

THE Rock COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Samuel 13

“Saul’s Big Slip”

5_19_2024

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Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

19:05

All right. It's good to be here with you this morning. I want to invite you to grab your Bibles and make your way to 1 Samuel chapter 13. 1st Samuel 13, if you didn't bring your Bible, there should be a black one hiding underneath your chair.

19:17

You can follow along in that one as well. I forgot to grab the page number, but just cheat off of somebody's next to you. I'm sure they can help you out. So I wanted to say thank you to Pastor Mike last week.

19:30

Wasn't able to preach. Pastor Mike did an excellent job. I just, I wanted to specifically point out and remind all of us why we do what we do as we have different elders. We have different men who step in and fill this pulpit, fill this responsibility from week to week, time to time.

19:48

And really that is intentional. It's not just a scheduling issue. It's not just something that we accidentally kind of bump into from time to time, but it's intentional. It's because this church is not my church.

20:01

It's not Pastor Dave's church. It's not Pastor Mike's church. It's Jesus's church, right? It's about God. It's about His Word being proclaimed. It's about us being obedient to what God calls us to. And so that means that it's not about whoever, whatever man fills this pulpit, fills this time.

20:19

It's about God and His Word being proclaimed. And so the star of the show is going to be here every single week, whether you like it or not. And that's not me, and that's not Mike, and that's not Dave, and that's not Bruce, and that's not anybody else that we would stick up here.

20:31

It's the Word of God. It's the Holy Spirit as we just sang. It's Jesus being lifted high in the midst of everything that we say and do here. So that really is just kind of an intentional. We want to build that in and remind ourselves of that as we come to this point.

20:47

So thank you, Pastor Mike. As we jump in to 1 Samuel 13 this morning, last week if you were here with us, you'll remember that we looked at kind of the official inauguration, for lack of a better term, of King Saul, where Samuel kind of officially hands the baton.

21:04

We've seen King Saul kind of floating around. We knew that he was going to be king. He was anointed as king and kind of selected, but we see that the official, he's the guy that we looked at last week in 1 Samuel chapter 12.

21:19

There was a key command to Israel and really to King Saul that's going to be really important for this week and what we see, excuse me, what we see in this week's passage that was shared in last week's passage in 1 Samuel 12.

21:36

So let me just go back and highlight two key verses for us. If for some reason you weren't here, maybe you just forgot, but 1 Samuel chapter 12 verses 14 and 15. Really, really important for us as we go into this week's passage.

21:51

It says in 1 Samuel 12:14, if you will fear the Lord and serve Him and obey His voice and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, if both you and the King who reigns over you will follow the Lord your God, it will be well.

22:06

But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord, but you rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you and against your King. This is God telling the people of Israel it's essential for them to be obedient, to follow what God calls them to do.

22:22

And so this week what we're going to see in chapter 13, we're going to see some military action taking place. We're actually left on a bit of a cliffhanger as we come to the end of chapter 13 and this ongoing war that we see with the Philistines.

22:38

But there's a critical moment in King Saul's reign in this week's passage because we're going to see Saul's kind of first significant decision. His first critical moment after becoming King Saul, and to be frank with you, it doesn't go well.

22:56

The decision that Saul makes, it may seem minor at first to us as we're reading through the passage, but there are far-reaching consequences. There's a much deeper issue at the core of what's happening this week in our passage.

23:10

So let's just jump right in. We're going to read all of our passage, 1 Samuel 13. We're going to do the whole chapter and we're going to go back and dig into it a little bit and see what God has for us as we have a little bit longer this morning.

23:22

So let's read together 1 Samuel chapter 13, starting in verse 1. It tells us, Saul lived for one year, then he became king, and when he had reigned for two years over Israel, Saul chose 3,000 men of Israel.

23:37

2,000 were with Saul in Michmash in the hill country of Bethel, and 1,000 were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. And the rest of the people he sent home, every man to his tent. And Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines that was at Geba, and the Philistines heard of it.

23:53

Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, let the Hebrews hear. and all of Israel heard it said that Saul had defeated the garrison of the Philistines, also that Israel had become a stench to the Philistines, and the people were called out to join Saul at

Gilgal, and the Philistines mustered to fight with Israel; 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude.

24:20

They came up and they encamped in Michmash to the east of Beth-aven, when the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble for the people were hard-pressed. The people hid themselves in caves and in holes and in rocks and in tombs and in cisterns.

24:36

Some Hebrews crossed the fords of the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. But Saul was still at Gilgal, and all the people followed him, trembling. And he waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel.

24:50

But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, bring the burnt offering to me and the peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And as soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came.

25:04

Saul went out to meet him and greet him. Samuel said, what have you done? Saul said, when I saw that the people were scattering from me that you did not come within the days appointed, the Philistines had mustered at Michmash.

25:19

I said, now the Philistines will come against me at Gilgal and I have not sought the favor of the Lord. So I forced myself and I offered the burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, you have done foolishly.

25:32

You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, which he commanded you. Then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart.

25:46

The Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you. Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal. The rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the army.

25:59

They went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin and Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about 600 men. Saul and Jonathan, his son and the people who were present with them stayed in Geba of Benjamin but the Philistines encamped at Michmash.

26:15

And raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned toward Ophrah to the land of Shual, another company toward Beth-horon, and another company turned toward the border that looks down on the valley of Zeboim, toward the wilderness.

26:32

Now there was no blacksmith to be found in all the land of Israel for the Philistine said, lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears. But every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his ax, or his sickle.

26:46

The charge of two thirds of a shekel for the plowshares and for the mattocks and a third of a shekel for the sharpening of axes and for the setting of goads. So on the day of the

battle, there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people with Saul and Jonathan, but Saul and Jonathan, his son, had them.

27:04

The garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash. These are the words of the Lord. Would you pray with me? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the opportunity to consider here what happens with Saul and Jonathan and God, how you are working among your people.

27:21

And God, we pray that this morning as we consider Saul's terrible grave error that he made, God, that as we see you take the kingdom from Saul, that you promise that he will not be the forever king and his line will not be the forever line of Israel.

27:37

God, we pray that you would help us to consider why you did that. God, help us to consider what that might have to do with us today, how we might learn from Saul's mistakes and God, how we might correct some errors in our own lives.

27:51

So God, we pray that you would speak for your servants who are listening. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen. Alright, well as we jump in, I titled this first little section of our outline, Kicking the Ant Hill.

28:03

Anybody ever do that as a kid? Maybe you were a mischievous kid like I was, but if you see, you know, you find a big old ant hill and there's, you know, there's always a few ants going in or out, right?

28:13

But if you go over and you stomp on it, you kick it for whatever reason, what started with a few ants turns into what seems like millions of ants that come pouring up out of those holes in the ground.

28:23

Well, essentially that's what we see here that Israel does in 1 Samuel 13. You may remember from the very beginning of King Saul's arrival onto the scene in 1 Samuel, fighting the Philistines was a key expectation.

28:39

King Saul was going to have this conflict with the Philistines that the people had asked for a king to go out before us to fight our battles. You may remember that from 1 Samuel chapter 8. Well, Saul had been chosen by God to actually to specifically to free Israel from the Philistines.

28:56

1 Samuel 9:16. Let me just read it for you real quick. And it says, God speaking, tomorrow about this time, I will send to you, Samuel, a man from the land of Benjamin. And you shall anoint him to be the prince over my people, Egypt.

29:10

And he shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. See, God had mapped out this conflict with the Philistines that Saul was going to come in, was going to rescue Israel. So when Saul was anointed to be king, Samuel charged him, specifically told him, go and deal with the Philistines.

29:29

He was told to go and to do what seemed right to him, to deal with the Philistines, which by the way, he didn't do at that time. But now we're going to see the conflict with the Philistines take center stage.

29:41

At this point, now Saul is officially King Saul. We've seen him kind of pass the baton last week by Samuel. And now we jump into our passage this week in this conflict with the Philistines is front and center.

29:54

So right at the beginning of our passage in verses 1 and 2, right at the beginning of Saul's reign, we see him established this little standing army. We have about 3,000 men, if my math is correct, right?

30:06

We look at verse 2, it tells us 2,000 were with Saul. And then there's 1,000 men with Jonathan in Gibeah. So we've got about 3,000 men, this standing army that Israel has kind of put together. But whatever it is that's going on at this point, we don't see a conflict yet.

30:25

But it appears that Israel is getting ready. Israel knows there's something getting ready to go down. And so Israel is putting this small army together. So it may have been for defensive purposes. It may have been that Saul had some big plans.

30:39

But what may have started as a defensive measure, it didn't take long for this to change. Because Jonathan, we see him described as Saul's son in a few verses. Jonathan tells us that he and his unit went out.

30:53

They attacked this Philistine outpost in Geba. We see that they overrun this outpost, that they take this place back in Geba. And so news spreads quickly, both in Israel and in

Philistia. We see the Philistines and the Israelites all hear news of the fact that this outpost has been taken.

31:14

And you may expect that Israel seemed to be positive about that news, right? But the Philistines, they weren't big fans. Anybody surprised by the fact that the Philistines decided they didn't like the fact that Israel was pushing back.

31:27

They didn't appreciate hearing the news of this Israelite attack. In verse 4, in fact, it tells us that the Israelites had become a stench to the Philistines, that they were a problem that needed to be snuffed out.

31:40

They needed to be dealt with. And so knowing that a response from the Philistines was inevitably going to come tells us that Saul blows the trumpets, that he sends out this cry throughout the land. He's mobilizing, preparing the nation for battle.

31:54

Anybody that's at home, any of the reserves that we kind of sent home that weren't a part of the original army, the people were called out to join Saul at Gilgal, it tells us, in verse 4. The people were called out to join Saul at Gilgal.

32:09

So what's significant? Why Gilgal? Does that matter to any of us, right? That's just one of the towns we hear 400 little town city names in here. What was special about Gilgal? Well, Gilgal, you may remember, was where Samuel had gathered the people to renew the kingdom, where he had delivered his speech back in chapter 12, just last week, that we looked at.

32:32

More importantly, however, it was the place where Samuel had told Saul to wait for him once the initial action with the Philistines had taken place. Back in 1 Samuel chapter 10, verse 8, let me read this for you.

32:45

This is a really important verse. We're going to read it a few different times this morning. But 1 Samuel 10, verse 8. It says, go down before me to Gilgal, Samuel talking to Saul. Go down before me to Gilgal and behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings.

33:04

In seven days you shall wait until I come to you and I show you what you shall do. Saul was given orders by Samuel and kind of through Samuel by God himself. God had given Saul these instructions to go to Gilgal and that these sacrifices were going to be offered by Samuel and then he was gonna wait for directions before he attacked the Philistines.

33:29

So in verses 5 through 7, as we see the story continue, we see Saul now looking out and he sees an overwhelming army, an overwhelming sign of strength gathering from this Philistine army. You may remember as we looked just a few moments ago back in verse two, there were about 3,000 prepared troops in the Israelite army.

33:50

What we see in verses 5 through 7, we see that the Philistines start to gather their forces, start to gather their army and what do we see with regard to some numbers in their army? What tells us in verse 5 that there are 30,000 chariots, that there are 6,000 horsemen and that they're infantry troops, that their troops are like the sand of the seashore in multitudes.

34:12

You know, anybody that kind of loves those old epic fantasy novels, you may remember you hear something like this and you think of the scene at the end of the Lord of the Rings, right? Anybody ever watch those movies?

34:23

You see the small army of the good guys and then the hordes of the bad guys just come pouring through the black gate. We have this massive scene. All right, little army of good guys, big pile of bad guys.

34:37

Chronicles of Narnia kind of has a similar picture. My mind goes to this. The people of Israel are massively outnumbered. We've got 3,000 Israelite troops and maybe 100,000 Philistine troops between the chariots and the horsemen and the infantry.

34:55

We are massively outnumbered. There's an overwhelming response. That's why I titled this section, Kicking the Ant Hill, right? There's this massive army that comes pouring out of the Philistine camp and so Jonathan and Israel had defeated this small little Philistine outpost and now hundreds of thousands of troops are gathered in a response from the Philistines.

35:19

It seems like a terrifying situation to be sure. And what we see in response from the Israelites though, it's a fairly pitiful scene because Saul's people, Saul's troops, as they're preparing themselves to fight the Philistines, well, they panic.

35:37

They start to run away. They went into hiding. It tells us that they found any crack that they could crawl into and they just disappeared. They hid in the rocks. They hid in the caves. They disappeared jumping down into wells.

35:48

Anything that they could find, they disappeared. Many of them ran across to the other side of the Jordan River to try to escape the oncoming attack of the Philistines but Saul didn't go into hiding. He remained in Gilgal.

36:03

He was faithful to do what Samuel had instructed him to do. He was probably a little terrified, a little confused but Samuel had told him to wait in Gilgal so that's what he was going to do. That's where we see Saul's tragic mistake.

36:17

Our second point in our outline that we see show up in verses 8 through 14. Saul's tragic mistake because Saul's situation was desperate. Saul was looking at this and anybody with about two marbles in their head to bounce around together can figure out that the army of 3,000 men doesn't have a very good chance against the army of 100,000 or more.

36:44

But Saul remembered what Samuel had told him. I just read it a minute ago in 1 Samuel 10 verse 8. Samuel told Saul, go down before me to Gilgal. I'm going to come down to you. I'm going to offer burnt offerings.

37:00

I'm gonna sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait until I come to you and show you what you shall do. As we can tell, best we can see, it seems like Saul attempts to follow these instructions, right?

37:15

Saul's told what he's supposed to do. Seems as best we can tell that Saul sends word Samuel, you need to join us. We've got some stuff that's starting to go down here and so Samuel is supposed to be on the way and Saul's just sitting there waiting.

37:29

Sometimes seven days can really fly by. Anybody ever been on vacation and had a week fly by? And there's some times that it seems like time just drags on and on and on. You start watching the clock. Anybody ever had the last day of school and you're sitting there, come on.

37:45

Three o'clock just needs to get here. I'm done, I'm out, right? And I check the clock and it's gotta been a few hours and it's like four minutes. And it just drags on and drags on. This has to have been the longest seven days of Saul's life, as he's sitting here and he's watching this army that's coming against them.

38:06

He's also watching his terrified troops disappear. They're scattering. They're running away. They're hiding. He's watching, well, I had 3,000, but now they're running away and hiding. I don't even have the 3,000 that I had.

38:20

Saul's got to be growing anxious as he's watching his troops run away. He's approaching the end of these seven days, and as he's sitting there checking his watch and checking and, you know, all right, what's going on?

38:31

Where is Samuel? As the end of the seventh day approaches, it tells us here that Saul decides to take things into his own hands. Saul decides, no, bring out the sacrificial animals. I'm going to go ahead and begin this process of offering the sacrifices.

38:48

Samuel's not here, but we need to do this. It's time for us to act. So at first glance, we look at this, we see this, and it seems like Saul's making the best of a crummy situation, right? Samuel wasn't there.

39:01

Samuel didn't come. The sacrifices needed to be offered. Something needed to be done, and so Saul was simply doing what needed to be done. But upon Samuel's arrival, it quickly becomes clear. Samuel doesn't agree with this whole, it's not a big deal, assessment that Saul seems to offer.

39:20

We might perhaps seem to offer as we look at this and say, well, Saul just did what he had to do, right? How did Samuel respond? Let's read verses 10 through 14. We see Samuel's kind of firm and harsh response here as he hears what Saul has done.

39:36

Verse 10, it tells us, as soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel came. Saul went out to meet him and greet him, and Samuel looks at him and he says, what have you done? And Saul said, when I saw that the people were scattering from me, that you did not come within the days appointed that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, this huge army.

40:01

I said, well, the Philistines are going to come down against me at Gilgal if I have not sought the favor of the Lord. So I forced myself and I offered the burnt offering. Samuel said to Saul, you have done foolishly.

40:14

You have not kept the command of the Lord your God with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever, but now, now your kingdom shall not continue.

40:27

The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. The Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you. Seems a little harsh, doesn't it? Samuel sees what Saul has done and Samuel just rips into Saul.

40:47

He clearly expresses this disapproval at Saul's decisions, at Saul's actions. He comes in, he shows up, he says, Saul, you've blown it. Saul, what are you doing? Samuel accuses Saul of not keeping the command of the Lord your God.

41:04

In fact, he continues on. He says, Saul, your kingdom, your kingship and the kingship of your sons and your grandsons, your future dynasty, it's going to be taken away from you. You're no longer going to be the king of Israel.

41:18

Your sons and your grandsons, your line is no longer going to lead Israel. You're done. But why? What's the reason? What was Saul's failure here? Saul thought that there were some things that needed to be done, right?

41:37

He thought that God wanted some animals to be killed, some sacrifices needed to be made. Saul thought there was this tip of the cap that needed to be given to God before they entered into battle, that he needed to acknowledge God.

41:50

But that's not what Samuel said, is it? Back in 1 Samuel 10, verse 8, I've read it a couple of times at this point. That's not what Samuel actually says. That's not what God tells Saul to do. 1 Samuel 10:8, Saul is told, go down before me to Gilgal.

42:08

Behold, I'm coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait until I come to you and I show you what you shall do. This was not about some token obedience that Saul was just supposed to make sure that a few animals died before they went into battle.

42:26

This was about seeking God's direction. This was about seeking God's guidance. This was about God being in control. This was God telling Saul, no, no, you're going to wait until Samuel comes. You're going to wait until I show up and you're going to wait until I tell you what you should do.

42:44

So the problem here is that Saul had misunderstood his role. Saul had gotten the order of operations. He'd gotten the org chart mixed up. See, Saul thought that by hearing that he was the king of Israel, he had thought he was the top name on the top line on the org chart.

43:02

But Saul's not the man that's in charge. Saul's not ultimately the shot caller in Israel. God was supposed to be the one that was still calling the shots. Saul was just the man that God had chosen to lead his people into battle, to be the man who led as God spoke and God led his people.

43:24

But instead of waiting for God's direction, Saul killed a few animals. Saul decided that he was going to do what he thought was best. He had forgotten the key message of Samuel's charge to him and to Israel in chapter 12 last week that we just looked at.

43:43

Verse Samuel chapter 12 verses 14 and 15. You remember, I read it, we read it last week. Samuel looks at the people of Israel and by extension looks at Saul. He says, if you will fear the Lord, if you will serve him, obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, if both you and your king who reigns over you will follow the Lord your God, it will be well.

44:09

But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord, you rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you and against your king. Saul knew that he was supposed to wait there for Samuel to come, that there were some offerings that needed to be sacrificed, but what Saul saw this whole thing as, Saul saw this as a religious ritual that needed to be attended to.

44:35

It was some religious ritual that needed to be performed before battle. He thought that he was seeking God's blessings for what he had already decided that he was going to do. Hey God, just so you know, I'm getting ready to go out here, we're gonna go fight these Philistines, but if you could make sure that we're successful, that'd be great.

44:55

But what Saul doesn't do is, he doesn't seek God's direction. He saw no need for divine guidance, he just wanted God's blessing on what he had already decided he was going to do instead of seeking God and asking God what should he do.

45:12

King Saul here is making the same classic mistake that by the way, so many before him made the same mistake. We know this to be true of Lucifer, we know this to be true of Adam and Eve, we know this to be true by the way of every human being that has ever walked the face of the earth.

45:33

The same classic mistake that people make as they look at God, they think the same thought, they think, you know, I know better than God. I know better than what God knows. I need to be in control of my life.

45:47

I should be in control of what's happening in this situation. I am gonna go do what I want. I know better. Saul knew what he was supposed to do, but he ignored God's instructions to do what he thought needed to be done.

46:05

The instruction in 1 Samuel 10 verse 8 was to wait until I come to show you what you need to do. But Saul didn't wait. Saul didn't wait on the Lord. It's easy for us to look at Saul and go, Saul, why couldn't you just do what God said?

46:19

It was pretty simple, right? You made it to like the end of day seven. Samuel was clearly right around the corner. You could have just waited a few more minutes and it would have been okay. Things would have gone entirely differently.

46:31

It seems so simple. Why couldn't you just do what you were supposed to do, Saul? But let me ask you a question. Is there any instruction that God has clearly given you in his word to obey that you're choosing not to obey?

46:48

Uh -oh. This just went from Saul being in trouble to me being in trouble, right? It's easy for us to look at Saul and to think, Saul, it was so easy. Why didn't you just do what God had commanded? But we do the same thing on a regular basis.

47:04

We look at circumstances in our lives. We look at things and we think, no, no, I know what's best here. God, just so you know, this is what I'm gonna go and take care of. This is what I'm gonna go do.

47:16

Any sinners in the room who know the right thing to do, but choose to do what they think is best instead? Yeah, I know. I know you thought it. You weren't brave enough to raise your hand, but that's okay, right?

47:28

We're all in the same boat together, right? Every human throughout history, every man, every woman, in fact, Lucifer himself, Satan himself, this was the same problem that we've seen all the way back from the beginning of time.

47:41

Adam and Eve make the same mistake. Every person that decides, I know better than God, I'm going to do what I think is right instead of what God has told me is right. Every single one of us. We make the same mistake.

47:54

We make the same critical error. Trusting God, obeying God is not something that we do only when it lines up with what we already think. Obeying God, trusting God, following God is something that we do even when it doesn't line up with what we already think.

48:12

We trust and we obey God regardless of what we think because what God thinks is more important than what I think or what you think in a situation. What we see here in Saul's interaction with Samuel and really with God is that sin has consequences.

48:34

Every person who sins ultimately feels the weight of this reality, right? As we are separated from God, as we are made enemies of God, our sin very clearly has separated us from a holy God. There is no way for us to measure up to God's standard or for us to approach God's throne on our own.

48:52

You're not good enough. I'm not good enough. King Saul wasn't good enough. King David, by the way, in the future is not going to be good enough. There is no person who is able to measure up to God's standard of perfection on our own.

49:07

Every person who sins ultimately feels the weight of this as we are separated from God, as we're called in the book of Romans as enemies of God. But God made a way for us to be forgiven, right? We have the privilege of hindsight that we can look back and see, no, no, Jesus is coming.

49:25

A sacrifice is coming. A payment is going to be made so that we can be forgiven, so that we can be brought back into a right relationship with God through Jesus's sacrifice on the cross. The ultimate punishment for sin can be resolved in Jesus's sacrifice.

49:43

But there's also some tangible earthly consequences for our actions oftentimes, aren't there? We know that just because God forgives us, just because we may find ourselves in heaven one day because God has paid for the eternal consequences of our sin, that doesn't mean that we just get to go do whatever we want with no consequences in this life.

50:05

Sin often breaks stuff in our lives, doesn't it? Relationships can be fractured. Resources can be lost. Prices, sometimes prices need to be paid. For King Saul, the price of his disobedience was that his kingdom was not going to continue.

50:24

He was no longer going to be the king of Israel for the long haul. God was going to elect a new king. There was going to be a new family line that was going to lead God's people. We're gonna meet him in a few weeks, right? I think you guys, if you've read ahead, you'll recognize the name David.

50:39

We know that David's coming. But in the meantime, Saul and his army are in trouble. Verses 15 through 23, we see this awkward season of waiting as the people of Israel, as Saul, are simply sitting here awaiting the slaughter, right?

50:59

You remember 100,000 plus soldiers that are sitting outside, sitting across the valley waiting to just go flatten the people of Israel. And King Saul's in a tough spot. At this point, it tells us that all but 600 of his soldiers have abandoned him, have run off into the hills, have run across the river, tried to flee.

51:21

There's 600 people left, 600 soldiers with King Saul and Jonathan. They're sitting there encamped at Geba, looking across at the Philistine horde that was encamped, gathered at Michmash. 100,000 versus now, you know, 3,000 wasn't great odds, but now we're down to 600.

51:41

Also, by the way, they had no weapons, right? Great situation. At verse 19, it tells us that there was no blacksmith in Israel. They had to go get their tools even from the Philistines. They weren't allowed to have blacksmiths in their territory.

51:57

The Philistines wanted to make sure that if the Israelites ever did decide that they wanted to fight back, if there ever was going to be an uprising, they're going to be really poorly equipped as they come out to try to fight us with their sticks and rocks.

52:13

So this week we finish this chapter, there's this impending battle on the horizon and it doesn't look promising for Israel. But we don't get the conclusion in this week's passage. We kind of, we get to this point and we have the narrator pop over top, right?

52:27

Like one of those old superhero TV shows that would pop in. What's gonna happen to our heroes, Saul and Jonathan next week? When the Philistines attack, will they find any weapons? Will they, will the rest of the troops come back?

52:39

Well, you need to tune in next week to find out what happens in the next episode of Jonathan and Saul. We're just kind of left hanging, right? We don't get the conclusion of the military story here this week as this fight is coming.

52:57

But what we do see is a pretty clear message from 1 Samuel chapter 13. You know, as I was studying, as I was trying to get my head around this passage this week, there's many contemporary authors that will kind of contend that Samuels and by extension God's treatment of Saul, that it was unfair for him to be so harsh with Saul.

53:18

And he wasn't being deliberately disobedient. Besides, was it really that big of a deal? Who offered the sacrifices? Why is Samuel, why is God so like overwhelmingly freaking out about this? See, it was just a few sacrifices.

53:35

I think it's important for us to slow down here because I don't think it's so much the specific sin that deserves the primary attention here. I think it's the nature of the sin that we see from Saul.

53:49

Effectively, Saul had determined that his assessment of the circumstances was more important than what God had commanded. He's sitting here looking at his troops running away. He's looking at this army that's across the valley staring them down.

54:04

He decided that he knew what was best. He had placed himself in what he thought over what God had commanded. He pridefully determined that he knew what was best. Perhaps more importantly, we also see no evidence of any sort of repentance for his actions.

54:22

Samuel shows up after he's offered these sacrifices and Saul gets defensive, right? He sees Samuel come walking up. Samuel says, what have you done? And he starts firing off all these defenses of, well, you know, I did the right thing because, well, I had to.

54:40

And because I offered the sacrifices, I did what I had to do. You weren't here. So I stepped up. Saul's attitude in the midst of this story. We hear that and we go, all right, not a great response from Saul.

55:01

But objectively, those who know the rest of the story, if you've ever read the rest of 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, you know objectively that David, that the future king, man who's going to replace Saul as king of Israel, David's gonna commit some sins that I think most would agree are far worse than what Saul does here.

55:21

Because David has an affair with a married woman. David commits murder. David hatches this massive coverup plot to hide all these things that he's done. David objectively has done a lot of things that are a lot worse than what we see here with Saul.

55:40

And we just look at the actions themselves, but there's a difference here. The difference that we see between David and Saul is in their response. Because when we see David confronted with his sin, we see a brokenhearted repentance that shows up in David.

55:58

2 Samuel chapter 12, we see the prophet Nathan come and stick his finger in David's chest and say, David, you screwed up. And David acknowledges that David's brokenhearted and David humbles himself before God.

56:10

Meanwhile, that's simply not present in Saul here. Saul chose to do what he thought was best, and he ignored God's explicit instructions that God had given to him. Saul thought that he was in charge.

56:28

I'm the king, I know what's best. He refused to acknowledge that God was the true leader of Israel. He refused to acknowledge that God was the one who was supposed to determine how and when Israel attacked the Philistines, not Saul.

56:44

Saul, no, no, no. You're the man who I have put in this position. God's sitting here looking at Saul going, no, no, no, no, you're not the leader, I'm the leader. You're not in charge, I'm in charge.

56:56

You don't get to make those decisions, I get to make those decisions. So when Saul took things upon himself, determined that he was going to do what he thought was best. When Saul determined that he was unwilling to humble himself before God, that he defended himself instead of humbling himself before God when he was confronted with his sin.

57:21

That's where Saul lost the kingdom. Yeah, I'm reminded as I read through all of this, as we look at this, I'm reminded of Hosea chapter 6 verse 6, I think this will be familiar to many of us. Hosea 6:6 says, God speaking, for I desire steadfast love, not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

57:44

There's a greater reality than just some dead animals that God was looking for. God wanted Saul's obedience. God wanted Saul to acknowledge that he was the ultimate king of Israel, not Saul. But as we see Saul just big old swing and a miss here, I think there's a question for us today. A question for us to ask as we're wrapping up, as we're preparing to leave this morning, the question for us to consider is, are you willing to let God call the shots in your life?

58:19

Are you willing to humble yourself before God in the way that Saul wouldn't? And the things that Saul said, no, no, no, I'm in charge, I'm going to do what I think is best. Is God in control in your life?

58:33

Or is God your co-pilot, like the bumper stickers used to say, Jesus is my co-pilot, right? Is he your co-pilot who you consult, but ultimately you're going to do what you think is best in life? Is Jesus in charge?

58:45

Is God in charge or is God just a consultant? Is he an advisor that shows up that you give a call to every once in a while and you think you might need some advice? I'll tell you something, God will not be mocked.

58:59

God is not a co-pilot. God is not a consultant that you call when you need advice. When God's desires and our desires are in conflict with one another, guess what? We are the ones that yields. We are the ones who humble ourselves.

59:15

We are the ones that are in the wrong. When God says one thing and my heart says the other, you know which one of those is wrong? My heart. Jeremiah tells us that our heart is desperately wicked, that we can't trust our heart.

59:28

Follow your heart is a lie, right? It might sound great on a throw pillow. It's not true. We don't just do what our heart tells us to do. We do what God tells us to do. We do what God's word tells us to do.

59:44

God deserves our absolute obedience. We surrender our will to God. God is in charge in our lives, not us. It doesn't mean that we perfectly offer perfect obedience every time because, right, we mess up.

01:00:05

But what it does mean is that we show a willingness to mold and to conform our will and our plans and our desires to what God tells us to do. And when we don't, we repent and we look for opportunities to correct it.

01:00:20

We don't double down and say, God, I did what I needed to do. We say, no, no, God, forgive me because I messed up. When God's desires and our desires are in conflict, guess who wins that debate? God is God and I'm not.

01:00:38

When we realize those things, that's where Saul misfired here. That's where Saul misses the mark. That's where Saul lost the kingdom. Saul thought, I'm the king, I'm in charge, I'll do what's best. I forgot that God is ultimately in charge and God is ultimately what's best.

01:01:00

Doing what God says is ultimately what's best. So sitting here this morning, the question for us is, what do you need to surrender today? What is it in your life that you're holding onto that you've got a situation that you're sitting here going, no, no, I know what's best.

01:01:19

God might seem to have some different opinions on the matter and you go, no, no, no, God, I'll let you know when I need you. But I know what's best. I'm going to do what I think here. Where are your desires in conflict with God's desires for you?

01:01:34

And how do you need to adjust your plans to fit his plans? Our prayer team is gonna be down here at the end of the service. They would love to pray for you. Our prayer team checks our prayer wall. We've got a prayer wall out in the back hallway if you go out and turn to the right.

01:01:51

We've got a wall out there. We would love for you to write your prayer requests down. And our prayer team goes out there, checks those, prays for those regularly. We would love to pray with you about whatever it is that you've got going on in life.

01:02:02

There's something that you need help. God, help me surrender this. God, I know that you're in charge, but it's hard for me to let go. Let us pray for you. Let us pray with you about that. We would love to help in any way that we can.

01:02:18

But ultimately, the question for us is, who's in charge in life? Are you in charge? Or is God in charge? Would you pray with me, church? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for, God, for a very clear and pointed reminder for us this week of that.

01:02:44

God, that doing what we think is right is limited at best. God, it's flawed. God, we are utterly insufficient of doing the right thing. We lie to ourselves so often. God, how could we ever expect to do rightly when we choose our opinions over your commands?

01:03:06

God, give us a spirit of humility that, we don't see evidence to here in Saul. God, help us to realize that when we depart from what you have commanded, God, we are the ones that missed, not you. God, that we don't need to conform you to our plans.

01:03:24

We need to conform our plans to you. God, help us to humble ourselves and to be obedient to what you call us to do. God, in the big things and the little things and the in-between things, God, you are in charge in our lives.

01:03:40

God, you are the king, you are the Lord of our lives. God, when we sign up and we say, I want you to be my savior, it also requires that we say, God, I want you to be my Lord, to be my king, to be my master in life.

01:03:53

God, you call the shots in my life. And God, while we would all openly acknowledge that we don't do that perfectly, God, help us to grow. Help us to be more obedient today than we were yesterday. Help us to be more obedient tomorrow than we are today.

01:04:11

God, help us because we so desperately need help. Utterly incapable on our own of measuring up to your perfect standard. But God, in your perfect spirit, God, we are thankful for the fact that your grace is new every morning and God, that we can wake up and that we can be newly empowered to go and to do better today.

01:04:36

God, your faithfulness, your compassion, your forgiveness, it blows me away sometimes. But God, help us to live in obedience at the same time. Help us to live in the joy that grace provides. But God, help us to not continue in sinning so that grace may abound.

01:05:01

Father, we need you, we need your help. We thank you for loving us in spite of us. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.