

The Reason Saul Failed

1 Samuel 31:1-6

Life Group Discussion – July 29th, 2018

When you look at the Old Testament, many deaths occur. In Genesis we see Jacob and Joseph's death, in Deuteronomy Moses dies, and in the book of Joshua, Joshua dies. At the end of 1 Samuel, we now see the death of Saul and the beginning of David's reign.

What was the difference between David and Saul? David committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband but was beloved by the Lord. Whereas Saul reigned in Israel for 40 years and yet his kingship was considered a failure.

Why was Saul considered a failure?

1. Saul failed because of his disobedience

God chose Saul out of the Tribe of Benjamin. This tribe was not extremely famous or even that large. But it was through God's grace that He allowed the next king to come from that tribe.

Saul was humble in the beginning. But after becoming king and receiving the praises and compliments from the people, he forgot about God and believed himself to be great.

The role of Israel was simply to follow the Word of God. But they forgot their place and began to do things their way. If they had simply followed after God, they would have succeeded instead they followed their own desires.

The breaking point of God and Saul's relationship was during the war against the Amalekites. In Saul's disobedience it was Samuel who said, "To obey is better than sacrifice."

After his disobedience, God throws Saul away.

Even if we believe our spiritual lives are doing well, it does not matter if we do not obey the Lord.

There are many people who pray for a very long time, but when the decisive moment comes that they've been praying for, they follow their own heart rather than listen to what the Lord wants.

To obey is better than sacrifice.

2. Saul failed because of his worship

The strength to obey the Lord comes from worshipping Him. This is why you cannot be faithful to God when your worship is dead.

Saul had this dead worship.

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)

The foundation of your worship must be in obedience. God is happy when our worship and praise to Him is based on our obedience to what He has said to us.

It is because of Saul's disobedience that God rejects him.

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." (1 Samuel 15:23)

The conclusion is that when you fail in worship to the Lord, you fail in life.

I hope and pray that we will be faithful in our worship to God. Come to him in humility and in obedience, leaning upon Him.

3. Saul failed because of his prayer

For Christians, we must talk to God about everything. The reason we do this is because it acknowledges that God is Lord over everything.

But Saul's failure comes from not asking 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 main difference between Saul and David was prayer. David went to God for everything and asked the Lord before he made a move.

However, Saul did not ask the Lord of guidance and this led to sinful and unwise decisions.

In 1 Samuel 22, Saul kills 85 priests who helped David when Saul was chasing after him.

But when he first told his guards to kill them, they did not follow his commands because they knew that the Lord was the one who set the priests in their place.

Slowly, the people who would pray and counsel Saul began to disappear. Soon, Saul stopped praying and there was no one left who would pray for him. Without the power of prayer, how could Saul ever lead the nation of Israel?

We must always ask the Lord for everything in prayer. And we must be close to the people around us who pray and whom we know are prayer warriors. We may naturally want to be closer to people who are funny and nice, but we must seek out those who know what it means to pray.

A prayer warrior is not someone who prays for hours, but someone whose life is about asking the Lord about everything. This is a type of spiritual life that is humble and understands how great the Lord is.

Because of Saul's failures, his life ends miserably.

Thus Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, on the same day together. (1 Samuel 31:6)

The saddest part of this verse is that Jonathan dies with Saul. Jonathan was a faithful man and risked his life for his friendship with David.

Jonathan was very different than his father, but still died alongside of him.

After Saul's death, David's era begins.

A new generation and a new king appear. In the same way that new wine needs new wineskin, Jesus is also wanting to give new mercies and new blessings everyday, but will not settle for a life that was faithful in the past. Everyday is a new day to recommit oneself to Christ.

Saul forgot that it was through God's grace that he became king.

David never forgot what God did and continually thanked Him all the days of his life. When you look at the Psalms, no matter what situation occurs David always ends his song with a word of thanks.

My brothers and sisters,
Be thankful for the small things.
No matter the situation, be thankful.

Anyone can be thankful for the good things, but to be thankful in all circumstances requires the understanding of God's grace in our life.

Today we looked at the failures of Saul's life. Even though everyone fails, it's important to see the foundational aspect of why Saul failed but David succeeded.

Obey the Lord in all circumstances.
Worship God at all times.
In everything, pray to the Lord.

Saul failed in these three things.

As we look at Saul, I hope that we can succeed where he failed. Stay faithful and obedient to the Lord and He will protect and care for you.

SHARING-----

1. Out of the three reasons why Saul failed, which one do you relate to the most? Out of the three, which one have you struggled with but have overcome? Please share.
2. We know that anyone can be thankful for good things, but only those that have experienced God's grace can be thankful in all circumstances. What are some difficult situations or hard times that you can look to God and be thankful for?
3. Please share something that was impactful to you about the sermon.