

I Samuel 13-15

“The Fall of Saul”

Introduction

- Tonight we continue in our study of I Samuel
 - And the content of I Samuel can be remembered by the fact that the book is really about 3 people, 3 main characters

The Book of I Samuel

Samuel – I Samuel 1-7

King Saul – I Samuel 8-15

David – I Samuel 16-31

- And we have moved from looking at the upbringing of Samuel to the first King of Israel Saul
 - And last week we saw how Israel rejected God ruling over them because they wanted a King to be like all the other nations
- And even though God warned them this would not turn out good
 - They demanded a King – and a King they received

Last week we meet King Saul

- and we saw how he started out really good
 - He was humble
 - He was anointed, called by God for service and really prepared by the Word of God and the Spirit of God
 - He was loving – when the men of Jabesh Gilead were in trouble – Saul put an army together and went all night to come to their defense
- It was really day one of his ministry as King and as we will see tonight – it was also really the highlight

Because even though Saul was warned at his Coronation to cling to the Lord and keep walking with God

- as we get to our story tonight, we are going to see the character flaws in King Saul that will eventually lead to his demise
 - and I think this is important for us to consider, for in our lives we can really go one of two ways
- We can stay humble, stay in the Word and filled with the Spirit, we can stay loving and kind toward people
 - Or we can end up like Saul
 - So we need to do a little self inspection tonight as we see the character flaws of Saul, to let the Lord weed those same things out of our heart
 - So what are they?
- If you are taking notes tonight, which I encourage you to do, it will help things stick, but I would like you to consider....

5 Character flaws of King Saul – I Samuel 13-15

#1 – Saul was insecure – I Samuel 13:1-4

#2 – Saul was impatient – I Samuel 13:5-23

#3 – Saul was complacent in duty – I Samuel 14:1-23

#4 – Saul was foolish as a leader - I Samuel 14:24-52

#5 – Saul was disobedient to God– I Samuel 15

- lets consider those one at a time tonight

5 Character flaws of King Saul – I Samuel 13-15

#1 – Saul was insecure – I Samuel 13:1-4

- it is kind of hard to understand in English

- in fact if you have a NLT or NAS, verse one says something totally different than what I just read – it says and Saul reigned 42 years over Israel
- the reason for the discrepancy is the Hebrew isn't clear – we will get to why in just a few minutes

But I believe what it's telling you but what verse one is telling you is all the good years of King Saul amounted to two

Saul's time of being humble and anointed by the Spirit, taught by the Word and loving towards the people lasted 2 years

- and the next 38 of Saul's reign because Acts 13:21 tells us Saul reigned for 40 years, no confusion in the Greek in that passage
 - so two years of Saul's reign – alright and then 38 years of misery for the nation
- And one of the primary reasons for the misery of the nation was what we read in verses 3 and 4
- Jonathan who was a young general at this time in Israel's history was leading 1,000 men
 - And Jonathan took them to battle against the Philistines and won a great victory
 - But Saul blew the trumpet
 - Saul took the credit – for in verse 4 it says the people heard that Saul had defeated the Philistines

And we see a glimpse here of something that will be obvious and blatant when we get to the life of David next week – Saul is insecure

- He is not confident in who God has called Him to be, he derives all of his personal significance from what people think of him
 - And so instead of saying of his son, Jonathan won the battle, we are blessed to have him on our side
- He just takes the credit for Jonathan's victory

And someone who always needs the credit for everything is someone who will not be blessed in ministry

- Proverbs 16:18 says,

“Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.” – Proverbs 16:18

Saul started out so humble

- but now that he is taking credit for things he didn't do and needing to be affirmed all the time
 - he is on a slippery slope to destruction

Maybe you have heard the story of the frog – his pond was drying up and if the pond became dry well he knew he would die and so this frog thought and thought and finally came up with a plan, “hey ducks he said to his feathered friends in the shrinking pond, I will hold this stick in my mouth and one of you grab one end, and the other grab another and then fly away and take me to a deep pond where I will be safe. Well the ducks agreed and the plan began, the frog put the stick in his mouth, and the ducks grabbed the ends and as they began to fly, the farmer came out of his house and he was amazed at the sight. “I have never seen anything like it, a frog being moved by two ducks as he holds a stick in his mouth – who thought of that plan” – and the frog could not resist – “I did”.... And it was the end of Kermit – it's a Jim Henson story they haven't released yet

- After a haughty spirit came a fall
 - And that is what will happen to you and me – when we stop realizing it is all God's goodness and grace in our lives
 - I am who I am because of who I am in Christ
 - Not what people say of me
- I don't need to always be affirmed, I don't always have to take credit
 - That is insecurity or a better way to say it is pride
 - And it needs to be repented of in our hearts precious church
- Insecurity was deadly for Saul, but his flaws did not stop there

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- The Philistines, as we were introduced to them two week ago, were a pain in Israel's side for years

At the very end of this chapter we read that they wouldn't let the children of Israel have a sword in their hand

- they controlled the blacksmith and the process of making blades and so they wouldn't let Israel have a sword
 - now we can understand why – that is a good military tactic – don't let your enemy have weapons – pretty smart

But as I was reading that – I was just thinking how our enemy does the same thing in this day and age

- In Ephesians chapter 6 we are told that this book is the sword of the Spirit
 - It is used by the Spirit of God to be a defense to our own hearts – I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you
 - But it is also used by the Spirit to go on offense – where people are saved as we speak the Word to them

An the enemy knows this and so because of that – there is an all out attack against the Word of God

- I see this as a minister even at Calvary Chapel Bible College. Some students are reading books by popular pastors who just throw out these under the guise of having a conversation
 - Do we really know that Moses wrote Genesis?
 - Do we really know John wrote John?
- Do we really know that God wanted Israel to kill the people of Canaan or was that Israel learning about God from the gods around them and progressive revelation was taking place
 - It isn't until the New Testament that we have a clear picture of God? What do you think?

And some students will share this with me and say – good conversation to have

- But I say – I see that as from the enemy trying to get people to doubt the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God
 - Questions are asked to spark conversation
 - But what happens so often in hearts – is I start to question, well do I know who wrote this, was it more human that divinely inspired – can I trust this book to lead my life?

And can I say as one who has devoted my life to studing this book, especially in the last few years in going back to school to be able to speak the language of the scholars

- There is every reason in the world to trust that this book is the inspired, infallible word of God
 - God meant what He said and says what He means
 - It is not progressive revelation where the New Testament is a clearer picture of God
- From Genesis to Revelation – God is saying – this is who I am
 - And wise is the man or woman that believes this book, studies this book, applies this book to their lives

And realize – yes the enemy would love nothing more to take the sword right out of your hand

- because if we don't have God's word to guard us, to teach us, well good luck living this Christian life the way it is suppose to be lived

- the Devil would love nothing more for you to try and live for Christ without the influence of God's word and God's spirit – go ahead – nothing will produce dead religion faster than that

➤ Don't let the enemy take away your sword!

The Philistines did this literally – only two swords in Israel at the time

- And you compare that with the Philistine fighting force
 - 30,000 chariots
 - 6,000 horseman

Now some Bible critics will say right there – it is not clear in Hebrew whether the number is 30,000 or 3,000 chariots

- Now from a practical perspective, the Egyptian armies we read in history would have anywhere from 900 to 4,000 chariots
 - So 3,000 is probably the actual number, plus it goes perfect with 6,000 horses for 3,000 chariots

But Bible critics will say – you see why we can take that sword out of your hand – you can't even trust the numbers that are in there

- When we did on Sunday Night "Ground Work Series" we talked about this in depth and so you can find those online
 - But Bible critics will point on that there are thousands of contradictions in the Bible

And what they mean by that is – there are contradictions by how one scribe copied the original text and how another scribe copied it

- and they are right – I don't want to hide that from you
 - but you need to know the differences, not all contradictions are always something like what is in front of us tonight
 - Word order, spelling of a kings name or whether it was 30,000 or 3,000
- Doctrine is never changed, things we know about God are never effected by these slight differences

Pastor Jason are you saying God's word isn't inspired perfectly by God?

- of course not – When God inspired the original author, Samuel in this case, I have no doubt Samuel wrote down the correct number
 - it was those that copied it years later that made an error

Personally because this is the third time something like this has happen in the book of I Samuel

- in chapter 6 – there is a debate – did God kill 50,000 and 70 or as most scholars believe it was it 70 out of the 50,000 that lived in Beth Shemesh
 - in chapter 13 is Samuel telling us that after Saul reigned 2 years these events happen or it is a summary statement of his entire reign like some of your bibles translated it
- and now just a few verses later – is it 30,000 or 3,000?

Do you know what I think? – I think Samuel had poor hand writing

- I say this because it happens to me all the time
 - I write down my phone # for some guy I am talking to after service and more often than not, the guys says to me – is that a 2 or a 7
 - Now I wrote down the right number – the fact that he can't read it doesn't mean I didn't write down the right number, my handwritings bad

And so I believe Samuel was perfectly inspired by God, but occasionally, nothing dealing with doctrine, nothing dealing with who God is or how He loves his people

- but with number order, is that a 2 or a 7, it is possible that it was copied down incorrectly
 - you can trust this book

- unlike other religious books that say things like the sun sets in a mud pool every night

Or there are people living on the moon that they had edit out of later copies of Doctrine and covenants

- nothing like that appears in the Word of God, nothing has had to be edited out, or corrected because we found out that is not true
 - the only thing, that the critic has to hold on to, is there are some passage where we are not 100 percent sure whether that number should be 30,000 or 3,000 – we just don't know
 - and again – I think we don't know not because there is anything wrong with God, but something was wrong with Samuel's handwritings, well see – maybe I will get corrected in heaven
 - but there is nothing like this book friends

3,000 or 30,000 – the point is Israel didn't even have 3 swords, so you understand why they are scared

- Samuel tells him, we will meet in 7 days and offer sacrifices to God, wait for me
 - And it may not be apparent to you – But in Israel there were specific roles and duties in leadership – the King was not to partake in the duties of a priest, they were holy, and set apart
- But Saul waits and waits and just before Samuel arrives he moves ahead of Samuel and really the Lord as well as he as King begins to offer the sacrifices

And Samuel says what are you doing??? – Because you could not wait for the Lord's timing, God is taking your Kingdom away

- Now you and I might say – what in the world? – why is this a big deal
 - But friends it is essential in ministry, in leadership, in service to the Lord, to be able to trust and wait on the Lord's timing

Think of all the problems in scripture that have happened because men and women have moved out ahead of the Lord

- God promised Abraham a son – and yes it seemed like the Lord was way too late on His timing
 - But that simply wasn't the case
- But Abraham moves out ahead of the Lord – we are going to help God out – He is busy, He doesn't understand what I do – Let's have a kid with Hagar – and Ishmael is born
 - And a problem – you can still turn on your TV thousands of years later and every night that problem is played out on the News in front of you concerning trouble in the Middle East

And what about Israel wanting a King – God wanted to give them a King – He made provision in the book of Deuteronomy for when Israel had a King

- He wanted to give them a King, but they couldn't wait for God's choice, that we will see next week – they needed a King now
 - And they got what they wanted – and it was trouble

Think about all the times in scripture, think about all the times in your own life that you have moved out ahead of the Lord, done your own thing, gone your way – does it ever work out – no, it only causes undue pain

- If you want to lead, you need to learn to follow God, and follow His timing and His plan

And yes sometimes God waits until the last second to move

- Why does He do that??? – because God is working on you – He was trying to work in Saul but Saul was impatient – may we learn to be different

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- The Philistine army is all around, the people of Israel are hunkered down and yet we find Saul not praying, not planning, nope he is just sitting under the pomegranate tree
 - I love the detail of the Word of God
 - Saul is just fine with the status quo

When Saul hears the battle, verse 18 he goes and asks the Lord if the Lord is in it?

- I mean think that through – He is hearing God destroying the Philistines, you think Saul would run head first to be part of it
 - But now – He is going to ask a priest – is this God, this miraculous killing of the Philistines my enemy – is that God, should I get involved
 - And I just picture the eyes of the priests, rolling, “are you kidding me? Isn’t this what we have been waiting for”
- By the time Saul decides to get involved the battle is over

And you contrast that with Jonathan, Saul’s son – He says in verse 6, the Lord can win with many or few

- now again we read this with our latte in our hands and say – oh what faith
 - 3,000 chariots, 6,000 horses, probably an equal amount of foot soldiers – so maybe 20,000 soldiers and two guys are going to go take them on to see what the Lord might do? – That is more than oh wow – that is crazy!
- But as I was reading that I was thinking – what Jonathan must have counted the Lord for

Because 2 guys can’t take on 20,000

- Jonathan is a reasonable guy – that can’t be done
 - But Jonathan counts the Lord for 19,998 men – and I’m sure he would have trusted God for more than that

What do you count God for in your lives friends?

- because it says a lot of whether you are going to be a Saul, who just says – it can’t get better than this
 - I’m living carnal, in bondage to sin
 - I have never affected anyone’s life
 - We will never reach North County
- What do you count God for
 - Because if you count him like Jonathan does
 - There is no sin that He can not overcome
 - There is no end to what He can do
 - There is no one He can’t reach
- What do you count God for precious church?
 - We don’t want to be like Saul, we want to be like Jonathan or His armor bearer – maybe you don’t have the faith to step out – but can you trust those who do
 - It’s a great question?
- Well it gets worse for Saul, look at verse 24

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- Another character flaw in Saul is he is just a foolish leader and we see this in this section in that first of all he is making foolish vows

First of all he declares in the midst of battle no one is to eat – he calls a fast, not to prepare people spiritually, but for his own glory – in the midst of the battle?

What a dumb thing to do in the midst of a battle, you need fuel to fight

- And we see the effects when the people come upon the spoil of cows and sheep, they just start ripping in
 - And you might not understand why, you look at them and think that is gross – but if you have done an extended fast, you know, you know you will eat anything if you are hungry enough

The last time I did a week, I was traveling and I was going through security at LAX on day six of the fast and I saw a Cheez-it as I was doing through security and what popped into my head was “yes a Cheez-it - good, I am so hungry, and I reach out to eat it” – are you kidding me – I took a picture of it and texted to my wife – I am so hungry I am almost ate this

Picture of the Cheez-it in LAX

- so you might think – gross why would anyone just start eating an animal without it being cooked
 - I don't know – because hunger will make you think eating a Cheez-it it on a push bar in LAX is a good idea

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But the point is Saul's foolish vow leads the people not to spiritual greatness but to sin

- for it was more that gross, it was sin against the Jewish law to eat an animal that was not bleed properly
 - So Saul leads his people into sin

Now all this time – Jonathan doesn't know what his dad has said and he sees this honey dripping and he partakes and his face brightens

- The rest of the nation falls into sin

And as I was reading I thought again what a great picture of the Word that is

- In Psalm 19 David says the Word is like honey to our lips – just able to brighten our lives and keep us from sin – and the enemy knowing that will want to keep you from it

If we will partake on a regular basis

- and if you don't know how to do that, I would love to talk with you afterwards
 - maybe you have trouble reading the New King James
 - I would highly recommend – the New Living Bible – that is what I read every night and I love it, so simple
- Or maybe you have trouble reading – the audio bible, you can get apps pretty cheap that will read the Bible too you

Well I get discouraged trying to go through the Old Testament

- well maybe start with the gospel of Mark and just find things about Jesus as you read through or listen through, write them down if you can

I like the One Year Bible just because while you are reading through Leviticus and parts of Ezekiel that even I think are tedious at times, you are also reading a chapter in the New Testament and the Psalms and Proverbs – so when you are done with your 15 minutes of reading – it hasn't been all Old Testament, which is good for you to read as well – but you get some New Testament

- but someday, somehow – be in the Word every single day and if you miss, God's not mad at you – just get in the next day
 - your hearts will brightening and you will be kept from running to sin as we see in our story

But if we say – no time for the honey of the Word – I have battles to fight today

- we will find ourselves down, depressed and easily defeated by our sinful hearts

Saul is foolish – He is making dumb vows, leading his people into sin and then he can't admit when he is wrong

- even if it means the death of his son, he will not back down
 - oh that is a strong man
 - no – that is stupid man (sorry kids – when I use the word stupid, they say, Dad just used the S word) – sometimes Stupid is necessary and someone who won't admit when they are wrong – you have earned the title – Stupid

Listen – there is only one person who is perfect – Jesus – and you are not Him

- and if you can't go to your wife, your husband, your kids, your parents, your pastor, your people and say – I was wrong, forgive me
 - then you are not a good leader in any way

If you are Jesus, then you never have to say you are sorry

- but since you are not
 - you better make it a regular part of your vocabulary
 - remember – the people you are around, your kids, your employees – they are sinners too
 - and if they never learn how to repent because you pretend that you are perfect, well then you have earned the title – big dummy as well
- Saul was a foolish leader

But He made an altar, right there, we just read it, he isn't all bad

- that is what we call in the law of averages, if you have your whole life to live, you will do a thing or two right, just by blind luck, every once in a while a blind squirrel finds a nut right
 - but 99 percent of the time – Saul was foolish

How can you and I avoid being foolish – it comes back to the Word again

- Also in Psalm 19 – where the Word is compared to honey

David also says – **“The Word of the Lord is sure making wise the simple.” – Psalm 19:7**
We all have sinful, foolish tendencies which is another reason I need to constantly be in the Word

- letting who He is shape who I am
 - letting His priorities become my priorities
 - I need to be in the Word, to make this simple man, wise
- This will shock some of you but I get asked at least once a week – how does someone so young become so wise
 - And I don't know if I really agree with any of that statement because I'm not that young anymore and I don't find myself to be wise
 - But if what I say comes across occasionally as wise

And I can tell you, since I was 12 years old I have read this book at least once a year

- a couple of more times than that a few years of my life
 - so that is about 30 times over to cover now
 - and I love listening to Bible teaching

And maybe you can get away with less, but that is how this foolish man occasionally has some wise things come out of his mouth

- it's not my education
- it's not my upbringing
- it's God's unchanging amazing Word
- good news – same book is sitting in your lap, get it into your heart

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- super sad
 - chapter 15 deals with battles against the Amalekites

Now the children of Israel had a history with the Amalekites all the way back to when they were wandering in the wilderness

- they were treated poorly by this group of people hundreds of years before this event, but now God is bringing justice
 - God tells Saul to kill them all

Now we dealt with this extensively when we were in Numbers and in Joshua

- some people see these kinds of commands from the Lord as contrary to His nature
 - but when you do a little background research into the culture of these nations what you find really makes you sick
 - homosexuality and rape were not only prominent but they were forced onto their children

And when you realize what these kids were going to grow up into and instead they were short-circuited into heaven and grew up in the presence of God

- it starts to sound more like God has never changed
 - he has a heart for the innocent
- So God says kill them all
 - Saul disobeyed the Lord and he thought it was no big deal

And of course we see from the heart of the Lord in this chapter, it was a huge deal

- God always knows what he is talking about
 - And we can live like eternal teenagers and constantly question – why, why, why?
 - Or we can obey
- If we don't – we will find out why
 - As we get to II Samuel chapter 1 we are going to find out that eventually it will be an Amalekite that will kill Saul

Do you think the Lord knew that?

- do you think God was trying to protect Saul
 - but Saul did what he thought was best and it hurt him in the end

We need to learn this lesson

- God tells us to deal with a sin in our lives and we think, well Lord practically let me explain to you in my infinite wisdom, why I don't have to be as radical as you are calling me to
 - And we can give our amazing arguments – but do you really think anything has changed
- God says what He does in our lives because He loves us and he knows what is best for us
 - And you can rebel against that – and God will still love you – if you believe in Jesus as your savior, you will still go to heaven

But you will suffer because you ignored God – not from His hand, not from His punishment – but from the effects of sin in your life

- Its not worth it gang – its not – deal with the flesh, deal with what God is calling you to deal with
 - You can write worship songs, preach sermons – but obedience – that is better than any sacrifice
- God is done with Saul and next week we will meet David who will become a King after God's own heart