

SERIES: PROPHETS, PRIESTS AND KINGS

Godly leadership in the house of God and the heart of the believer

TITLE: Saul: The Battle of Two Spirits

TEXT: 1 SAMUEL 8-25

The Setting: Israel Abandoned God as King – 8

1 Sam. 10:19

“But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, ‘No, set a king over us!’ Now therefore, present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and by your clans.”

Anointed in Private – 10

- 9:21 *Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?”*
- 9:27 *Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to go on ahead of us.” And he went on. “But you stand here awhile, that I may announce to you the word of God.”*
- 10:1 *Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said: “Is it not because the Lord has anointed you commander over His inheritance?”*

Announced in prophesy – 10

- The Lord spoke to Samuel
- Singing with the prophets
- 6 Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.

Appointed in Public- 10 / 1

12:13-14 *“Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen and whom you have desired. And take note, the Lord has set a king over you. If you fear the Lord and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the Lord your God.*

- Called the people together.

- 17 Then Samuel called the people together to the Lord at Mizpah, 18 and said to the children of Israel,...
- Lots were cast and Saul was confirmed – he was hiding in the equipment – fearful and insecure?
- God surrounded him with godly men - and valiant men went with him, whose hearts God had touched.

Acknowledged through battle -11

Saul consolidated his rule over Israel and made war on all his enemies on all fronts: on Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the king of Zobah and the Philistines; whichever way he turned, he was victorious. He did great deeds of valor; he defeated the Amalekites and delivered Israel from those who used to pillage him. - 1 Samuel 14:47-48

- The Ammonites at Jabesh – sent oxen pieces to tribes and gathered 130000. Victory
 - Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard this news, and his anger was greatly aroused.
 - But Saul said, “Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the Lord has accomplished salvation in Israel.”
- 13:3-4 -Gibeah – Jonathon’s victory over the garrison
 - Bad oath leads to frustration and desent among the people
- 14:6-23 - Michmash – Jonathon and Saul beat the Philistines
 - Bad offering leads to loss of kingdom
- 15:1-9 - Amalek – Saul defeats them
 - Disobedience leads to Loss of kingship
- 17:40-52 – Elah (terbinth) – David’s victory
 - 10 Then the Philistine said, “This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.” 11 On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.
- 31:1-13 - Gilboa – Defeat and he is killed with his sons
 - Rebellion in witchcraft – 28

- Saul’s sin is dealt with harsher because they were sins of the spirit and against the holiness of God. Setting his choices above that which is holy!

King Saul's Accomplishments

- **A overwhelming popular vote** - Saul was chosen by God himself to be the first king of Israel.

- **Strong Foreign policy** - Saul defeated many of the enemies of his country, including the Ammonites, Philistines, Moabites, and Amalekites.
- **Strong domestic policy** -Israel First -He united the scattered tribes, giving them greater strength.
- **Strong economic policy** -Weapons independent – no more out sourcing (Blacksmiths) - 13
- **A long tenure in office** - He reigned for 42 years.

Saul was:

Appointed by God

Affirmed by God

Anointed by God

Assigned by God

We will be looking at the life of David in the next few weeks. There is a common contrast between the lives of Saul and David as the first and second king

We see two very similar beginnings and anointing.

We see two men with great accomplishments

We see two men who fall to their sinful natures.

We see two men who have repent in their own way.

Yet we see two different responses from God to their sins and to their repentance.

- Saul never set up the death of a good man in a military maneuver which leads to his death, simply to cover up his sin.
- We do not see Saul committing adultery.
- Saul's sin was less a lapse in his physical lusts and fears.

King Saul's Failings

- Insecurity
- Not honoring the sacred

Lessons from Saul

The Lesson of Insecurity

Dictionary - a modest or low view of one's own importance; humbleness.

Biblical Humility – There is no place for insecurity in the believer.

Biblical Humility is not Insecurity.

- Saul showed so many signs of being an insecure man.
 - Hiding in the equipment.
 - Jealousy over Jonathon in battle.
 - Jealousy over David.
 - It leads to internal and external chaos.
 - It is about self.
 - Self-exaltation
 - Self-deception
 - Self-ignorance
 - Self-reflection
- It leads to needing to hold on to control
 - Anger
 - Arrogance
 - Aggression
- According to the Bible, it is no sin to know who you are and to know what you are called to. The Apostle Paul said:
- But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. (1 Corinthians 15:10 ESV)

Biblical Humility is not Indecisiveness.

- There is no surer way to be labelled as a humble person than to move along with continued questions yet no answers
 - Who can know?
 - Who can say?
 - I'm open to all options and perspectives.
 - That sounds like humility to many people.
 - But not, apparently, according to Jesus. He preferred men of character and conviction.
- **We see Saul continually looking to others as to what to do.**
 - A friend points to the seer to find donkeys.
 - Feels accepted in a group of prophets (one of the in crowd).

- Jumps to hear from God in an offering on his own terms.
- Defers to David to take on Goliath.
- Asks for a perfect lot concerning Jonathon and backs down on his oath. because the people demanded he spare his son.
- Allows his people to save the best cattle to give an offering rather than do what God said.
- Asks the witch of Endor.

Jesus wants us to be decisive as we walk in the Holy Spirit.

- He pointed to John the Baptist as a prime example:

(Matthew 11:7–11 ESV)

- *“What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist.”*
(Matthew 11:7–11 ESV)

- John the Baptist was a man of straight lines and hard edges. He made bold statements and gave clear directions. He pointed at Jesus and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29 ESV).
- Indecisiveness is often nothing more than a failure to take God at his Word. It is not humility – though it is often mistaken as such.

Biblical Humility is not Inactivity.

- Hedging your bets, playing it safe and hiding your talent in a cloth should in no way be associated with biblical humility.
- The Apostle Paul lived his life and executed his ministry almost like a man possessed. He said:

“I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:10 ESV)

“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”
(Philippians 3:14 ESV)

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Timothy 4:7 ESV)

- Evangelicals too often look at a hard-working person and wonder what they are trying to prove. Are they trying to earn their salvation? Are they trying to merit God’s kindness? Are they proud of what they can achieve through will and force of labor?
- But perhaps, like the Apostle Paul, they are merely living each day with one eye on the Final Judgment. Perhaps they are fearful of entering into eternity as a naked man escaping from the fire. Perhaps they are motivated by the desire to receive from God the greatest of all commendations:

Biblical Humility is Complete Reliance on God’s mercy.

- Saul did not walk in a state of recognition that he was blessed by no means of himself – all he had was a gift from God.
- He began to rely on his own way of dealing with things and many of those decisions were rooted in his insecurity.

(Luke 18:10–14 ESV)

But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

- In this parable, to be “humble” is to be aware of your own sin and unworthiness and to cast yourself entirely upon the mercy and undeserved kindness of Almighty God. It is in that sense, very similar to what Jesus meant by “poverty of spirit”. In the Sermon on the Mount he said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3 ESV).

Biblical Humility has no concern for one’s power, position or prestige.

- Saul’s entire life was trying to impress and be accepted and to hold on to his appearance and position.
 - His entire life was marked by striving to be loved and acknowledged.
- According to Jesus, humble people are not scrambling for power, prestige and position. They take the lowest seat and they are content to function as servants.
- In Mark’s Gospel, when Jesus caught the disciples arguing over rank and seniority, he called them together and said to them:

(Mark 9:35–37 ESV)

“If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.”

- To be humble – in a biblical sense – is to disregard all concern for rank and privilege and to live one’s life in service to the least of Christ’s disciples. It is to accept all, serve all and prefer all – in Jesus’ name.

Biblical Humility is absolute acceptance of God’s Word.

- Saul disobeyed God’s word multiple times. It’s as if he felt he could improve or assist god in God’s plan.
- There is no biblical definition of humility that does not include absolute, unquestioning obedience to the Word of God.

Isaiah 66:2

“But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word” (Isaiah 66:2 ESV).

- To obey is better than sacrifice!

The Lesson of Honoring the Sacred

The Offering – He lost his kingdom. 13

- He jumped ahead of god and not follow the WAY of God in doing the things of God
- It was the priest who was to bring the offering
- He got ahead of God
- Honor the things that are sacred!
- God’s ways are His and we are to follow them

13:13-14

“You have done a foolish thing,” Samuel said. “You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. 14 But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the Lord’s command.”

The Oath – he lost his reputation. 14

- He was rash and quick to make an oath that would cause him great shame
- No one was to eat – Jonathon did not hear of the mandate and ate honey
- 44 Saul said, “May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan. 45 But the men said to Saul, “Should Jonathan die—he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel?”

14:45 Never! As surely as the Lord lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God’s help.” So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

The Obedience – He lost his kingship. 15

- God had said go in and kill it all
- He did 9/10ths of it... yet held back
 - His holding back even seemed like a good thing to him and to what he thought the people would think

15:19-20

Why did you not obey the Lord? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?” “But I did obey the Lord,” Saul said. “I went on the mission the Lord assigned me.... To obey is better than sacrifice,...

The Outrage – He lost the Spirit. 16

- He traded the Spirit of the Lord for another spirit.

1 Sam. 16:14-15 *Now the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. And Saul’s servants said to him, ‘See now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you.*

- Saul spends the rest of his life defending his fallen reign and chasing David
- He wars with David over jealousies and his own insecurities.
- His focus completely moves away from the nation and from God and only to his own position

The Occult – He lost his life.

1 Sam. 28:17, 19

“The Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one of your neighbors—to David. ¹⁹The Lord will deliver both Israel and you into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.”

- Rebellion is as witchcraft
- It is an abomination
- You have left the Lord and can’t hear him
- Many seek other ways to find their “spirituality”
- True repentance brings mercy

Challenge

I will not trade God’s Spirit for the spirit of insecurity

I will not take lightly the sacred things of God