


First Baptist Church  
Canton  
Gather. Grow. Go.

**'HONING IN ON THE HEART!'**



**A VERSE-BY-VERSE SERIES ON THE BOOK OF 1ST SAMUEL DURING WEDNESDAY NIGHT SERVICES IN 2024**

*Honing in on the Heart!' Sermon Series*

**Sermon #27:**

**'Abusing God Given Authority!'**

Wednesday, September 25th, 2024

**Last week in 'Honing in on the Heart:**

- Last week Pastor Steve did a great job of preaching from 1st Samuel 14:47-52.
  - I am so thankful to him for doing that.
- The last time I preached from our 'Honing in on the Heart!' series I preached from *1st Samuel 14:36-46* and asked the question: *What occurs in the passage to show us that there was sin present in the camp of Israel?*
  - **Point 1: *The Lord is Silent. (V. 36-37)***
  - **Point 2: *The Leaders are Summoned. (V. 38-39)***
  - **Point 3: *The Lots are Started. (V. 40-42)***
  - **Point 4: *The Livid Saul. (V. 43-44)***

- **Point 5: *The Loyalty Shown. (V. 45)***
  - Based on this sermon from several Wednesday's ago, is there still in sin your camp that you still need to get out between you and the Lord?

**'Abusing God Given Authority!'**

*1st Samuel 15:1-9*

***Sermon in a Sentence:***

*We can see that Saul abuses God Given Authority when we look at how the Orders were Straightforward, Operations Started Smoothly, and then Obliteration of the Amalekites Stalls.*

***Intro:***

- Earlier this week I read an article that a local Pastor wrote about *How it is easier to read, learn and focus on the Pastors of the Past who have already gone to be with the Lord, then to listen and learn from 'big name' preachers today who seem to be dropping like flies from the ministry.*
  - ***In his article, he argued that the preachers who have already finished the race can be looked up to because they did not fall out of the ministry due to moral failings.***
    - ***Even with that, I prefer to make the argument that just because they are dead and we don't know if they abused***

*God given authority or not, doesn't mean that they didn't.*

- The root of the issue is that we are all sinners and have the potential of abusing the authority God has given us by disqualifying ourselves personally.
- For years now in our culture, we have seen countless spiritual leaders in our world have to step down or be removed due to abusing the authority that God has given them.
  - **Before I give you a list of the most recent occurrences of this, let me preface with saying that it's not just pastors that are in this boat, but Deacons, SS teachers, and other Church leaders.**
    - It's just most often the headline preachers that reach the headlines after falling and failing. This is why it's important to pray for those that God has placed into these ministry positions.
  - Just last week, **Pastor Steven Lawson** of Trinity Bible Church of Dallas was removed as Senior Pastor due to an inappropriate relationship with a woman.
  - Several years ago my wife's childhood Pastor, **Dr. Frank Page** was removed from his position

with the Southern Baptist Convention for an inappropriate relationship with a woman.

- In 2015 North Greenville University **President Jimmy Epting** was removed due to an affair with a woman on the NGU staff.
- In 2021 after the death of **Evangelist Ravi Zacharias**, it was revealed that he engaged in sexual abuse and sexual misconduct.
- In 2022 former Pastor of Woodstock, **Johnny Hunt** admitted to an inappropriate relationship in conduct.
- **The list could go on and on of men whom God has given positions of leadership and authority.**
  - *But before we think and look at these men in disgust and shake our heads, may we remember that they are just that, men.*
  - **May we remember that there go I but by the grace of God.**
- **One may ask the question why is it that Pastors and Christian leaders are dropping like flies in our Convention and world?**
  - **Because I believe that satan tries his absolute hardest against Pastors and those who lead others spiritually.**
    - *To satan, these men and their families are a trophy.*
  - *Now, I believe all these men can repent, turn to God, and be restored to a certain level and extent.*

- But there's no doubt that there will be consequences for those actions
- This is something I am reminded of everyday and I pray to the Lord everyday: Keep me clean and keep me close to you.
  - *Am I perfect, no absolutely not.*
    - But this is why I need your prayers daily so that the Lord might keep me close and clean so that I don't become another trophy in satan's trophy case.
- ***I bring all this up to show you that in tonight's text, we find a man who abused the authority of God.***
  - We find a man who had already been rejected by God once, but due to his persistent and continual disobedience, would be rejected completely.
    - *He and his family would no longer be able to continue in the royal line.*
  - *We find a man who God had chosen and given great abilities to lead Israel, yet he took advantage of it and abused it.*
    - Whether you lead a SS, lead a ministry, lead your family, or simply lead others in any kind of way or format, you are held to a higher standard, and satan will constantly be on you trying to get you to abuse your God Given Authority. Don't do it...

- ***To define abusing the authority of God, is to simply disobey Him and His commands and simply do what you want to do over what He has said and directed for us to do.***
  - In order to get a good grasp on our text tonight, we need to look at how Saul was not an Ordinary King. I think there are three good pieces of evidence.
    - #1: The Lord was the one who had decided Saul would be the King.
    - #2: Saul had to submit to the prophet Samuel.
    - #3: The people over whom he reined were not his people but God's people.
  - ***Saul, like you and I, Saul fell into the train of thought thinking that he was the boss. When in reality, it was the Lord.***
    - \*Read 1st Samuel 15:1-9\*

***Question to Ask:***

***How does King Saul continue to abuse the authority that God has given him as King of Israel?***

***Point 1: Orders are Straightforward. (V. 1-3)***

- ***In verses 1-3 we see that Samuel comes back into the picture to tell Saul what the Lord wanted to say to him.***
  - Several chapters ago we had heard Samuel's farewell message. But, as I told you then,

- Samuel is not out of the picture yet, he just was not the judge/leader of Israel. Saul was.
- ***But, he still acted as a prophet and the spiritual leader for Israel whenever God had a message for his people.***
    - Last week when Pastor Steve preached from 1st Samuel 15:47-52, that was an overview of Saul's military career, family and administration.
  - ***Tonight, our narrative into Saul and the continuing story of his reign in Israel continues.***
    - ***While we've already seen a pretty downward turn in the life of Saul, that snowball is going to get bigger and faster as Saul will choose to disobey the Word of the Lord, again.***
  - One important concept I find in these three verses is that when God tells us something, He does not want to confuse us.
    - ***God is not the author of confusion, but satan most certainly is.***
  - That's why much of the Bible is straightforward so that we will follow it and live by it, accordingly.
    - In these first three verses, I want us to see **3** important things about the orders Saul was being given being straightforward.

- ***Listen. (V. 1)***
  - 'And Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the LORD.'
  - ***Samuel is still the mouthpiece that the Lord is using to speak to His people and will be until his death.***
    - It's important that Samuel says this, because he shows that it is not that Saul should obey him necessarily, but that he should obey God who is speaking through him.
  - ***The orders and commands of God come straight from Him, and Saul is to obey them just as we are.***
    - We must listen, but in this case there is a history lesson that Saul was going to be made aware of by Samuel...
- ***Learn. (V. 2)***
  - 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt.'
  - ***The Lord is giving explanation to what the order will be that will follow in verse 3.***
  - We must understand the Amalekites were constant and continuous enemies of Israel.
    - ***The Amalekites were also a very evil group of people.***

- *The Israelites first come in contact with the Amalekites as they were coming out of Egypt and they were alone and defenseless:*
  - ‘Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim.’ Exodus 17:8
- **Joshua was leading the Israelites and they defeated the Amalekites that day.**
  - After the Battle, the Lord made this prophecy...
    - ‘Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.” Exodus 17:14
  - ***This is when and where the Lord gave this prophecy, but several other scripture passages reiterate and reaffirm this prediction...***
    - ‘Then he looked on Amalek and took up his discourse and said, “Amalek was the first among the nations, but its end is utter destruction.” Numbers 24:20
    - ‘Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt, **18** how 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. **19** Therefore 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.” Deuteronomy 25:17-19

- **The Lord had a plan to wipe out the Amalekites.**
  - ***Because this event was mentioned multiple times in scripture and anticipated, most of Israel knew about it.***
- It’s possible that the Lord reminds Saul that, because Saul didn’t grow up knowing the Word of the Lord as was evidenced all the way back to the search for lost donkeys.
- One scholar, Robert D. Bergen said ‘***Now Yahweh was giving Saul the awesome responsibility of fulfilling these Torah prophecies. Saul, who was noted for his military leadership, was ideally suited for carrying out this challenging task.***’
  - There was a lesson to learn, now an army to lead.

- **Lead. (V. 3)**
  - ‘Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction[a] all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’”
  - The command here that God gives saul to go and do, is unique and not the norm.
  - **‘Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’**
    - This was the kind of warfare that was practiced only against people who had come against the Lord’s most severest form of judgment (another example in the OT would be the city of Jericho).
  - ***In this kind of mission, the soldiers were not to take the spoils (prizes) of war, because this was viewed as a solemn and holy task, as they got to function as the Lord’s agents in fulfilling a prophecy.***
    - Heath Thomas said *The goal of the attack was not to make Saul rich but to execute justice on a rebellious group of people. Saul was explicitly told to take no prisoners and to leave the wealth alone.’*
  - ***While this seems dark and extreme to us, God does not like it when others oppress and seek to hurt His people.***

- So, God let Saul know what the plan us and how it needed to be executed...

- ***In the beginning, things went well...***

**Point 2: *Operations start Smoothly. (V. 4-6)***

- ‘So Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah. **5** And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley. **6** Then Saul said to the Kenites, “Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.’
  - ***Obviously, this is a big task with big theological implications that Saul was assigned with.***
    - Saul was known as a great military leader (although not as great as his son), so he was going to assemble and army and begin this task. A task that Israel had awaited for many years so many of the men would’ve been hungry to get in the fight.
      - There are **3** things to look at concerning how the operation started smoothly...
- ***The Number. (V. 4)***

- ‘So Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah.’
- *Saul must’ve somewhat understood the magnitude of this task, because he gets a large number of troops together. (notice that God did not give him a number of troops that he was to recruit).*
  - *Based on the text, there was 210,000 men that were going to be apart of this battle.*
- This would have been the second largest army under Saul’s command that we find in the Bible.
  - The Number was really big, but before they could engage in battle, they actually had to get their first...
- **The Navigation. (V. 5)**
  - ‘And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley.’
  - *We do not know where the city of Amalek would have been located.*
    - Most scholars believe that it would have been to the south or southwest of Judah.
  - *‘Lay and wait in the valley’ is a phrase conveying that this was going to be an ambush attack.*
    - Robert D. Bergen holds the belief that this location was probably called ‘the brook of egypt’ which was a major road in the region at that time.
- *Saul’s troops were ready for an attack on the major Amalekite settlement, and then they would have to inevitably travel throughout the countryside attacking the fleeing Amalekites.*
  - *Before the fighting begins, Saul shows his knowledge of Israelite history and tradition and extends an olive branch of kindness and niceness, to a people group who had helped the Israelites years ago.*
- **The Niceness. (V. 6)**
  - ‘Then Saul said to the Kenites, “Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.’
  - *Who were the Kenites and why was Saul being nice to them in letting them escape?*
    - According to Judges 1:16, Moses Father-in-law was a Kenite and his son had been very helpful to the Israelites. We see evidence of that in Numbers 10:29-32...
      - ‘And Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law, “We are

setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will do good to you, for the LORD has promised good to Israel." **30** But he said to him, "I will not go. I will depart to my own land and to my kindred." **31** And he said, "Please do not leave us, for you know where we should camp in the wilderness, and you will serve as eyes for us. **32** And if you do go with us, whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same will we do to you."

- *The Kenites had been kind to Saul, and ultimately down the line, were related to the Israelites because the mother to Moses children was a Kenite.*

- *They were very nomadic people.*

- *They had settled among and near the Amalekites at this time. Probably because they wanted to be friendly towards them, so that they (Amalekites), would not be hostile towards them. That's how feared the Amalekites were at this time in Israel.*

- David would later spare the Kenites when he was in Ziklag according to 1st Samuel 27:8-10.
  - *Saul does a very kind and commendable thing here, but it does not excuse what he's getting ready to do in verses 7-9.*

- So far tonight we've seen the orders of God were straightforward, the Operation starts smoothly, but now we see Obliteration will stall...

**Point 3: *Obliteration Stalls. (V. 7-9)***

- 'And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt. **8** And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword. **9** But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves[b] and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.'

- *The battle goes well, but the military leader or mastermind, did not fully obey the directions.*

- From the beginning of the passage we were told that Saul was to completely obliterate the Amalekites...

- *But the mission to obliterate starts to stall, when Saul sees that he can get some glory for himself and put others to shame to spread his own fame...*



- This is where the abuse of God's authority is really evident in the life and tenure of Saul's time as King.
  - *There's so much of Saul in each one of us than we are usually willing to realize.*
    - Saul sees an opportunity to make 210,000 men happy.
      - *If Saul chose to obey God, then 210,000 men would not be happy because they would have fought in a battle and not been able to take any of the spoils home (which was their usual compensation when they would fight).*
  - If he's able to obey God and send them home empty handed, he will be hated and be talked about for years. At the end of the day, Saul's desire is that the people of Israel think and speak about him in such a way that David would be years from this time period when they would say
    - "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands." 1st Samuel 18:7
      - *Saul would rather be liked and disobey God, than to obey God and be disliked by the world.*
- *We have this same struggle each and everyday.*
      - There are 2 things you need to see here in the text...
  - *Huge Victory. (V. 7)*
    - 'And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt.'
    - This expression in the Hebrew text that is translated to '*From Havilah as far as Shur*' is a *reference to the entire geographic extent of the territory of the Ismaelites according to Genesis 25:18.*
      - *In modern geographic terms, it's the distances from Arabia to Egypt.*
    - *Even in today's standards of modern warfare, this is quite the wide sweeping attack.*
      - But, due to the amount of troops that Saul had, it was certainly possible.
      - John Woodhouse said '*We might shudder as we think of what was involved behind those brief words. We sense that King Saul was indeed bringing the long anticipated judgment on the people of Amalek.*'
        - *While we may see God's command to destroy all the Amalekites as harsh, we can't argue the fact that the command was clear.*

- One thing I've picked up on in our study of 1st Samuel, is the fact that Saul does have a little bit of an anger issue...
  - And we see it on display in the next two verses...
- ***Humiliating Vengeance. (V. 8-9)***
  - 'And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves[b] and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.'
  - ***Out of all the Amalekites, they only spared 1. They only kept one alive.***
    - ***The fact that they kept 1 alive, is a direct contrast and sign of disobedience from the command in verse 3.***
      - 'Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction[a] all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"
  - ***The Hebrew idiom translated here as 'taking alive' means that Saul more than likely was going to eventually kill king Agag...***

- ***But what is really happening here is that I personally believe, Saul is keeping him alive so that they can have a parade and festival for killing the Amalekites, and put Agag's head on some sort of thing that would have been shown off.***
- ***This was to humiliate agag and the amalekites, but it wasn't what God wanted him to do...***
  - The people also took spoils of war, that they were not supposed to take.
- ***So what do we call what we see happening here? It's something you and I do on a daily, sometimes hourly basis...***
  - ***This is a Self-Serving Selective Obedience by Saul and the army.***
    - The result of this???
  - ***To pursue personal gain on the guise of serving God.***
    - That is abusing and using God given authority...
- We must be careful to never fall into that same trap that Saul was entranced with.

**Conclusion:**

- ***For those who are serving the Lord, no matter where or what you are doing, you are God's representative here on earth.***
  - We saw that from our text on Sunday.

- *So to abuse the authority of God is a very dangerous situation to be in.*
  - As I said at the beginning of my sermon tonight, to abuse the authority of God, is to disobey Him and live the way that you want to live.
- *To abuse the authority of God is to disobey what is written in His Word and to continually reject the teachings and ways of the Lord.*
  - While Saul obeyed part of the mission directives, He was still guilty of disobedience because he did not do ALL that God had told him to do.
- *To partially obey God is to fully disobey Him.*
  - Do you have areas in your life tonight where you are partially obeying God? But you don't think it's bad because you're still serving Him and living for Him?
  - *If you're partially obeying the Lord, you are living a full life of disobedience.*
    - It's time for you to come and repent and give that to the Lord fully and wholly tonight.
  - **Point 1: Orders are Straightforward. (V. 1-3)**
  - **Point 2: Operations start Smoothly. (V. 4-6)**
  - **Point 3: Obliteration Stalls. (V. 7-9)**