



Challenging Chapters of the Bible

Christian Life Assembly
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Don't forget Dan's suitcases. 😊

Open House for class 10/17/14.



Why is obedience better than sacrifice?

Deuteronomy 25

- **17 “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt, 18 how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God. 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.”**

1st Samuel 15

One day Samuel said to Saul, “It was the Lord who told me to anoint you as king of his people, Israel. Now listen to this message from the Lord! 2 This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies has declared: I have decided to settle accounts with the nation of Amalek for opposing Israel when they came from Egypt. 3 Now go and completely destroy the entire Amalekite nation—men, women, children, babies, cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys.” 4 So Saul mobilized his army at Telaim. There were 200,000 soldiers from Israel and 10,000 men from Judah. 5 Then Saul and his army went to a town of the Amalekites and lay in wait in the valley. 6 Saul sent this warning to the Kenites: “Move away from where the Amalekites live, or you will die with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up from Egypt.” So the Kenites packed up and left.

1st Samuel 15

7 Then Saul slaughtered the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur, east of Egypt. 8 He captured Agag, the Amalekite king, but completely destroyed everyone else. 9 Saul and his men spared Agag's life and kept the best of the sheep and goats, the cattle, the fat calves, and the lambs—everything, in fact, that appealed to them. They destroyed only what was worthless or of poor quality.

10 Then the Lord said to Samuel, 11 “I am sorry that I ever made Saul king, for he has not been loyal to me and has refused to obey my command.” Samuel was so deeply moved when he heard this that he cried out to the Lord all night. 12 Early the next morning Samuel went to find Saul. Someone told him, “Saul went to the town of Carmel to set up a monument to himself; then he went on to Gilgal.”

1st Samuel 15

- God is just and very patient – He even says of Himself, “vengeance is mine, I will repay”.
- Saul was God’s chosen instrument to carry out justice against the Amalekites.
- Exodus 20:5 You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me.

1st Samuel 15

- Saul was to kill them all – men, women, children, and animals – no exceptions.
- What to do with those innocent children that God ordered to be killed?
- “We do know that no man can be saved except through Christ; we do not know that only those who know Him can be saved through Him.” C. S. Lewis

1st Samuel 15

13 When Samuel finally found him, Saul greeted him cheerfully. “May the Lord bless you,” he said. “I have carried out the Lord’s command!” 14 “Then what is all the bleating of sheep and goats and the lowing of cattle I hear?” Samuel demanded. 15 “It’s true that the army spared the best of the sheep, goats, and cattle,” Saul admitted. “But they are going to sacrifice them to the Lord your God. We have destroyed everything else.”

16 Then Samuel said to Saul, “Stop! Listen to what the Lord told me last night!” “What did he tell you?” Saul asked. 17 And Samuel told him, “Although you may think little of yourself, are you not the leader of the tribes of Israel? The Lord has anointed you king of Israel. 18 And the Lord sent you on a mission and told you, ‘Go and completely destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, until they are all dead.’ 19 Why haven’t you obeyed the Lord? Why did you rush for the plunder and do what was evil in the Lord’s sight?”

1st Samuel 15

20 “But I did obey the Lord,” Saul insisted. “I carried out the mission he gave me. I brought back King Agag, but I destroyed everyone else. 21 Then my troops brought in the best of the sheep, goats, cattle, and plunder to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.” 22 But Samuel

replied,

“What is more pleasing to the Lord:
your burnt offerings and sacrifices
or your obedience to his voice?

Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice,
and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.

23 Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols. So because you have rejected the command of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.”

1st Samuel 15

- Does it not seem true that incomplete obedience is an oxymoron to God?
- Saul is insisting that he should be 'okay' with God because he obeyed 99% of what he was told to do.
- Samuel says he is a rebellious idolater.

1st Samuel 15

- So why is 99% obedience not okay with God?
- Vs 24) Then Saul admitted to Samuel, “Yes, I have sinned. I have disobeyed your instructions and the Lord’s command, for I was afraid of the people and did what they demanded.
- Disobedience reveals that our fear of man is elevated over our fear of God.



1st Samuel 15

- So why is 99% obedience not okay with God?
- Vs 19) Why haven't you obeyed the Lord? Why did you rush for the plunder and do what was evil in the Lord's sight?"
- Disobedience reveals that our pleasure is more important to us than God's pleasure in us.



1st Samuel 15

- So why is 99% obedience not okay with God?
- Vs 12) Early the next morning Samuel went to find Saul. Someone told him, “Saul went to the town of Carmel to set up a monument to himself;
- Disobedience reveals that we are more interested in elevating self than God.

1st Samuel 15

- Saul came from the smallest tribe in Israel – Benjamin.
- Saul was chosen by God to be king – he had already been elevated far beyond anything he could have expected or imagined.
- The path of obedience is not about elevating self – it is about elevating God which is ultimately good for us and honoring to God.

1st Samuel 15

- But unfortunately, that is not our natural bent.
- We are born wanting to elevate self – when babies cry in the night they are elevating their own need (food) over the needs of others (sleep).
- As we grow, we do not automatically lose the desire to elevate self – in fact, it often grows and is more demanding even if it is more subtle.

1st Samuel 15

- So why is 99% obedience not okay with God?
- Vs 23) “Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft.”
(divination)
- Disobedience reveals that we are willing to trust our own minds, or other sources of guidance over the Word of God.



1st Samuel 15

- If I am right that we are prone to trust ‘other’ sources of wisdom over God’s Word, what is really at play here?
- We must not believe that God is really God.
- We must not believe that God’s Word is really His Word.

1st Samuel 15

- The moment we begin to consult with, and value other sources over the Word of God we are on sinking sand.
- Deut 18:10 There shall not be found among you any one who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, any one who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For who ever does these things is an abomination to the Lord.

1st Samuel 15

- Disobedience of God's word puts my own wisdom in the place of God's and thus insults God as the only sure and reliable source of wisdom.
- We most often seek 'other' wisdom when one of two things is true –
 - 1) We don't like what God says, or
 - 2) We think of God as just one of many good sources for counsel.

1st Samuel 15

- Rebellion against the counsel of God is in the same category as witchcraft.
- God is very jealous of His glory and for us to cast aside His clear directives is to say that He is not God.
- He takes obedience very seriously – thankfully He is also plenteous in mercy.

1st Samuel 15

- “When God says one thing and we consult the little wizard of our own wisdom and then stubbornly choose to go our own way, we are idolaters. We have not only chosen to consult ourselves as an alternative to God, and thus become guilty of divination, but we go beyond that and actually esteem the direction of our own mind over God's direction and become guilty of idolatry. And worst of all, the idol is our own self.” John Piper

1st Samuel 15:22

- “What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.”
- God went to great lengths over thousands of years to give us His Word – it is good for us, it points us to Christ, it is authoritative on all subjects, and it helps us live.
- Therefore it makes perfect sense to me that He also highly values our obedience to it.

1st Samuel 15:22

- When we bring an offering, or make a sacrifice, while good, it is not the same as simply obeying what He says.
- We always want to 'do' something or 'give' something – He always wants our obedience.
- When we obey we exhibit a level of trust that pleases God.



Disobedience

- Puts the fear of man in the place of the fear of God.
- Elevates pleasure in things above pleasure in God.
- Seeks a name for itself instead of a name for God.
- Consults the wisdom of self instead of being satisfied with the will of God.
- Sets more value on the dictates of self than on the dictates of God - we therefore effectively give allegiance to the idol of the human will.



Questions