

EVERYTHING BUT...

1 Samuel 15(1-15, 16-35)

Sermon in a Paragraph: When we put God first, we allow blessings to flow in our lives. We can then choose to manage those blessings in FEAR, or live in the fullness of those blessings in FAITH, with an open stance, open hands and open hearts toward God, others, and God's purposes in our lives.

We see both FEAR and FAITH in Saul's reign. The first king of Israel was 30 when he was crowned king, and he reigned for 42 years. (1 Samuel 13:10)

OPPORTUNITIES SAUL HAD TO LIVE IN HIS BLESSINGS IN FAITH...

1. GOD CHANGED SAUL'S HEART (1 Sam 10:9)
2. The Spirit of God came upon Saul (1 Sam 10:10) and he prophesied. [note the response of people who knew Saul's reputation: they were *surprised* that he would do such a thing.]
3. God touched the hearts of some of Israel's greatest warriors and led them to follow Saul and be his team (1 Sam 10:26).
4. The first time his kingship was called into question by an outside enemy, the Spirit of God came upon Saul again and when he summoned his army, 330,000 well-armed troops responded. (1 Sam 11:8)
5. God gave Saul a son, Jonathan. He was a young man of incredible courage and tremendous character.
 - a. He was probably a teenager when he won a huge victory over the Philistines.
 - b. He was a good son, a true friend, and, standing by his father, was a force to be reckoned with.
6. In a verse that would be easy to miss, Saul won victory after victory against the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Parasites and the Philistines. He even won street brawls with the deeply hated Amalekite gang.

These were the high points of Saul's reign as king. But, the in-between spots were a bit troubling. In them we see that, when God didn't directly take over Saul, fear usually held sway over him. He depended on himself and leaned on his own understanding, not on the word of God as revealed by the prophets.

HOW SAUL MANAGED HIS BLESSINGS IN FEAR...

1. Hiding among the baggage when he was going to be declared king (even AFTER prophesying with the prophets and knowing that God had a great hand on his life). [1 Sam 10:20-22]
2. During the miraculous rout of the Philistines, he included his men in an oath he made to God. As a result, his men were strictly forbidden to eat or drink until they had defeated the Philistines.
 - a. His men couldn't help themselves. After defeating the Philistines they began slaughtering some of their choice animals – bulls and lambs – to eat. But they were so exhausted and "hangry" that they did not properly prepare the meat and were eating it with the blood of the animals, which Moses strictly forbade. Saul "manages" the situation further by creating a slaughtering space where his men could come, slaughter, and properly roast the meat they so desperately wanted to eat. But not Saul was still "managing" the situation.

- b. Jonathan, not hearing the oath – and then rejecting his father’s authority on this matter after hearing about it – was almost killed by Saul, for death was the punishment for violating Saul’s oath. Had Saul’s men not intervened, Jonathan would have been killed!
- 3. Somehow, in the space of just a few years, Saul went from an army of 330,000 well-armed troops to an army of 3,000 troops armed mostly by agricultural implements. How did this happen?
 - a. Apparently, the Philistines, even though they had an adversarial relationship with Israel and Saul, managed to burrow, unchallenged, into the economy.
 - b. Maybe they were too big to fail, or there were too many of them to jail, but Saul let the Philistines boss him around. Soon, they figured out how to confiscate weapons, and weapon-making systems and the next thing they knew, the Israelites were unarmed, vulnerable, and in some ways subservient to Philistia. All because of their king, who the Israelites wanted so he could go toe to toe with all the other kings of the other nations that surrounded them.
- 4. Saul made up his own rituals to manage people’s opinion of him, even though this seriously damaged his relationships with God and Samuel.
 - a. The premature sacrifice at Gilgal (1 Samuel 13:7b-10)... couldn’t Saul have done something else to rally his troops and keep them focused until Samuel came?
 - b. The rash oath mentioned above.
 - c. Saul’s “victory lap” with spoils of war... which we will see here in chapter 15. But first, let’s go back and review a few things.

THE STORY OF “EVERYTHING BUT”

[RETELL 1 SAMUEL 15]

THE OPPORTUNITY OF “EVERYTHING BUT”

1. Why did God command this attack against the Amalekites?

Deuteronomy 25:17-19

7"Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt, 18how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God. 19Therefore when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your enemies around you, in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget.

When Saul came back having preserved the life of the Amalekite king Agag, he had taken care of everything but. God is looking for Saul –and us – to have an “Everything” attitude toward the mission He has given us.

2. Are there evils **in society** toward which we should have an “Everything Attitude”?

EXAMPLES:

Racism:

Romans 17:26 - “He made from one every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth...”

Ephesians 3:14 - "I bow my knee before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name."

Abuse and Killing of the Unborn and "Inconvenient"

Psalms 139:13-14 - "You formed my inward parts and knit me together in my mother's womb, I will give You thanks, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made... my frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth."

Jonah 4:11 – God to Jonah, "Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from left?"

Luke 17:2 - It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble.

3. Are there issues **in our lives** toward which we should have an "Everything attitude"?

Colossians 3:5-11 (ESV)

5Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. 11Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

4. God changed Saul's heart. God touched Saul's life in so many ways, but Saul couldn't see past himself and past his fear to really pursue God's heart, and eventually, he lost God's favor.

1 Sam 15:11

11"I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from Me and has not carried out My instructions."

1 Sam 15:22b

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has rejected you as king."

1 Sam 15:28-29

28Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you. 29He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind; for He is not a human being, that He should change His mind."

TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE – KEITH GREEN

To obey is better than sacrifice
I don't need your money
I want your life
And I hear you say that I'm coming back soon
But you act like I'll never return

Well you speak of grace and my love so sweet
How you thrive on milk, but reject My meat
And I can't help weeping of how it will be
If you keep on ignoring My words
Well you pray to prosper and succeed
But your flesh is something I just can't feed

...

To obey is better than sacrifice
I want hearts of fire
Not your prayers of ice
And I'm coming quickly
To give back to you
According to what you have done

Perhaps Samuel changed his mind and went to worship with Saul because he wanted to remind Saul that even though Saul forfeited his throne, he could still know the grace and mercy of God in his soul. The same is true for us today: no matter what we have done or are doing, God says, "Call to Me and I will answer you," and "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

HOW CAN WE LIVE IN THE BLESSINGS OF GOD WITH OPEN STANCE, OPEN PALMS, AND OPEN HEARTS?

How can the blessing of God's favor be ours?

RELATIONSHIP >>>> REPENTANCE >>>> WRESTLING >>>> RECLAIM >>>> REALIGN

John 14:15

"If you love Me, obey My commandments."

1 Sam 15:22

"Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the LORD?"

To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.