

“Predecessors, Next-In-Lines, & Name’s-Sakes”

(a 360-degree, atomic life lesson)

1st Samuel 16:14

October 3, 2021

INTRO:

- Can you recall some of your greatest life-lessons?
- Ever noticed **the BEST lessons are multifaceted?**
- Are you a **360-degree, atomic lesson-learner?**

PREVIEW:

1 Goal – Bring God glory by making & equipping disciples!

2 Books of the Bible – 1st & 2nd Samuel

3 Pillars – 1)Holy Hearing, 2)Holy Humility, 3)Holy Healing

4 People – Saul, Predecessor, Next-In-Line, Name’s-Sake

CONTEXT:

- **Series:** *Show And Tell... The Word of God*
- Bible Cloth focus on Samuel
- Sermon: lessons 22,23,24...Samuel, Saul, & David

BIG IDEA: **Don’t fall like Saul...**
brawl and enthrall like Paul!

TEXT: **1 Samuel 16:14**

Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful/evil/distressing spirit from the LORD tormented/troubled/terrified/terrorized him.

I. Holy HEARING

(Predecessors)

Here we are going to see & seek the difference between human & holy hearing...

VIDEO #1: *Defining Holiness/Sanctification*

Samuel: (Essentials; Extended; Exemplified)

- Holy Hearing **ESSENTIALS:** (contrast Samuel & Eli)
 - Grace
 - Love
 - Listening

 - Holy Hearing **EXTENDED:** (continual & perpetual)
 - Responding
 - Loving
 - Listening
 - Repeating
 - Committing
- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|------|-------------|
| <i>God:</i> | Drawn | and. | Delivered |
| <i>Eli:</i> | Challenged | and | Courageous |
| <i>Saul:</i> | Uncomfortable | and | Unwavering |
| <i>David:</i> | Shocked | and | Surrendered |

- Holy Hearing **EXEMPLIFIED**:
 - Hearing (“shema”)
 - Heeding
 - Heralding

1 Samuel 8:7-8; 10-11; 18-20

7 And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. **8** According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you.

Samuel’s Warning Against Kings

10 So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him. **11** He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: **18** And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day.”

The LORD Grants Israel’s Request

19 But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, “No! But there shall be a king over us, **20** that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.”

II. Holy HUMILITY (Next-In-Lines)

A. SAUL (at the start)

➤ CHOSEN by GRACE

1 Samuel 9:17

17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people."

➤ CHANGED by GRACE

1 Samuel 10:6 & 9

Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy... and be turned into another man...

9 When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass...

VIDEO #2: *Summary of 1st Samuel*

B. SAUL (at the finish)

➤ FLAWED yet Favored

1 Samuel 15:7-11

And Saul defeated the Amalekites... **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 and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.

10 The word of the LORD came to Samuel: **11** "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments." And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the LORD all night.

➤ Favored but FALLEN

1 Samuel 15:19-35

Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?" **20** And Saul said to Samuel, "I have obeyed the voice of the LORD. I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me.

22 And 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 listen than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king."

24 Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. **25** Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the LORD." **26 And Samuel said to Saul, "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."** **27** As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. **28** And Samuel said to him, "**The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.**

32 Then Samuel said, "Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." **33** And Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

➤ **Favored but FALLEN**

- Stopped Responding
- Stopped Loving
- Stopped Listening
- Stopped Repeating
- Stopped Committing

35 And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

VIDEO #3: *Piper on Pride & Humility*

Holy humility is surrendering to victory in Jesus! - JDP

*“Thousands of humans have been brought to think that humility means pretty women trying to believe that they are ugly, and clever men trying to believe they are fools..... **True humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less.**” - C.S. Lewis (*The Screwtape Letters*)*

**At the same time,
beware you never become proud of your humility!**

C. DAVID

➤ FOUND and FAITHFUL

1 Samuel 16

1 The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and **go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.**”

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: **man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.**”

11 Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.” **12** And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And **the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.”**

And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward.

David’s life, complete with his ups and downs, was noteworthy because God’s with-ness was his legacy & witness. – JDP

➤ **Faithful but FLAWED**

- David is FAR from perfect
- David is a “biblical guardrail”

VIDEO #4: *Summary of 2nd Samuel*

T/S: **Flawed and FORGIVEN**

- King David: *“a man after God’s own heart.”*

Psalm 51:10

*“Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a spirit of integrity in me.”*

III. Holy **HEALING**

(Name’s-Sakes)

Name’s-sakes can be both powerful & special!

- **Inspirational:** Griffin, Monet, Silas, & Gideon
- **Salvation:** **There’s power in the name of Jesus!**

A. SAUL / PAUL (Hebrew & Roman names of the same man)

- Pharisee Saul: the best of the worst...
- Apostle Paul: *the worst of the best...*

“Avoid a sugar-coated gospel. Seek the gospel that rips up, wounds, and even kills, for that’s the gospel that makes alive again.”

- Charles Spurgeon

- Chosen by Grace
- Cleansed by Grace
- Commissioned by Grace
- Ransomed by Grace
- Restored by Grace
- Redeemed by Grace

The Gospel is greater than any sin or sinner! - JDP

B. CHRIST Jesus

- The perfect Prophet
- The eternal King
- The sovereign Apostle
- The Christian’s Name’s-Sake
- The living & loving LORD
- The only Almighty & SAVIOR

REVIEW: 1 Goal; 2 Books; 3 Pillars; & 4 People...

CLOSE:

Additional Life-Lessons

1. The higher your privilege, the harder your crash. - JDP
2. Holiness is measured in TRUTH, TIME, & TRAJECTORY.
3. Holiness is our best test... of where we stand with God.
4. The best & most Christlike leaders come from humble beginnings and never lose their servant & shepherding hearts. - JDP
5. Humility is the governor of the human heart. - JDP
6. God's love & Gospel are greater than any sin or sinner!
 - Both Saul's hurt & hunted God's #1
 - Paul went from #1 enemy to #1 ambassador
 - No past, no shame, no guilt negates The Gospel!
7. God is eternally serious about all aspects of everyone's sin!
8. Faithful obedience is not always easy & is not for wimps...
9. Shrewd & Christlike disciples look upon the heart, needs, and fruit of other's lives.
10. Our Savior was a sent Servant... so are those He saves!
 - He was a foot-washing, ransom for many...
 - How eager to go, wash-feet, & sacrifice are we?

11. All good things begin & end with God's grace & gospel.
12. Holy-hearing plus Holy-humility lead to Holy-healing.
13. God's Word, will, & ways define holiness & real healing, while ALWAYS coming back to the HEART.
14. Rejecting the word of the LORD... is rejecting the LORD of the Word!
15. The LORD ultimately rejects those who ultimately reject Him.
16. The Spirit's presence does not, in and of Himself, stop us from sinning... We must do our part. See once again the tension & relationship between sovereign grace and human responsibility.
17. Learn today... humility & repentance are like a key and a lock... each one is needed by the other to fulfill their purpose and potential. - JDP
18. Christian... see yourself with the thunderous & zealous humility with which the Apostle Paul saw himself...
19. **Don't ever forget...**
*Pride falls... Self deceives... Lies hurt... Lust burns...
Fear gives-up... Quitters lose... and **SIN KILLS**.*

BUT...

20. *Grace chooses... Truth defines... Trials refine...
Persecution purifies... Temptations test...
Confession humbles... Repentance frees...
Warfare works... Worship washes...
Witnessing wins... & Love obeys!*

BECAUSE...

Jesus is LORD...

and He speaks, saves, sanctifies, & sends out His
selected & spoken-to-servants to share what He's said
and done... ALL by His grace & ALL for His glory!

Titus 2:15

*"Declare these things, exhort and rebuke with all
authority. Let no one disregard you."*

FINALLY...

Saul's life-lesson points us ALL to The Gospel...
by revealing each person's initial problem (sin) and
their eternal potential; namely, of going & growing
from flawed to favored... and then from favored to
fallen... but then... through the truth, love, grace,
and gospel of Jesus Christ and His cross...
we can still go from fallen to family! – JDP

**I think the most succinct way of saying that is...
on the back of business card:**

John 3:36

“He who believes has life, but he who does not obey does not have life, instead, the wrath of God abides on them.”

Let's PRAY

WORSHIP:

1. “Love God & Love People”
2. “Confidence”
3. “I’m A Believer”

Why did God send an evil spirit to torment King Saul?

[First Samuel 16:14](#) says, "The Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him." This is also mentioned in [1 Samuel 16:15–16, 23; 18:10](#); and [19:9](#). Why did God let an evil spirit torment Saul? In what way was the evil spirit "from" the Lord?

First, the evil spirit was "from" the Lord in that it was allowed by God to harass Saul. Ultimately, all created things are under God's control. It is likely that this evil spirit was part of God's judgment upon Saul for his disobedience. Saul had directly disobeyed God on two occasions ([1 Samuel 13:1–14; 15:1–35](#)). Therefore, God removed His Spirit from Saul and allowed an evil spirit to torment him. Likely, Satan and the demons had always wanted to attack Saul; God was now simply giving them permission to do so.

Second, the evil spirit was used to bring David into the life of Saul. This account is recorded immediately following David's anointing as the future king of Israel. The reader would be wondering how a shepherd boy would become king. [First Samuel 16](#) reveals the first step in this journey. When the king's servants saw the torment Saul was enduring, they suggested, "See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the lyre. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes on you, and you will feel better" ([1 Samuel 16:15–16](#)).

One of the king's servants referred David to the king, describing the youth as a great harp player, among other things (verse 18). Saul called David to come and found him to be a great comfort: "David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers. Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, 'Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.' Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him" ([1 Samuel 16:21–23](#)).

It is important to note that this evil spirit that troubled Saul was only temporary. The final verse notes that the evil spirit came on multiple occasions to bother Saul, but also it departed from him.

A related question is, does God send evil spirits to torment people today? There are examples of individuals in the New Testament being turned over to Satan or demons for punishment. God allowed Ananias and Sapphira to be filled with the spirit of Satan as a warning and example to the early church ([Acts 5:1–11](#)). A man in the Corinthian church was committing incest and adultery, and God commanded the leaders to “hand him over to Satan” to destroy his sinful nature and save his soul ([1 Corinthians 5:1–5](#)). God allowed a messenger of Satan to torment the apostle Paul in order to teach him to rely on God’s grace and power and not become conceited because of the tremendous abundance of spiritual truth he was given ([2 Corinthians 12:7](#)).

The New Testament reveals how God can use the presence of evil spirits to reveal His power. Jesus showed His power over demons on multiple occasions; every time Jesus cast out a demon, it was an affirmation of the Lord’s authority. The account of Jesus’ casting out the demons who entered a herd of pigs indicates that perhaps as many as 2,000 evil spirits were present, yet they all feared the power of Christ ([Mark 5:1–13](#)).

If God does allow evil spirits to torment people today, He does so with the goal of our good and His glory ([Romans 8:28](#)). And, just as in Job’s case, Satan and his minions can do only what God allows them to do ([Job 1:12](#); [2:6](#)). They never act independently of God’s sovereign and perfect will and purpose. If believers suspect they are being tormented by demonic forces, the first response is to repent of any known sin. Then we should ask for wisdom to understand what we are to learn from the situation. Then we are to submit to whatever God has allowed in our lives, trusting that it will result in the building up of our faith and the glory of God.

Evil spirits are no match for the power of God. As [Ephesians 6:10–12](#) commands, “Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

[God’s Devil: The Incredible Story of How Satan’s Rebellion Serves God’s Purposes by Erwin Lutzer](#)

Saul: A Tale of Self-Deception

Talk About Breaking Bad...

by **Tim Mackie & Aeron Sullivan**

Table of Contents
Samuel's Warning
Saul can't get it together
Look inside your heart

King Saul was technically Israel's first king. He came to power after a bloody and tumultuous period in Israel's history, when the people were governed by various tribal chieftains, called "Judges." An account of this period can be found in the Book of Judges, which tracks the progressive moral corruption of the Israelites and their leaders after the death of Joshua. With no centralized government and two hundred years of poor leadership, this was a period of political and social upheaval. The Israelite people were looking for a savior who could end the strife that had marred their nation's landscape for generations. They needed a king, but what kind?

This kind of leadership crisis is familiar from past and current history. Israel wanted a good leader, one who was not corrupt and had integrity. However, there were other cultural influences at play, and the Israelites' intentions were not completely pure as they asked for a king. We're told that "all the elders of Israel gathered together and they came to Samuel at Ramah." They said to him, "You are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now, install for us a king to govern us like all the other nations."

1 Samuel 8:4-5

This should bother us, because Israel had a king already, named Yahweh (remember Exodus 15)

He was trying to teach the Israelites how to become different from the other nations in order to become a blessing to those same nations. But the cultural pressures to have a leader like the Canaanites proved more powerful. Their hearts were not aligned to Yahweh, so He honored their request.

Samuel's Warning

The Lord said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in relation to all that they say to you. For it is not you they have rejected, but Me they have rejected from reigning over them... Now then, obey their voice. Only you will testify against them and proclaim to them the judgment concerning the king who will reign over them."

1 Samuel 8:7, 9

Next, Samuel delivers a famous warning to the Israelite people (1 Samuel 8:11-22)

giving the Israelites what they desired.

Saul was not a great king, nor was he even a good man. He was deeply flawed. The entire first half of Samuel is dedicated to a character study about his failures. When reading through Samuel, you might have a tendency to become critical or judgmental of Saul at times; you'll probably feel sorry for him at times too. But slow down and be honest with yourself. If you're open-minded, you'll realize you likely have more in common with Saul than you'd care to admit. The whole point of exploring Saul's failures is to warn us so we don't repeat his mistakes.

First Samuel offers up a number of vignettes, some seemingly small, some big, that examine Saul's missteps (see 1 Samuel 13-15)

You might wonder if God being overly hard on Saul is just an intentional creation of sympathy by the narrator. Well, yes. He wants us to feel sorry for him, so that we begin to see ourselves in him and learn our lesson through him.

In essence, **Saul's root character flaw is self-exaltation and self-deception**. He thinks he knows better than everyone else, including God. **The biggest tragedy is that he's not even aware of it**. The story shows he is completely blind to his arrogance and always believes he's in the right.

Saul can't get it together

As Saul's story progresses, the mistakes get bigger and the stakes get higher. Somehow, he is never able to own what wrong he has done when it's pointed out to him. For example, in 1 Samuel 13 he was told to wait for Samuel before offering sacrifices to God and initiating a battle with the Philistines. He didn't listen, however, and he bulldozed ahead

impatiently. Even though Saul eventually wins the battle, he did it on his own terms instead of God's, a point that he seems to never grasp.

His self-ignorance is even greater in 1 Samuel 15

where God commands Saul to go and fight against the Amalekites (this nation tried to wipe out the Israelites long ago when they had just escaped Egypt, see Exodus 17:8-15)

He was given clear instructions to thoroughly defeat the Amalekites. However, Saul stopped short and allowed the soldiers to plunder the spoil, even though he was explicitly told to not let this happen. When Samuel confronts him, Saul somewhat confesses, but with a spin: "The people spared the best of the sheep and oxen to make a sacrifice to Yahweh" (1 Samuel 15:15)

He justifies his stubbornness as a form of obedience, but he can't see that's what he's doing. Samuel then calls Saul to account:

"Why then did you not listen to the voice of the Lord? And why did you rush upon the spoil and do evil in the sight of the Lord?"

1 Samuel 15:19

Saul is still unable to see his mistake:

"I did listen to the voice of Yahweh, and went on the mission he sent me... but the people took the spoil."

1 Samuel 15:21

Now he's blame-shifting to get Samuel off his back. But Samuel has had enough: "Does Yahweh delight in burnt offerings as much as listening to his voice? To listen is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22)

It's only at this point that Saul can see his error, and so he owns his behavior with a confession:

"I have sinned. For I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and your words, because I feared the people, and listened to their voice."

1 Samuel 15:24

It's really hard to tell how genuine Saul's repentance might be. He's slippery and has a habit of saying whatever he needs to say in order to get out of trouble. In just a few moments, he reveals one of his motivations for the show of remorse:

Then Saul said, "I have sinned, but please honor me before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn back with me, that I may worship the Lord your God."

1 Samuel 15:30

Look inside your heart

Saul's failures hit close to home, if we're willing to let this story shine a spotlight onto our own hearts and minds.

Saul valued the opinion of the people over God's wisdom. He feared people when he should have feared God. Moreover, he continued to worry about one thing in light of correction—his own reputation and honor. Saul is perpetually downplaying his role in the bad decisions he makes. He keeps bringing in other people as if they are responsible for his mistakes.

The remainder of 1 Samuel recounts Saul's further slide into moral and spiritual decay. His descent provides a strong contrast with David's rise to a role of influence. At the end of the day, Saul placed his real trust in himself, his plan, and other's opinions of him. When convicted of this sin, his response is less than admirable. He never actually changes, and he perpetuates these behaviors until the end as he continues down a self-centered and prideful path. Contrast this with David, who is characterized in these same chapters as radically obedient and trusting of Yahweh, which eventually leads to his rise as king and solidifies his lineage.

These two characters provide us an opportunity for self-reflection so that we might find the blind-spots where our pride may be getting the best of us. We justify our poor decisions and try to negotiate with God.

We let our cultural river sweep us away. All of this forces the reader to ponder if we are more similar to Saul than different. In what ways do we elevate the opinions of other people above the wisdom and love of God? In what ways do we blame-shift in order to avoid truly owning our failures?

Saul's demise is a powerful lesson, but as with all tragic stories, it serves a redemptive purpose. It's a warning for us, so we don't repeat his mistakes. Our deepest character flaws don't have to define us or be the end of the story, not when it comes to the God revealed in Jesus. Unlike Saul, Jesus was a king of Israel who never failed, but took upon himself the consequences of the failure of others. Unlike Saul, Jesus never flinched when faced with the dark side of humanity. Rather, he ran directly into it with his love and passion because he knew that God's power could overcome our evil and create something new. What Saul needed, and what we really need, are new hearts and minds that don't need to defend themselves or justify failure and selfishness. What we need is what David later prays for after his greatest blunder:

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a spirit of integrity in me.”

Psalm 51:10