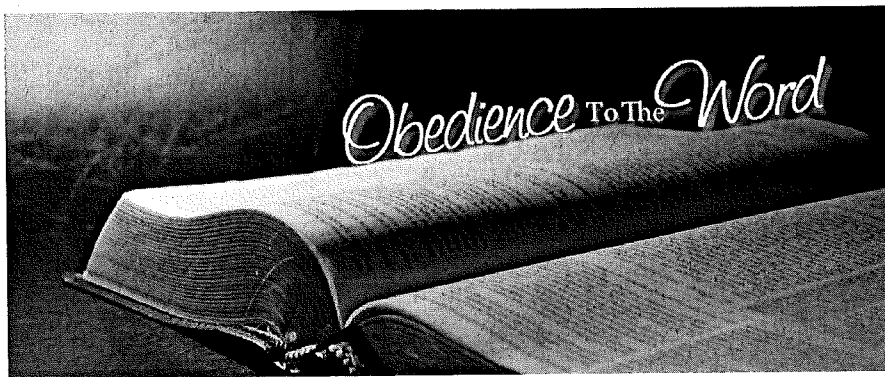


THE CHARACTER (OBEDIENCE) OF A DISCIPLE

(HOW OBEDIENCE IS THE TRUE CERTIFICATE OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER)

I Samuel 15:1-35



"TO OBEY IS BETTER"

- ◆ The Command of the Lord (Vs. 1-3)
- ◆ The Compromise of the King (Vs. 4-9)
- ◆ The Confrontation of the Prophet (Vs. 10-21)
- ◆ The Calling of You and Me (Vs. 22-24)

"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." (I Samuel 15:22)

Bill Kirk

“THE BOTTOM LINE”

Text: I Samuel 15:1-24

Subject: How Obedience Is The Key To Every Would Be Disciple.

Introduction

Question: How many of you believe that obedience to God pays great dividends?

(Hear With Your Heart)

- ◆ Isaiah 1:19: “If ye be willing and **obedient**, ye shall eat the good of the land”.
- ◆ Exodus 20:6: “For I the Lord am a jealous God, showing mercy unto them that love me and **keep** my commandments”.
- ◆ Exodus 19:5: “If you will **obey** my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then you will be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people”.
- ◆ I Kings 3:14: “If you will walk in my ways and **keep** my statutes, then I will lengthen thy days”.
- ◆ James 1:25 : “Whoever looks into the law of liberty and **continues** therein, this one shall be blessed in their deeds”.
- ◆ Revelation 22:14: “Blessed are they that **do** His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life”.
- ◆ Joshua 1:8: “Meditate in the Word day and night, **observe** to do what is written therein, and then your way will be prosperous and then you will have good success”.
- ◆ Matthew 7:24: “Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and **doeth** them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock”.
- ◆ John 14:23: “If a man love Me, he will **keep** My words and My Father will love him and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him”.
- ◆ I Peter 1:14: “Gird up the loins of your mind, as **obedient** children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance”.
- ◆ Deuteronomy 11:26: “I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing if you **obey** the Lord and a curse if you will not obey”.
- ◆ John 14:15: “If you love me, **keep** my commandments”.
- ◆ Matthew 7:21: “Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that **doeth** the will of My Father which is in heaven”.

(And What Provokes Me The Most)

- ◆ John 14:21: “He that has My commandments and **keepeth** them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to Him”.

Some Questions Answered In I Samuel 15:

- #1. What did God command Saul to do?
- #2. How did Saul respond to God's command?
- #3. Why did Saul partially obey the Lord?
- #4. What was the purpose of the bleating of the sheep?
- #5. Who did Saul blame for his own disobedience?
- #6. What was the cost of Saul's disobedience?
- #7. What does it mean in (v. 22) that "To obey is better than sacrifice"?
- #8. Why did Saul say his prayers too late?
- #9. Why did the Lord repent for choosing Saul?
- #10. What caused Saul to lose his authority and be rejected of the Lord?

(The Bottom Line To Christian Living) It Begins With...

I. The Command Of The Lord (Vs. 1-3)

Fact: In I Samuel 11:15, Saul was made king at Gilgal.

Fact: In I Samuel 13:13, Saul was rebuked at Gilgal.

Fact: In I Samuel 15:23, Saul was rejected from the throne at Gilgal.

Question: Pastor, why was Saul **rejected by the Lord** after being anointed king **for the Lord**?

(It Is Clear And Simple In I Samuel 15)

- ◆ In (v. 3), Saul was commanded to smite the Amalekites (Amalek) and destroy all they had.
(V. 3) "Slay, destroy and spare them not"

Question: Why did God say to Saul, "Destroy Amalek and Agag"?

Answer: Because in Deuteronomy 25:17-19, Moses revealed that Amalek didn't **fear God** and smote Israel when the Israelites were faint and weary.

In Fact: In the book of Esther, Haman almost succeeded in destroying the entire Jewish race.
(Haman was an Amalekite).

Thus: In Deuteronomy 25:19, God said: "When you are in the Promised Land of rest, blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven".

(In Other Words Saul)

- ◆ "Perform radical surgery in the land".
- ◆ "Spare no expense to extricate evil".
- ◆ "Spare nothing and save nothing of the spoils in battle".
- ◆ "Saul, exterminate the Amalekites before they exterminate you".
- ◆ "And Saul, don't go half way with God, there is too much at stake".

II. The Compromise Of The King (Vs. 4-9)

Question: Pastor, how did Saul respond to his clear instructions from the Lord?

Answer: He responds in a costly way:

- ◆ In (v. 4), Saul enlists 200,000 foot soldiers from Israel and 10,000 foot soldiers from Judah.
- ◆ In (v. 5) Saul lies in wait in the valley.
- ◆ In (v. 6) Saul urges the Kenite people to move out of Amalekite territory lest they be caught in the crossfire.
- ◆ The Kenites were descendants of Moses' father-in-law, (and)
- ◆ This was an act of mercy on Saul's part, (something that no pagan nation would have practiced in that day).

- ◆ In (v. 7), the battle rages and Saul defeats the Amalekites. (So far, so good)
(But Then It Happens)

Question: What did God clearly tell Saul to do?

Answer: (V. 3) “Destroy everything and spare nothing”.

Question: What did Saul do in (v. 9)?

Answer: He made a costly error:

- #1. He spared Agag the ruler of the Amalekites.
- #2. He kept the best cattle and spoils for himself.
- #3. He had the nerve to cover up and lie about his activity:

(V. 13) “And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said unto him, blessed be thou of the Lord, I have performed the commandment of the Lord”.

Question: What is Saul doing here?

Answer: #1. He is failing to accept responsibility for his actions!!

#2. He doesn't see any big deal about partial allegiance to the Lord.

#3. He smooth talks Samuel and makes excuses for his willful disobedience:

- ◆ In (v. 15) Saul says, “**They did it Samuel**, it was the people who kept the good cattle to sacrifice to the Lord”
- ◆ “In (v. 21) Saul says, “**The people took of the spoil**, the things which should have been utterly destroyed”.

Question: Why did Saul allow the will of the people to override the will of God?

Answer: (V. 24), “And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned, for I have transgressed. (why?)...**Because I feared the people and obeyed their voice**”.

Question: How did the enemy of our soul de-throne Saul and ruin his testimony?

Answer: (V. 24) **He feared his friends rejection, more than God's rejection.**

In (v. 30), Saul asks Samuel to “Honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel”.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ “Let's go through the motions of worship Samuel”.
- ◆ “Let's not let the people see that I've been rejected”.
- ◆ “Let's cover up the fact that I wasn't obedient to the Lord”.
- ◆ “Lets continue on “as is” so that no one will know I'm a coward for the Lord”.
- ◆ “Let the people respect me Samuel for partially following after God”.

III. The Confrontation Of The Prophet (Vs. 10-21)

Question: How did God expose Saul's lie in (v. 13) when Saul said:
“I have performed the commandment of the Lord”?

Answer: (V. 14) “And Samuel said, what meaneth then this bleating of the sheep?”

(In Other Words)

- ◆ God stirred up the sheep and oxen with a great disturbance.
- ◆ Saul is confronted and convicted, but he doesn't repent.
- ◆ Samuel can hear the sheep and oxen that were supposed to be destroyed.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Saul **spared** what God said to **destroy**.
- ◆ Saul **entertained** what God said to **subdue**.
- ◆ Saul permitted to **live**, the very things that God required to **die**.

Question: Is there anything God, in our lives that has yet to be subdued?

Question: Are we allowing anything to be spared, that God wants to die?

Question: Do we permit anything to hang on, that God wants to drop off?

(Isn't It Strange)

- ◆ That the very spoil that Saul was sneaky with, was the very spoil that did him in (and squealed on him)?

(The Result?)

- ◆ Saul's confession was rejected in (v. 25) because there was no contrition and repentance.
- ◆ Saul himself was rejected in (v. 26) because he failed to learn the lesson in his test with the Amalekites.

(What Is The Lesson?)

IV. The Calling To Your Heart And Mine (Vs. 22-24)

- ◆ (V. 22) "Obedience is better than sacrifice".
Question: What does it mean?
- ◆ (V. 23) "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft".
Question: What does it mean?
- ◆ (V. 23) "Stubbornness is an iniquity, like idolatry".
Question: What does it mean?

The Lesson Is Clear:

- ◆ Saul disobeyed God to offer sacrifices in worship to the Lord.

Question: What does God Say? (He says:)

Answer: "I don't want external form".

"I don't want outward appearance".

"I don't want what people see".

(In Other Words)

- ◆ "I want your heart of obedience".
- ◆ "I want what I think, to be more important than what your friends think".
- ◆ "I want a willingness to do my will, so I can trust you with more responsibility".

Question: Why was Saul de-throned?

Answer: Because God couldn't trust him on the job!!!

"Secrets From The Bleating Sheep for Every Would Be Disciple"

#1. Partial obedience on our part is total disobedience in God's sight!

#2. Trivial acts of compromise are a revelation of a deeper-seated evil that God wants to address.

- #3. No action is unimportant when it disregards God's plain instruction, (little things matter to God).
- #4. Small acts of our will manifest to whom our allegiance truly belongs.
- #5. Mixing personal advantage with service unto God, ruins that service, forfeits its reward, and disqualifies the worker.
- #6. Blaming someone else for our choices nullifies the grace that God is wanting to bestow.
- #7. The bottom line in Christian living is obedience in the heart of a disciple.

Conclusion: Let's Take Inventory...

- #1. Am I diligently searching the Scriptures to know God better?
- #2. Is there any secret sin (in word, thought or deed) that contaminates and pollutes my heart?
- #3. Do I harbor any ill will (grudges, bad feelings or unforgiveness) towards anyone that has ever offended me?
- #4. Do I resent any of the delegated authorities that God has placed over me in my life?
- #5. Am I angry at God for any of the circumstances in my life that have detoured my plans and expectations?
- #6. Am I practicing anything that is causing someone else to stumble?
- #7. Am I addicted to (enslaved by) any hobbies or habits that do not have eternal values attached to them?
- #8. Are my quiet (prayer) times quality times to pour out my heart to God and then listen to His inner promptings?
- #9. Is there any human relationship that is interfering with my obedience to God?
- #10. Does pride keep me from deep repentance when God turns the light on within my soul?
- #11. Is there any agenda that is more important than God's agenda in my life?
- #12. Am I broken hearted over the eternal damnation that awaits unsaved people?
- #13. Am I transparent and honest in all my business (and financial) dealings with people?
- #14. Do the things in my house (books, videos, posters, T.V. etc.) represent the heart of Jesus?
- #15. Do I allow my thoughts to wander into forbidden territory through viewing garbage on the television?

AMEN!
Bill Kirk, Pastor
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