

G'Day church family.

Please have your Bibles open at 1 Samuel chapter 13 - as we continue the story of King Saul of Israel.

There's the usual outline for you to jot down notes if you wish.

Let me ask God for His understanding, before we begin

Let's pray...

Recap

Before we begin let's remind ourselves of a few things about Saul and his mission

[PowerPoint 1a-1 Samuel 8:11]

Samuel warned the people of Israel what having a king like the other nations would be like - back in 1 Samuel 8:11 - "This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots.

[PowerPoint 1b-1 Samuel 8:17-18]

And also, Samuel warned, in 1 Samuel 8:17-18 - such a King ¹⁷ will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. ¹⁸ When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."

[PowerPoint 2a-1 Samuel 9:16]

And Saul's mission - was given in 1 Samuel 9:16 - God told Samuel - "Anoint him [Saul] ruler over my people Israel; he will deliver them from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked on my people, for their cry has reached me."

[PowerPoint 2b-1 Samuel 10:8]

And Saul's was given strict instructions by the man of God, Samuel - in 1 Samuel 10:8 - "Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do."

So, in summary:

[PowerPoint 3-Summary]

- The King will use up the resources of the people
- The King's mission was to protect the people from their arch enemy - the Philistines
- And the King was to wait for the man of God - Samuel - and fully obey God's instruction given to him
- The King is not a replacement for God - nor a replacement for God's prophet - Samuel
- The King is to be a godly king - who **trusts** in God in all things - and **pleases** God in all things

Intro

[PowerPoint 4a-Intro]

What about us?

A couple of questions for us to ponder as we go through the passage....

Who are we trusting in?

- In ourselves?
- Or in someone else?
- Or in what we have?
- Or are we trusting in God in all things?

And

[PowerPoint 4b-Intro]

Who are we trying to please?

- Ourselves?
- Other people?
- Or God

(pause)

Let's have a look at what Saul gets up to in 1 Samuel 13 - verses 1 to 15

Let's look at his *actions* first

Saul's Actions (1 Samuel 13:1-12)

[PowerPoint 5-Map]

V1 - Saul started his reign at 30 years of age - and reigned 42 years

We're not told how old he is at this point in his reign but he does have a son -

Jonathan - who is old enough to lead a small army

V2 - Saul has 3000 men - 2,000 men at **Michmash** [#4 on map] and **Bethel** [NW of Michmash] and 1000 men with his son Jonathan at **Gibeah** [South of Michmash]

V3 - Jonathan sees an achievable opportunity to attack a Philistine outpost at **Gebah** [above Gibeah] - not far from his hometown of Gibeah. There's no evaluation - positive or negative - of Jonathan's actions. The facts are just given. Jonathan has solved one problem - in having a Philistine outpost near to his hometown - but has created a bigger problem - there will surely be a fierce response from the Philistines!

The Philistines heard about it in v3 - this is an ironic way of saying - they're angry about it.

Saul hears about it too in verse 4 = and also hears that Israel has now become obnoxious (stench - on the nose) to the Philistines. And Saul realizes there will be a response from the Philistines - so he summons all the people to join him at Gilgal [far east of map]

But notice in v4 - we get a hint of the heart of Saul - Saul plainly took credit or glory for Jonathan's attack - the message went out that "***Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost...***"

A Godly king would have attributed the success in battle to the Lord!

This was a bad sign in the heart and character of Saul. His own sense of insecurity will not allow any of his associates (even his own son) to receive credit. He needed to drink in praise like thirsty men drink water.

In some ways - Jonathan's actions could be seen as foolhardy - but on the other hand it's an opportunity for Israel to finally confront and get rid of their arch enemy - the Philistines.

Assembling at Gilgal would be a reminder of Saul's coronation and celebrations of his first victory - over the Ammonites in chapter 11 - this would be a great moral booster for the army. Gilgal is far enough from the Philistines to give the army time to gather and for Saul to wait for Samuel to come and do the sacrifice before the battle - as Samuel said in 10:8

So far so good for Saul...

But we see in v5 - that the Philistines certainly outnumber the Israelites - they have 3000 chariots and 6000 charioteers and an unaccountable number of soldiers (as many soldiers as the sand on seashore).

The Israelites were understandably afraid - v6 - hiding in caves, thickets, behind rocks and in pits and cisterns. It could be seen as a good tactic - hiding and waiting to surprise the enemy. But the bottom line is - they are scared. And some even ran away across the River Jordan - in v7.

You see, the people had said "what we really need is a king - he'll solve all our problems". But now they have a king and the problems are still there. The people needed God just as much with a king as they did without a king!

Saul however - in v7b - stands firm - even though his troops are quaking in their boots - he remains at Gilgal with his troops

See V8 - He even waits the 7 days allotted by Samuel - who is due to come and make a sacrifice to God

We must understand Saul's dilemma here

The Philistines are ready to attack - Saul's army is deserting him - and Samuel hasn't arrived on time - he's late!

Saul jumps the gun!

[PowerPoint 7-Actions]

See v9 -with the Philistines advancing and his troops deserting Him - Saul is desperate and sees only one solution - to seek the Lord's blessing himself and as the 7th day dawned and Samuel has not arrived - Saul "felt compelled" (he says in v12) to offer the burnt offering

If only Saul could have waited a few more hours, how different the story of his life might have been. Samuel arrived exactly on schedule - just as Saul was completing the sacrifice

The last moments of waiting are usually the most difficult and they powerfully tempt us to take matters into our own hands.

Saul's argument - told from his point of view - is convincing and our first response when reading this is to feel sympathy and even agree there was nothing else, he could do. The implication from Saul's words is that it was Samuel who was at fault, not Saul! If only Samuel had arrived on time, then the problem could have been avoided.

It's like Saul's saying: "You see Samuel, it was really your fault. If you came earlier, I wouldn't have done this."

But if Saul obeyed and trusted God, God would taken care of Samuel and the people. Even if Samuel was totally in the wrong, it still didn't justify Saul's sin. We often try to blame our sin on someone else.

Ask Adam - ask Eve?

[PowerPoint 7-Picture]

But it's never right

To do wrong

To do right (picture)

It's not right for Saul

To do wrong - make the sacrifice

Even though he's doing the right thing and asking for God's blessing

You see, as v10 explains - Samuel did arrive on 7th day - just not at the beginning of the day - but just after Saul made the sacrifice

An unwillingness to accept responsibility for our actions is often one of the early signs of being unsuitable to be a leader

It is made abundantly clear - Saul's chosen course of action to offer the sacrifice was completely unacceptable

The way forward for a leader who is struggling to exercise the power he or she is given - is NOT to exercise the power he or she has not been given

[PowerPoint 8-Saul's Actions = disobedience]

Saul had disobeyed God 's command given through Samuel because

- a. Saul had failed to wait the full 7 days
- b. Saul had attempted to exercise a priestly role - of sacrificing - a role he had not been given. God gave a whole book of instructions (in Leviticus) to describe who should do the sacrifice - how they should do it - and when they should do it - and why they should do it
- c. Only the priest could do the sacrifice on behalf of the people - no one else. God is a holy holy holy God and things must be done His way

Consequences (1 Samuel 13:13-15)

Any time we sin there are consequences

[PowerPoint 9a-Consequences]

Sometimes consequences are more severe than other times

Stealing a pen from work - although the sin of stealing - probably won't have too many consequences

Stealing thousands of dollars of stuff from the company you work for - will have many consequences - like losing your job, having a criminal record, possibly jail - it might even cause your marriage to fail - and have consequences for your children and the family

Saul doesn't seem to have any problem with his actions, though.

He doesn't repent - he seems to feel he had no choice

Saul gave reasons/excuses - when all Samuel wanted was to hear Saul's ***confession and repentance***

[PowerPoint 9b-Consequences]

But Samuel tells Saul, he is foolish and has not kept the command God gave him. Because of his actions - Saul will not be sacked as king but - his kingdom through his family line will not continue. So, Saul's son, Jonathan, will not succeed him as King - neither will Jonathan's son become king. The Saul dynasty will start and end with Saul

You see, instead God - in v14 - will appoint a new king - a ***man after God's own heart***

And there - highlights the most important point

It's Saul's *heart* that is the problem - it's not so much his sin - as we all sin - but his heart is the problem!

Saul's acted foolishly - because he trusted himself more than God - and because he wanted to please his men - by doing the sacrifice urgently - so they wouldn't desert him - instead of waiting on God and realizing that God will fight the battle for him - whether he has 1000s of men or just a few hundred men!

You see, the basic question for Saul - is will he as king being subject to the word of God from the prophet Samuel - or will Saul overrule him

Saul's actions show - he is willing to override the prophet - and showed he did not consider he was bound by God's word and instruction

The difference between Israel's king and the kings of the other nations - is that ultimately Israel has a supreme king, God - so Israel's king - must totally rely on God - and be a king after God's own heart

- A King after God's own heart - honours the Lord - and does the will of the Lord - not their own will
- A King after God's own heart - puts the Lord God on the throne as King - in Saul's case - Saul was his own King - not God
- A King after God's own heart - Has a repentant heart
- A King after God's own heart - Loves others

There's another consequence for Saul - the thought of an unknown successor - a man after God's own heart - which we know is David - this thought took a grip of Saul - took root and began to eat away at him - and made him very bitter and twisted as we'll see in the coming weeks -consequences consequences consequences!

Our Response - Galatians 1:6-10

How should we respond to this passage?

[PowerPoint 10-Response]

Should we be like Saul?

No - of course not!

Yet - we all perhaps have a bit of Saul in us

Taking things into our own hands

Jumping the gun!

Failing to wait on God!

"Helping" and "advising" God

Pleasing others when we should be pleasing God

As we come to our NT passage from Galatians 1:6-10

There's a similar problem - that the Apostle Paul highlights

Some of the Galatians are deserting the Gospel

People are following & trusting in a different Gospel -

They are being sucked in by "charming" preachers - preaching a Gospel other than Jesus' once and for all sacrifice on the cross for the forgiveness of sins - and His glorious resurrection - so we can have the gift of eternal life

Examples of False Gospels today would be:

"We can work our own way to Heaven"

"All religions lead to Heaven - not just Christianity"

"God want us to be rich" [Yes, rich in love for Jesus - not necessarily wealthy]

"If you suffer for the Gospel - you will be prosperous"

"Poverty Gospel" - give up everything for Jesus - but focuses on what we give up for God - instead of what God gave up to us"

"God is a love only God" - God loves everyone and we have to accept everyone the way they are. Yes, God does love us - but we must also mention His holiness, His justice and His anger with sin.

God does not love us so much that he overlooks our sins, accepts us no matter our behavior (meaning he approves of us, even our sin, no matter what), and will thus always be happy with us no matter what we do. He loves us so much he pays for our sin himself. God always loves people no matter what they do because he is love, but he expresses that love in many different ways, including discipline, consequences, and trials meant to break us so we will turn to him. Hell is real

and people really are punished for their sin if it is not covered by the blood of Jesus.

Believing in these false Gospels is putting our trust in the people who teach them and pleasing them - instead of trusting in Jesus' Gospel and pleasing God

The Apostle Paul didn't care how charming or convincing these false preachers were

He says ultimately - He must please God - not please people

Otherwise he wouldn't be a servant of Jesus

You see the One true Gospel is built on the Good News of Jesus

Jesus unlike Saul always does the Father's will

Jesus is able to make the sacrifice to God for our sin - and be the sacrifice for sin - because Jesus fulfils all the offices of the OT - He is the ultimate Prophet - Priest - and King

Three Responses then:

[PowerPoint 10a-Response 1]

1. **Search our hearts** - are we *taking the glory that belongs to God*? Do we give God the glory for the things that happen in our lives or do we think these things happened by our own efforts?

(pause)

[PowerPoint 10b-Response 2]

2. **Search our hearts** - are we *trusting in God or ourselves*? Do we take matters into our own hands - try to help or advise God? - do we jump the gun? Saul had to wait. Are we waiting on the Lord? We're not good at waiting - are we? We live in a microwave, fast food, I can have everything now society - we don't want to wait - why should we? Yet the Bible is full of examples of people waiting. {Abraham & Sarah; Joseph; Moses; Hannah and son on...}

God wants us to wait and trust in Him in all things. [All sin - breaks the commandments - and is putting ourselves and pleasing ourselves - ahead of pleasing God and trusting Him]

(pause)

[PowerPoint 10c-Response 3]

3. **Search our hearts** - are we trying to *please God or ourselves or others*? Saul cared more about placating his soldiers from leaving than trusting God. Do we care more about what people think of us than what God thinks? Are we doing what people want us to do rather than what God wants us to do? Do we cave in to unbelieving family members or friends at times - rather than putting God first?

Conclusion

As the writer of Psalm 146 says in v3

[PowerPoint 11-Conclusion]

Do not put your trust in princes,
in human beings, who cannot save.

Only God can save us - so let's put our trust in Him!

Let's pray