

(1 Samuel) What God Regrets

by David Guzik

God's judgment on the Amalekites serves as a reminder of the importance of obedience and the principle that time does not erase sin before God.

Duration: 38:32

Scripture: 1 Samuel 15:15, Psalm 139:23

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Divine Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Saul and Samuel from the Bible. The sermon begins with the scene of Samuel confronting Saul after his victory in battle. Samuel questions Saul about the sound of sheep and oxen, revealing that Saul had not fully obeyed God's command to destroy everything from the Amalekites. The speaker emphasizes the importance of true transformation in the hearts and minds of people, rather than simply following commands. The sermon also highlights that God no longer calls his people to take up arms for judgment, but he still judges nations in his own way.

Transcript

1 Samuel, chapter 15. We've been making our way through this book of 1 Samuel, and as we have been making our way through, we've seen this interplay between the prophet Samuel and the king Saul. And Saul was the first king of Israel, Samuel, of course, this great leader and prophet of God, and we see as they relate to one another, it sort of comes all to a head here in chapter 15.

So let's just begin right here at verse 1. Samuel also said to Saul, the Lord has sent me to anoint you king over his people, over Israel. And therefore heed the voice of the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, I will punish what Amalek did to Israel, how he laid weight for him on the way when he came up from Egypt.

Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey. This was a message from the spiritual leader of Israel, the prophet Samuel, to the political and military leader of Israel, the king Saul.

The message was clear. God instructed them to punish what Amalek did to Israel, to go and attack Amalek, and to utterly destroy all that they have, and to do not spare them. The judgment that Israel was to bring against the Amalekites was frighteningly complete.

Kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey. God clearly told Samuel to tell Saul to bring a total judgment against the Amalekites. Why? What was it that the Amalekites did that was so bad that could merit this kind of judgment? Well, this he also explained to Saul, if you see there in verse two.

He says, I will punish what Amalek did to Israel, how he laid weight for him on the way when he came up from Egypt. You see, centuries before this, the Amalekites were the first people to attack the Israelites when the Israelites came from Egypt. You know, Moses, Egypt, prince of Egypt, all that stuff.

When the Israelites came from the land of Egypt, they were attacked by the Amalekites. And not only did the Amalekites attack them, but they did it in a particularly despicable way. God relates this in Exodus chapter 17, where it says, Then the Lord said to Moses, write this for a memorial and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

And Moses built an altar and called its name, The Lord is my banner, for he said, Because the Lord has sworn, the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. Deuteronomy chapter 25 repeats the point, starting in verse 17, Moses writes and he says, Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear when you were tired and weary, and he did not fear God. Therefore it shall be that when the Lord your God has given you rest from your enemies all around in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

You shall not forget. Well, those are very solemn words from God. And God was particularly angered at the Amalekites because they committed a terrible sin against Israel.

When the nation was weak and vulnerable, the Amalekites attacked the weakest and the most vulnerable of the nation. It said in Deuteronomy, they attacked your rear ranks and all the strangers at your rear when you were tired and weary. There's Israel coming in this great procession from Egypt and at the very end of the procession are the weak and the infirmed and the young.

The Amalekites came and without any provocation, with no reason except violence or greed, they came and killed and robbed those people at the very end of the procession. God hates it when the strong take cruel advantage over the weak, especially when the weak are his people. I think this is a reminder for us, you might kind of pat yourself on the back and say, you know, I'm not an Amalekite, I haven't slain any Israelites on the way to Egypt lately.

But maybe when you have the opportunity, you're a strong person who takes advantage of the weak. You know, this can be done emotionally. It can be done in the workplace.

It can be done economically. You know, let's say you have the opportunity to buy something from somebody and you know they really need the money. You know they're in a desperate, desperate place.

And so you grind them down on the price to where you're paying far below what the thing you want is worth. But you just grind them down because you know you can because they need the money so bad. I don't think God is pleased with that.

That's the strong taking advantage of the weak, pay them a fair price. That's what it's worth. Instead of you being in a position of strength, taking advantage of them just because they're weak.

You see, God promised to bring judgment upon the Amalekites for the vicious way that they preyed upon the weak when they were strong. Now, as I read this, I kind of scratch my head and I say, wait a minute, all this happened some 400 years before this. And now God wants them to take judgment on the Amalekites? I mean, it's kind of like if something happened back in colonial times.

You know, there's some dispute between Ben Franklin and George Washington. And now God wants us to do something about it. Well, what's that? I think this is an important principle for us to understand and to take to heart.

God still held it against the Amalekites because of an important principle that I think we often forget. And the principle is simply this time does not erase sin before God. Sometimes I think God forgets about our sin just because it was a long time ago that we committed it.

Time does not erase sin before God. Now, I think time should erase sin between people. If you're still holding on to things that people have done to you years ago or months ago or decades ago, let it go.

Let time heal all wounds. I think that's a beautiful principle between people. But between man and God, time can't atone for your sin.

You might think you're justified before God because you're living a pretty right life right now. You're thinking, well, you know, I'm living a good American life right now. I guess I'm justified before God.

Well, we could debate whether or not you're living a good life before God right now or not. That's something worthy to debate. Well, let's just talk about years ago when you were a kid.

How about those teenage years or in your young 20s? Well, you think God just kind of says, you know, ollie ollie income free because you're living better now. Time cannot atone for our sin, only the blood of Jesus can, only what Jesus did on the cross on our behalf. That's the only thing that can erase sin.

As a matter of fact, the time that God gave the Amalekites was mercifully given time to repent. God gave them hundreds of years to repent, to change their hearts, but they did not. And the years made them more hardened against God and made them more guilty against God instead of less.

So God told Saul and the Israelites, you go and bring my judgment upon the Amalekites. Now, again, here's another question I have. I don't know about you.

I ask a lot of questions when I read the Bible. God, why are you making the Israelites do this? I mean, if you want to judge the Amalekites, why didn't you just rain down fire and brimstone from heaven like you did with Sodom and Gomorrah? Why does it send a great big earthquake and swallow them all up in the earth? Lord, you can do anything you want. Why bring Israel into this? Why make them the instruments of your judgment? I think this is just part of the unknowable ways of God, but we can say that God had a special purpose in this for a special nation, Israel.

He wanted it to be a test of obedience for Saul and for all of Israel. Plus, I think we should say Amalek's sin against Israel was a military attack. So shouldn't it make sense that that's what the judgment upon them be? God likes to make the judgment fit the sin.

And so God has set his people against the Amalekites. Now, sometimes people wonder if God would call people today to fight such a war of judgment. You know, is God going to tell Christians to take up arms

and to go battle against some wicked people somewhere? Do you know that many people are afraid in our own country, in our own culture, many people are afraid that this is sort of the real agenda of the what they call the Christian right or the religious right.

You know, people gather together in their churches and form armies and militias. And the real goal is to go out and to conquer over America at the end of a gun and bring the whole country, throwing out the Constitution and, you know, instituting a rule by the Bible instead. And that's how we'll have things here.

And we're going to force our way on the whole nation. And that's what the what they call the Christian right or the religious right wants to do. Friends, nothing could be further from God's heart than that kind of thing.

God has a completely different call for Christians under the new covenant than he had for Israel under the old covenant. You know, Jesus made it clear that he was establishing a spiritual kingdom, not a political or military kingdom. Jesus said it himself in John 18.

He said to Pilate, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight so that I should not be delivered. And then later on, Paul made it clear that the enemies of the church were not material, but spiritual.

He said, but we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places. You see, friends, through the centuries, whenever the church has tried to battle in flesh and blood instead of spiritually, whenever the church has tried to take upon it political or military power, has the church handled it well? No, it's been a disaster. Although I will say.

Unashamedly. That we want to win the world for Jesus Christ. We want our culture to be a Christian culture.

We want our nation to be a Christian nation, but we don't want it to happen by coercion. We don't want it to happen by making people do things. That's never the way to do the work of God.

We want it to happen by one heart after another being transformed by the glorious power of Jesus Christ. We want it to be a spiritual work in the hearts and the minds of people, where people who are just touched by the ministry and the power of God, then are just an influence wherever God has put them. That's how we want to see this nation transformed, one life at a time, by the power of Jesus Christ.

So God calls the Israelites to judge this nation of the Amalekites. One more thing before we get on to the battle itself, starting at verse four, we should also recognize that God no longer calls his people to take up arms as instruments of his judgment. But it doesn't mean that God has stopped judging the nations.

Let me read you a quote from about 100 years ago, written by a man named F.B. Meyer. Again, this is from about 100 years ago. He says, We cannot suppose for a single moment that the judgment of the nations is to be altogether relegated to the final day.

Throughout the history of the world, the nations have been standing before Christ's court. Nineveh stood there, Babylon stood there, Greece and Rome stood there, Spain and France stood there, and Great Britain is standing there today. One after another has heard the solemn word depart, and they have passed into a destruction which has been absolute and terrible.

He wrote that 100 years ago. I think if he was writing today, he'd say that the United States of America is at the court of God. And we stand ripe and ready for God's judgment.

So God is going to use the Israelites to judge the Amalekites and see how it happens here. Verse four. So Saul gathered people together and numbered them in Talaim, 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah.

And Saul came to a city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley. Then Saul said, The Kenites go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.

So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. So Saul, we see him doing the good things here. So far, so good.

God told him, attack the Amalekites. What does he do? He gathers an army, shows good organizational and political skill, gathers a vast army, sets them out, sets them in ranks, sets them out against the city. They surround the city.

They give an ultimatum. They let the Kenites know. Now, the Kenites were a people's descended from the father-in-law of Moses, a Jethro.

And they were friends and helpers to the Israelites. So he says, Listen, God has no problem with the Kenites. Escape.

Get out from among them. Escape this judgment that's going to come upon us. Kenites leave.

And like I say, so far, so good. They're ready to attack. Well, let's see how it develops here in verse seven.

And Saul attacked the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. Well, praise God. Good.

Everything's going great. Saul's doing just what the Lord told him to do. And come to verse eight.

He also took Agag, king of the Amalekites, alive and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs and all that was good and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless that they utterly destroy.

Well. God told them very plainly, you wipe out everything just as much as Sodom and Gomorrah were completely destroyed by the judgment of God. So God wanted the Amalekites completely destroyed by the judgment of God.

But Saul didn't do it. First of all, he spared King Agag. Why exactly? We don't know.

Maybe it was kind of as well. We're all royalty, aren't we? You know, you're a king. I'm a king.

We'll give you the honor that's due to kings. We'll steal your life, King Agag. Maybe it was because he wanted a ransom from King Agag.

Maybe it was because he wanted a king as a trophy to say, look, this king is in subjection to me. Look at what a great man I am. I don't know why, but he did it.

And you notice when Saul didn't obey the command of the Lord, then his army didn't obey the command of the Lord. They were following the leader. Saul was giving them the kind of leadership that said you don't have to obey.

And so the people said, well, we don't have to obey. And so they spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs and all that was good. They were unwilling to utterly destroy them.

In other words, God said, destroy everything. Now, in a normal war in the ancient world, armies were freely permitted to plunder their conquered foes. This was how the army was paid.

They'd go out and they'd get some ox or some sheep or some gold or whatever. That was normal operating procedure in the ancient world. But God said, no, I don't want you to do it here.

Do you know why? Because God didn't want any individual to benefit from the judgment that he was bringing on the Amalekites. That was wrong. Nobody should be leaving happy about the judgment that was poured out upon the Amalekites.

No, instead, they should be grieved. It's just as wrong as if a hangman were to empty the pockets of a man that he just executed for murder. We'd say there's something wrong about that.

That's what God didn't want the Israelites to do to the Amalekites. But if you notice here, it says very plainly in verse nine. That everything despised and worthless that they utterly destroyed, you see, they took care to make sure that they took home the best and we can imagine they're very well pleased with what they gained after the battle.

You see, Israelite come from there, look at the sheep, look at this fine oxen I gained. Wow, what a fine. Well, this is a great day.

This was perhaps worst of all, because Israel was not reflecting God's heart in his judgments when they came home happy and excited because of what they had gained from the battle. They implied that there was something joyful or happy in the midst of God's judgment. This dishonored God who brings his judgment reluctantly and without pleasure, desiring instead that men and women would repent before him.

But they say, well, we destroyed some things. We partially obeyed, you know, God gave us one, two, three things to do and we did one, shouldn't we get credit for that? No. One preacher named Alexander McLaren said partial obedience is complete disobedience.

Saul and his men obeyed as far as it suited them. That is to say, they did not obey God at all, but their own inclinations, both in sparing the good and destroying the worthless. What was not worth carrying off was destroyed, not because of the command, but to save trouble.

In other words, why did they destroy the worthless things? That's too much trouble to carry them away. Friends, for a lot of us, that's how our obedience to God is. You know, we have God's interests and we have our interests and sometimes they overlap.

Well, where they overlap, we'll obey God. But we're really just serving our own interests, not God's. So oftentimes we're prepared to obey God's commands up to a point, up to the point where it costs us something, up to the point where we'd rather not.

We need to obey God all the time. Israel didn't, Saul didn't. Now comes the reckoning, verse 10.

Now the word of the Lord came to Samuel saying, I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel and he cried out to the Lord all night. Do you see the heart of God in this? God is grieved over the fact that Saul has disobeyed so greatly.

This man who started out humble and submissive to God was now boldly going his own way in disobedience. Now, you should know that what God says in verse 11 has been a stumbling point for some people in their understanding of the Bible. They say, well, how can God say I greatly regret? I mean, did that mean God didn't know what happened or that he wanted something else to happen, but he was powerless to direct these events? No, not at all.

This is the use of what we call an anthropomorphism. I don't expect you to remember that word. I just want to let you know that I know it.

Now, an anthropomorphism is where you take something and assign a human characteristic to something that isn't human. We do it with our pets all the time. There's your dog.

And you say, oh, my dog is so sad. Well, you don't really know if your dog's sad or not. I mean, you can't get inside your dog's head.

The dog can't tell you. You know, you see an expression. You see the kind of.

Who knows? But it's the closest you can come to attribute a human emotion to your dog and say, well, you know, and it's close enough. But it's the best you can do. Well, God does the same thing towards us.

God's divine. He can't express to us in divine terms and divine understanding what he feels and what he experiences and what he's like. So for our benefit, he puts it in human terms.

And God knew exactly what was happening. God's plan hadn't changed from the beginning. But God was feeling in heaven as the plan unfolded.

You see, as the plan unfolded, God's heart was not emotionless. He didn't sit in heaven with a clipboard and checked off boxes and say, well, this happened and this happened and this happened. I guess all going according to the plan.

No one saw sin this way. God, since we couldn't understand what was really going on in God's heart, the closest that we could come is for God to express it in human terms by saying, I greatly regret that I've set up Saul as king. So you see the pain in God's heart and in addition, you see in verse 11, the pain in the prophet's heart, it says.

And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the Lord all night. You know, the more we get to know Samuel, the more we like him, the more we get to know Saul, the more we don't like him. But Samuel, this is a man of God, I mean, do you understand the relationship between Saul and Samuel? Samuel was the leader of the nation of Israel.

He was the official judge over the nation. It wasn't a monarchy. He wasn't a king, but he was the judge.

He was the leader of the nation. And one day the elders of Israel came to Samuel and said, Samuel, you're getting old. We don't want you as a leader anymore.

That stung Samuel. Nobody likes to be told you're getting old. You can't do the job anymore.

But that's what they told him. Samuel didn't like it, but he sought God about it. And God said, yeah, give him a king.

So they gave him a king. And who is the king? Saul. Saul replaced Samuel as the leader of the nation.

Now, if you were doing a job and you like doing the job and you didn't want to be replaced and your replacement comes in and does a lousy job and crashes and burns, how do you feel? You feel great, don't you? You're like, yeah, and now they'll see. Now they see that they should have never fired me. Young whippersnapper.

They said I was too old for the job. They didn't know anything. Maybe now they'll come back and ask me to lead the nation again.

That might have been Samuel's attitude, but it wasn't. He was too concerned for the glory of God and too unconcerned about his own glory or prestige. No, it grieved Samuel and he cried out to the Lord all night.

It shows that Samuel has God's heart. It hurt God to reject Saul and it hurt God's prophet to see him rejected. We're close to God's heart when the things that grieve him grieve us and the things that please God, please us.

So now Samuel has to confront Saul. Verse 12. So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel saying Saul went to Carmel and indeed he set up a monument for himself and he's gone on around, passed by and he's gone down to Gilgal.

Then Samuel went to Saul and Saul said to him, Blessed are you of the Lord. I've performed the commandment of the Lord. What a picture this is.

First of all, here's Samuel, and as he's making the 15 mile journey from where he was to where Saul was, he hears along the way, Saul's got a little building brought in. He's built a monument for himself. Was Saul grieved over his sin? Was he sorry that he had done this? Not at all.

Instead, he set up a monument for himself. He's pleased with himself. He felt that he had done something good and he believed that he was totally justified in what he had done.

There's not the slightest bit of shame or guilt in Saul, even though he had directly disobeyed the Lord. And I think here we find a significant difference between Saul and the man we're going to meet in the next chapter, the next king of Israel, David. Saul and David both sinned as leaders of the nation, there's no doubt about that, but when David sinned, he was terribly ashamed and broken before God.

Saul, he built a monument to himself. What a difference in heart. It also shows us that Saul isn't the same humble man that he used to be.

You know, when Samuel first came to Saul and said, you're going to be the leader of the nation, Saul's heart was so humble, he said, who, me? What, me be the leader? What, you're talking to me? That's a humble heart. Saul doesn't have that humble heart anymore. Now he's setting a monument for himself.

When Samuel first wanted to anoint Saul as king over the nation, where was Saul? Up on the platform saying, here I am, your new king. He was hiding among the equipment. He doesn't have that same

humble heart anymore.

No, now he's zealous for his own honor. He's zealous for his own interest, but he's lukewarm where God is concerned. So it must really great in Samuel's ears.

Look at verse 13. Can you just picture this? Here's Samuel. He's tired.

He's weary. He's been walking 15 miles. He finally comes up to Saul.

And how does Saul greet him? I'm so sorry, Samuel. No. How does he greet him? Blessed are you of the Lord.

I have performed the commandment of the Lord. What a statement. How could Saul say such a thing? How could he come to the prophet of God with such boldness, such confidence and boast of his obedience? I'll tell you why.

Because of his pride, Saul is self deceived. Friends, he probably really believed what he told Samuel, he probably believed it himself, that he had performed the commandment of the Lord. Pride always leads us into self deception.

The French, if he had really done the commandment, he wouldn't have been so quick to boast about it. You know, true obedience doesn't parade itself. I'm so obedient.

That's not true obedience. So Samuel knew something was up in verse 14. Samuel said, What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen, which I hear? Again, I tend to think of the Bible in very dramatic terms and think of it like as if I was making a movie out of this and I know how I'd shoot this scene if I was the director.

I mean, there's Samuel and there's Saul and Samuel's tired and Saul there, you know, he's all happy and victorious and, you know, kind of cocky up there. Yeah, everything's going great. And he runs out to Samuel and says, Oh, Samuel, blessed are you of the Lord.

I perform the commandment of the Lord. And as you say those words, commandment of the Lord in the background, you can hear baaah. In the low of the oxen, Samuel looks at Saul with cold steel in his eyes.

He says, What then is this bleating of the sheep that I hear in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear? See, my friends, he confronted him. Saul was proud of his accomplishments. He set up a monument for himself.

He said in his own mind, at least honestly, I perform the commandment of the Lord. At the same time, the evidence of his disobedience could be heard even as he spoke. The livestock that God clearly commanded to be killed could be heard, seen and even smelt.

Even as Saul said, I have performed the commandment of the Lord. See, friends, that's how it works with pride and disobedience. It makes us blind or deaf to our sin.

What was completely obvious to Samuel was invisible to Saul. This is true of all of us to some degree. We all have blind spots of sin in our lives, and we need to constantly ask God to show us.

We need to sincerely pray the prayer of Psalm 139, where it says, Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. See if there's any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

It's so hard for us to see ourselves for what we are. I heard one man say to another, he said, Listen, if you only knew how obvious it was to everybody else, how greatly you're in the flesh right now, you'd be terribly embarrassed. I think that could be said of almost any Christian at some time or another.

We need to plead with God to reveal our blind spots to us. Now, look at what Saul responds to your Samuel statement, verse 15, and Saul said, Well, they have brought them from the Amalekites for the people spared the best of the sheep of the oxen to sacrifice the Lord, your God, and the rest we've utterly destroyed. Now, I don't know if you like to write the margin of your Bible.

If you do, right next to verse 15, lame excuse. Well, did you see that? First, he blames the people, not himself. Did you notice that in verse 15? Where are the sheep and where are the oxen from? Well, I'll tell you, Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites.

And then he says, The people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen. Oh, I didn't have anything to do with it. It was those people, Mr. Prophet.

Secondly, though he excludes himself from the disobedience, he includes himself in the obedience. Did you see that at the end of verse 15? The rest we have utterly destroyed. You know, the small point of obedience.

Well, I'm included in that. But all the disobedience, that's a they thing. Thirdly.

Saul justifies what was kept because of its fine quality. Well, we kept the best of the sheep and the ox. You know, we're very discerning about these things.

We looked at it very carefully. We just try to keep the best. And finally.

Perhaps worst of all, Saul claims to have done it for a spiritual reason. Well, we did it to sacrifice for the Lord, your God. We want to please the Lord, right? Well, God's going to be so honored with the sacrifice we bring to him.

Yes, God, be honored. God's not going to be honored with the sacrifice of disobedience. See, I think while Saul was saying this, it all made perfect sense to him and his proud self-deception.

But it meant nothing to God. It meant nothing to Samuel. In fact, it was worse than nothing.

It showed that Saul was desperately trying to excuse his sin by word games, by half truths. You almost expect him to say next. Well, it depends what is is.

Or it depends what you mean by alone. See, friends, the Sauls, they're still with us. It'd be easy for us to take a look at prominent leaders and say, well, you know, they're just like Saul.

But you know, if we'll be honest with ourselves, there's some of Saul in us, too, isn't there? Doesn't God want to deal with whatever there is in us that's like Saul? Excusing our sin, justifying our sin, blind to our sin. But you see, even as an excuse, Saul says something that's so powerful, so so clearly identifying with the real problem is that it's amazing. Did you notice that in verse 15? Let's read it again.

And Saul said they brought them from the Amalekites, who the people spared the best of the sheep of the oxen to sacrifice to the Lord, your God, not the Lord, our God, not the Lord, my God. Saul said, the Lord, your God, Samuel, he's your God. He's not my God.

You know who Saul's God was? Saul, that was Saul's God. No, the Lord was the God of Samuel, not Saul. In his pride, Saul had removed the Lord God from the throne of Israel.

So what does he say feebly at the end of verse 15? Well, the rest we've utterly destroyed. Yeah, we killed the rest. Do you know that, in fact, wasn't even true? As it turns out, Saul did not even do what he said he did.

There were still Amalekites left alive. How do we know? Because they pop up in the Bible after this point. First Samuel, chapter 27, chapter 28, excuse me, chapter 30.

And in second Samuel 8, King David is fighting the Amalekites. Matter of fact, many years from this point in the days of Esther, a man named Haman will come up and devise a plot to try to execute all the Jewish people in the days of Esther. You know who he was descended from? King Agab.

Finally, and maybe most ironically. You could look this up in second Samuel, chapter one. When Saul lost his life on the field of battle, you know who delivered the final thrust of the sword? An Amalekite.

Isn't that interesting? An Amalekite whom Saul was supposed to have dealt with way back in first Samuel 15. Friends, when we don't obey God completely, the leftover portion will surely come back and trouble us, if not kill us. So here's Saul making his lame excuse.

You see how Samuel replies. Look at verse 16. Then Samuel said to Saul, be quiet.

And I will tell you what the Lord said to me last night. And he said to him, speak on, on you know what the Lord had to say to Saul through the prophet Samuel. This is incredible stuff.

That we'll have to get to next week. Time escapes us this morning, but you got the scene here, don't you? Here, Samuel stops him in his tracks and says, that's it. Be quiet.

That's enough. Enough of your excuses. Now it's time for Saul to be quiet and to listen to the word of the Lord through Samuel.

But even in this, Saul can't shut up. You know, he shows his proud desire to retain some control. But at the end of verse 16 saying, speak on, I can just imagine that.

Well, speak on, prophet. What is it? The messenger of God needed Saul's permission to deliver the message? No. Saul's is fine.

Well, I'm in charge here. Go ahead. You may speak, prophet.

Oh, believe me, Samuel is going to speak. What he has to say is amazing and what he does is amazing. We'll take a look at that together next week.

What an interesting journey in the life of this man, Saul. From a place of being so humble, so submitted to God, to a place of real pride and disobedience and arrogance. We say, well, how did he go? You know what? When maybe it was success that spoiled him.

You know, I think that's a good debate. Maybe it was success that spoiled Saul. Maybe Saul really was a humble, obedient man and success changed him and made him proud and disobedient.

We can only guess. But my guess is that's not what happened. I think the seeds of pride and disobedience were in Saul's heart all along.

See, I don't think success changes a person so much as it reveals who they really are. And some people have very proud hearts, but you don't really see it as much because they're in pretty humble circumstances. But if you were to put them in more successful circumstances, you'd see the pride in their heart.

I think that's where Saul was all along. You see, at the beginning, it started out with that pride that just comes from a self-focus, a self-interest, an unwillingness to pour out your heart and your life towards God. But then as he became successful, he was able to display and show that pride more and more and more.

You know, you may be kind of satisfied this way and say, well, I'm certainly glad that I'm not like Saul. I'm a lot more like Samuel. We all wish we could be like that.

Don't we all want to identify ourselves with the heroes of the Bible? It's just the people who are sitting around us that are like the bad people in the Bible. Friends, even if you are in humble circumstances, there can be the real seeds of pride in your heart. I guess it all begins with that self-focus.

That's why God wants us to pour out our lives and our hearts for him and lay it down for him and make him first in our lives. Whether you're in humble circumstances or successful circumstances, you can do that before the Lord right now today. And guard your heart in the kind of blind pride that Saul had in his life.

I think that's a worthy prayer for us to pray together.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10638.mp3>

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