

“He Has Turned Back From Following Me”

1 Sam. 15:10ff

Introduction:

1. A young lady from Leticia, Colombia asked an interesting question. “In 1 Sam. 15 Saul is rejected from being king because of his disobedience to God, but in 2 Sam. 11-12 David sins, but he is not rejected from being king. Why was Saul rejected and not David?”
2. This is a very powerful question and one that is relevant to us. Will we be like Saul, rejected by God when we sin or will we be like David and receive God’s forgiveness?
3. Sincere souls are concerned that they might sin so as to be rejected by God and their hope for forgiveness be cut off.
4. An examination of the texts is in order.
5. Reading of 1 Sam. 15:1-3, 7-9.

Discussion:

I. The disobedience of Saul (1 Sam. 15).

A. Whatever you think about God’s plan for Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites, including

infant, ox, sheep, etc. that is not the issue. God brings judgment upon wickedness in radical ways. He destroyed the whole world with the flood and even in the case of David’s sin a child died as a result. God sacrificed His own Son, as innocent as He was to pay the penalty for sin. Cf. also 1 Sam. 22:19; Josh. 6:21.

1. All such actions make us aware of the severity of sin.
2. They intensify our desire in avoiding falling under the condemnation of God’s wrath and thus make our question most relevant.

B. Saul has disobeyed the Lord. All the Amalekites and their property were under the ban. That is, they belonged to the Lord. But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of

the animals and destroyed the things that were worthless.

C. The key statement that gives us insight into the nature of Saul’s sin is in verse 10: The Lord said, “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.” Note: “He has turned back from following Me.”

1. This suggests that there was more involved than just the matter of Saul disobeying a commandment of God.
2. He has turned from following God. The matter of sparing Agag was just one manifestation of his turning from following God.

D. Saul defends his actions and blames the people for what he has done.

1. Whether affected by greed or a desire to please the people, Saul has turned from following the Lord. “Theocracy trumps democracy.”
2. Saul has gone from “little in his own eyes to head of the tribes of Israel.” Cf. 9:12. He has exalted himself against the Lord.
3. He explains that he has brought back the best to sacrifice to God.
4. Samuel identifies him as rebellious and insubordinate and having rejected the word

of the Lord.

5. Saul acknowledges that he has sinned and continues to blame the people. He asks for pardon from Samuel. He asks for Samuel's support and says he will worship the Lord. "Worship without subjection of the will is no worship at all." He is interested in saving face before the people. He seized Samuel's robe and tore it. He would force Samuel to support him. But Samuel will not support him.
6. "You have **rejected** the word of the Lord, and the Lord has **rejected** you."

II. The disobedience of David (2 Sam. 12).

- A. Involves a misuse of his power.
- B. Involves the sin of adultery, lying and murder. Very severe! And God's language to David is strong. "You have despised the word of the Lord. You have despised Me."
- C. The consequences were severe.
 1. The sword would never depart from the house of David.
 2. His companion would take his wives, in demonstration of his power over David.
 3. The child born to David and Bathsheba's union would die.
 4. As I reflect on the life of David I know of no one whose life was characterized by greater grief than David's. Even though Job's life was filled with grief he did not have to live knowing he was the cause of the grief on his own family.
- D. Yet God said, "I have taken away your sin, you shall not die."
- E. While David committed these atrocities he never "turned away from following the Lord."
- F. He confessed his sin. He did not blame someone else. He prayed for forgiveness (Psa. 51).

III. The Book of Hebrews reflects the same distinction that we see in these two examples.

- A. 3:12-19 warns against allowing an evil unbelieving heart to cause us to fall away from the living God.
 1. How do we avoid it? By encouraging one another, so that none of us will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
 2. This text reminds us of those who came out of Egypt who were unable to enter the promised rest. Instead they died in the wilderness.
 3. He reminds us that we have a high priest who sympathizes with our weakness, but we must not be like them, instead we need to hold fast, firm until the end.
- B. 5:11-6:12 tells us we need to grow and develop lest we fall away.
- C. 10:23-39 and following through chapter 12. (The examples of faith are about enduring to the end.)

Conclusion:

1. It is indeed the kindness of God that leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4).
2. But if we turn away from following the Lord we are storing up wrath for ourselves (Rom. 2:5, 8, 9).
3. You cannot reject the word of the Lord and turn away from Him and things go well.

4. We need to take God's graciousness seriously. We need to take God's wrath seriously. If we turn away from His graciousness we have chosen His wrath. It is a terrifying thing.
5. And we need to take seriously how to stimulate one another, how to encourage one another and how to heal one another lest any one of us come short of the promised rest.