

# (1 Samuel) How to Be Rejected by God

by David Guzik

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*David Guzik's sermon explores Saul's disobedience to God, emphasizing the dangers of pride and the importance of a surrendered heart in obedience.*

**Duration:** 37:47

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:3, 1 Samuel 15:10-27, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Disobedience And Pride", "Godly Humility"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the tragic relationship between Saul and Samuel. Despite being mentored and anointed by Samuel, Saul never reconciled with him. Saul tries to excuse his sin and blame it on the people, justifying one sin with another. Samuel confronts Saul and tells him that God has torn the kingdom of Israel away from him and given it to someone better. The preacher emphasizes the importance of not living in fear of people and the consequences of holding onto pride. The sermon is based on 1 Samuel chapter 15.

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## Transcript

1 Samuel, chapter 15. Now last week, when we began in the chapter, we saw that the prophet Samuel had a message to deliver to King Saul. And the message was simply this, that God wanted to bring his judgment upon a people known as the Amalekites.

And when God brought his judgment upon the Amalekites, he wanted Saul and the army of Israel to come and utterly destroy the Amalekites, men, women, and children, to completely wipe them out. Now, there's some issues involved in that, with any human being used as such a violent instrument of the Lord's judgment. And if you're interested in that whole issue, I'd really recommend to you the tape from last week, because we talked about that.

But in any regard, God told Saul and the army of Israel to go and utterly wipe out the Amalekites. Everything that they had and everything that they were. And Saul went forth and attacked the Amalekites, but he stopped short of doing everything that God told him to do.

He spared the king of the Amalekites, a man named Agag. And then he also allowed the soldiers to keep the best of the livestock, the sheep and the oxen, and to take that back. God didn't want anybody to benefit from this war of judgment.

Well, that's where it comes to us, and we'll get a running start into the text that we're really going to focus on and start at 1 Samuel, chapter 15, verse 10. Now, the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, I greatly regret that I've 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.

So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel saying, Saul went to Carmel and indeed he has set up a monument for himself and he's gone on around, passed by and gone down to Gilgal. Then Samuel went to Saul and Saul said to him, Blessed are you of the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord.

When in fact, he hadn't at all. On to verse 14, but Samuel said, What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen, which I hear? And Saul said they have brought them from the Amalekites for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen to sacrifice to the Lord your God and the rest we have utterly destroyed. 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.

Well, that's sort of a cliffhanger that we left it at last week. Let's go on and see what the prophet Samuel had to say to King Saul beginning at verse 17. Samuel said, When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel and did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel? Now, the Lord sent you on a mission and said, go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites and fight against them until they are consumed.

Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you swoop down on the spoil and do evil in the sight of the Lord? The Lord sent King Saul on a mission and Saul didn't obey it. He told him to utterly destroy the Amalekites and Saul did not do it. Now, that act of direct disobedience was the most apparent of Saul's sin.

You take a look at that. OK, fine. God told him to do something.

He didn't do it. That's disobedience. That's sin against the Lord.

However, you should understand that even though that was the apparent sin, there was something below the surface that was even worse in Saul. And that was pride. It's as if Saul was one of those weeds that you have in your garden and you see a bit of it up above the surface, you know, a little plant up above this thing.

I got to pull that thing out. And you go to pull it out and you understand that that thing has a root in it that's about five times as long as the plant itself. Well, what you could see on Saul was the direct act of disobedience, the root that nourished the disobedience was pride.

And that's what God was dealing with there in verse 17. Did you see what Samuel said? He said, when you were little in your own eyes, were you not the head of the tribes of Israel? Saul, we can't say that of you anymore. We can't say of you any longer that you're little in your own eyes.

You're big in your own eyes now. My friends, there is a spiritual principle at work here, and I think it's just as certain as anything else in life. Is that when you are little in your own eyes, then the Lord can be big in your eyes.

When you are big in your own eyes, then the Lord has to be little in your eyes. And there was a time when Saul was little in his own eyes and the Lord was big in his eyes. But that time isn't here any longer.

Now he is big in his own eyes and the Lord is little. If you want to see how this pride has a work in Saul's heart, take a look at Saul's response here at verse 20. I mean, Samuel has just confronted him.

He's molded him. He says, here, here, here's your sin right in front of your face. And look at Saul's response in verse 20.

And Saul said to Samuel, but I have obeyed the voice of the Lord and gone on the mission which the Lord sent me and brought back again king of the king of Amalek. I've utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took up the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed to sacrifice the Lord your God.

And he'll go. Hello, Saul. He says, look, I've destroyed all the Amalekites, I've obeyed the voice of the Lord.

Look, here's King Agag. Wait a minute. He's an Amalekite, isn't he? Well, yeah, but.

I have to believe that when Saul said this, he was speaking and I'm going to put parentheses around this. He was speaking honestly. Honestly, because he felt that he really had obeyed the voice of the Lord, but his problem was that his pride had deceived him.

Pride has such a strong work of self-deception in our hearts that it's frightening when we're given over to pride. We deceive ourselves. We think we're one way when we're really the other.

I'm sure Saul really thought, well, I did obey the Lord, didn't I? Even when Agag was standing right beside him, even when you could hear and see and smell the sheep and the oxen that the people spared because Saul allowed them to. Pride has an amazing power to deceive us. I think the ultimate example of this is Satan himself.

There is not a creature filled with pride more than Satan himself, and I think that he's the most self-deceived creature in the whole universe. You ever wonder sometimes, why does Satan keep with it? I mean, hasn't he read the Bible? Doesn't he know he loses in the end? Why not just give up? It's so futile. It's so stupid.

Why does he keep with it? I think for this simple reason, I think he's self-deceived. I think he would, so to speak, honestly say to us, I think I have a chance. I think I really can derail God's plan.

I really think I can have a go at it. Maybe I can win. You and I, you're nuts.

There's not a chance. But he's self-deceived. We can deceive ourselves, too.

We can deceive ourselves and congratulate ourselves and tell ourselves that everything's fine when it's not. We can have massive blind spots to sin. And Saul could sit here and he could say, I've utterly destroyed the Amalekites when he had not.

I mean, obviously, Agag was standing right there. Could it get worse? Well, yeah, I think it does. Look at verse 21.

Not only is he self-deceived, but then he starts blaming the people. But the people took up the plunder, sheep and oxen, and the best of the things that should have been ill should have been destroyed. Oh, yeah, I wanted to obey the law.

I obey you, Lord. But it was those people. They just, oh, they don't serve you, God.

Saul, first of all, you set the example by compromising by saving King Agag. The people thought, well, I guess it's a day to compromise. Let's do that.

And secondly, what are you going to tell us, Saul, that you don't have control over your own army? You know, it's so interesting that just in the previous chapter, Saul made a vain and a foolish command that on a particular day of battle, no one in the army of Israel should eat anything, that it should be a day of fasting. This wasn't a command prompted by God. This was a foolish, arrogant command by Saul.

And Saul was very zealous in making sure that command was obeyed. When it came to his own will, Saul could be really pumped up, really zealous. But when it came to God's will, it was, well, the people are going to do what the people are going to do.

Who can stop them? No, Saul, you're responsible. And so Samuel is going to reply to Saul's very weak repentance, a very poor excuse, I should say, in verses 20 and 21 by what he pronounces in verse 22. Then Samuel said, Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to heed than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as the iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he also has rejected you from being king. You get the scene here, friends, you get the scenario.

Here's Saul, he's got all these sheep and oxen that have been spared from the Amalekites. And he says, let's sacrifice them to the Lord. Come on, Saul, let's get together and Samuel, join with me and we'll have a sacrifice to the Lord.

Right. God will really be pleased with the sacrifice that we make. But it would have been a sacrifice of disobedience.

These sheep, these oxen should have never been spared to begin with. So what does Saul do? He says, come on, Samuel, let's have a sacrifice. And Samuel says, no, to obey is better than sacrifice.

God doesn't delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much he does in obeying the voice of the Lord. Friends, one could make a thousand sacrifices unto God. You could work a thousand hours for God's service or give millions of dollars to his work.

But all of those sacrifices mean little. If there's not a surrendered heart to God shown by simple obedience. I want you to know that the issue here isn't some kind of legalistic, mechanical obedience.

The issue here is a surrendered heart to God. Oh, sure, it's easier perhaps to give something or to do something or to perform something than it is to really surrender your heart to God. And a surrendered heart to God will show itself in obedience.

Oh, I don't mean to imply perfect obedience or faultless obedience. Every one of us sins and we have things to repent of before the Lord and to make up before him. But the life in general will be characterized

by obedience.

And this is where Saul's life was so far from. Obedience is better than sacrifice. Then he goes on to say in verse 23, for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

Oh, can't you see Saul looking at the godless Philistines, the godless Amalekites and saying, well, these godless pagans, they worship their idols, they practice witchcraft. Oh, they're so far from God. They don't worship God.

Saul, you don't worship God. You pretend to, but your heart isn't there. You see, Saul's problem wasn't that he just neglected some ceremony.

That's probably how Saul thought of obedience to God. I mean, in today's world, he might have said what? So God wants me to go to church more. All right, I'll go to church more.

But religious observance was not Saul's problem. The problem was that his heart had become rebellious and stubborn against God. If religious observance wasn't helping that problem, then it was no good.

It's a dangerous thing to come to church, because when you come to church, and God moves on your heart, God speaks to your heart through the worship and through the word. And if you keep hardening your heart against God as you keep coming to church, you're going to be in a worse place than you were, than you were before. That's exactly the kind of place that Saul was at.

So what, you want me to go to church more? No, that's not the issue. The issue is your lack of surrender in your heart. You see, we give God our hearts and then the religious observance, the things that we can fulfill, then it all falls into place.

What God really wants is a surrendered heart. Saul wouldn't do that. So the pronouncement comes in verse 23.

Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he also has rejected you from being king. In his empty religious practice, in his rebellion and in his stubbornness against God, Saul was rejecting God's word. So God rightly rejected him as king over Israel.

I don't know about you, but when I read the Bible, I ask a lot of questions of myself. And one of the questions I asked as I was reading this, I said, no, wait a minute, God, aren't you overreacting? So Saul was too nice. He spared a king.

He spared some sheep and oxen. I mean, maybe his heart was being awakened to, you know, animal rights or something. He didn't want to kill the sheep and oxen.

He was too nice. Give him a break, God. You're overreacting.

I mean, I think of later kings of Israel who did far worse before the Lord and God didn't take away their throne. God, aren't you overreacting to Saul? No, the Lord wasn't. Because what God could see was Saul's heart.

God could see how stubborn and rebellious it was. You know, Saul's condition was like an iceberg, you know, an iceberg. You see some of it above the surface and there it is, you know, below the surface.

There's far more to the iceberg than you ever see above the surface. And you looked at Saul's life and the sin on the outside of his life, the sin above the surface. It looked manageable, so to speak.

Well, you know, sure, that's not so bad. You know, God can deal with that. But God could see what was below the surface and God could see the massive, settled state of rebellion and stubbornness against the Lord.

And that's why the Lord said, I can see this man's heart. I've rejected him as king over Israel. Let me make a statement here that if you really understand it, if you really take it inside you, it's going to make you react one way or the other.

Here's the statement. God sees your heart. Now, for some people, that's a comfort.

Lord, you see my heart. You see that I sin from time to time. You see that I don't always please you.

You see that I get in these conflicts with others, but Lord, you see my heart. I'm sorry. I repent.

I want to be right with you. If that's where your heart is, it's a comfort to you that God sees your heart. But for other people, that statement is a terrifying statement.

God sees your heart. Oh, yeah, you're dressing up things on the outside. Everybody looks at you and say, my, what a fine person.

But God sees the stubbornness and the rebelliousness of your heart. If you were to say this to Saul and if he knew what you meant, it would have terrified him that God could really see his heart. So the Lord rejected Saul as king.

But Saul wants to get it back. Look at verse 24. Then Saul said to Samuel, I have sinned for I've transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words.

OK, stop right there. And they thought, that's great. Praise the Lord, Saul, you're repenting.

My, this is good. What a change of heart. I mean, wouldn't it be great? Wouldn't it be great to have a national leader caught in sin? Say this.

I have sinned for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words. I mean, if Saul would have stopped right there, it would have been great. But you know what? He said the words, but his heart wasn't in him.

And you know how you know his heart was, because as he kept talking, his heart was revealed. Look at it. Verse 24.

I have sinned for I've transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words. Please stop there, Saul. But he doesn't.

He has to reveal his heart. He goes on to say, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. First of all, he's trying to excuse his sin, number one, and secondly, he's trying to blame it on the people.

As a matter of fact, what he's doing is he's trying to justify one sin with another. You shouldn't live your life in fear of the people, Saul. That's sin in and of itself.

But, you know, oh, I did the crime officer because my friend dared me to. Was that some justification? Not at all. Saul, Saul, your heart isn't right with God and that's revealed.

This was the best kind of excuse he could make. And then he says in verse 25, now, therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may worship the Lord. Do you get the feeling that Saul thinks it's all a little too easy? I mean, he's got this deep, deep root of sin in his heart, this stubbornness and this rebelliousness.

He goes, come on, Sammy, just pray a prayer and everything will be better. That's because all Saul was concerned about is the image, the outward. And God wants to deal with his heart.

But a simple, please pardon my sin would not do it when one's heart is settled in rebellion and sin against the Lord. So the Lord wants to communicate a finality about this, please look at verse 26. But Samuel said to Saul, I will not return with you, for you've rejected the word of the Lord and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.

I find that verse to be very interesting for two reasons. First of all, do you understand what Saul was asking Samuel to do? Let's go sacrifice to the Lord. OK, let's go.

Come on, come worship with me, please. Let's return with me that I may worship the Lord. Now, do you know what Saul was really trying to get Samuel to do? What were they going to sacrifice? The animals that they had captured from the Amalekites.

And if Samuel would sanction the sacrifice of those animals, it would be like putting a stamp of approval on it. Saul, you're a sneaky one. Try to get Samuel to officiate at the sacrifice and then put a stamp of approval on it.

No, Samuel's not going for it. I'm not going to go with you. But secondly, do you see what he says there? In verse 26, where he says, I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the Lord and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.

Do you see what he said there in verse 23? Look back at verse 23. This is what Samuel said just before that. Because you rejected the word of the Lord, he also has rejected you from being king.

Same thing, right? Do you understand what the prophet Samuel is saying to King Saul? He's saying, I've got nothing more to say to you. I already said it. I'll repeat what I said again.

You've rejected the word of the Lord. God's rejected you as king. There's nothing more to say.

There comes a point for us where God has nothing else to say to us than repent. I knew a fellow once, and it's been years and years since I've seen him. And this fellow once had remarkable ministry.

I mean, for a wide area, he was ministering to people all over the place, just a remarkable, remarkable ministry, real charismatic kind of guy. Until this fellow got it in his head that he was one of the two witnesses from the book of Revelation. I've personally met about a dozen people who are convinced that they're one of the two witnesses.

You know, I'm sure there's hundreds of them that they're convinced there's going to be some fight someday when they try to figure out, sort it out, who it is. Well, if that's not bad enough, being persuaded that you're one of the two witnesses of the book of Revelation, wouldn't you know it that he starts taking up

with this gal, not his wife, who he's convinced is just happens to be the second of the two witnesses from the book of Revelation? Well, isn't that convenient? And before long, he's determined his course that he's going to walk away from his wife and his precious children for no justification other than this crazy idea that he has in his head. And he's convinced that God is telling him to do it and that God is honoring this nice guy.

I talked with him and I talked with him, as did many other people, but he was determined to do this. And I told this fellow, I said, listen, you're going to go and you're going to cross a line one day. And the line for him would have been actually following through with the divorce.

I said, when you cross that line, I'm going to have nothing more to say to you. There's going to be no more fellowship between you and I. You cross that line. And the only thing I want to hear from you is I repent.

I'm sorry, and I've repented before the Lord. Not that he had to repent before me. Who cares? But I want to know that he had repented before God.

Well, wouldn't you know, the man carried on his course. He divorced his wife, abandoned his children. Also, he could be with this other gal who was one of the two witnesses, so he thought.

And one day after that, he comes up to me. Hey, David, how's it going, brother? I didn't have a word for him. Matter of fact, it was kind of embarrassing because we met at another church that I was visiting.

And he just happened to visit. I kind of got into his face before service right now. He was awfully embarrassed in front of the crowd.

But I just I have to admit, I shook my finger in his face. I said, I've got nothing to say to you unless you're here to tell me that you've repented before the Lord. What more is there to say? That's exactly the kind of thing that the Lord's communicating to Saul.

What more is there? I'll repeat what I said before. You've rejected the word of the Lord. So the Lord has rejected you.

And the great thing about that is when we come with a repentant heart, God is so ready to restore us, so ready to rebuild in our lives. But it has to begin there. So that's what Samuel told Saul.

And if you notice this scene, look at verse twenty seven. The Samuel turned around to go away. Saul sees the edge of a row of his robe and it tore.

No, Samuel, don't leave. And he reaches out, he grabs onto his robe and as he holds on to it, Samuel's robe tears away. And there's a piece of Samuel's robe left in his hand.

You have the picture there, my friend. There's this proud, willful king and this old noble prophet of God. And there the prophet of God is leaving him.

There's some distance between them. I don't know, 15, 20 feet, whatever it was. And here's this willful king holding a piece of robe in his hand.

And Samuel turns and he looks at Saul, fire in his eyes. And he says, verse twenty eight, so Samuel said to him, the Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to a neighbor of yours who's better than you. You're holding on to your pride.

I'm going to tear it away, God says. You're holding on to this. You wouldn't give it up to me.

I'm going to tear it away. You know, that's exactly how it happened with the kingdom. Saul never voluntarily gave up his throne.

He never said, I resign. No, God had to tear it away from him. And all he was left with was just a rag in his hand at the end.

Amazing scene here. And then he adds on verse twenty nine. And also the strength of Israel will not lie nor relent for he is not a man that he should relent.

Saul, this is permanent. It's not going anywhere. God has decreed this and God is not going to back off from this.

I think it's very interesting. That Samuel uses a title for the Lord here that's used nowhere else in the Bible. This is the only place you're going to find this title.

I love this title. He calls the Lord the strength of Israel. I think that's important because, first of all, it gives Saul a sense of the strength of God's command here.

The strength of Israel decrees that he will not relent. That's that means something, doesn't it? But I think it also means something else. When he says the strength of Israel, I think it's also a rebuke to Saul, because let's remember, Saul was a very successful military leader by all outward appearances.

He was a good king for Israel. And I bet you anything that Saul thought of himself as the strength of Israel. Well, God can't reject me as king.

What's Israel going to do then? They're going to be left without a leader. I'm the strength of Israel. I'm the leader of this nation.

And Samuel's reminding Saul, no, the Lord is the strength of Israel. And just as much as that pathetic little piece of robe is in your hand. That's how it's going to be torn away from you.

Look at Saul's response here in verse 30. Then he said, I have sinned yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel and return with me that I may worship the Lord, your God. So Samuel turned back after Saul and Saul worshiped the Lord.

Now, you kind of scratch your head. Why does he do it now? Well, I think for two reasons. I think it was understood that it would be without any sacrifice now or at least sacrifice of those animals in question.

But secondly, I think Samuel knew something from God right here that it was not Samuel's job to depose Saul. Samuel wasn't going to go out and start a dethroned Saul campaign. He was going to let the Lord do it.

He wasn't going to try to get him out of the office. No, that was going to be God's doing. But secondly, understand this.

God understood this, that Saul at that time was better for Israel than having no king in anarchy. See, God has another man that he's going to raise up, but he's not ready yet. And so it was better to have Saul as king until that time.

And so Samuel's not going to do anything to undercut Saul. They'll go, OK, I'll support you before. But do you see the wickedness of Saul's heart? All he cares about is image.

Well, please now honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel. Samuel, don't you know that if you don't go with me, my approval rating is going to go down? The polling numbers are going to come back bad. You got to shore me up here, Samuel.

So he says, OK, I'm not going to undercut his throne. I'm going to leave that up to the Lord. Pretty much end of story there, isn't it? No, not at all, because there's an unresolved issue here, isn't there? What's going to happen with King Agag? There's Agag, one of the Amalekites that the Lord has sworn should be completely wiped out, should be utterly destroyed.

And there's King Agag right there. Look what happens, verse 32. And Samuel said, bring Agag, king of the Amalekites, here to me.

So Agag came to him cautiously and Agag said, surely the bitterness of death has passed. You have a scene impressed in your minds here. Here's the old prophet of God.

Here's the willful king Saul. And here's Agag, this violent, wicked man who was king over a violent, wicked people, a people that God wanted to bring his complete judgment down upon. And there's Agag.

His life was spared by Saul. Maybe it was his honor among king things. Oh, you know, we're all royalty and I'll spare you.

Maybe somebody will spare my life someday. Maybe it was that kind of thing. Who knows why exactly Saul spared Agag's life? But there was Agag.

He says, you know, I escaped from Saul, this warlike king on the field of battle. What's this old priest going to do to me? So surely the bitterness of death has passed. I like how the living Bible puts it.

It puts it, Agag arrived all full of smiles, for he thought surely the worst is over and I have been spared. This old prophet, what's he going to do to me? He'll let bygones be bygones. This old prophet's going to let me go home now.

I mean, he's a man of God. That's all that. See what Samuel says, verse 33.

Samuel said, as your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women. I bet Agag has a rude awakening right there. Wait a minute.

If my mother is childless, that means that, look at the end of the verse. Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord and Gilgal. Samuel was a priest.

And he had officiated at hundreds of animal sacrifices, maybe thousands. Samuel knew what it felt like to have the blade cut into flesh, to see the life go out of something, to see blood all over the place. Samuel knew what it was like, but he had never lifted a blade against a person.

But now, without hesitation, he does what King Saul refused to do. This old prophet raised a sword. No, you know what? I bet it wasn't a sword.

Samuel was a prophet. Prophets don't handle swords. He wasn't a soldier.

You know what he probably used? He probably raised something like a butcher knife, because that's what that's what priests use to slaughter animals. And he raised this knife up and he plunged it down. I'll tell you something else about priests.

They know how to kill things. And he probably delivered a first blow right to the neck and cut the jugular and then completed the job and hacked Agag to pieces. But notice what it says as he brought down this proud, violent king.

It says that he did it at the end of verse 33 before the Lord. Friends, that's a very important verse, because those words, when it says that he did it before the Lord, it shows us that he didn't do this before Saul. It wasn't like Samuel was saying, listen, Mr. Disobedient.

You're so weak, you're so proud you wouldn't do what God told you. I'll do it. No, he didn't do it before Saul and he didn't do it before Israel.

He wasn't there showing the nation. Look how strong and tough I am. You say I'm an old prophet of God.

Well, I'll show you all. No, he didn't do it before Saul. He didn't do it before Israel.

He did it before the Lord in difficult obedience to the Lord God. The scene must have been shockingly violent. I bet the stomachs of everybody who watched it turned.

But Samuel did it all before the Lord. His obedience was important to him. By the way, let me just quickly say that there should be no one and I mean no one who for a moment thinks that God would call anybody to do something like this today.

I'm not saying that God would call anybody to do something like this today, but I'm not saying that God would call anybody to do something like this today. Please, we live by the law of God, not by extraordinary examples in the scriptures. This is exactly what the prophet verse thirty four.

And Samuel went to Rama and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul and Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. What does it mean when it says that the Lord regretted it? You know, we talked about that last week at some length, and if that troubles you again, I just recommend the tape to you. It's using a figure of speech, speaking about God's heart and trying to communicate his feeling to us.

But isn't it tragic? Rama and Gibeah were about 10 miles apart and never during the ensuing years did Saul come to Samuel and say, let's get it right, Samuel. I want to be right before God. Never did they reconcile.

Never did they work together. Saul, this man who had been mentored by Samuel, Saul, the man who had been anointed king by Samuel. They never really reconciled.

And the last visit to Saul by Samuel. Well, that's a whole weird occasion in itself that we're going to see at the end of the book of Samuel. You know what I think is remarkable here? Is there any doubt in our minds that God has rejected Saul as king over Israel? No doubt about it, right? It's pretty clear in the scriptures.

I don't see anybody who could miss that. Do you know how many years it was until God removed Saul from the throne and put a replacement on? Oh, almost 25 years. God, what are you doing? Why? I mean, you rejected Saul as king.

Why did you let him stay on the throne 25 years? I think this teaches us at least two things. The first thing it is, it shows that God has his timing. You know, God had a replacement for Saul.

We're going to meet him next week. Oh, you think the book of first Samuel has been good up to this point? You just wait. The best is really yet to come.

We're going to meet Saul's replacement next week. But God has to train Saul's replacement. You know how long it's going to take him? Almost 25 years to train his replacement.

And then God will put him in the place. And as a matter of fact, God is going to use Saul's proud, stubborn, rebellious heart. He's going to use that in the training of Saul's replacement.

And God will all work it out for his good. So it teaches us God has his timing. The second thing it teaches us is that God has his timing.

And God's timing is God's timing. I don't think reading through this story, not a single one of us would have predicted that it would take 25 years for God to finally take this rejected king off the throne. Most the time, we're in much too great a hurry when it comes to God's work in our life.

Does that ring true with anybody here? Hurry up, Lord. Hurry up, Lord. How many times we've prayed that? Friends, God has his timing.

He's not in a hurry. And I'll tell you this, that even if it took God 25 years for him to fulfill that promise, for him to complete that work. And I know some of you are gritting your teeth and saying, no, not 25 years.

But even if it were to take that long, it would be worth it. It would be completely worth it. Because God knows what he's doing when it comes to these things.

The best thing we can do is have that humble, submissive heart before God and yield to both his will and his timing. And that's a big order, don't you think? I think we should pray and ask God to do it. Lord, you called us here to something so big, this great submission to both your will and your timing.

That's something so big, Lord, that God, only a profound work by your spirit in our hearts can accomplish that. But we know that it can happen by the work of your spirit in our hearts. We believe it, Lord, that it's not by might nor by power, but by your spirit, you'll do this work.

So, Lord, do it. Do this work in our hearts and our lives. We want to yield ourselves before you.

We want to raise that white flag of surrender, as it were, Lord God, and say, you win, Lord. We want to submit to both your will and your timing. We want to do this, Lord, to bring glory to the Son of God who saved us by his work on the cross.

Thank you, Lord. We honor you together this morning in Jesus' name.

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