

2013.10.27 Slippery Slopes

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Fallen Giants: Lessons From Failure Slippery Slopes

(1 Samuel 13:1) Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years.

1. We are at risk when we forget about (———)
(1 Samuel 9)

A. Because we forget (———)

(1-3) There was a Benjamite, a man of standing, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bekorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin. Kish had a son named Saul, as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else.

Now the donkeys belonging to Saul's father Kish were lost, and Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys."

B. Because we forget (———)

(4-21) So he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and through the area around Shalisha, but they did not find them. They went on into the district of Shaalim, but the donkeys were not there. Then he passed through the territory of Benjamin, but they did not find them.

When they reached the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, "Come, let's go back, or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us."

But the servant replied, "Look, in this town there is a man of God; he is highly respected, and everything he says comes true. Let's go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take."

Saul said to his servant, "If we go, what can we give the man? The food in our sacks is gone. We have no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?"

The servant answered him again. "Look," he said, "I have a quarter of a shekel[a] of silver. I will give it to the man of God so that he will tell us what way to take."

(Formerly in Israel, if someone went to inquire of God, they would say, "Come, let us go to the seer," because the prophet of today used to be called a seer.)

"Good," Saul said to his servant. "Come, let's go." So they set out for the town where the man of God was.

As they were going up the hill to the town, they met some young women coming out to draw water, and they asked them, "Is the seer here?"

“He is,” they answered. “He’s ahead of you. Hurry now; he has just come to our town today, for the people have a sacrifice at the high place. As soon as you enter the town, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people will not begin eating until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward, those who are invited will eat. Go up now; you should find him about this time.”

They went up to the town, and as they were entering it, there was Samuel, coming toward them on his way up to the high place.

Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel: “About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over my people Israel; he will deliver them from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked on my people, for their cry has reached me.”

When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, “This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people.”

Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and asked, “Would you please tell me where the seer’s house is?”

“I am the seer,” Samuel replied. “Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you are to eat with me, and in the morning I will send you on your way and will tell you all that is in your heart. As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found. And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and your whole family line?”

Saul answered, “But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?”

2. We are at risk when we are (———)
(1 Samuel 10-14)

A. By experiencing a (———)

(10:9) They told the messengers who had come, “Say to the men of Jabesh Gilead, ‘By the time the sun is hot tomorrow, you will be rescued.’” When the messengers went and reported this to the men of Jabesh, they were elated.

B. By experiencing (———)

(10:10) They said to the Ammonites, “Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do to us whatever you like.”

(11:6) When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he burned with anger.

(14:1) One day Jonathan son of Saul said to his young armor-bearer, “Come, let’s go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side.” But he did not tell his father.

3. We are at risk when we (———)
(1 Samuel 15)

A. As is evidenced by our (———)

(1-9) Samuel said to Saul, "I am the one the Lord sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the Lord. This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy[a] all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.'"

So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim—two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand from Judah. Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine. Then he said to the Kenites, "Go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites. Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt. He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

B. As is evidenced by our (———)

(10-21) Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel: "I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions." Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the Lord all that night.

Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, "Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal."

When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord's instructions."

But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?"

Saul answered, "The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest."

"Enough!" Samuel said to Saul. "Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night."

"Tell me," Saul replied.

Samuel said, "Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. And he sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites;

wage war against them until you have wiped them out.’ 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. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal.”

Conclusions

1. A day spent (————) God’s grace is a day spent creeping toward the slippery slope.

2. A day spent (————) is a day spent creeping toward the slippery slope.

Connect Group Questions
Fallen Giants: Slippery Slopes

1 Samuel 13:1

1. Get familiar with the story of Saul's "humble beginning" (1 Sam. 9:1-24), what are some interesting things you notice about this part of his story? How is he similar to others God has called out for His service?

2. Despite the way Saul begins his rule as king, we often remember him for his failures. What are some of his failures and acts of disobedience you notice throughout 1 Samuel? What does his pattern teach us about the "slippery slope"?

3. Read the orders Samuel delivers in 1 Samuel 15:2-3, then how Saul responds in 15:9, 15. Have you ever found yourself reasoning in a similar way to Saul?

4. Take a look at 15:22-23, what do these words teach you about God's desire for your obedience?

5. This week Pastor James taught us, a day spent without celebrating God's grace and a day spent not dying to self is a day spent creeping toward the slippery slope. What is one thing you do to daily celebrate God's grace? What is one thing you do to daily die to yourself?