OBEDIENCE IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE

Read 1 Samuel 15:1-22

Purpose: To explore the importance of obedience to God over the decision to make a personal sacrifice. Bringing the Christian to a place where they trust God’s instruction over their own wisdom.

Sacrifice: An act of offering to a deity something precious; destruction or surrender of something for the sake of something else; something given up or lost. (Example: what parents give up in order to meet the needs of their children)

Biblical definition: Originated in the garden, after the fall of mankind. Various accounts are confirmed in the story of Cain & Able, Genesis 4:3-5.

1. Abel gave the best that he had, Cain offered whatever was available.
2. Abel’s offering demonstrated that he was motivated by faith, Cain was motivated by personal gain and greed.

-Old Testament: given for atonement of sin.
- The gift aspect was emphasized by the many divine regulations that determined what was acceptable to God. Note: for people to determine what pleased God would make them equal to God.

God’s choices: Oxen, sheep, goats, pigeons and some clean vegetables, grain, wine and oils.

God’s stipulations: Clean & acceptable, or symbolically without sin.

He repeatedly emphasized that he didn’t need or desire the food or sacrifices themselves. He wants our love, commitment and service. Deuteronomy 6:5, 1 Samuel 15:22.

Obedience: an act or instance of obeying; the quality or state of being obedient.

Biblical: Carrying out the word and will of another person, especially the will of God. In the Old and New Testaments, to obey is related to the idea of hearing from God. It’s a positive, active response to what a person hears and evidence of a reverent, respectful relationship with God. He summons us to active obedience to his revelation. Our obedience is an indication of our love for him. Failure to obey- evidence of no love- ultimately results in judgment. Obedience to him is evidence that we are his children. Exodus 19:5

Exodus 24:1-8: Moses confirms the covenant between God and the children of Israel with the splattering of the blood from the animals sacrificed. Note: obedience is the basis for knowing God’s blessing and favor. However, in the New Testament, the obedience of Christ stands in contrast to the disobedience of Adam. One man, Adam brought (death) separation from God, the other Adam, Jesus, brought grace, righteousness, and life) restoration. Romans 5:12-21
Jeremiah 31:31-34: God declares that the new covenant would be written on the heart of men and accomplish what the old one couldn’t. It suggested a new level of obedience and new knowledge of the Lord, a personal relationship with him that came with a new forgiveness of sin. New Testament means New Covenant. However, obedience was still required.

**Note:** There can be no obedience without a relationship.

Text: Samuel reviews God’s instructions with Saul who had declared victory. He claimed to have obeyed God’s instructions to the letter. Yet, Samuel heard evidence to the contrary.

**Saul’s faults: pride and disobedience.**

1. Led to deceit
2. Alienated himself from God
3. Was a people pleaser (tried to exalt himself)

**To obey:**

1. Must make a conscious decision and effort: based on your knowledge of God and love for him.
2. Disobedience alienates us from God and others.

**Note:** God never asked for a sacrifice. Sacrifice is a ritual transaction between a person and God and is a physical demonstration of the relationship. However, if the heart is not repentant or there’s no love and obedience to God, the ritual is empty.

Have an attitude of love and obedience to God. Don’t give him what he’s not asking for. Ex: he may want a frog that he can turn into a prince and you want to give him a horse because it appears to be a more valuable sacrifice. He wants your service and obedience according to HIS specifications.

Disobedience is rebellion against God. Rebellion and stubbornness are serious sins and considered witchcraft and idolatry, sins worthy of death. Leviticus 20:6, Deut. 13:12-15. God is a jealous God. Anything put before him he wants destroyed. Disobedience also shows misplacement of praise. (God had exalted Saul but he still lusted after human glory). As a result of Saul’s rebellion and stubbornness, God took away his kingdom. When we disobey God, we rebel against him. Remember his covenant with us: if we obey, his promises are ours.

Deut. 25:17-19: God reminds the children of Israel of what Amalek had done to them when they were leaving Egypt. He attacked them when they were faint and caused them to lag behind. He had no fear of their God. God promised them that after they rested they would blot him out. He had their back at setting them up to win. All he required was obedience. His plans for you are sure.

**Those who obeyed were blessed**
- Joshua at the wall: Josh 2:1-22, 6:1-27
- Widow with 2 mites: Mark 12:42
- Woman with Elijah: 1 Kings 17:7-24
- Woman with jars of oil: 2 Kings 4:1-38

**Those who didn’t were cursed**
- Saul: 1 Samuel 15
- Lot’s wife: Genesis 19:26
- Samson: Judge 16:18