

'The Rise of the Kings Series'

Sermons in the Book of 1 Samuel

Message 18 - 'The Damage of Disobedience'

1 Samuel 13:1 - 14



In the first part of the chapter we have before us, the continuing of Saul's reign is documented and it showed how his relationships deteriorated, especially with the Lord, and His man, Samuel. Saul relied on his own wisdom and ability to make foolish decisions, and then his attempted lies to cover them up. From this point, his life is headed to disaster, and eventual suicide, as he wanders far away from the Lord. We can see the things that Saul lacks in this sad episode:

1. Lack of Humility (v1-4) - As king, and after his initial success over the Ammonites, Saul's status and power increased. This was consolidated by the fact that for the first time, the Israelites had a standing army. Such an organised presence had clearly alerted the Philistines, and they were preparing to meet the Israelites. Jonathan wins a victory at Geba. Why is Jonathan the one who is the instigator of this success? He is the king's son for sure, and it is a brave feat, but should not the king himself have been setting the example. Jonathan had won this initial victory (the war would be completed by David), and yet notice who gets all the credit, who is the one blowing his own trumpet, is it not Saul? We can see already that Saul enjoyed the adulation of the people (this would be a major problem in his relationship with David), and his pride is very evident. He wants the glory himself. Pride is a dangerous thing, especially in Gospel work, it has no place here.

2. Lack of Patience (v5-9) - Saul calls the people together at Gilgal. The Philistines gather at Michmash, and it becomes very clear that the Philistines greatly outnumber Saul and the Israelites. At this prospect, Saul's army begins to desert him. Saul is under pressure, but he waits seven days, as Samuel had commanded him. Yet, each moment he waited, his army was decreasing, and the situation was getting worse, and there was no sign of Samuel. The Lord himself was testing Saul, exposing his faith or lack of it, and also his patience. If we are the Lord's this night, we must be a people of faith, and a people of patience, for the Lord will accomplish His purposes, and uphold His promises. We have to learn to trust in the Lord and lean not on our own understanding, to wait on His timing. This is a real situation, with real issues, but that is the point, it is in the 'real world' that we are to act with faith and obedience.

3. Lack of Honesty (v10-12) - This is the beginning of what becomes a real problem for Saul, as he becomes a great deceiver. How arrogant Saul was, to greet Samuel in such a way, and expect such a blessing. Saul was a hypocrite, acting as though he had done nothing wrong, when in reality he had made a grave error. Then we see another trait of a deceiver, as he does not blame himself, no he blames those around him for his error. The army was at fault because they were not faithful and they ran away. Then Samuel, if he had not been late, then there would have not been a problem. Saul's explanation throws up a major problem, he allowed the circumstances he could see to dictate his actions. He was living by sight, he should have been living by faith, and trusting in a sovereign God, whilst unseen, is ever at work. Saul had failed to submit himself to the Word of God. He had made it clear that in his thinking, there were emergencies that rendered God's Word unnecessary.

4. Lack of Wisdom (v13-14) - Samuel makes it clear that Saul's sin was disobedience to the great God of heaven. As a result his line would not endure. Saul was a fool as he thought he could disobey God and just get away with it. Not only that, but he also expected there to be blessing on himself, and on the endeavours of the army. This attitude finds its root in the darkness of man's heart, and the devil's devices. It echoes the logic that is denounced in Romans 3:8, '*Let us do evil that good may come.*' He thought his sacrifice would be just as sufficient as that of the priest. He was walking by sight and his own logic, rather than by faith and the promises of God. Romans 14:23, '*for whatever is not from faith is sin.*'



Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs