

The Habitual Cost of Disobedience

1 Samuel 15:17-23

Life Group Discussion – June 10th, 2018

God allowed King Saul to defeat the Amalekites in order to test his obedience. But Saul failed in following God's command. Instead of killing everything like God had said, Saul saved the best of what the Amalekites had in order to "sacrifice to the Lord". Saul believed that offering to the Lord was more important than doing what He had commanded. God's anger is evident in this passage because He wanted obedience from Saul, not sacrifice.

"What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. (Isaiah 1:11-13)

Even though he was disobedient, Saul believed he was doing what the Lord commanded.

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. 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." (1 Samuel 15:20-21)

Saul brought King Agag and the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the Lord. When you look just at the surface of this passage, it seems logical and valid for Saul to have done what he did. However, there is a very important difference we must realize.

Saul believed the most important thing in the battle was winning. But to God, winning or losing was not important; what was most important was obedience to Him.

It was because of this difference in understanding that we get the famous verse of sacrifice versus obedience. God is not happy with sacrifice, He is happy when we obey.

Saul had killed 99% of the Amalekites, leaving only the king alive. To many people, 99% may seem like

obedience, but even leaving 1% for yourself is disobedience to God.

To be honest, it is impossible to separate your obedience from your possessions. Spending our time in worship is a healing process that allows God's words to cover us and reorients our mind to God. If we want to obey the Lord, start first with your time and in your worship.

But what was the type of worship Saul was talking about?

His worship was not aimed toward obedience to the Lord but of one that saw a type of give-and-take relationship. He thought that if he sacrificed, God would bless him more. It was a conditional type of sacrifice. This is why God was angry with Saul.

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. (1 Samuel 15:22)

We must understand that God will throw away those that are prideful and disobedient. In all things, we must try our best to stay humble and obedient to the Lord's commands.

Saul was respected by his peers and was known to have loyalty and kindness. But his connection to the Lord was weak and it ultimately destroyed him at the end.

On the other side is David, a boy that was the youngest and weakest of his brothers. But he was a man that put the Lord in the center of his life.

To look simply on the outward appearance is dangerous because God honors those who put Him in their hearts, while Satan may be the one who is lurking behind someone who's respected by the world.

If God is in the center of your life, you will pray for and ask God concerning all matters.

The Bible says that Saul's greatest mistake is that he did not ask the Lord.

So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. He did not seek guidance from the Lord. Therefore the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse. (1 Chronicles 10:13-14)

The biggest difference between David and Saul was that David always went to the Lord for anything and everything. From the big things to the small things, David went to the Lord. Saul simply followed his own conscious and did what pleased him.

Even though we understand that living a life of obedience means that you will live a life of blessing, why can't we do it?

This is because we do not truly know who the Lord is. It is through obedience that God wants to bless us. Obedience is not just for obedience, but it is to bless us with more of His presence.

God gave this command to Abraham,

He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." (Genesis 22:2)

Even though Isaac was his last hope, Abraham obeyed the words of God. But God's command was not to hurt him, but to give him an even greater blessing. God wants to give us many things. But it is through our act of obedience that He desires to work.

This is why many call obedience "The Path of Blessing".

It was Peter who obeyed Jesus and threw his nets over the boat and caught an overflow of fish, resulting in him becoming a disciple.

Peter did not catch the fish, Jesus caught the fish. When you obey, God is the One doing the work.

So when God says to go or when God says to stay, we can follow in confidence because we know it's right.

My brothers and sisters,
God is looking for that type of obedience. Not someone who is rich or famous, simply one who obeys.

The first half of the year is finished. As we look back on 2018, can we say that we followed the Lord in obedience? Or are we like Saul, habitually disobeying the Lord because we think we know what's best?

I hope that we can be a church that stays obedient to the Lord and experiences Him in a new way this year.

SHARING-----

1. Saul kept the livestock alive in order to "worship the Lord". When I look back on my life, has there been a time when I've used a "Christian" excuse but in reality I was in disobedience? Please share.
2. As you reflect on the message, is there somewhere you need to be obedient to the Lord? Instead of following your own logic or reasoning, where or what is the place that God is telling you to be obedient in? Please share.