

*To obey is better than sacrifice***1 Samuel 15:22**

Saul, the first king of Israel, had disobeyed God and Samuel was bringing his sin to light. Saul was to have destroyed Amalek but he refused to do so, *“But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them (1 Samuel 15:9).* It was not so much that he refused God’s command but that he tried to cover it up and to insist that he had done the will of God, *“And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD (1 Samuel 15:13).* In the New Testament, Ananias and Sapphira tried a similar deception letting on that they had given the full price of their land to Peter when in fact they kept part of it for themselves. Again, it was not the fact that they did not give the full amount, it was that they did not fully reveal their dealings. Both dropped dead when Peter exposed their sin to them (Acts 5:1-10). In Saul’s case, when Samuel exposed the sin of disobedience to him, Saul excused himself by saying that he was not the only one involved as the people actually did the taking, not him, *“And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed” (1 Samuel 15:15).* He did not take full responsibility for his actions. Further, he exempted the people from any wrong doing by saying that what they took was intended for sacrifice to God. So in the end, what did it matter, was his argument. Saul was not burdened by his disobedience though Samuel brought it to his attention; it was an insignificant sin compared to more egregious deeds, was Saul’s thinking.

Saul was given another opportunity to repent when Samuel reminded him that it was God who installed him as king, when he was an unknown, and that it was God who sent him to destroy the Amalekites, but it was he that did not fully obey God and, thus, it was he who had committed the sin. Without Samuel’s intervention, Saul would not have known that he had sinned, *“... I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had*

not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Romans 7:7). And thus it is for us today, without the preached Word no one ever becomes a sinner, let alone ever receives the opportunity to lay sin aside; our wrongs would not be exposed. After again hearing that he had sinned Saul chose once more to justify his actions rather than to agree with Samuel and confess his sin, *“And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal” (1 Samuel 15:20-21).* Although sacrifices are required by God, Samuel informed Saul that obedience to the Word must come before sacrifice. Samuel preached the consequence of minimizing God’s Word, *“... Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king” (1 Samuel 15:23).*

Upon hearing from Samuel that God was going to punish him, Saul finally confessed *“I have sinned” (1 Samuel 15:24).* However, Saul’s confession was prompted more by worldly sorrow—sorrow that his sin was uncovered and that he feared reproach from the people — than by Godly sorrow—sorrow that he had transgressed God’s law. He asked Samuel to forgive his sin so that he could remain in good standing before the people, *“... yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God” (1 Samuel 15:30).* In essence, Saul did not want to fully expose his sin publicly; he chose to use Samuel as a shield against imagined derision rather than a conduit through which to be freed from his sin. God saw through this man-made confession by refusing to forgive Saul, *“... I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).*

Scripture speaks of another king whose sin was also brought to light to him by another prophet. In this instance, Nathan confronted David over his sins of adultery and murder. Rather than justify his actions, David immediately confessed to Nathan with the very

same words used by Saul, *“I have sinned”* (2 Samuel 12:13). To which Nathan applied the keys of the kingdom of heaven to free David from his sins, *“... And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die”* (2 Samuel 12:13). All of David’s past sins were drowned in the sea of God’s grace (Romans 3:25).

Today Jesus has provided the ministry of reconciliation to every believer to proclaim forgiveness to all who are burdened by sin. Our text encourages us to take full responsibility for our actions by allowing the Word to fully expose our weights and sins to the light of the Gospel. We are to obey that still small voice and confess our sins one to another, *“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”* (Romans 10:10). Do not hide behind your own excuses and justifications. God’s Peace,

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Jan 03	Ken Storm	Holy Communion –
Jan 10	Charles Korhonen	
Jan 17	Ken Storm	
Jan 24	Paul Copponen	Potluck meal following
Jan 31	Herb Jarvi	

Online Broadcasts

From our webpage: <http://www.tapiolachurch.org/> you will see the mixlr live audio – we will be 'on the air' during our church services.

Winter Schedule

Sunday Service 11:00am. Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 9:45am
Wednesday night Bible Study 7pm