



## **1 Samuel 14:24-52**

### **“Saul’s Foolishness on Display”**

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26:24

We're going to finish up 1 Samuel 14 this week.

26:26

We started the passage last week. We're going to finish 1 Samuel 14 this week. So if you didn't bring a Bible, there should be a black one underneath your chair. You can grab one of those and follow along as well.

26:38

We're page 287 in those Bibles if you want to follow along. But if you weren't with us last week, just a quick catch you up to speed. So the first half of 1 Samuel 14, we saw God give Israel through Jonathan, King Saul's son, a key victory over the Philistines.

26:56

Incredible story. I encourage you to go back and check that out if you missed it. But Jonathan kind of takes this leap of faith and goes into the Philistine camp really by himself, just him and his armor bearer.

27:08

And there's this incredible story of God giving them victory and kind of the end of the passage last week, verses 22 and 23. Our passage concluded by telling us that the Philistines were on the run, that God had given this victory to Israel.

27:24

So now we pick up in verse 24. What do we find in verse 24 and beyond as we pick up our passage this week. Well you may remember back just a couple of weeks ago in 1 Samuel 13. You may remember Samuel's words to King Saul in 1 Samuel 13:13.

27:43

If you don't, let me remind you. It says that Samuel said to Saul, you have done foolishly. That was in reference to Samuel yelling at King Saul for not obeying what God had instructed him to do. Well, this week when we pick up the rest of the story in 1 Samuel 14, essentially we see foolish King Saul is at it again.

28:06

Saul's prospects as he became the king, as he was placed into this position, it began with such promise. He's this tall, handsome, powerful, he looked the part of a leader. He had some very clear leader traits as you read through his resume.

28:21

But when it comes to self-destructive foolishness, few people are on par with King Saul. Saul blows it by failing to acknowledge God as the true leader of Israel over and over and over again. And he failed to lead with wisdom and with humility like we see from from godly leaders in other places throughout the scripture.

28:42

So our story this week is going to begin with this overwhelming victory that God gave Israel last week as we saw the Philistines defeated and running with their tails between their legs. And although this significant victory is won in 1 Samuel 14, as Israel defeats this overwhelmingly superior army, the emphasis of this passage is on failure.

29:05

It's on the fact that the victory would have been much greater for Israel if Saul hadn't stepped in and decided to exert himself as the leader once again. And his conduct, his leadership just proves itself to be inept over and over and over again.

29:19

Saul's pride, his need to be the man, cost Israel that day. So let's look at our passage. 1 Samuel 14, we're going to read verse 24 all the way down through the end of the chapter through verse 52.

29:31

Starting in verse 24, it tells us that the men of Israel had been hard pressed that day. So Saul had laid an oath on the people saying, cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged of my enemies.

29:44

So none of the people had tasted food. And when all the people came to the forest, behold, there was honey on the ground. And when the people entered the forest, behold, the honey was dropping. But no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath.

29:57

But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath. So he put the tip of his staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes became bright.

30:09

Then one of the people said, your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, cursed be the man who eats food this day. And the people were faint. But then Jonathan said, my father has troubled the land.

30:21

See how my eyes had become bright because I tasted a little of this honey? How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies that they had found? For now, the defeat among the Philistines has not been great.

30:35

And they struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very faint. And the people pounced on the spoil and took sheep and oxen and calves and slaughtered them on the ground.

30:46

And the people ate them with the blood. But then they told Saul, behold, the people are sinning against the Lord by eating with the blood. And he said, you have dealt treacherously. Roll a great stone to me here.

30:58

And Saul said, disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, let every man bring his ox or his sheep and slaughter them here and eat. And do not sin against the Lord by eating with the blood.

31:09

And so every one of the people brought his ox with him that night and they slaughtered them there. And Saul built an altar to the Lord. It was the first altar that he had built to the Lord. And then Saul said, let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them until the morning light.

31:23

Let us not leave a man of them. And they said, do whatever seems good to you. But the priest said, let us draw near to God here. Saul inquired to God, shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into the hand of Israel?

31:37

But God did not answer him that day. And Saul said, come here, all you leaders of the people and know and see how this sin has arisen today. For as the Lord lives who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die.

31:52

But there was not a man among the people who answered him. Then he said to all of Israel, you shall be on one side and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said to Saul, do what seems good to you.

32:05

Therefore Saul said, oh Lord God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, oh Lord God of Israel, give Urim. But if this guilt is in the people, Israel give Thummim.

32:20

And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. Then Saul said, cast a lot between me and my son Jonathan and Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan, tell me what you've done. Jonathan told him, I tasted a little honey with the tip of my staff that was in my hand.

32:36

Here I am, I'll die. Saul said, God do so to me and more also, you shall surely die Jonathan. Then the people said to Saul, shall Jonathan die who has worked this great salvation in Israel? Far from it.

32:51

As the Lord lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day. And so the people ransomed Jonathan so that he did not die. Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines and the Philistines went to their own place.

33:05

When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the Kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines.

33:16

And wherever he turned, he routed them. And he did valiantly instruct the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them. Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchi-shua.

33:30

The names of his two daughters were these, the son of the first born was Merab, and the name of the younger was Michal. The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, and the daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the commander of his army was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

33:46

Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner, who was the son of Abiel. There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he attached him to himself.

34:00

These are the words of the Lord. Would you pray with me, church? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for, God, for another beautiful example of some pitfalls that we often wander into ourselves.

34:14

God, we pray that as we consider this story of Saul and Jonathan, God, this interaction, God, some of Saul's missteps that we see so clearly illustrated here, God, I pray that you would speak to us. God, that you would give us an understanding of the dangers that we see in Saul so that we might be able to avoid many of those same things.

34:34

God, that you would give us faith to pursue you in humility instead of pridefully thinking that we've got all the answers like Saul did. So God, we pray that you would speak during this time for your servants are listening.

34:46

It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen. Alright, well we're going to go back and kind of pick it apart a little bit. Lots of stuff going on here. We actually, I broke the mold, right? We always have three points.

34:56

We got four points this week. So I'm sorry, but we're going to get through this together, right? The first thing that we see in verses 24 through 30, we see Jonathan, King Saul's son, we see Jonathan breaks Saul's vow.

35:09

We've got this strange contrast, if you noticed it, between the way that we ended last week's passage and the way that we start this week. If you remember in verse 23 of our passage, it tells us that the Lord saved Israel on that day.

35:24

Meanwhile, now in verse 24, it tells us that the men of Israel had been hard pressed that day. The first statement, verse 23, talking about how God saved Israel, it refers to God's work in blessing Jonathan in this bold attack.

35:38

This had been a good day, right? Jonathan had gone and had pushed back the Philistines. Meanwhile, this second statement, verse 24, was resulting not from God's work in Jonathan going and pushing the Philistines back.

35:51

It was resulting from Saul's misguided decision making as he had placed this unnecessary burden on the people of Israel this day. Guys, we're going to go out and we're going to fight, but we're not going to eat, right?

36:05

Anybody ever been hangry before? We got a bunch of hangry guys that are here fighting, rushing into battle this day. Richard Phillips talking about this, I thought this was funny, and he said in his commentary, Saul's efforts served almost to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory, right?



36:21

Way to go, Saul, right? Almost able to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory that day. The Israelite forces were hard pressed that day. This is an expression that was usually used to convey harassment from an enemy that someone would step in.

36:36

The Philistines should have been described as being hard pressed that day as the Israelites came against them. But the Philistines are in disarray. Philistines are falling apart. They're fighting against themselves, if you remember from last week's passage.

36:50

But the Israelites are described as being hard pressed that day. The Israelites are exhausted, and it's a consequence of this requirement that King Saul had imposed on the army not to eat. We don't know why he decided that.

37:04

Maybe it was a good reason that he thought he had. Maybe it was a poor one, but certainly it wasn't a wise decision. It seems to me like his focus was on getting revenge. He makes this comment here right at the beginning of our passage.

37:19

No one eats until I am avenged on my enemies. Sounds like the same prideful, arrogant, self-centered king that we've seen show up a few different times already up to this point in 1 Samuel. Jonathan had illustrated decision making with God as the primary influence in his thoughts.

37:39

1 Samuel 14 verse 6, if you remember from last week, Jonathan going in to fight this fight, Jonathan speculates, he says, it may be that the Lord will work for us. His focus is on God. What will God do in this situation?

37:55

Meanwhile, everything that we're getting from Saul here is self-centered, right? He's saying, cursed is the man who eats food until I am avenged of my enemies. He thinks it's all about him. So as Jonathan and the troops are cruising on through our passage, it tells us that they come to this forest.

38:13

They find wild honey. All the troops are avoiding it. They're anxious, nervous, whatever it is, they're staying back. But Saul's given this clear order. Nobody eats today, right? But Jonathan, if you remember, let's put the pieces together.

38:27

Where was Jonathan when King Saul was probably giving that order? He was gone, right? Jonathan and the armor bearer rushed into battle. They were over busy kicking some Philistine butt while King Saul is back in the camp giving this order to everyone.

38:43

Nobody eats today until I'm avenged. Jonathan wasn't there. He was busy routing the Philistines. And so Jonathan comes to this honey and Jonathan does the natural thing for a hungry soldier who has been fighting all day who finds this natural surprise treat sitting there in the forest for him, right?

39:00

He sticks his stick in the treat. He takes a taste. How invigorating it must have been in the midst of this day-long battle to experience this treat. I think all the frozen yogurt shops were closed, but they found honey, right?

39:14

He's out having this terrible day, but meanwhile, the troops see him taste this honey and they're horrified. Nobody told Jonathan. Jonathan's breaking King Saul's rule, and so they step up and they tell Jonathan, Jonathan, you can't, no, no, whoa, and it's too late.

39:33

He's taken of this honey, but Jonathan voices no regret for his actions. Even after hearing King Saul's rule, instead of showing remorse that he's broken this rule, Jonathan offers criticism of his father.

39:46

Jonathan starts to call out how stupid of a plan dad made in deciding nobody eats today. We're all out in battle. Great idea, dad. Dad makes a dumb rule. Nobody gets to eat today. Jonathan also points out that Saul's foolishness has cost Israel, allowing the Philistines to retreat, allowing the Philistines to flee from the weekend to Israelites to allow them to live, to fight another day.

40:14

I dare say if it wasn't for some poor decisions of Saul's leadership here, the engagement with the Philistines may not have lasted quite as long throughout the rest of 1 and 2 Samuel. I think the story probably would have played out differently if they had been completely routed today, as it seems like they were headed towards.

40:34

The victory would have been much greater if it wasn't for Saul's poor leadership. Jonathan were to give us a summary of that day. It probably would have been something along the lines of, God gave us a victory, and then dad decided to give it back.

40:48

Jonathan breaks Saul's vow, but he certainly didn't seem to be really excited or concerned about it as we see here in this first section. Now we look at verses 31 through 35. We see hungry disobedience from the army, from the people of Israel.

41:04

As you make your way down through a little bit further into the story, it tells us that the people upon having this victory over the Philistines, it tells us in verse 32 that they pounce on the spoil, that they take the sheep and the oxen and the calves and they slaughtered them on the ground and the people ate them right where they were.

41:22

These guys were starving, and whether it was due to the fact that the Philistines were fleeing, that they had been defeated that day, or whether it was the fact that evening had come, it seems clear to me that the ban on eating, it lapses somewhere around verse 31, right here as we kind of see this transition take place.

41:41

It tells us that people were faint from fighting, but the people were starving and they wasted no time to properly prepare their food. Now if you have any sort of experience, if you've ever read through the Old Testament, you'll know that there were several dietary restrictions that God had placed on the people of Israel.

41:58

They needed to prepare their food this way, they needed to offer these sacrifices, they needed to follow all of these rules in a certain way to make sure that they honored and respected God's laws. But the problem here that we see in 1 Samuel 14 is that due to their desperation because they were so hungry, because of Saul's foolish rule that he had created, they overlooked their long-standing dietary restrictions.

42:24

All the way back in Genesis, all the way in Leviticus, God had prohibited eating meat with the blood in it. Genesis chapter 9, not too far from the very beginning of the book, right? Genesis chapter 9, it tells us that you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is the blood still in it.

42:44

There were rules for how the meat was supposed to be drained, how it was supposed to be prepared before consumption, and these soldiers had just thoroughly disregarded all of God's laws. They said, no, no, we're hungry, and so they rushed in to, you know, slap the animal, whatever it was, and dig in.

43:02

The people had given no thought to God's law, they'd rushed to satisfy their cravings for food. But the reason that they had done that, we start to follow the line, we start to trace this back. There's some responsibility on those men who had gone, who had taken these animals, who had not followed the restrictions as they were supposed to, but I look at this, and I think it's obedience to Saul's silly oath that he had made that leads to this mass disobedience of God's law.

43:34

Saul had said, no, no, nobody eats, and now by the time they're finally allowed to eat, they say, no, no, just give me some food, right? Just give me some food. And so when Saul is now informed in verses 33, 34, right in there, when Saul is informed of this failure of his people to observe the law, he accuses the troops, making a poor decision, of acting treacherously by breaking God's laws.

43:59

And so he decides, no, no, I'm going to fix the problem. And he steps in, and so he requires, he says, bring out this great stone, we're going to have this great stone, bring it out, roll it out here.

44:10

And when people take their animals that they're going to make dinner for themselves, they're going to slaughter their animals on this great stone, and the blood will drain away properly. That we're going to follow God's laws before we just dig in and eat and continue to eat.

44:27

Seems to me like that's a positive, right? King Saul's responding appropriately here. He seems concerned about the fact that the people are not following God's laws the way that they were supposed to be.

44:38

He was concerned about the obedience of His people. He calls upon the troops to follow the correct procedures that they should have been following. But you know, we've seen this type of thing from King Saul before, haven't we?

44:51

We've seen this same attitude over and over in Saul because we're actually going to see it addressed again in chapter 15 as we finish 14 this week. Saul is focused on obedience, but usually Saul's focus is on external obedience.

45:08

It's on religious observance. It's on making sure that everyone checks the right boxes, that everybody does the right things and does the things that everyone else can see they're supposed to do. The problem that we've seen with Saul is that while he may be concerned about making sure that sacrifices are offered properly, he has little concern for actually seeking God.

45:30

I'm going to cheat and steal from Mike or Dave or whoever it is that's supposed to preach this verse, but 1 Samuel 15 verse 22, it tells us that to obey is better than sacrifice. Let me say that again.

45:43

To obey is better than sacrifice and to listen is better than the fat of rams. Saul is focused on these sacrifices. He's focused on making sure that they did the right things, that they said the right things, that they looked right to the outside eye.

46:00

But what God's going to say here time and time and time again, we're going to see it again just a couple of chapters later. God's looking at your hearts. God's not looking just at your hands. God's not focused on the outward appearance like we do.

46:13

God focuses on a person's heart. To obey is better than to sacrifice. A summary of Saul at this point seems to be something along the lines of, he was really strict about external obedience and following the rules.

46:29

He looked the part in every way. But Saul insisted upon making extra rules to make sure that he looked extra holy. He demanded more of the people than what God had demanded of the people, and it turns out that it had cost him.

46:46

Saul was so focused on checking boxes, you know. Saul's attitude was essentially if God made a few rules and that's good, well then more rules would probably be better, right? Let's make a few more rules.

46:58

It's the same mistake that we see from the Pharisees. It's the same mistakes that we see from the religious establishment that if you get forward into the New Testament, Jesus starts to call out these people who have said, no, no, God said rest on the Sabbath.

47:11

He didn't say how many steps you were allowed to take. He said rest, right? We've taken some basic expectations from God and they had turned them into this massive burden that people simply couldn't stand up under.

47:26

Saul is illustrating for us that the dangers of religious legalism, right? It's this reality that if some rules are good, if God has told us a few things, if God's given clear guidelines, well that's good.

47:39

Let's make a bunch more. It'll be even better. That's a danger for us. There's pitfalls on both sides of this road that we have to be careful to avoid because where God gives clear guidelines, we should be careful to obey those.

47:58

If God says, no, no, this is how my people should behave, we should behave that way. But on the other side of that coin where God gives grace, where God gives freedom, where God allows us some flexibility, we should be careful about not creating legalistic rules for ourselves.

48:18

I know King Saul didn't have the privilege of reading this, but we do. The Apostle Paul addressed this in Colossians chapter 2. In the book of Colossians chapter 2, let me just read for you a few verses.



48:29

You can flip there if you want to. But Colossians 2 verse 18 through 23, it tells us, let no one disqualify you insisting on asceticism and worship of angels. Asceticism is this idea of intentionally depriving yourself for religious purposes.

48:46

Let no one disqualify you insisting on asceticism and the worship of angels going on in detail about visions and puffed up without reason by a sensuous mind not holding fast to the head from whom the whole body nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments grows with a growth that is from God.

49:05

Listen to this. If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of this world, why, as if you were still alive to the world, do you submit to regulations? Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch, referring to things that all perish as they're used, according to human precepts and teachings.

49:23

These indeed have an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. What Saul is missing is what the Apostle Paul lays out so clearly for us here.

49:41

He's saying, don't just focus on doing some external things so that it'll look like you deprive yourself and that makes you holier than everybody else. Saul wanted to make sure that he looked holier than everybody else, but he didn't have the same heart attitude that he was supposed to.

49:59

He was focused more on sacrifices, but God in chapter 15, 1 Samuel 15, is going to say, no, no, I desire obedience, not sacrifices. But Saul is going to double down on this foolish rule in just a second.

50:13

God warns us about the error on both sides of these road, right? Many have wandered down this path of antinomianism. Big word that simply means, I get to go do whatever I want because God will forgive me anyways, right?

50:24

Throughout church history, we've seen people mistake, make that mistake time and time and time again. It goes all the way back to Jesus' day because in Romans chapter 6, Paul addresses this reality. Romans 6, he says, what shall we say?

50:38

Should we continue to sin so that grace may abound? By no means. How can we who died to sin still live in it? So if we were to sit here and say, well, God's going to forgive me so I can just go do what I want, Paul says, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

50:52

You're missing the point, right? We don't just continue to go sin more so that God can forgive us more. There's danger on that side of the road. We fall off that side. Meanwhile, we also have to be careful to remember Paul's warnings from Colossians chapter 2 that I just read a minute ago, insisting on this religious obedience, this asceticism to say, I discipline myself, this severe self-discipline for religious reasons.

51:19

That has no religious value either. I think this is another clear application of what it means to be Bible people, right? We talk about the fact that we are Bible people. That means that what the Bible says we should do, we should do.

51:33

But that means we also should be careful about creating our religious rules that we say, no, no, you have to worship this way. You have to dress this way. You have to talk this way. You have to listen to this.

51:43

You have to say that when we create all these arbitrary, extra-biblical rules like the Pharisees did with the idea, with the goal of projecting this appearance of holiness without any actual value in promoting godliness, Paul would warn us in Colossians chapter 2.

52:01

No, no, you're missing the point. Do what God says. Read the Bible and do what it says. Don't read the Bible and do more than it says. Don't read the Bible and do less than it says. Read the Bible and do what it says.

52:15

We continue through our passage. What we see in verses 36 through 46 is King Saul's prideful and misguided anger. Prideful and misguided anger. So in these verses, Saul is drifting again. He's wandering off into another opportunity for King Saul to make a poor decision on his own, right?

52:36

He makes another decision on his own without consulting God. He decides, well, we're going to continue this attack. We're going to attack the Philistines. I know we've pushed them back until nightfall, but we're going to continue the attack during the night.

52:50

And the people respond essentially saying, do whatever you want. Whatever. Sure, he's, it seems to me like he's lost the support of his people at this point, which by the way, we're going to see again in a few verses.

53:04

But as the priest hears King Saul make this suggestion, the priest suggests that, hey, maybe we should see what God thinks about this. It seems like a good idea, right? What do you think God says about this?

53:17

Saul, maybe we should seek God's direction before rushing off again into poorly planned action. So Saul offers a pretty basic, hey God, what do you think? And he doesn't get anything. There's no response.

53:31

God, what do you think? Saul gets no response and he does what any of us would do when there's something wrong in the situation, right? He assumes that someone else did something, right? He assumes that someone else is the problem.

53:49

If we pause for a second, who's the one that's been blowing at time and time and time and time again over the last several chapters? It's not somebody else, right? It's King Saul. King Saul has been the one that's been blowing it time and time again up to this point in the story, but now we remember that he was yelled at by Samuel in chapter 13 for ignoring God's instructions.

54:10

We remember earlier in chapter 14 that he blew off God's directions and he did what he wanted as he told the priest, hey, hey, just hold your hand. I don't really care. We don't have time for this. We're going to go and rush into battle.

54:22

He's disobeyed. He's ignored God at every turn up to this point. So Saul says, there's a problem in the camp. Can't be me. Let's figure out who it is. He ignores his own guilt. He sets out to determine who in the camp is guilty of some event.

54:40

So it tells us there's this little interaction. They cast lots and it lands on Jonathan. So Jonathan steps up and Jonathan confesses. He says, yep, I ate some honey while we were out in the forest. I unknowingly broke your rule today, Dad.

54:53

So he essentially offers this, here I am. I guess I need to die for this one, right, Dad? You can't help but miss the flavor of sarcasm in that. He offered criticism just a few verses earlier. Jonathan openly criticizing Saul's vow to the soldiers, but now we see him say, yep, Dad, I ate some honey.

55:15

I didn't know you had made the rule, but here I am. I guess you need to execute me. It's probably deserving of the death sentence, right, Dad? So Saul's response, to me, it seems strange as we read through this, right?

55:29

Because upon hearing of Jonathan's unknowingly poor decision to break his rule, Jonathan didn't know, but he determines, yeah, Jonathan, you're right. I'm going to put you to death. You're done. Saul's determination is unnecessary.

55:46

It seems rather absurd to me. In fact, under Mosaic law, Jonathan's sin, if we want to call it that, he unknowingly sins. Under the Mosaic law that God had given to Moses, the only offering, the only sort of payment that was necessary, they required a trespass offering.

56:02

This wasn't a capital offense. Saul's stepping things up at a level. Saul's demanding more than God would demand from his son. Saul's focus was on making sure that he looked good in the midst of all of this.

56:19

Saul was mad at his son for making him look bad. You broke my rules and everybody knows that you're going to die. But it was the people who stepped in. It was the people who stepped in and are the voice of reason in the midst of this interaction.

56:34

As they step in, they say, no, no, no, you're not going to kill Jonathan today. God, through Jonathan, saved Israel today. Jonathan was the one who had the bravery, who had the willingness to go and to do what God had told you to do.

56:50

You're not going to execute him tonight. Today's not the day for Jonathan to be killed. And so the people step in and they tell Saul essentially, no, back you go. We see this prideful and misguided anger from Saul as he tries to lash out and to kill his son for breaking his rule.

57:13

When we get to verses 47 through 52 and we see what seems at initial glance to be a kind of a strange little injection that we have here in the middle of our story in 1 Samuel. I've titled this little section Saul's obituary.

57:30

Now I know that King Saul is going to remain around for a bit longer. We see him kind of through the rest of 1 Samuel. But this point in the story, it essentially marks the end of King Saul's reign as God's chosen king of Israel.

57:44

Saul, in chapter 13, Samuel declared that Saul was, he was done. You're not going to be the king over Israel forever. In chapter 15, we're going to see that the Lord rejects Saul, that God officially declares Saul is done after, by the way, get ready for this.

58:01

Saul blows it and does what he thinks is best instead of what God has commanded again, right? We see this over and over and over again from Saul. And so it seems appropriate that chapter 14 ends with this sort of obituary, summarizing the life of King Saul, summarizing the the victories of King Saul, the family of King Saul.

58:23

It talks about his military victories and a few of these verses, all the different enemies that he has defeated. It talks about his family, about his children, and his son's daughters, and some people that he was related to that played a role in his kingdom.

58:41

We look at this little summary here, and clearly it's not all bad. Saul's time as king wasn't all bad. We see victory after victory after victory listed here. But if we read through those verses, I'll give you a second to look as I say this, but if we read through those verses, 47 through 52, there's something that's glaringly missing from this summary of King Saul's reign.

59:05

Do you notice something, or by the way, maybe it's someone who's not mentioned a single time in all of the conquests that Saul has listed here at the end of chapter 14? God doesn't show up a single time in this summary.

59:21

God doesn't show up a single time in all of these things. It seems fitting to me, seems somehow an appropriate summary of Saul's life because Saul does some great things. And Saul pushes back some enemies.

59:34

Saul gives military victory after military victory to the people of Israel, but best I can tell it was pretty much Saul that was doing those things, not God through Saul. God had very little place in Saul's kingship.

59:49

We know that God is in control, but ultimately Saul didn't seem to turn to him very often. Saul didn't seem to have any interest in God except for when he was checking off the boxes to make sure that everyone saw, I did the things that I was supposed to do.

01:00:03

It was always a religious checkbox, not any sort of desire to pursue what God would have for Saul and for Israel. So we look at this story as we have interacted with Saul chapter after chapter after chapter.

01:00:19

I can't help but think that Saul is one of the great tragic figures of history and literature as we see him. Because we're going to see in just a few weeks, God doesn't judge man by the outward appearance.



01:00:32

God doesn't judge people in the way that we judge people. God doesn't judge success like the world judges success. First Samuel 16, just two chapters from now, God tells Samuel that the Lord sees not as man sees.

01:00:48

For man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the hearts. God judges by a different grading rubric than people do. We look at Saul and we see that Saul was a man who had every opportunity to succeed.

01:01:03

He had all the opportunities in the world. He had all the things going for him, right? He was handsome. He was strong. He was this person that was put in a position of leadership. He had charisma. He was likable when he wasn't trying to, you know, kill his son.

01:01:16

But the tragedy that we see here with King Saul is one that reminds us all of a familiar story. There's pitfalls that we see in King Saul's life and they're familiar ones for us because the weakness that we see in Saul has a tendency of showing up in our lives as well, doesn't it?

01:01:36

It has a tendency of showing up in us because Saul fails in the same way that I fail, in the same way that you fail, in the same way that we have this tendency of falling into. What Saul does, Saul forgets about God.

01:01:52

Saul forgets to consider what God would have him do. He doesn't really trust God. He just kind of does what he wants and sometimes tries to stamp God's approval onto it. He disobeys God and does what he wants.

01:02:03

He thinks he knows better than God many, many, many, many, many times throughout this story. But the good news is we don't ever do that, right? We don't ever think that we know better than God. We don't ever forget to consult God when we set our mind to something.

01:02:20

We don't ever stop trusting God because we think we know better. We don't ever disobey God because God doesn't give us the answer that we want, right? That shows up in my life often. I dare say that shows up in your life often.

01:02:41

That we are all too familiar with Saul's failures because Saul fails in the same way that we all fail over and over and over again. But the hope for us is that we don't have to continue in the mistakes that we see in Saul because Saul refuses to submit himself to God.

01:02:59

Saul refuses to humble himself before it's too late and God humbles Saul. But seeking God's favor requires sinners to humble themselves before God, to cast themselves at the feet of God and ask for mercy.

01:03:17

That was the glaring omission of Saul's life. That's the thing that we don't see in Saul. We see Saul puff his chest out and say, I got this. We can figure this out. We'll go take care of this problem.

01:03:28

And he steps in. He's a man of action so, so, so often. But he's also a man of poorly planned action. He's a man of disobedience. He's a man of prideful action. Humility and contrition, confessing our sinfulness, confessing our failures.

01:03:48

That's the glaring omission of Saul's life, and ultimately it was Saul's downfall. So if you're here thinking that you're going to impress God with your fancy car, with your pious lifestyle, with your generosity, with your religious observance, whatever it is that you think you're going to stand before God and impress Him somehow because you're taller or stronger or a better leader or, you know, fill in all the blanks that Saul would fill in the blanks with.

01:04:13

If you think that you're somehow going to impress God by your actions, I'd encourage you just take a second and remember Saul. Take a second and remember how badly Saul missed the mark, and it was because Saul thought he had the answers.

01:04:32

Meanwhile, what we're going to see is the man who follows after Saul, the man who is described as God's king that he puts into this position. David messes up just as much as Saul does, if not worse. David's sins are glaringly obvious to anyone who's read the story.

01:04:53

Openly sinner, right? But the difference between Saul and David was David acknowledged his sinfulness and cast himself at the feet of God asking for mercy, while Saul needed to humble himself and refuses to.

01:05:09

Saul needed to humble himself like David does when his sin comes to light. We see this Psalm, Psalm 51 is David writing this Psalm of contrition, of sorrow, of humbling himself before God and asking for mercy as he realizes his sinfulness.

01:05:27

Psalm 51 verses 1 and 2, it starts just so clearly. David says, have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. According to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, cleanse me from my sin.

01:05:43

That was the difference between David and Saul. David humbled himself before God and threw himself at the abundant mercy of God's feet. Meanwhile, Saul tried to have all the answers for himself. As we come to the end of this passage, I think we've got a great opportunity today.

01:06:01

I'm sure you noticed the tables, the red tables as we came walking in this morning. We have this tangible reminder of the grace that is made available to us this morning. Because what we see in Saul is Saul refused to humble himself and ask God for for grace that was available.

01:06:16

But we have this reminder, we're going to take communion together in just a few moments and be reminded of the grace that God has made available to us. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, Jesus paying the sin debt that I owe, that you owed.

01:06:31

Those who placed their faith in him are forgiven, not because God just said, yeah, it's not that big of a deal, but no, because it was a big deal and Jesus paid the penalty that I deserve and you deserve.

01:06:43

We're going to remember Jesus' sacrifice this morning. And so if you have humbled yourself before God, if you have asked for his mercy, if you know Christ as your Savior, we're going to celebrate that this morning.

01:06:55

We're going to celebrate the fact that God made a way for sinners to be forgiven and that's good news. That even though we think we can somehow measure up on our own, God looked at us and said, no, no, you can't and I'm going to make a way.

01:07:12

We're not left in the position that King Saul was left in. We're not left trying to figure it out for ourselves, but God has made another way available to us. And so if you have received salvation from Jesus Christ this morning, it's a good morning, right?

01:07:26

It might be raining outside. It was when I came in. I don't know if it still is. It might be rainy, but it's a good day, right? We have reason to celebrate. If you haven't humbled yourself, if you haven't asked God to have mercy on you, that's where you start this morning, right?

01:07:43

Communion's not for you until you have received salvation through Jesus, but if you have, we're going to partake of these elements together in just a minute. We're going to pause to remember the sacrifice that Jesus made and so I want to encourage you as we prepare to take communion together this morning.

01:07:59

I just want to encourage you with the same thing that I would have encouraged King Saul with all these years ago. Humble yourself before God. Confess any sin that you might have in your life and ask, as David asked in Psalm 51, have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.

01:08:17

According to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. We've got fresh elements that are available here at the front. They're also available back at the back of the room. So in just a minute, I'm going to read from 1 Corinthians 11.

01:08:30

I'm going to pray, and then I just want to encourage you to take a few moments, right where you're seated, to take a few moments and simply to pray, to read Scripture if you need to, to prepare your heart.

01:08:44

Make sure that there's nothing standing between you and God at this moment. Prepare your heart to take communion, and then when you're ready, come take these elements, take them back to your seat, and partake of communion as we celebrate the sacrifice that Jesus made for us this morning.

01:09:02

Let me read from 1 Corinthians 11 as refers to the institution of communion that we're going to take together in just a moment. 1 Corinthians 11 verse 23 says, For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed, He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it.

01:09:22

So this is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way also, He took the cup after supper, saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

01:09:36

Would you pray with me, church? God, we thank you for, God, we thank you for the cross. We thank you for the good news of the gospel that this isn't about sinners somehow measuring up, cleaning themselves up, being good enough to somehow earn a wink, a side door into heaven because we measured up on our own.

01:10:01

God, we thank you that the good news of the gospel is that sinners could be forgiven because Jesus was good enough. God, that Jesus in paying a sinner's debt can offer forgiveness to sinners like me, like us.

01:10:20

God, we pray that as we come to this table, that we would be reminded of the great, incredible mercy that you've made available to us. God, the grace that you showed to us, that when we will simply humble ourselves before you, we will simply cry out, God, that you make dead things alive, that you take sinners and make them whole.

01:10:40

God, that you take us and you welcome us into your family. So, God, for those of us that have placed our faith in you, for those of us that have received new life in Christ, we thank you for this opportunity, for this moment because we have an opportunity to remember what an incredible gift we've been given for us to humble ourselves before the king of the universe, for us to ask for mercy.

01:11:10

God, we thank you for for loving us, we thank you for Jesus, we thank you for His sacrifice. It's in His name we pray. Amen.