

1 Samuel 15

8-8-10

“Almost Repentant, Almost Obedient!”

I. INTRO:

- A. **Illust:** Jimmy was hard at work. His Sunday school teacher had just finished a lesson on **creation** & she told him & the other children in the class to draw what they had learned. Noticing Jimmy’s absorption w/the project, she peered over his shoulder to see what he was doing. “What are you drawing?” she asked. W/o looking up from his work, Jimmy answered “God.” “What is God like?” “I don’t know. I ain’t finished with Him yet!”
1. Unaided by *biblical revelation* we create gods out of our own imaginations.
 2. Or we derive our concepts of God from how our parents treated us as children
 - a) It’s called making God *in our own image!*
 3. It’s hard to figure out God w/His paradoxes: **sometimes** he seems to be **tolerant** of sin (Acts 17:30 **Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent**) **other times** He punishes an offender w/ awesome *ground swallowing severity!* He expresses His willingness to answer prayer, & at **other times** seems reluctant to do so. He welcomes peoples worship, while **other times** condemns worshipers & their gifts. He sometimes rewards the righteous, **other times** the righteous are not always rewarded. [Poor Saul, never figured Him out!]

II. ALMOST REPENTANT, ALMOST OBEDIENT!

- A. **LESSONS FROM THE AMALEKITES!**
- B. Come on God *lil sheepies? mommies? babies?*
1. Critics of this passage & one’s like it in scripture, **may be a little too dependent on *sentiment* then on *spiritual truth***, not realizing how long-suffering the Lord had been w/these nations, & **how unspeakably wicked they were.**
- C. They were descendants of **Esau** (unbel. brother of Jacob) & enemy of the Jewish people.
- D. The army of Amalek attacked the recently emancipated slaves shortly after Israel came out of Egypt. **Sum up** Ex.17:8-16
1. See promise vs.14. **The Lord declared perpetual war against Amalek** vs.17.
 2. **More details** **Read** Deut. 25:17-19.
 - a) **Why was God was so mad?** vs.18 [**rear ranks**: women, children, grandparents, sick, weary, tired]
 - b) Don’t forget vs.19 - **God viewed this as reprehensible!**
 - c) So, Amalek attacked when Israel was most vulnerable; habitually when they settled in the land; by the time of the kings **their cup of iniquity was full!** [They proved themselves as *hopelessly & incorrigibly corrupt*] **Judgment had come!**

- E. God's covenant w/the Jewish nation includes the promise, "*I will curse those who curse you.*" And, **God always keeps His word!**
1. Nations like the Amalekites who wanted to **exterminate** the Jews weren't just waging war on **Israel**; **they were opposing Almighty God & His great plan of redemption** for the whole world!
 - a) It's a **Jesus** issue. (i.e.) If Jews are wiped out, **Jesus** doesn't come!
- F. Simple but potent lesson from the Amalekites... *We cannot do as we please!*
1. In time, **divine retribution** will over-take those who practice evil.
 - a) 1 Tim.5:24 **Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.** (timing issue!)
 - b) Hosea said, **They that sow to the wind, will reap the whirlwind.** (8:7) italic words added
 - c) Jesus said, **For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.** (Mt.7:2)
- G. **So you might ask, What is God's criteria for War? Does God ordain war or violence at times & what would be the guidelines for that justification?**
1. Violence is everywhere in the world.
 2. **There are 3 or 4 Theories of War** that are prevalent: (i.e. **Pacifism**: the belief that war of any kind is morally unacceptable)
 3. **Another is the Just War Theory.** That basically says, **war is just** if life is being **desacralized** by a group of people.
 - a) If my **wife** or **children** were jumped by thugs I'd go down fighting. **Even if it meant my life.** But even if it were a **stranger...Why? Because you're protecting the sacredness of life!**
 - b) If life is **sacred** & needs to be **protected** than I believe in a **Just War Theory.**
- H. **LESSONS FROM SAUL!**
- I. **A pivotal chapter for Saul:**
 1. 1 more opportunity to prove himself, but **fails** again, **lies** about it, & was **judged**.
 2. Saul had a habit of substituting **saying for doing**; of **making excuses instead of confessing sins**; more concerned about **looking good** before the people **than being good** before God.¹
 3. **God's** orders were **clear**, but **Saul's** motives were **mixed**.

¹ Warren Wiersbe: Be Successful; pg.79

- J. (6) **Kenites** - This is similar today when we drop leaflets on a village before we bomb it.
- K. We admire Saul for being careful to protect the Kenites, **but** he wasn't careful to obey God's will
1. Some people are very careful to protect the **bald eagle, baby seals, & kangaroo-rats...but** have no problem turning around & having an **abortion?**
- L. (9) **The best of - Really?** If the Lord says something is condemned, how can we say it's "the best"? Is.5:20 **Woe to those who call evil good & good evil.**
- M. (12-15) In the eyes of the soldiers & the Jewish people, Saul had won a great victory over a long-time enemy, but in God's eyes he was a failure.
1. Yet the king was so impressed w/himself that he went to Carmel & erected a **monument** in his own honor. (wonder what it looked like?)
 2. Seems like God says, "**enough is enough**".
 3. **Have you erected any "Me Monuments?"** - maybe a **spiritual trophy room**.
 - a) Where, you invite friends to come visit your **spiritual exploits: like souls you've won to Christ; ministries you've ran.**
 - b) **Fine line between boasting in God & boasting in self. - Fine line between erecting an Ebenezer stone of remembrance & your own me monument!**
 4. Big difference when later on this same spot (**Carmel**) Elijah would say, **Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.**" Then fire fell from heaven & the people shouted, **"The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!"**
 - a) Archeologist found this monument, it read **"Saul, he's da man, Saul, he's da man!"**;)jk
- N. (13) Saul's greeting - sheer hypocrisy.
1. He had **no blessing to bring. He had not performed the will of the Lord.**
- O. (15) **Saul lied to himself**(thinking he could get away w/this deception); **to Samuel**(who already knew the truth); & **to God**(by saying he spared the animals for sacrifice).
1. With Saul, it was always somebody else's fault. **Note: They, the people, we** (15,21)
 2. **He was commander-in-chief, he could have controlled them.**
- P. **Is there a king Agag in your life?**
1. **Something** God has prompted you to **eradicate** from your life that you haven't dealt with yet? (something you need to *hack to pieces?* Or, *shake in the fire?*)
 2. **Someone** that God has shown you **isn't** healthy for your relationship w/him?
 3. **Some-thought** that God continues to remind you to take captive & not allow it to **run amok** down the alleys of your mind?
 4. **Is there a king Agag in your life?**

Q. What was the losses Saul incurred for disobeying God's word?

1. He lost his **character**; He lost his **friend Samuel**; He lost his **crown**.
2. He had so many **advantages**, but he didn't **cultivate** his **spiritual life**.

R. **Have you ever thought**, If I obey God & serve Him devotedly *in all these areas* of my life, surely He will let me have my way *in this one area!*

S. **LESSONS FROM SAMUEL!**

T. (11) **Grieved** - "to burn", suggests a righteous indignation, a holy anger.

1. Saul was God's choice for king & Samuel wanted him to succeed.

U. (16) Samuel had enough also! "**Be Quiet!**" - "stop", "enough"

1. **Entering Canyon Lake yesterday @ 1 of 1st signals SLOW DOWN!** flashing light
2. *You're just digging yourself deeper!* - Nothing worse to have someone in my office that you just wont come clean(when I already know! - it just breaks your heart).

V. (22,23) Samuel explains why God couldn't accept the animal as legit sacrifices.

1. The Lord wants **living obedience from the heart**, not dead animals **on the altar**.
 - a) *Samuel wasn't belittling sacrifices, but pointing out that **the condition of the heart determines the value of the sacrifice!!!***
2. God isn't enriched by our gifts! **Ps.50:10-15 For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, And the wild beasts of the field are Mine. "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, Or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me"** [God isn't enriched by our gifts but we are enriched if are gifts to Him are backed by obed hearts]
3. Then Ps.51 reminds us in (16,17) **For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart These, O God, You will not despise**
 - a) He accepts the **worship** only if He can accept the **worshipper!**
4. **Sacrifice w/o obedience is only hypocrisy & empty religious ritual.**
 - a) The religious leaders **in Jesus' day** didn't understand this truth either.
 - b) **Neither does Churchianity today!**
 - (1) We as believers today still face a constant temptation to **substitute religious ritual** for spiritual reality!
 - c) What is **ritual w/o obedience?**

d) What is **outward religious observance** that masks *inner disobedience*?

(1) **Have God's requirements changed in our day? Nope!**

- W. Samuel went on to reveal to Saul his sins of **rebellion** & **stubbornness**(arrogance) controlled his heart & they were as evil as **witchcraft**(which he'd resort to later) & **idolatry**.
1. Both sins were evidences of a heart that had rejected the Word of the Lord.
 2. To **know** God's will & **deliberately disobey it** is to put ourselves **above God**, & therefore become **our own god**. This is the vilest form of idolatry!
- X. (24) **True repentance?** See vs.30. He seemed to be more concerned about his **reputation w/the people** than his **character before God**.
- Y. (33) **Hacking Agag to pieces** - Samuel carries out what should have been Saul's responsibility & kills Agag as **repayment** for all the violence he committed against Israel.

Z. **LESSONS FROM OUR LORD!**

AA. Here's what we learn about our God:

1. He is **slow to anger!**
 - a) God's grace in giving Amalek so long a time in which to repent.
 - b) He did not punish their sins the moment they transgressed. Ps103:8 **The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.**
 - c) There came a time, however, when He decided to put an end to Amalek's predatory raids. The cry of the weak & defenseless in Judah had come before Him.
2. God is **sovereign** in His power & authority.
 - a) By giving Israel victory over an enemy far more powerful than themselves He demonstrated the awesomeness of His might!
3. God is also **steadfast** in keeping His covenant with those who revere Him.
 - a) Whenever Israel **kept** his covenant, He gave them victory over their enemies, & rewarded them far in excess of what they deserved.

BB. From the namesake of my hometown, *John Greenleaf Whittier*:

1. For all sad words of tongue or pen
The saddest are these: "*It might have been!*"