maybe it *has* caught up with you!

- Maybe today it feels like everything's come crashing down on you
- And all your sin has just come to light
- And you're sitting there thinking
- *"How am I going to deal with this?"*

Well we'll see in just a moment how we should deal with it.

But let's keep going and push through towards the end here.

This is going to be a lot of text here but let's get through this next big section starting at verse 17...

1 SAMUEL 15:17-23

[17] And Samuel said, "Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. [18] And the LORD sent you on a mission and said, 'Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' [19] Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?" [20] And Saul said to Samuel, "I have obeyed the voice of the LORD. I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. [21] But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal." [22] And Samuel said, "Has 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 listen than the fat of rams. [23] For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king.”

TRANSITION: HOW SAUL THINKS HE SHOULD DEAL WITH SIN

So now we get to how *Saul* feels like he *should* deal with this.

- He *does* admit to keeping King Agag alive
- But he again blames *everyone else* for keeping the good animals alive
 - And his reason for that is something all too common that we as Christians do.

He says...

- *“The people took the spoil, the best of all the animals*
- *But they took them to be sacrifices to God!*
- *They didn’t take them for themselves*
- *We were going to give them back to God!*
- *See...it’s ok. We did it for a good reason!”*

MAIN POINT #3: OBEDIENCE OR RELIGION

This is how Saul justifies his blatant act of disobeying the command of God by saying... *“But I did it for God!”*

- Saul is trying to cover up his sin by saying he did it for God.
- He says *“Sure I didn’t listen to God fully, but look...”*

- *I'm going to make sacrifices to him!*
- *I'm going to show him my good deeds!*
- *I'll just do more!*

And Samuel calls him out on it again and says

the Lord wants your Obedience, not your sacrifices!

And church, we do this all too often

- when we try to cover up our sin and disobedience to God
- with *more* religion.
- More things that we think God wants from us.

And it's my third point today...

It's Obedience or Religion.

SLIDE OBEDIENCE OR RELIGION

Saul tried to justify it by thinking God would want the sacrifices so that's why they didn't destroy everything.

EXAMPLE

And we do this too! It just looks a bit different, right?

We try to *do more for God* even though we totally miss the mark elsewhere...

- Maybe we're the ones who think...

- *Every Sunday I'm going to fill my notebook with pages of sermon notes...the more the better...I'm taking so many notes every week!*
 - Even if I go straight home and throw that notebook in my drawer and never read those notes again until the next Sunday.
- *OR...I'm gonna volunteer in the kids ministry and on the welcome team AND I'll help out on the missions team!! I'll just do everything for the church and be involved everywhere at church!!*
 - Even though when I go home I neglect my own family and I don't care to spend time being a good example to my own kids.

It doesn't work to just do more things for God!

God doesn't want all of our religious acts if we're not submitting to his authority and obeying him completely!

Are you just trying to please God with more "acts" rather than submitting to Him and obeying his word for you?

To obey God is better than sacrifice, Samuel says to Saul.

To submit and obey God is better than just doing more Christian things to cover up our sin.

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Ok let's finish this up, verse 24...

1 SAMUEL 15:24-26

[24] Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. [25] Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the LORD." [26] And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

Quick pause...

Saul finally admits he's sinned, but yet still justifies that sin because he was afraid of the people...

So Samuel drops the last hammer

- And says *because you have rejected the word of the Lord...the Lord has rejected you.*

Verse 27

1 SAMUEL 15:27-35

[27] As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. [28] And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. [29] And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret." [30] Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the LORD your God." [31] So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the LORD. [32] Then Samuel said, "Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites." And

Agag came to him cheerfully. Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." [33] And Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. [34] Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. [35] And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

CONCLUSION

So let me wrap this up by saying this...

I do think this a great place for us to end our journey through 1 Samuel, at least for now, and through Saul's life as King over Israel

- Because this last little bit is I think the closure Saul and Samuel need...and it sort of puts a bow on this for us as well as reminding us what we need to do most of all.
- *And that's how we go about dealing with our sin.*

The sin that we keep going back to.

The sin that is going to find us out and catch up to us if it hasn't already.

The sin that Saul just couldn't seem to take responsibility for.

The sin that Samuel was grieving for Saul over...

Samuel...not Saul...needed to Finish the job.

And that's my final point today...

MAIN POINT #4:

SLIDE: FINISH THE JOB!

EXPLAIN: HOW IT'S DONE

You see,

- Samuel had to finish the job for Saul
- Samuel realized that in his grieving and frustration and anger towards Saul and his disobedience to God
- He was the one who need to Finish the Job for Saul

And so he sends for the King of the Amalekites, King Agag

And Samuel does what Saul couldn't do.

He finishes the job, and he kills Agag himself.

And listen he doesn't just kill Agag,

- It says *"Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the Lord in Gilgal."*

Told you this passage was brutal.

But here's the thing, church. It's the way we need to deal with our sin!

We need to put our sin to death!

We need to step up, take responsibility for our sin, and kill it.

And here's the deal church, Saul never took his sin seriously.

- Saul never fully took responsibility for his sin

- Saul never took obeying the word of God seriously
- And his sin just continued to build up and build up until God and Samuel had enough.

And church, as brutal as this passage ends...

I believe we need that reminder yet again on how to deal with our sin.

I'm talking about the sin in our lives that we need to drag out, in front of God and maybe even in front of others...

- And we need to hack it to pieces!
- We need to butcher it.
- We need to deal with our sin aggressively, completely and utterly destroy it.
- Show no mercy to our sin!

Because here's the truth,

- Theologian and writer back in the 1600's, John Owen, says

SLIDE: *"Be killing sin, or it will be killing you."*

How do you treat your sin, church?

- *Do you not want to let it go?*
- *Do you not want to be too harsh with it cause it still makes you feel pretty good?*
- *Do you want to continue making excuses for it?*

Or do you take sin as seriously as Samuel took it?
And do you see it for what it is?

Do you need to not just kill your sin...but hack it to pieces! Show no mercy to your sin!

BLANK SLIDE

It's a good reminder for us as we close this chapter on the Kingship of Saul...

- Is it **ALL OR NOTHING** for you in obeying God's word for you?
- Because **SOONER OR LATER** your sin will find you out.
- And you'll either keep trying to cover it up with **more religion, more acts, more "good deeds"...**
- Or you will step up, and hack it to pieces, and **finish the job before it finishes you.**

On a positive note, as terrible of an ending this is for Israel...

- There's hope.
- There's hope for Israel

But we'll wait to see that hope in King David next year.

Let's pray! **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER (we do this every week, and we ask if you are not a Christian joining us to just abstain from communion. We are so glad you’re here and you are welcome here but we believe communion is for those who have put their life in Jesus Christ).
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give (also if this is not your home church than don’t feel obligated to give at all, just be our guest today)
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let's stand and sing together.