

A Man After God's Own Heart – 1 Samuel

1 Samuel 15:1-35

“God delights in obedience” – July 23, 2017



Introduction

1 Samuel highlights the leadership crisis of a nation around 3,000 years ago. Coming out of the period of Judges when everyone did what was right in their own eyes ([Judges 21:25](#)) they needed a leader who would deliver them from the enemies that surrounded them. The book breaks into three main sections: chapters 1-8 focus on Samuel, 9-15 on Saul, and 16-31 on David. Samuel was the last of the judges; Saul was Israel's first king. Chapter 15 closes the chapter on Saul as next week the focus turns to God raising up David. We learned in 1 Samuel 13, a good leader must first be a good follower – one who trusts and follows God. The rest of chapter 13 and 14 tell the sad story of Saul failing to follow God. But, the verdict is still out as we enter chapter 15. Would Saul learn what is pleasing to God? Would he learn how to approach a holy God and lead a nation God? Or was it too late? Saul's story is a sad one, but it is meant to be an *example* for our *instruction* (see [1 Corinthians 10:6-13](#)).

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response.

Sermon Outline

- I. God delights in obedience, because trust manifests itself in obedience (15:1-23)
- II. Trusting God involves *true* repentance (15:24-35)

Read & Discuss

- 1) Read [1 Samuel 15:1-23](#)

Samuel begins chapter 15 with clear instructions from God for what Saul is supposed to do: listen to the voice/words of God. Saul is then to wipe out the Amalekites to their south who had long oppressed and terrorized Israel's weakest and most vulnerable ([Deuteronomy 25:17-18](#); [Exodus 17:14](#)). As a God of justice, this was an act of judgment holding them accountable for their sin. As difficult as this command is, how should it give us pause as we think about our own sin? Why is the justice of God good news for those who have been wronged and oppressed? Why is the mercy and patience of God good news for us who are *guilty* of wrongdoing?

Saul is guilty of partial obedience. He carries out part of what God called him to, but selectively obeyed when it was beneficial and convenient for him. Why is partial obedience still disobedience? Are there areas in your own life that you're guilty of selective obedience? If Samuel came to you today, what would be the 'bleating sheep' testifying to your disobedience? What is the benefit of having loving church members in our life watch out for us to fight against sin's deceitfulness ([Hebrews 3:12-13](#))?

God does not need our religious offerings ([Psalm 50:10-15](#)) but delights in our obedience because it reveals what our heart is trusting in and God desires our heart! Where are you tempted to lean on religious activities to make up for your sin? If Bible reading, church attendance, prayer, etc. are not divine currency to pay for the debt of our sin, what positive role *should* they play as we seek to know and follow God? As followers of Christ, we know that Jesus is the final sacrifice – He paid a debt our sin deserves that we cannot afford. Instead of trusting in our religious 'offerings' what should our response be to the grace of God today (see [Romans 12:1-2](#))?

Additional reading: Romans 12:19-21; Luke 13:1-5; Hebrews 10:5-9

2) Read [1 Samuel 15:24-35](#)

Saul had the chance to come clean – to stop making excuses, turn from his sin, accept the consequences of his actions, and trust in God. He does confess his sin, but his confession is not genuine. Instead is damage control; a desperate attempt to save face in the eyes of man. Saul was a little man (v17) trying to prove himself to be a big man (v12) apart from God. Are there ways you suffer from the little-big man syndrome? Ways you too are trying to prove your value and significance apart from God? What difference does the good news of Jesus Christ make for the Christian at this point?

There is such a thing as *godly* grief that leads to true repentance and *worldly* grief ('I got caught!') that leads to cover up and death ([2 Corinthians 7:9-11](#)). True repentance involves an end of excuses, a turning from sin, a turning too God, and having a priority of being right with God, not looking good before men. Are there ways you see yourself in Saul at this point? What do you need to do today to get off or Saul's path and onto a path of *true* repentance that leads to life and freedom?

Additional reading: Proverbs 29:25; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

*Two books that we'd recommend as a follow up to some of the ideas in this text are:

- 1) [When People are Big and God is Small](#) by Ed Welch. This is a very helpful book looking at the fear of man and how to overcome it.
- 2) [Humility: True Greatness](#) by C.J. Mahaney – an insightful, practical (and convicting!) book about pride and humility.

Both these books are available at the bookstall at church.

Prayer of Response

Spend time praying together in response to God's word for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <http://firstbaptistum.com/media.php?pageID=6>