

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 29TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

ORDERS (1 SAMUEL 15:1-9) THE WORDS OF THE LORD

Samuel came to Saul with a message from the Lord. The time had come to fulfill the prophecy made in the days of Moses about the treachery of the Amalekites.

- **For 500 years, the Amalekites had rejected the God of Israel, and repeatedly attempted to destroy God's people.**

COMPLETELY DESTROY

Saul is directed to destroy everything they have... *everything* completely.

- **It can be challenging to reconcile the extent of God's command here with the God who sent Jesus to die for sinners, the God whom we love and follow. How could our God send an army to do such a horrible thing?**

GOD'S TIMING

It's essential to notice that this wasn't Samuel's, Saul's, or even Israel's war. It wasn't about the conquest of land or riches but God's judgment.

- **For 500 years, God had given the Amalekites time to repent. They had not, and God knew they never would. God has the right to judge at any time.**

THEN AND NOW

God directed Saul to divine warfare to fulfill prophecy and protect His people from continued attacks and destruction.

- **Today, God calls His Church to spiritual warfare that involves learning to live in the victory God has provided in Christ and His Kingdom.**

SAUL PREPARES

Saul summons enough troops to get the job done. He even warns the Kenites and shows God's grace to those who have shown kindness to His people.

- **Up to this point, Saul seems prepared to obey God's command. It won't be the difficulty of the task; it will be the desire of his heart that leads to disobedience.**

SAUL FAILS

Saul knew God's command but decided he had the authority to amend it. By God's grace, he spared the Kenites. By Saul's greed, he spared some of the Amalekites.

- **When we live our lives looking for the least we can do to appear obedient, we live in disobedience.**

ACCOUNTABILITY (1 SAMUEL 15:10-23)

REGRET

God "regrets" that He made Saul king. This doesn't mean God had changed His mind or wished for a do-over. Saul's actions did not surprise God; He knew exactly what Saul would do. This was a sad moment in the history of Israel.

- **God feels the pain of our current circumstances.**

RESPONSIBILITY

God tells Samuel what Saul has done, and he becomes angry. As the one who endorsed and taught Saul, Samuel confronts him after a night of difficult prayer.

- **When we feel betrayed by other's actions, our first response should be prayer. But we should follow that up with direct conversation, not gossip.**

EXPOSED

Saul is beginning to show his true motives. He is so proud that he builds a monument to himself, puffs out his chest, and tells Samuel how faithful he has been to God.

- **Beware leaders who put themselves on a pedestal and declare all they have done FOR God. Like a prideful leader, Saul was hiding disobedience.**

EXCUSES

Samuel had spent the night in grief, while Saul had spent the night glorifying himself. As Samuel reminds Saul of God's anointing, he calls him out, and Saul begins his pattern of lies, excuses, and denial.

- **Our response to honest accountability says as much about our relationship with God as it does our character.**

SO PROUD

Saul must think he can talk Samuel into believing that he fulfilled God's mission. As he reviewed his actions, he blamed the troops and then tried to offer his plunder as a sacrifice to Samuel's God.

- **We live in a religious culture that repeatedly tries to tell God what we've done for Him. God can see the pride.**

OBEDIENCE

Samuel sees through Saul's revisionist history. Saul's token offering was not what God desired. God desires obedience.

- **How much obedience is enough? Are we at peace with 50%, 75%, 90%? Are we proud of how obedient we are? God can see the pride.**

CONSEQUENCES (1 SAMUEL 15:24-35)

CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE?

Saul finally admits he disobeyed but adds that the people strongarmed him. He asks Samuel to forgive his sin but adds that he wants Samuel to honor him in front of the elders.

- **Saul hasn't changed; he is just trying to find a new angle to get the attention he desires.**

OPTICS

Saul was more concerned with how he would look in front of the people than his sin against God.

- **Sin can be embarrassing, but we tend to ignore the fact that the person most offended, most involved—God Himself sees and knows our sin completely.**

REPLACED

Samuel informed Saul that God had chosen another to be the future king. Saul still would not truly repent, and God would keep His word.

- **Although Samuel returned with Saul and prayed, another was already chosen to be the next king.**

GOD'S COMMAND FOLLOWED

Samuel is the one who took King Agag's life, publicly revealing that Saul had been disobedient to God's command.

- **When someone else completes God's command, those in rebellion are always exposed.**

AN AUTHENTIC HEART

The Lord had rejected Saul. Although Samuel wouldn't see Saul again, he wasn't glad to see him fail. He mourned Saul's rebellious heart.

- **Christians who look on the lost with compassion and love, eagerly extending God's message of salvation, are those who most genuinely represent the heart of God to the world.**

OPPORTUNITY

- God will reveal opportunities for us to serve Him and others.
- **Our response is obedience or disobedience.**
- **Obedience isn't always easy or popular, but it is what is best for us and the ones around us.**

DISOBEDIENCE

- Anything less than full obedience is disobedience.
- **Disobedience grows out of greedy desire.**
- **When disobedience is exposed, it creates a choice: self-deception or true repentance.**

OBEDIENCE

- God does not want our rationalizations; He wants our repentance.
- **He does not want our empty sacrifice; He wants our true submission.**
- **The choice between self-deception and repentance, between death and life, stands before each of us, even today. Will we choose obedience?**