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## Becoming Christlike – Learning How from Old Testament Kings and Prophets

### Session 19 – I Samuel 16 - Hearts Revealed

I Samuel Chapters 13-19 or 20 are packed with records that show the hearts of individuals in the way that they responded to events and interactions. Shows who they are and what resides in their hearts.

We will see the hearts of Saul, Samuel, Jonathan (Saul's son and rightful heir to the throne), David (who will replace Saul as king) and God.

We will see Saul respond to being confronted by Samuel having the kingdom taken from him by spending the rest of his life trying to kill David. Actually all the way to chapter 31. That is a lot of ink is devoted to Saul for nearly the rest of I Samuel. There is a great deal to be learned from comparing and contrasting these hearts. Remember God inspired Paul to write:

#### **Romans 15:4**

For whatever was written in former days **was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.**

#### **“What Could They Have Done Instead” Mindset**

As we study these records and see what happened we will ask ourselves what they could have done instead. What can we learn from them and their choices?

As mature adults in our sixties and older we have a lot of life to look back upon. We have all made mistakes, made bad choices. We don't want to wallow in guilt or regret, and we don't need to because we have been forgiven, we have been made righteous in Christ. However we can think back about decisions that proved to be a bad choices (even if it seemed good and right at the time) and ask ourselves what would have had to have been in place for us to choose differently. What might have happened had we paused, sat down, and prayed about the situation before moving forward. We can learn from our past choices.

#### **Recap**

After looking at Saul's first egregious sin in I Samuel 13, we looked at the fall of Adam and Eve with the results that ensued for mankind with his total focus on self and trying to fill the void within. Next was Eden vs Eden Prairie: are we racking up rewards for God's Eden to come or trying to create our own little Eden on earth now? Then we looked at the Real Eden To Come, the paradise on earth that God will eventually create in contrast to the devil's counterfeit Eden/globalist society that he will eventually bring into being during the tribulation but will be destroyed during the end times. Last session we looked at Saul's second egregious sin and the many ways he rationalized and justified his actions and the consequences he suffered.

#### **Focus on Hearts**

Today we are going to revisit some records that we already read with a focus on the hearts of those involved and move on to Chapter 16.

### **I Samuel 15:35**

**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.**

Why did Samuel grieve over Saul? Look at Samuel's heart here. Samuel never wanted a king. He knew God was supposed to be the king for the Children of Israel and they were to have judges to help them along the way. Samuel goes along with God's willingness to grant them a king because God knew they would never give up on this request to be like the nations surrounding them. Saul endeavors to mentor Saul but Saul sins egregiously so Saul greives over what could have been for Saul.

This verse says that God regretted having made Saul king. This was not in the sense that God made an error, but rather it is pointing out the Saul had free will. God had given him a tremendous opportunity. God did so much to support him with the spirit rushing upon him, turning him into "another man", him prophesying with the prophets etc. However, Saul used his free will to make bad choices.

Look back at Saul's first egregious sin in Chapter 13.

### **I Samuel 13:12, 13**

**12** I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the Lord.' **So I forced myself and offered the burnt offering."**

Here Saul is trying to reframe reality to make himself look good as though he was trying to really do the Word of the Lord. He didn't "force himself" to offer the burnt sacrifice. He impatiently raced ahead and did what was Samuel's to do. God and Samuel both see right through this.

**13** And Samuel said to Saul, "**You have done foolishly.** You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. **14** But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince<sup>b</sup> over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you."

Anytime we sin it is Foolish! Anytime we make decisions that are not in accord with God's Word, it is foolishness. Read through Proverbs looking for the contrast between wisdom and the fruit that results and foolishness with its consequences. Samuel tells him God would have established his kingdom forever, but now he has lost it.

We see Samuel's heart. We see Saul's heart. Saul carries on with his life as king as though nothing had changed in Chapter 14. He persisted in stubbornness and pride.

Return now to Chapter 15 and consider what could have been. Consider instead of the rebellious heart we saw, what if he could have changed.

### **I Samuel 15:35**

**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.**

It says that Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. Why not?

What if Saul had had a “Come to God Moment”? He could have gone to Samuel and said I was wrong, I sinned against God. I Repent. He could have asked Samuel what he needed to do to get right with God again. He could have but did NOT do this because he was stubborn, prideful, and hard-hearted.

Think of David’s reaction when Nathan came to him after he committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had Uriah killed to try to cover his sin. He immediately declared, “I have sinned against the Lord”. David’s willingness to repent and change is why he is called a man after God’s own heart. Read Psalm 51 to see the heart of David.

Saul could have repented like David did. We will never know what God would have done.

In our own lives at points of decision we should sit down and pray before making decisions.

Perhaps Samuel was thinking back to what he had said right before Saul’s first egregious sin.

Let’s look back further in I Samuel 12 to God’s reaction to repentant hearts.

#### **I Samuel 12:19-25**

**19** And all the people said to Samuel, “Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die, **for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king.**”

The people are repentant. They realized how they had sinned in asking for a king and admitted it to Samuel. They are asking for mercy, not to die. They knew the records of Aiken, Korah, and others who had been put to death for disobedience

**20** And Samuel said to the people, “Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil.

Samuel is a straight shooter. He does not soft-peddle their sin. He acknowledges it. **Yes you have done all this evil!** But look at the graciousness and compassion God has for them...

Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord but serve the Lord with all your heart. **21** And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty.

Look you did sin but do not turn aside. Move forward. God forgives. Serve the Lord with all your heart. Don’t turn aside after empty things. Reminds us of Jeremiah where he warned them not to follow after worthless things and become worthless.

#### **Jeremiah 2:5**

Thus says the LORD: “What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthlessness, and became worthless?”

**22** For **the Lord will not forsake his people**, for his great name’s sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself.

God so loves and is so concerned for his people that he is willing to forgive even this great sin of them wanting to replace Him as king and have a man for their king.

**23** Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way. **24 Only fear the Lord and**

**serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you. 25** But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king.”

Look at the forgiveness in this section when the people sincerely repented.

Do you think God would have forgiven Saul had he repented and asked for forgiveness? He could have had a totally different future.

Instead as we saw last session:  
He didn't take God's Word seriously.  
He didn't pay attention.  
He didn't listen.  
He thought, well this is “good enough” of his partial obedience.  
Well this is going to be good for us.  
He didn't really get what God was after.  
He hadn't read the Word.  
He didn't really know God's heart.  
He feared man over fearing God.  
He was interested in appearance.s  
He shifted the blame.  
He made excuses.  
He rationalized.  
He justified himself: it's not my fault.  
He lied.

Certainly Samuel was grieving because of the different future Saul could have had. Samuel knew how loving and forgiving God is.

## **I Samuel 16**

Samuel is grieving for Saul as we saw at the end of Chapter 15

### **I Samuel 15:35**

**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.

### **I 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.”

Samuel is still grieving for Saul. Look at what God does for Samuel! God is ready to move forward. Samuel had always had his heart in alignment with God.

God gives him instructions to help him get through his grief. Sometimes the only way we can can through hard times that make us want to wallow in grief, or guilt or the past is to get up and get moving.

**2** And Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’”

**3** And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you.”

Samuel is rightfully worried that Saul will try to kill him if he hears what he is going to do. God kindly and sweetly gives Samuel a way to accomplish what God needs done without putting Samuel in jeopardy. God’s heart is tender toward Samuel; he is compassionate, makes it a bit easier for him. He does not chastise him to get up and quit wallowing. He needs Samuel to get through this and move on to accomplish His will.

Samuel is to take a heifer with him and say he is going to sacrifice to the Lord, which he will do. But while he is there he will anoint the new king of God’s choosing.

There are times as we walk with God that it is just tough, and we may feel like giving up. There are other OT examples of individuals who get to a very low spot and God shows compassion, Read the record of Elijah under the broom tree when Jezebel is seeking to kill him. The Lord works with him, sends an angel to help etc.

The Lord will work with you when you get to a low point and feel like giving up. There is still more work to do no matter how old you are. We are still to do the best we can. God will work with us and help us himself, through his Word, through another believer speaking into our life.

**4** Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem.

This is so beautiful in light of all Samuel had been through. Consider the healing that Samuel might have experienced as he obeyed God and got on the way. He might have been thinking as he walked about the new future ahead with a new king. What great things might be in store?

The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?”

What a contrast to Saul. The elders have so much respect for Samuel and the Word he represented that they are trembling.

**5** And he said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

They get the invitation to the sacrifice because they come trembling. They respect God and His Word.

Speaking of trembling, this is a huge key. Here are some verses that speak of trembling:

**Isaiah 66:2**

**2** All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. **But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.**

They knew about blessings and curses. They knew obedience brought with it blessing and disobedience brought consequences. This is who God looks to in terms of answering prayer and blessing.

**Psalm 51:17**

**16** For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a

burnt offering. **17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise

David could have received the death penalty for having Uriah killed. But he repented, confessed and was contrite.

**Isaiah 66:5**

**5** Hear the word of the Lord, **you who tremble at his word:**

**Ezra 9:2-5**

**2** For they have taken some of their daughters to be wives for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race<sup>a</sup> has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands. And in this faithlessness the hand of the officials and chief men has been foremost.” **3** As soon as I heard this, I tore my garment and my cloak and pulled hair from my head and beard and sat appalled. **4** **Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel**, because of the faithlessness of the returned exiles, gathered around me while I sat appalled until the evening sacrifice

That is the attitude toward the Word that we should have.

**6** When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before him.” **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.**” **8** Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” **9** Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” **10** And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen these.”

Again Samuel is being obedient, waiting for God to show or tell him which son of Jesse is the chosen one!

**11** Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “**There remains yet the youngest,<sup>a</sup> 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.”

This of course causes us to recall when Saul was chosen, he was out looking for lost donkeys here David is out keeping the sheep.

**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.” **13** Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.

Samuel has no hesitation, no reluctance at all! As soon as David is pointed out he is anointed.

**And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward.** And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

Again this sounds familiar. The spirit of the Lord had rushed on Saul shortly after he was anointed king.

**14** Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, **and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him.**

People have asked if God sent this harmful (devil) spirit on Saul. It does not make sense for that to have been the case. We know from the gospels that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. God wouldn't send an evil spirit to afflict somebody and then send another person in his kingdom to get rid of that spirit. That would be a kingdom divided against itself.

There is a figure of speech called a Semitic or Hebrew "idiom of permission" where things are attributed to God that he does not do. In the Old Testament they did not know about the spirit realm. There are very rare mentions of evil spirits.

The evil spirit was sent by the devil and was able to enter and torment Saul because his mind was wide open to possession because of the whole list of rationalizations, justifications, and lies that we have seen. All the things we have seen in his heart and mind left him wide open to demonic influence. Saul is no longer under the umbrella of God's protection. Saul is not guarding his mind.

We know from the gospels that when a devil spirit is cast out if the mind of the person is not closed up with the Word, 7 spirits more powerful than the ones who left will come in and occupy that space.

**15** And Saul's servants said to him, "Behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you.

**16** Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well." **17** So Saul said to his servants, "Provide for me a man who can play well and bring him to me." **18** One of the young men answered, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the Lord is with him."

It was recognized that the Lord is with David. Music can bring peace and relief and help you get your thoughts in line.

**19** Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me David your son, who is with the sheep." **20** And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread and a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them by David his son to Saul. **21** And David came to Saul and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer.

At this point in time Saul loves David greatly because of the godly music he plays and the relief he is affording him from the torment of the devil spirit(s).

**22** And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight." **23** And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him.

The next chapter of I Samuel, 17, is the story of David and Goliath. We will not read the whole chapter just selected verses. We want to get to Chapters 18 & 19 to see what happens to Saul because of his jealousy of David.