

3/19/23 - 1 Sam. 15:1-35 - "The Sound of the Words of the Lord"

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[0 : 00] You could turn to 1 Samuel 15. And Samuel said to Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel. Now therefore listen to the word of the Lord.

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. 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. So Saul summoned the people and numbered them into lamb.

200,000 men on foot and then 10,000 men of Judah. And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley.

Then Saul said to the Canaanites, 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.

[1 : 01] So the Canaanites departed from among the Amalekites. And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah, as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt.

And he took Agag, the king of the Amalekites, alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword. 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.

It would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless, they devoted to destruction. The word of the Lord came to Samuel.

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.

And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, Saul, come to Carmel. And behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on, and went down to Gigao.

[2 : 10] And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, Blessed be you to the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord. And Samuel said, What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?

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.

Then Samuel said to Saul, Stop. I will tell you what the Lord said to me this night. And he said to him, Speak. And Samuel said, Though you are little in your own eyes, and you are not the head of the tribe, oh, I'm sorry, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel?

The Lord anointed you king over Israel. 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.

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? And Saul said to Samuel, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord.

[3 : 24] 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.

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. 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. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption as in iniquity and idolatry.

Because you've rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king. 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.

Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the Lord. 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.

[4 : 39] As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. 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.

And also the glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man that he should have regret. 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.

So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the Lord. Then Samuel said, Bring here to me Agag, the king of the Malachites. And Agag came to him cheerfully.

Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. 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. Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul.

[5 : 46] 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. Well, Father, we come to you today just as Israel desired for you to speak to them and to provide for them, to give them food and nourishment.

So we draw near to you at this time, searching your word for the word of life. Let it be that in our lives, a gift of life.

A gift of hope. And although a very difficult text, there is hope in the text and the message within the word. Help us draw from that well today.

We praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Life often has different instances where I was considering everything going on in this passage.

It's very packed full of stuff happening. A lot of moving pieces. And it just seemed as when I was studying, it was noisy.

[7 : 07] It was very noisy of a passage. And I began to think of just the background noise that we often experience in life. Their lives are full of background noise.

And no, I'm not talking about kids crying earlier than you desired them to wake up from their naps or from their sleep the previous night.

I'm not talking about the cars or the heating system that all of a sudden we had to crank up to like full blast in like nearly April as we all experience the cold Arctic issues that our state of Ohio has to deal with.

This is the second winter, third winter. How many winters are we on right now? This is four. This is the fourth winter. Okay. It's great that we've reached four. We still have breath in our lungs.

We have things to be joyful of as less indicated at the welcome. And I'm not talking about the things that are necessarily surrounding our lives because there is sound here.

[8 : 12] But there's actually something going on not only just with sound, but with context within this passage. There's a background noise of context.

And before we get to the sound of that which we hear in the passage, we have to hear and see the background of the context, the background noise of context.

This text concerns the Amalekites. Amalek was the grandson of Esau. This stems all the way back to Genesis 36.

And the nation of Amalek has a long history of being against God's people, violence against God's people.

And this was actually the first threat. The Amalekites were the first threat after the Exodus from Egypt. The Amalekites came and attacked God's people.

[9 : 12] And so it was here at Exodus 17 that God established a promise. Exodus 17.

It was here in verse 14. God says, I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek. I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

And it was through this promise that God revealed His commitment for justice for His people. At this promise, God is saying, I am going to bring justice.

Yes, you're suffering now. You're experiencing sorrow. You're experiencing hardship. But I will bring justice. Four decades later, before entering Canaan, the promised land, Moses reminded them of this promise.

Deuteronomy 25 in verse 17. Remember, he says, what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt. How he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you.

[10 : 36] And he did not fear God. Verse 19. Therefore, when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies around you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven, you shall not forget.

Violence persisted against God's people long after this, even entering into them being in the promised land of Canaan. This led to Judges 3 with Ehud.

We love the left-handed Ehud, don't we? Who used his dagger to the blunt of the sword was all the way in. And the stories from our series in Judges.

The Amalekites were against to oppress God's people then and led even to the rise of Gideon. The Amalekites were oppressing God's people in Judges 6 and 7.

And what's the deal with all these ites? Amalekites, Israelites, what's these ites all about? What's the deal with all these cultural identities, you might ask?

[11 : 48] What's so significant? Well, cultural identities were bound to their location. It makes the promised land so important in the nation of Israel. Because they had their God, they had their people, they did not have their land.

And that is what was significant with cultural identities. They had land, they had a God, and they had a people. All those three things. And this was why the promised land was so vital.

And so for an entire nation to be displaced and completely obliterated, and the memory of them be completely wiped away, that meant that God waged war on their God and revealed Himself to be the one true God for a nation to be completely wiped out, to be blotted out from memory.

That's what's going on here. So what's the reason for these holy wars? God is saying, I am the one true God.

That was the message back in 1 Samuel 4 all the way to 7 with the issue with that box of wood, the tabernacle that represented God's presence. The enemy captured it thinking they defeated their God.

[13 : 02] They captured their God. But God is not bound to wood, remember? And so God assaulted their false God of Dagon. And so Yahweh used instruments of man.

Some people say holy wars. I like to put it better as divine wars of Him showing that He is the one true God. A sermon would not do to go in there.

If those wicked nations were given just a millisecond to repent of their wickedness, like the Amalekites, they would not repent. God knew this of their wickedness.

Even given a millisecond to repent, they would not repent. And God used instruments of man to demonstrate His authority and execute His authority over false gods and the sin so they would know who God is.

So, like I said, background noise. It's a lot of noise going on. Now we get into 1 Samuel. With that in mind, Samuel said to Saul, the Lord has sent me to anoint you king over His people.

[14 : 23] And with that, we have a sermon titled The Sound of the Words of the Lord. And I'm going to break this up into two separate scenes as they play out in the text as it was read today.

With that background noise, now we're going to hear the sound. In the first scene, we see the sound of obedience.

Samuel said to Saul, the Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, Israel. Saul was sovereignly chosen by God.

Sovereignly chosen by God. It had nothing to do with virtue or chance or luck. It had nothing to do with birthright. It had nothing to do with intelligence. and it didn't have anything to do with appearance.

He could be the most handsome man and still, it has nothing to do with being credited a worthy place of leadership. Saul was king because God chose to do so.

[15 : 28] God does what He wants. He's sovereign. And this means that Saul has authority but not the ultimate authority. Right? So in other words, Saul is subject to the Lord and the prophet.

And Saul did not own any people. He was the king of people but he didn't own them. Verse 1 says, King over His people, Israel.

So, he says, now therefore, listen to the words of the Lord. Now listen with your ears.

to the words of the Lord. I love how the Hebrew, I studied a lot of Hebrew this week. I'm still not getting it but studied a lot of Hebrew. And it literally says, listen to how this actually translates into English.

I think it's beautiful to what is being communicated. In Hebrew, it says, hear the sound of the words of the Lord. It doesn't make sense.

[16 : 38] You'll get an F in English spelling class and grammar if you say that. But isn't that beautiful? It's saying, listen for something within the words.

Listen for some context of what I have you to embark upon. Being a symphony geek and orchestral geek, I would call myself, I love to see live symphonies.

It doesn't get much better than that. I believe it is therapeutic. And I love to hear for different instruments within an entire orchestral arrangements.

I'll listen for the oboe. I'll listen for the bassoon. I'll listen for the French horn. And different parts are kind of like, stay under the surface of other parts. And in order for me to hear a specific instrument within the hall, I have to listen closely.

I have to pay close attention to the sound. What makes it distinct? I have to listen to the detail to distinguish it.

[17 : 50] Saul is to do this very thing, to listen to the sound of his command. What distinguishes the sound of the command? Well, let's see.

This is where the context comes in. Verse 2, Thus says the Lord of hosts, I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came out of Egypt.

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.

Literally nothing can survive. This sound that he's supposed to hear is significantly deep.

It's very historical. And unless you took Old Testament 1 and 2 in seminary, it's hard to really draw that out for just a common folk. And we see that this is deeply rooted in historical and deep in drama that's been playing out long before this situation has occurred.

[19 : 10] And it's instruction. One thing is, like, you can hear. But obedience is another aspect.

I have four young children. That's another sermon for another day for all of us parents. Following the instruction takes great attention to detail.

What's at stake? If the instructions are not carried out, what God promised to Israel then would prove Him to be a liar now?

I think our conscience desires justice. Doesn't it? When you hear of injustice towards somebody, I think that it's natural based on, more than likely, the imago Dei, the image of God that is ingrained within us, that we desire justice because God desires justice.

Right? And so, we have this hunger for justice to be carried out. When we find out that young teenagers are being snatched and kidnapped and sold into sex slavery and found on your next porn site nearest you, being abused and exploited, sold and used, we could probably care less about what happens to those sex traffickers if we want to be honest.

[20 : 50] If they got hit by a bus, well, okay. Or maybe we have to make it real. Real life person, Jeffrey Dahmer, a rapist, a murderer who committed multiple murders, dismembered people, committed necrophilia, completely vile, cannibalism of his victims.

When we hear that while he was locked up, he was beaten to death, I don't think many people shed a tear over that because we desire justice.

Or in the early 2000s with Castro who was hiding away and stole a 14-year-old, 16-year-old, and 21-year-old kidnapped them.

When we find out that he hung himself by a bedsheet when he was locked up, not many people will bat a tear because justice was served to that person.

And so, what I'm trying to say is that our conscience desires justice. That's something that comes natural in our lives. And so, we can't measure these historical events based upon our modern categories.

[22 : 09] Okay? Like, labeling this as, like, ridiculous genocide or saying that this is ridiculous ethnic cleansing. That's not a God that I want to serve who kills infants and children.

No. these verses exist to show us that God is, in fact, a judge of all the earth. And He is a promise keeper of providing justice to those who provide injustice to the nation of Israel. And this whole justice aspect makes the cross of Jesus Christ all the more vivid in its horrific nature. We're going to be celebrating Good Friday.

I invite you to, our Good Friday service, maybe a little plug, because we really do come back at 6 o'clock on that Friday and reflect upon that horror of the cross with song and with reflections and with some poems and prayers.

You see, what God was doing here was fulfilling justice. He was fulfilling justice. He was fulfilling a promise for this moment in history for the nation of Israel, and it's something that's embedded within the image of God.

[23 : 31] And we desire justice to those Israelites then. They desired this justice against the Amalekites.

And so Saul does what Saul does, right? verse 4 and 5. He starts out pretty good. That's like the story of Saul's life. It's like, yeah, he did, but kind of didn't.

No, he didn't. That's the story of his life, and it starts out pretty good. 200,000 men in verse 4 assemble and unites a separated nation at this time.

10,000 men of Judah. Like, the nations are uniting against the Amalekites. This is something that the nation is rallying upon. It is time to bring justice against those Amalekites.

The time is now. And look, Saul even pays close attention to detail. He goes in there and says, I'm supposed to kill the Amalekites only, so Kenites, you know, you might want to get out because I don't want to confuse you and disobey God.

[24 : 43] So he separates the Kenites in verse 6 and verse 7. Saul defeats the Amalekites, but verse 8 says King Agag was left alive.

But the remaining people were destroyed. And verse 9, the people seem to follow suit and they save the best of the cattle. Considering the background noise, considering the context, church, is God a liar?

No. And Saul made God out to be a liar. That is what Saul's partial obedience declared.

While much of the world today might be wrapped up in this genocide language and ethnic cleansing and things like that, it's not whether the command was harsh or not.

The command and the question about the command is, was it clear or was it convoluted? And so the word of the Lord came to Samuel.

[26 : 07] The Lord who sees all, who knows all, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent. he reports the battle report back to, he debriefs Samuel.

I regret in verse 11 that I have made Saul king, Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.

Regret is a strange emotion to attribute towards an all-knowing God, isn't that? Sounds really odd.

It makes every theologian shiver and they're still trying to explain in different books. And even the Hebrew, if we want to go to the Hebrew, nakam actually doesn't help the matter.

Nakam is actually saying that God repented. That's not going to make a theologian sleep well at night either.

[27 : 18] What do we do with things that challenge our theology? What do we do with things that seem to change who God is based on a single word?

Well, we must not, we have to be careful not to allow a single mysterious word to make unclear all the other thousands of words that are clear of who God is.

Systematic theology comes into this, where we look upon what is clear of who God is, which makes us investigate what exactly was going on with God in this passage.

Right? So, with the sound of our sound doctrine guiding us, we know that Saul's actions, when you think of repentance, when you think of regret, there's no word that can actually describe what this infinite God is truly experiencing here, but with regret, with repentance, is utter pain.

We know one thing between those two words, is that God is experiencing pain, but He was never unaware of the actions as they would have played out.

[28 : 35] pain. We're not open theists here. Maybe the church around the corner, but not here. This is the same language that is attributed to the flood with Noah, right?

That God regretted that He made mankind. The rebellion of mankind pained God so deeply. He found a family, just a family of all of them that was righteous.

Pain. You see, we cannot shelf God's attributes easily in our finite minds. Okay?

Don't build your theology off of one word. That's dangerous. But what we can shelf easily in our minds as Christ made it is His commands.

God has told us and instructed us of the way that we should go. and how we should go. And that we can shelf easily in our minds. Our following of it, that's a different story.

[29 : 45] And so, modern Christianity, as we look at this, what's going on in this passage, we see judgment, we see this huge fulfillment of His promise to bring about justice, wrath, judgment.

I mean, that's a great pick-me-up message, isn't it? And modern Christianity, I think, believes that they can keep Christ, the fluffy Christ, the little lamb in his lap, right?

You got all the murals around, and you can keep the things and discard the things that you don't want, and completely minimize that this same Christ is, yeah, He's a lamb, He's a lamb of God, but He is a lion, and His judgments will roar.

I know that we have these films that are coming out, like the Jesus Revolution, and it's interesting in how that plays out, but boy, is it a fluffy God.

It's a fluffy Jesus. very much so is, and it almost turns Christianity into this Disney flick of make-believe. You just create your own God, put your own clothes on Jesus, accept what you want to accept, and yeah, you can pay attention to the things that you don't.

[31 : 11] Well, biblical Christianity, church, is not about embracing yourself. It's about denying yourself, okay?

That is biblical Christianity. It's not make-believe of just taking the things that make you feel good. And there's another aspect of this passage that we grapple with, with judgment and everything, and this wrath, these holy wars.

I don't know who needs to hear it, but this passage isn't calling us to physical violence, like a bunch of, as long as jihads, you know, movements, like going out and just cleansing anyone that's opposing our religion.

The passage does remind us, though, of the importance of being attentive to the sound of the word of the Lord. The sound of the word of the Lord. What is he saying and what does that mean?

Okay? So you see, God's authority governs our lives by his word, right? So it asks all of us.

[32 : 21] It's challenging. It is. But do you hear his word as it governs your life? Do you open his word regularly?

Do you submit your lives to it or kind of play biblical Chex Mix throughout those things that you don't want to eat and take all the M&Ms; and the things that are sweet to the taste?

I'm very guilty of that with Chex Mix but not with the Bible. The whole counsel of God is God's word and with that we have lion and lamb.

Do you hear it? Do you open it regularly? Do you submit your lives to it? Do you distinguish it from other noise in your life? Ooh, maybe that strikes a chord.

does God's word stand out from all the other instruments within the symphony of life? Right?

[33 : 27] Do you hear that most clearly? Well, I encourage us all to throw away our make-believe Jesus and follow the real Jesus judge of the living and the dead.

That is our Jesus. And so we see in this second scene playing out, we see the sound of disobedience.

And so after Saul, I'm sorry, after Samuel's sleepless night in verse 12, night of feeling righteous anger, crying out to the Lord, he set out to see Saul.

Why? To go see for himself? To go get some juicy gossip on what Saul is doing today for his Instagram feed?

No. More context, more background noise. Remember, this nation was teetering on the edge of the abyss.

[34 : 50] Chapter 12 of 1 Samuel. This nation was called that if they obey, good things will happen. God will renew them.

God will restore them. But if they do not obey his commands, background noise of context, they will fall into the abyss.

Samuel knows what he's to do. Deliver the bad news. And to his great surprise as he's taken his Uber into the city, Samuel passes by a monument of Saul.

Hmm. The monument was built to mark the victory against the Amalekites. Do you see it? It was definitely in contrast with the customary building of an altar by most great victories of God's people. Saul built a monument of himself.

[36 : 02] Maybe somebody is a little hungry for honor. We'll see by the end of the passage.

Verse 13 and 15, there's an exchange that goes on. Samuel gets out of his Uber, tips the driver, and he comes out and says, Saul, right?

Nice to see you. I saw your monument, Saul. It looks great. Right? No.

I don't think that's how Samuel spoke. But Saul was happy to see Samuel. Saul welcomes him in verse 13.

We did it! Samuel, can you believe we did it? But what did Samuel hear? This passage is full of auditory things and elements.

[37 : 06] What did Samuel hear? The cattle. The sound of disobedience.

And in this exchange up to verse 15, Saul dodges and tries to justify everything. Well, the people did it. You know, it's a sacrifice to your God.

Okay, king. Church, the most absurd thing that we can do is justify our selective obedience. It's the most absurd thing that we can do.

Silly. Saul's disposition in dodging any conviction and trying and trying to justify it is absolutely, truly pathetic.

Saul was the exact antonym of everything that Jesus Christ was. Jesus Christ was not selective in his obedience.

[38 : 08] He was fully obedient even to the point of death, death on a cross, Philippians 2. In his life, Jesus' death, his resurrection and ascension, full obedience.

Saul was the antonym of Christ, which says, just like our series title, yearning for a king. They truly are yearning for a king.

Yearning for King Jesus. But here we get a snapshot of what disobedience breeds, don't we? When we are found and Samuel hears the cattle and he's not happy at all, you could tell when people aren't happy, don't we dodge any sort of conviction sometimes, depending on the level of the disobedience.

When we do things wrong, we kind of dodge anybody who tries to address it with us. We're just like, maybe I just won't go to church today, so just nobody will ask me about that. Or maybe I won't go to my house church this week because I just don't want to deal with somebody addressing my sin. We dodge that conviction, don't we? We minimize the confrontation and actually we gaslight the truth. Well, I didn't know, right? It's been a hard week.

[39 : 34] I'm a sinner, saved by grace, right? Well, I've got to tell you this, that this type of disobedience, partial obedience is disobedience and partial obedience, which is disobedience, it pains God.

It pains God. This hearing of the cattle is literally the sound of God's pain. In fact, it is most often those who are offended by such confrontation, who do you think you are?

Right? Didn't Jesus say something about a log and a speck? Who do you think you are? Right? But it is most often those who are offended by such confrontation of sin that are usually the ones most guilty of it.

But the ones who feel the guilt of the offense are the ones most freely and openly easily forgiven for it.

Because it comes with contrition against the offense towards a holy God. Right? Saul isn't there. He isn't there yet. He's not there at all.

[40 : 52] It actually gets worse for him. Samuel is sick of the noise, sick of the dodging, sick of the excuses, sick of everything.

He says, stop. A word that is known as release, let go, abandon. What was Saul holding on to that he needed to let go of?

Verse 17, Samuel starts out pretty clear. You are king, you imbecile. That's not in my notes here.

This is child's play. Child's play. Verse 18 and 19, the mission is clear.

Why did you not obey? Why did you pounce, known as greedily dart for? Do you see him pouncing on the spoil in your minds?

[41 : 55] In other words, your disobedience has stolen from the Lord. God's word. What was meant for destruction. This is evil. You're calling God a liar.

And the icing, the icing on the cake, it seems, it's coming here in verse 20 and 21. You know how when we're caught in sin and you're trying to say the white lie, only reveal the things that you want to reveal, and you're just like, I hope they don't find out about that.

He's probably thinking in the back of his mind, oh boy, how do I not say Agag? How do I not mention Agag? How do I just text my buddies and go, you know, throw them in the river, get them out of here?

How am I going to cover this one up? You know how sin has a way of, like, self-disclosing itself? The more we think about it, the more we're probably going to actually say it? Well, that actually happens.

He dodges again, he justifies the cattle, woes the people to sacrifice to your God, but something new is exposed. The Amalekites are still alive.

[43 : 11] Because as the king of the Amalekites lives, so too the nation lives. Because this king is just a couple recruits of rebuilding that nation.

it's like Saul's like, Samuel, don't you see? I did obey. I'm so excited. My statue and my monument's looking great, isn't it?

And everything. Look at these people, they're worshiping. We're good. I went on a mission. I separated the Kenites even. I brought Agag with us. Oops, I probably shouldn't have said that. But all the rest are devoted to destruction. And all the people, yeah, they took the spoil, the cattle, but it's for worship. See, everything's fine, Samuel.

Church, those guilty of sin will dodge, conceal, blame others. But those forgiven of sin will take responsibility, will expose, and blame themselves.

[44 : 19] Our honor is counted as lost compared to the honor given to God in our confession when we come clean, fully clean.

Is there anybody who has confessed sin that has completely just released them from this weight? You know that feeling.

Might you be needing to release your sin to the Lord this morning? We'll have an opportunity in the last song to do that. Samuel, at this point of this narrative, it's sort of the climax, he gets to the verdict.

He's basically done talking at this point. He gets to the verdict in verse 22. He says, Has the Lord great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices?

In other words, does the Lord delight in our worship, our religious formalism, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, point of correction, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.

[45 : 49] The fat of rams, a portion due to God in sacrifice. In other words, Saul is the epitome of what false faith requires.

You want to see false faith? Study more in depth the life of Saul. Samuel's verdict concisely draws that line.

biblical faith requires believing God's promises and obeying His commands. It's a two-sided coin, hearing and doing, as we hear in the New Testament in James.

And worse yet, to think that any form of religious formalism will compensate and justify our sin actually proves and reinforces our rebellion against God in the first place.

things. And verse 23, the rebellion, Samuel says, for rebellion is as the sin of divination, seeking other gods and other mediums, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry.

[47 : 01] Ready for the hammer? because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has rejected you from being king.

Disobedience is rebellion. Disobedience is child's play. And the consequence of this particular rebellion, which says that God is a liar, was arrogance against the holy God in the highest order. It makes Him to be a liar. At this point, Israel has no king. Full circle, Saul becomes the lost donkey. We'll censor that word for the sake of the children. And so, we get to the end of his reign.

Saul discovered the hard way, that his disobedience could not be dodged, it could not be justified, it could not be blamed on others, that disobedience is a rejection of the sound of God's word, and that to reject God's word is to reject God, and for that, his status of king is revoked.

[48 : 36] Ready for something heavy? I believe that hell will be full with a lot of people with perfect church attendance. I believe hell will be full with a lot of people who were baptized.

I believe hell will be full with people who were very charitable. Why? Because none of that is what saves.

None of that is what saves. It's noise. It's noise. It's noise. true confession precedes devoted commitment.

To hear is to do. If you're doing, it means you're hearing. If you're hearing, you're going to do. If you plant a seed in fertile soil, you can tell and yell at that seed all you want to not grow. grow. What's it going to do? It will sprout. And that is the same to be true with the faith of a mustard seed as it grows in the life of a Christian.

[49 : 53] It is natural to produce fruit in your life. It's a heavy reality of what Samuel's words indicates of our heart problem in trusting in our religious formalism higher than being obedient to God's commands.

You can serve in every area of the ministry. You could be the most dependent on it within a church body, that the church would crumble without you, but without a life committed to obedience, all that consists of is noise.

true confession is what God is searching for. True commitments. When God's judgment comes to, isn't it final?

It kind of reminds us of an end-time perspective. It's like eschatological, if you want to get Christian-ese with it, that when His judgment comes, when He decides to recreate, that's it. There's only two places where you're going to go. Eternity in heaven with Jesus Christ, or eternity in hell.

[51 : 26] YouTube might not like this language that I'm using. It might get taken down, but I'll accept that as a compliment, actually. And look at what's happening here.

The judgment comes, and look in verse 24. Saul says, I have sinned. And it seems legitimate, doesn't it?

But remember how sin kind of self-discloses itself? It seems like he's legitimate sorry. Like, why doesn't Samuel forgive him? But verse 30, he says, I have sinned.

Honor me. Whoa. There it is. Honor me. In other words, I'm going to lose everything.

True confession precedes devoted commitments. You can plead at the horror of the reality and the consequence of your sin, but true confession does not come from someone who just doesn't want to go to hell.

[52 : 34] Do you hear me? It just, true confession doesn't come to somebody who's just scared of the consequence. True confession comes from someone who realizes that they have offended a holy God and rebelled against a holy God who has caused God pain.

Saul pleaded at the consequence for his actions. Loss of honor. But never really got to ownership of it.

And in true confession we learn that we abandon self in true confession. when we abandon self we meet the peace of God.

Right? And when we meet the peace of God in true confession abandon of self, yeah Samuel you can have my stature, you can have your people, I am sorry.

I repent. Take everything from me. Take my position from me. When true confession happens and we lose everything, there we find Christ's deepest and closest embrace.

[53 : 54] But Saul wasn't there. He wasn't there. Samuel calls for Agag. Doesn't he?

Agag seems quite chipper. In the back of his mind he's probably like, yeah, I already got a couple dozen Israelites joining my side.

He says, surely the bitterness of death is past. My buddy Samuel. Verse 33, hear the sound of God's word and his righteous anger against the enemy that began man in in Exodus 17.

Hear the sound, church. This is rated R. Verse 33, and Samuel said, as your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.

Israel is without a king.

[55 : 15] Israel is without a king. The child's play is indeed over. Samuel went to Ramah, grieved, and Saul to Gebeah, rejected, and the Lord in pain over the entire circumstance.

With such a passage that highlights this judgment, this finality of judgment, it should be teaching us how sin embeds in our lives and grows the longer it goes unaddressed.

Do you understand that this message is the most loving thing that me as your pastor can communicate to you today? Because this is the message of God's Word.

