

(1 Samuel) When God Won't Talk to You

by David Guzik

When we push away God's wisdom and word, we'll start falling for anything and can get into a confused state of mind, as seen in the story of King Saul's spiritual decline.

Duration: 42:56

Scripture: 1 Samuel 28:3

Topics: "Spiritual Decline", "Gods Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of obeying what we already know to hear from the Lord. He warns against any connection with the occult or demonic, stating that it has no place in the life of a believer. The speaker also highlights the intertwining stories of David and Saul in the book of 1 Samuel, noting that while David was in a period of spiritual decline, Saul was in a spiritual freefall. The sermon concludes with the reminder that God's commands and judgments do not change over time, and that time does not atone for sin.

Transcript

One of the reasons I love the Bible, and I have to say this is one of the lesser reasons, the great reason I love it is because it's God's Word and He just speaks so marvelously and powerfully to me through it. But another reason why I love the Bible is that it's so well written. And through this book of 1 Samuel, we've seen the intertwining of the stories of David and Saul back and forth.

And last chapter we dealt with David, as David was frankly in a period of spiritual decline in his life, and he took refuge among the Philistines. But if David was in a spiritual decline, King Saul was in a spiritual freefall. He jumped from the airplane and the parachute isn't opening.

And if I could expand that metaphor a little bit more, he's about to hit the ground. And we'll talk about that now, 1 Samuel, chapter 28. We're going to begin at verse 3, because we discussed the first two verses of the chapter last week in connection with 1 Samuel 27.

1 Samuel, chapter 28, verse 3. Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land. Then the Philistines gathered together and came and encamped at Shunem.

So Saul gathered all Israel together and they encamped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. There are many facts given to us in these three verses.

First of all, we know that Samuel died. Of course, that's not a surprise to us, because earlier in the book of 1 Samuel, chapter 25, verse 1, we're also told that Samuel died, but we're told this again because it's going to be relevant to the events of this chapter. We're also told that in times past, Saul, as the king of Israel, had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land.

And that was a good thing that King Saul did. You know, mediums and spiritists, those people who are practitioners of the occult, have really no place among God's people. Now, I don't believe that in America we should pass laws against palm readers and psychics and tarot card readers and things like that.

I don't believe it's the job of the government to prohibit those things, but I think it is the job of Christians to have nothing to do with those practices. Nothing at all. You can see in Leviticus chapter 19, Leviticus chapter 20, Deuteronomy chapter 18, where all of these practices are very clearly prohibited.

And Saul, as a good king of Israel, at least in that aspect, did a good thing. He put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land. Friends, this has a very direct relevance to our day and age.

You know, things such as tarot cards, palm readers, horoscopes, Ouija boards, access to psychics. Friends, that has no place among God's people. No place at all.

Those psychic friends, they're not your friends. They're just trying to make a buck off of you. And I don't care if it's Dion Warwick or anybody else tooting their horn.

They have nothing to do with them. It's a sad thing when God's people look to psychics for guidance when God wants to guide us. When God wants to lead us.

We don't need to be influenced and spoken to by these demonic things or things that have associations with the occult. And I would say it's worth it for you this morning, and this may be exactly the reason why God's brought you here today, is you may need to go back to your house and take a look. Well, take a look at your game shelf.

Maybe it's right there between Monopoly and Sorry. You've got the Ouija board there. And I tell you, go home and get rid of it.

Don't give it to the goodwill. Throw it away. Get rid of it.

Destroy it. Say, well, you know, when we were at this party, we did the Ouija board and it really spoke. That's even more reason to be frightened.

Because that's not the spirit of God speaking through the Ouija board, my friend. At best, it's or should I say in its most powerful way, it's a demonic spirit. Maybe you have books.

Maybe you have things in your home. Statues or things that have an association with the occult. You're a child of God.

It's a powerful thing for you to do to say, I have no attachment to these things. I get rid of them in the name of Jesus. It was a good thing that Saul did to put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land.

But if we notice here in verse four, something else happened. Samuel died, mediums and spiritists put out of the land, but the Philistines came together for battle and they attacked the Israelites. If you study the geography of this attack, you find that the Philistines were making a very deep incursion into Israelite territory.

This wasn't a little border skirmish. This was an attempt to really do some damage against the Israelites. And so the Philistines were gathered at Shunem.

And Saul responded by bringing his army up to the place at Gilboa. And there they are, one army at one place, one army at another place. And it's time to do battle.

And where's the heart of Saul? Did you notice that in verse five, when Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly. You know, at one time, Saul was a man of great courage. He was a man who was obeying God and at the best of his ability, walking in the spirit of God.

And in those times, Saul had courage. When the Philistines came against him, he'd come against them again with even more strength, with a confidence in the Lord. But not now.

Sin and compromise has robbed Saul of his courage, has robbed Saul of his strength. He's in rebellion against God. He knows that the strength of the army of Israel isn't in swords, it isn't in horses, it isn't in chariots.

It's in the power of the Lord as God. But he's rejecting the Lord as God. He's in rebellion to the Lord.

And so Saul has good reason to be afraid. And so what's he going to do? What should you do when you're afraid, when you don't know what to do? Well, you should seek the Lord, right? That's what he does. Look at verse 6. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.

Wow. Saul's seeking God. He goes to bed at night and he says, Lord, just please speak to me in a dream, God.

Please speak to me in a dream. Wakes up, the Lord didn't speak to him in a dream. He goes to the priest and he says, Speak to me by the Urim and the Thummim.

These are these strange articles. We believe there are a couple of stones that the Lord would somehow speak to the priest through these stones and speak to me through the Urim and the Thummim. God wouldn't speak to him through the Urim and the Thummim.

He'd go to the prophets. I don't know. He'd call up, dial a prophet.

This is King Saul. Any messages for me? No. No messages for you, King Saul.

Nothing for you. The prophets have nothing to say to you. God wouldn't speak to Saul.

Now, on the one hand, we might think this is unfair. Lord, don't you say in your word, Seek and you'll find. Ask and it'll be given to you.

Knock and the door will be opened. God, it seems unfair for you not to speak to Saul. But no, my friends, it's completely in consistency with God's standards and with God's practices.

You see, because Saul was not listening to God, and yet he comes to God and he says, speak to me. Saul was coming to God like this, with his hands over his ears, so to speak, spiritually, and saying, Lord, won't you please speak to me? Because God had already spoken to Saul, and Saul wasn't listening. God had spoken to Saul and told Saul, I'm going to take the kingdom from you.

And if Saul was a man of God and a man of obedience, he would have resigned his throne. He wouldn't do it. God had told Saul, I don't want you to go out and kill David.

He's my man. Saul wouldn't listen. So Saul wasn't listening to what the Lord was already saying to him.

So God was saying, I'm not going to tell you anything more. And it's a scary thing to be in this place where God isn't speaking to you anymore. You know, even when the Lord's rebuking you, even when the Lord is chastising you, at least he's talking to you, right? Now Saul won't even get that from the Lord.

Now the Lord just isn't speaking to him at all. It's a frightening place to be. And Saul does completely the wrong thing in his fear.

Look at verse 7. Then Saul said to his servants, Find me a woman who's a medium that I may go to her and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, In fact, there's a woman who's a medium at Endor. So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes and he went.

And two men went with him. And they came to the woman by night. And he said, Please conduct a seance for me and bring up for me the one I shall name to you.

Well, Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of land, right? But of course, there were a few who slipped through his fingers. And so he asks his staff, Hey, I'm looking for a medium. I'm looking for a spiritist.

Do you guys know of anybody? If his staff were faithful men of God, they would have said, Forget you, Saul. We've got nothing to do with this. But they were too compliant to Saul and they helped him along the way.

And they said, Well, we've heard that there is a medium out at Endor. So Saul says, Fine, let's go. He disguises himself.

And then there's a knock on the door of the medium at night. She opens up the door and Saul says, Hi, I want you to conduct a seance for me. And you know what a medium is, don't you? Traditionally, this woman has been called the witch of Endor.

I believe that's how she's referred to in the old King James Version. The biblical word really is more the idea of a medium. The Hebrew word and the English word medium are very similar in their idea, although they approach the idea in a different way.

It's the idea of what you may be familiar from the New Age kind of talk or movement of a channeler. Someone who's just kind of the voice of a spirit from the dead. Now, people today, you know, New Age folks and such as that pretend to be channelers.

You know, they say on the channel, there's one gal, Jay-Z Knight, for years made a career off of channeling the voice of a lord from Atlantis known as Ramtha. And, you know, she would get a funny voice and a funny expression on her face and speak the wisdom of Ramtha from Atlantis. You know, the

people they channel are always these exotic people from these far away wonderful places, you know.

I mean, it's never a guy from Cleveland from 150 years ago. You know, it's Atlantis or, you know, I built the pyramids or something like that, you know. But the Hebrew word for a medium has the idea of a channeler and it enforces the idea of the sound that the channeler makes.

It actually means kind of mumbling or speaking in a strange, hollow sound. Now, the English word medium has a good idea of the channeler too because the channeler also is the person who stands in between the dead and the living and brings communication between the dead and the living, doesn't he? The medium speaks and, you know, he's the one bridging the gap between the world beyond and this world. And so that's who Saul sought.

And he wanted a seance. And he said, speak to me now. I want to hear.

And so the question is, logically, take a look here in verse 9. Then the woman said to him, look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life to cause me to die? And Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying, as the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing. Now, this is where it gets funny, isn't it? First of all, you know, if you couldn't make this up, if you were making this up in the Bible, you just couldn't do it this good.

The woman says, look, is this a sting operation? Are you the cops? You know, Saul's been putting the mediums and the spiritists out of land and I don't want to be caught up in that. And Saul says, oh, no, no, no. As the Lord lives, you shall not be prosecuted.

Isn't that ironic? Saul is swearing by the name of the Lord to an occultic medium so that she'll be persuaded to conduct a seance so that he can hear from the Lord, who he hasn't been listening to because he's in disobedience to the Lord. Are you confused by that? So is Saul. He really is.

This is a man not in his right mind. You know, when you push away the Lord, when you push away the Lord's wisdom, when you push away God's word, you'll start falling for anything. And it's easy to get in a confused state of mind.

And that's exactly where Saul is. You just scratch your head and he swears, as the Lord lives. Well, Saul, if the Lord lives, why don't you seek him and repent instead of getting on with this business, with the medium? There's no point in this for you.

And so she says, OK, well, let's go on here. Verse 11, And the woman said, Whom shall I bring up for you? And he said, Bring up Samuel for me. Now, this is interesting.

Why Samuel? Again, Saul's confused here. He's remembering on the one hand how Samuel was such a good friend and mentor to him in his early days. You know, when Saul followed the guidance of Samuel, what a beautiful work God did in his life.

But he's forgetting the later days when Saul started rejecting the Lord and Samuel rebuked him as strongly as he rebuked anybody. And so he says, I want to see Samuel. I miss Samuel.

Maybe Samuel will speak to me. The other prophets wouldn't speak to me. No living prophet will speak to me.

Dreams won't speak to me. The Urm and the Thummel won't speak to me. Call up Samuel in a seance.

This is a cultic medium. And maybe he'll speak the word of the Lord to me. I know it's confusing, but it gets even more confusing.

Look at verse 12. When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul saying, Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul.

And the king said to her, Do not be afraid. What did you see? And the woman said to Saul, I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth. So he said to her, What is his form? And she said, An old man is coming up and he's covered with a mantle.

And Saul perceived that it was Samuel and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down. Now, this is where it really starts getting weird. First of all, what was this? I mean, this is a very challenging question.

Many people, you know, we do a question and answer thing every once in a while on a Wednesday night or at some service where we'll have people write down questions on a slip of paper and they bring them up to me and I'll just answer them. Questions from the Bible or about the church or whatever. And this is a question that comes up from time to time.

What was going on in 1 Samuel chapter 28 with this medium at Endor? Was it really Samuel that appeared? Was this something that was just a demonic impersonation of Samuel? Was this sent by the Lord? And I'll tell you that I believe that this was sent by the Lord. I don't believe this was a demonic imitation. I don't believe that this was just a conjuring up or a deception by the medium.

And I'll tell you why. First of all, the medium doesn't seem to be in on this. She's terrified when Samuel comes up.

Now, she was familiar with dealing with demonic spirits. She was familiar with the things of the occult. But the things of the Holy Spirit of God, I don't think she had any familiarity with it.

She was terrified when Samuel came up. Secondly, the most plain reading of the text says that it's Samuel. Not that it's some demonic apparition of Samuel.

I mean, it calls it Samuel. Samuel speaks for himself. And if you'll notice what Samuel says, and we'll take a look at that in the following verses, Samuel is speaking forth the word of the Lord.

Finally, when I look at this, I scratch my head and I say, I don't see what possible advantage Satan could have gained in this if it was him doing this work. So I have to believe that this was actually Samuel coming forth from the realm of the dead, coming to speak to Saul in this unique occasion. Now, I know what some people say.

They say, no, David, it can't be. Because the Bible says that once you go to the world beyond, you can't come back. I mean, there's no communication or transportation or whatever you want to say between the world beyond and this world.

It just doesn't work like that. Well, I say that's right. That's correct.

99.9999999% of the time. But there's exceptions. Can I give you one exception that I know for sure is an exception? When Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

One time Jesus led His disciples up to a mountain and there He was and He was talking and all of a sudden Jesus just started shining out in a glorious, radiant light and all of a sudden there appeared with Him, speaking with Him, Moses and Elijah. Now, that doesn't normally happen, my friends. But God allowed it for that reason, for that purpose.

I believe God allowed it for the same idea, for His same purpose here in 1 Samuel chapter 28. So God sent Samuel to deliver a message to King Saul. I want you to notice something.

Samuel isn't talking to the medium. He's talking to Saul. As a matter of fact, that's why I think and if you notice, this might have struck you.

Verse 12, when Samuel comes up, instantly the medium knows that this disguised man in her presence is Saul. How does she know that? Well, it's just speculation, I suppose, but I could give you what I think. When we get to heaven, we'll check this one out in the video library and watch it together and think if it happened like I think it did.

I think that when Samuel came up, he called out to Saul. When Samuel appeared, he said, Hey, Saul, why'd you call me? And the woman said, You're Saul? And of course, now she's doubly terrified. She's terrified because, number one, it's Samuel.

Number two, this is Saul. This was a sting operation. Now I'm really busted.

You know, not only do I got the king of Israel, but I got the greatest prophet of my generation here. Here's Samuel. So she's really afraid.

If she had reason to be afraid, so much more did Saul. Look at what Samuel says to Saul beginning at verse 15. Now Samuel said to Saul, Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up? Isn't that great? I mean, I just love that.

Why are you calling me? I was having a good time where I was at. You interrupted me. Now, we should point out something, and this is as good a place to point it out as any.

Properly speaking, Samuel was not in heaven. The Bible teaches us, and part of where it teaches us this is in the story that Jesus told of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke chapter 16. But the Bible teaches us that before the finished work of Jesus Christ, the righteous dead did not go to heaven.

Do you know why they didn't go to heaven? Because the work of Jesus Christ wasn't finished on the cross. Their sins were not paid for yet. It's like they were covered with IOUs, but the IOUs weren't cashed in yet at the cross.

And so they weren't able to go to heaven yet. But the Bible does say that they went to a place, and again, Jesus describes this in Luke chapter 16, into a place of blessing and comfort known as Abraham's bosom. A place where you would be with the righteous dead, such as Abraham, and enjoy a life of pleasure and comfort.

You'd just be waiting for Jesus to finish his work on the cross. Now, close to this place of blessing and comfort was the place where the unrighteous dead went. And that's a place of torment and torture.

Matter of fact, in Luke chapter 16, they even said that at least certain times or certain places, they could see from one place to the other. And so Samuel didn't properly come from heaven. He came from this

place of the dead, where both the righteous and the unrighteous dead were there in general, but they were in two different places.

So, for that reason, Samuel says, Hey, I was in a place of comfort and blessing. Why did you disturb me? Why did you bring me here? Look at Saul's answer, verse 15. And Saul answered, I am deeply distressed, for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams.

Therefore, I have called you that you should reveal to me what I should do. Now, there's a couple things that we need to pay close attention here. First of all, Saul's very painful words, God has departed from me.

You know, many times as Christians, we have an experience where we feel that God has departed from us. You know what I mean? You feel that God is very distant, very far away. Most of the time, that's just a feeling, isn't it? God's right there.

He's there with you. And you're just having a feeling. You're just being tempted by this feeling.

And God's right there all the time. But you feel that He's departed from you. Do you know how tough it is to have that time when you feel like God has departed from you? Now, what if it was real? When Saul says, God has departed from me, he's right.

Saul has cemented his heart in disobedience and rebellion and rejection against God, so God has departed from him. G. Campbell Morgan said, God never departs from a man until the man has departed from him. Then in the interest of righteousness, God is against that man.

You see, Saul was right in saying God has departed from me, but that's not where it started. If Saul was really being honest, he would have told Samuel, Samuel, I've departed from God! I want to come back to Him. But that's not what he's asking for.

As a matter of fact, if you look, and this is the other very interesting thing about Saul's words in verse 15. Do you see what he says at the very end of verse 15? He says that you should reveal to me what I should do. What do you mean what you should do? The Philistines have come against you in battle.

They're trying to overwhelm the land of Israel with their army. What do you mean what do you do? You battle against them. Saul's been in this place ten times before.

He knows what to do. And the real critical issue here is that Saul is, even though he's asking for guidance in something that's very obvious, that's not really what he wants. He doesn't want to know what to do.

He wants reassurance that everything's going to be okay. He wants reassurance that he's going to win the battle. This is where the real struggle of his heart is.

He feels so far from God, so separated from God, that he says, give me some assurance, some peace, some comfort to my troubled mind. I know I have to go out on the field of battle tomorrow. I'm not asking you to tell me that, Samuel.

But I want some assurance. I want a word from a prophet. I want a word from a man of God that it's all going to be okay.

Samuel has no such word for him. Look at how Samuel replies in verse 16. Therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day.

Wow. See, my friends, some 15 or 20 years before this, Saul was commanded by God to make war against the people of Amalek and to carry out a very unique war of judgment where everything was to be destroyed. And Saul didn't do it.

Saul kept back some of the things for himself. Saul preserved some of those things. And because he kept back some of those things, that was like the last straw of disobedience for the Lord.

And the Lord said, in response to Saul's disobedience with the war with Amalek, He said, I am going to tear the kingdom away from you, Saul. Now this was some 15 or 20 years ago. And do you know what Samuel's basic message is to Saul? He's saying, Saul, God hasn't changed His mind.

He said this 15 or 20 years ago and time has not changed God's mind. Do you understand that principle? Time does not change God's mind. Time does not atone for sin.

Now, among people, it can. And I suppose that's a good thing. We have a saying.

It's not a biblical saying. But we see it. Time heals all wounds.

You know, that's water under the bridge. And as far as human relations go, well, I think that's a good thing, don't you? You know, the years have gone on. We should forgive and forget.

Let's just move beyond that. As far as human relations go, that may be fine. But that's not how it is with God.

You know, God dwells in eternity. God lives outside of time. And there's no statute of limitations on sin with God.

You can't come up to God and say, well, you know, Lord, that was a long time ago that I did that. You'll say, so? Well, time does not forgive sin. It doesn't atone for it.

Only the blood of Jesus Christ can atone for sin. I would counsel you to think about that this morning. Maybe you're one of those people who, you know, right now your life's pretty together.

And, you know, you live a pretty good life right now. I mean, as far as you're not a notorious sinner. But you look back on your younger days.

Oh, I sowed my wild oats back then, you see. Wow, I, you know, boy. Now, can I ask you, you may look at your life right now and pat yourself on the back and say, I don't have much of a need for God right now.

What about your earlier days? What's going to forgive that sin before God? Say, well, that was a long time ago. Yeah, so? Doesn't matter before God. Time is not going to atone for your sin.

The blood of Jesus can. It'll wipe away every sin that you committed. Past, present and future for that matter.

But friends, that's only the thing that'll wipe away your sin. But Saul wasn't getting that message and Samuel has to come and remind him of it. He says, listen, it's just as the Lord spoke to me and he spoke to me the voice of the Lord.

Samuel, you've got to get this message. Now, there's one other thing here that I think is very interesting. My hope is that it's interesting to at least one other person here this morning, because I found it fascinating.

It's the way Samuel speaks in verse 17. Look at it again. It says, and the Lord has done for himself as he spoke by me, for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand.

Now, Samuel is quoting almost word for word what he told Saul back in 1 Samuel 15. I told you about this whole occasion with Amalek and how he was supposed to battle against him and Saul didn't. And some 15 to 20 years ago, that was the last straw for God and he said, I'm getting rid of you, Saul.

I'm tearing the kingdom away from you. Let me tell you how that happened. Samuel rebuked Saul for his sin and Saul was desperate, so he reached out after Samuel and grabbed onto Samuel's robe.

Samuel wore a distinctive robe as a prophet and a priest. As he grabbed onto the robe and as Samuel was moving away, the robe tore. Isn't that embarrassing? You just kind of grab a guy to stop him and all of a sudden you're ripping his robe.

Samuel turned back and he looked at that torn robe and he said, Saul, so the Lord has torn the kingdom away from you. What a powerful picture, right? Torn robe, torn kingdom. Now, look at it here in verse 17.

He says, for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand using the exact same picture. And you say, well, what's left? Well, go back to verse 14 where it says, the medium is describing the appearance of Samuel and she says, an old man is coming up. By the way, I don't know if Samuel appreciated that.

An old man is coming up. You know, he might have said, listen, medium, you don't look so great yourself. An old man is coming up and he's covered with a mantle.

You know what a mantle is, right? It's the thing that goes above the fireplace, right? So Samuel's carrying one. No, no, no. A mantle is just kind of a biblical word or a spiritual sounding word for a robe.

As a matter of fact, if you go back to 1 Samuel 15 and see where it says that Samuel had his robe torn by Saul, the same word for robe in Hebrew there in 1 Samuel 15 is the exact same word for mantle right here. I scratched my head why the translators translated mantle here instead of robe. I don't know why.

Because it's the exact same word for robe. Well, here's my point. I believe that when Samuel appeared before the medium and Saul, he appeared in that same torn robe to give a picture that would say to Saul and say to the medium, the kingdom's torn away from you.

My robe is still torn. Time hasn't atoned for this. It's still torn away from you.

Both by the words and by the illustration here. Look at it. It's torn away from you, Saul.

That's a heavy message to deliver, isn't it? Well, he's going to add to it here. Look at verse 19. If you think that's bad enough, look at what he says in verse 19.

Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines. Saul, tomorrow you're going to die.

You're going to be with me. Not in a place of comfort, in that general place of the dead. Saul's going to be in a place of torment.

He's going to go to the land beyond the very next day. I am going to suppose, and I might be wrong on this, but it's a fair supposition, I guess, that Saul was the kind of guy who always thought that he would have a lot of time to get right with God. I mean, why bother about it right now, right? He'd always do it tomorrow, the next day.

Now he knows there's really not going to be much of a next day, is there? Tomorrow he's going to die. The problem with living your life saying, I'll repent tomorrow, get right with God tomorrow, I don't need to do it today, it's not urgent today, it's not urgent today, is that first of all, you don't know when your last day is going to be, do you? But Saul did know. But does he get right with God? No, he doesn't.

Let's see how it ends here, verse 20. And immediately Saul fell full length on the ground and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him for he'd eaten no food all day or all night.

You would think he would repent right here, but he doesn't. I think this is one of the great reasons why God sent Samuel, was to give Saul one last chance to repent. Would to God that everybody would have a 24 hour warning before they die.

If you knew that you had one day left to live, I assume you'd spend part of that time getting right with God, don't you? Saul won't. He's sorry, he's grieved, he's stricken, but he's not repentant. And then look at the only person who can comfort him, it's the medium, verse 21.

And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was severely troubled and said to him, look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice and I've put my life in your hands and heeded the words which you spoke to me. Now therefore, please, heed also the voice of your maidservant and let me set a piece of bread before you and eat that you may have strength when you go on your way. But he refused.

And he said, I will not eat. But his servants together with the woman urged him and he heeded their voice. So he arose from the ground and sat on the bed.

Now the woman had a fattened calf in the house and she hastened to kill it and she took flour and kneaded it and baked unleavened bread from it. So she brought it before Saul and his servants and they ate. Then they arose and went away that night.

Saul resigned to his fate, leaves that night, and it seems that none of it really registered with Saul. He ate and he left ready to face his fate the next day. Well, if Saul never saw what he should do in light of this, we don't have to be like him.

Let me wrap this up by taking a look at some quick points and some things I think we can really gather from this lesson. First of all, I think we've seen together here this morning that to hear from the Lord, we should begin by obeying what we already know to be His will. Isn't that a great place to start? You want to hear God's voice? Then listen to what He's already told you.

Secondly, we should reject any connection with the occult or with spiritists or with the demonic. That has no place in the life of a believer in Jesus Christ. Thirdly, I think we've seen through this that when we close our ears to God, He'll find unusual and maybe uncomfortable ways to speak to us.

That's what He did for Saul, right? Certainly an unusual way by bringing Samuel back from the dead. Next, we should understand and appreciate the reality of the world beyond this present world. I need to speak on that just for a moment because it's an important point.

Samuel coming and speaking to Saul, if it demonstrates anything, it demonstrates that Samuel wasn't dead. He was alive. And he just moved locations.

Do you realize, my friends, that there really is a world beyond and that it makes total sense for us to prepare for it? And we need to reckon with that. I'm sure you heard on the news in some way or another this week about the terrible tragedy in Atlanta earlier this week where a man with murderous rage first he killed his wife, then he killed his two children, then he went on a rampage and shot up a lot of business people. Terrible, terrible thing.

And I'm wondering if any of you read in the newspaper or saw on the news his ransom note. Now, I saw a few excerpts on the television, but when I read the full excerpt of the letters and the ransom note that he left, not a ransom note, a suicide note, when I read the full excerpt of the newspaper, I was very surprised because I saw that he referred to God twice in the letter and how he referred to God. Did you notice it? He called God Jehovah.

Now, I may be proven wrong on this and I am speculating to some degree, but it would certainly make sense to me that the guy probably had some kind of Jehovah's Witness background. Not many people in our modern age refer to God as Jehovah unless they're Jehovah's Witnesses. And I think that if this man had a Jehovah's Witness connection, that it played into part of his thinking and what he did and why he did it.

You say, how can you say that? Jehovah's Witnesses don't tell people to go out and kill people. Of course they don't. And I wouldn't want to apply that for a moment.

But let me tell you something that Jehovah's Witnesses do teach. They teach that there is no hell. That if you're wicked, you're unrighteous.

And when you pass from this earth, you just die. You just cease to exist. Let me tell you something.

That man who committed that horrible crime, he wishes he didn't exist right now. And maybe it was in part the deception of thinking, hey, what's the big deal? I'll just go out and do all this. I'll vent all my rage and then I'll just kill myself.

And then what's the price to pay? He just ceased to exist. My friend, that's not such a terrible price to pay. And it might have made sense to this man.

This man should listen to the truth of 1 Samuel chapter 28. That there really is a world beyond. And I'll tell you something.

He knows it right now. He might be in the same place of torment that King Saul is in right now. Because there really is a heaven and there really is a hell.

And I know that many people who stand behind a pulpit like this are hesitant to talk about that. They don't want to be characterized as a hellfire and brimstone preacher. They don't want to say, well, you're trying to scare people into heaven.

I don't want to scare anybody into heaven. I want to scare you out of hell. Let the Lord love you into heaven.

I think we just need to think clearly about this. If there really is a hell, it matters everything that you don't go there. Now, if there's not really a hell, then let's just give all this up and play bingo, right? What does it matter? But if there really is one, then it matters a lot.

You can't say that there is a hell, but it matters just a little bit. No, if there is one, it really matters. We see the terrible fruit from denying that.

I think we've also seen in this morning's study that the test of any spiritual experience or revelations, how it measures against God's Word. When Samuel came and spoke, he spoke God's Word. He just repeated what the Lord had already spoke before.

We've also seen this morning that God's Word stays the same. Time does not change God's mind. You know, I think about it, and if you notice here in verse 24, where the woman killed a fatted calf, what did that register in your mind? Remember that phrase, the fatted calf? That's from the parable, the prodigal son, isn't it? When the prodigal son came home, they were celebrating, and the dad said, let's throw on a great big feast.

We'll have the feast and bring out the fatted calf. This is great. There the fatted calf was a meal of celebration.

Not here. This is like directly the opposite. You know what this meal is? This is like the last meal of a condemned man the day before he dies.

Saul's on death row, and he won't repent, but he should. Now, as we leave this chapter, there might be a few people here, and you probably wouldn't even say it because it doesn't sound very right to say among a bunch of Christians, but you might say within yourself, man, that's pretty neat. I mean, Saul actually got to hear from somebody from the world beyond.

Yeah, it was freaky, and yeah, what he said was scary, and all that. But man, that must have been a fine tingling experience, right? To hear from somebody speak to you from the world beyond. Wow! Do you want to hear from somebody from the world beyond? God sent somebody to speak to you from the world beyond.

His name is Jesus Christ. And He came and He spoke to you. You don't need to listen to anybody else.

You don't need to go to the seance and conjure up Aunt Sally or anybody else. Jesus Christ has come to you from the world beyond, and He's here to speak to you through His Word, and through His heart, and through His shepherd's voice. You can hear from Him.

And you know, Jesus has given us reason to know that He has triumphed over every spiritual foe. We don't have to walk around being afraid of spiritists or mediums or any of the stuff they can do. Now, I'll tell you one thing.

If there's anything I know in this chapter, I know that that medium did not call up Saul. Because no spirit medium has any power over a saint of God like that. Do you think Saul was going to jump from his place of comfort and blessing because some spirit medium called for him? No way! No saint of God, no prophet of

God is like that.

And friends, the same way with us. We don't have to live in this paralyzing fear because of demonic powers out there. We can have a peace and comfort and the triumph of Jesus Christ.

We should be aware of them. We should be wary of them. But we don't have to have this abject fear that Saul showed.

No, instead, we can know that we have a triumph in Jesus Christ that can conquer over all of that. Let's pray right now and thank the Lord.

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