

Series: Shepherd, Poet, Fugitive, King - The Life of David
1 Samuel 15:1-35 – “I Have Obeyed the Voice of the Lord” / Ryan
Patty / 11.26.23

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 17:18-20 ESV (All Scripture this week is ESV!)

This morning we will be in 1 Samuel 15, so if you have a bible please go ahead and turn there. Last week we saw the Lord use Jonathan to defeat the Philistines, Saul's rashness in a foolish vow, a vow that would have killed his own son except for Israel interceding for Jonathan. Chapter 14 ends with a sort of summary of Saul's kingship. And so even though we are interacting with Saul in chapter 15 today, the writer of 1 Samuel is signifying what is to come. The end of Saul's kingship is determined. It is set. And now we are to compare his foolishness, his failings, with the one who is to come, who we will see next week in chapter 16. King David who more than anyone points forward to the Son of David, Jesus Christ, the true and final king to come.

As we begin our study in 1 Samuel 15 I want to remind us of the words Jesus said in John 10. He said that His sheep hear his voice, and He knows them, and they follow Him. 28 He gives them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of His hand.

God's sheep hear his voice, and follow his voice. This is the main theme and point of this morning's sermon. God's people obey His Word. God's sheep obey his voice.

8 times in this chapter the word voice is used in Hebrew. Saul will hear the Word of the Lord, the voice of the Lord, and not obey it. And then because of that, the voice of the Lord will issue judgment against him.

4 points this morning that help us to track what is happening.

1. God's Command

Look with me at 1 Samuel 15, verses 1-8.

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. 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. 3 Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

4 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. 7 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.

The Word of the Lord comes to Saul through Samuel, and it is pointed. It seems harsh. Devote to destruction the Amalekites. The Hebrew here means to put them "under the ban." They are to be cursed for destruction, including all the people, and all of the plunder is off limits for Israel. This is what God commands Israel to do. And so the question must be asked, because I'm sure even in your conversations with unbelievers it has been brought up, is this just? Is this punishment just?

Well **first**, let me say this, our reaction that the innocent shouldn't be punished is a good thing. The belief that the innocent shouldn't be punished is correct. If anything, since we know the God who

declares what is just and rules with justice, then we should desire the innocent to not be punished. But **second**, this is the word of God. And This is a command from God. Kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey. Yet notice here that the innocent are spared. Did you see that in verse 6? The innocent are not punished. The Kenites are among the Amalekites and Saul instructs them, hey you are innocent. We are coming to destroy those who are guilty. Flee. God provides provision for them.

And so what is the background with the Amalekites? Why were the Amalekites guilty? V. 2 – I noted what Amalek did when my people came out of Egypt. What did they do? Deuteronomy 25:17-19 – 17 “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. The idea of faint and weary means that they were obviously exhausted, and cutting off the tail (those who were lagging behind it says) implies that as they are coming out of Egypt, Amalek is attacking the stragglers. Attacking the ones who are weaker. Doing raids against them. Attacking the women and children, who would be at the back, and killing them. V. 19. you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; **you shall not forget.**

Exodus 17:14-16 – 14 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.” 15 And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The Lord Is My Banner, 16 saying, “A hand upon the throne of the Lord! The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

Amalek then is under the curse of God, because as it says in the

Deuteronomy passage, in his actions he did not fear Yahweh. God will wipe them out. Israel is to not forget what they did. And this expectation of final destruction is given to the new king of Israel. He was to finish God's mission. The one who is leading God's people in vindication for the attacks done against God's people. And so I want to say this clearly, when God issues a command, it is the moral good. He alone sets morality. Morality, the idea of what is good or bad, is not some ethereal thing that exists in the universe apart from God. No, he tells us, and he reveals to us because He is our creator, what is good, and what is bad. And what God says to do, is the moral good.

And when he issues a command, it is what we are to do. Do we buck at that a little in your spirit? In your soul? Do we not even like those words? That when God tells us to do something, we should do it; it IS the moral good. Jesus in John 10 – “My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me.”

So what do we do with this command that grates against us? Devote all the people to destruction God? All?! Yes. That is the command of God here. It is a fulfillment of what he said he would do in Deuteronomy 17. And so I'm not going to be able to answer every “what if” or every question about this but let me summarize and end this point by saying this: A culture can become so wicked and corrupt that it deserves total destruction. Total annihilation.

And we have seen this before in Scripture, even before this. Genesis 6. The flood. Verse 5 – The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And then, he puts the world under the ban. He destroys all. He annihilates them and wipes them out.

I realize this is hard stuff, I don't want to skirt around that. But ultimately, we have to trust God. Being a Christian involves faith.

Sure, there are many rational arguments to prove the existence of God, to prove doctrines of God, but at the end of the day, Scripture repeatedly calls us to have faith. To trust that God is good and he is in control. And we leave the final decision to people up to him. That does not mean we don't evangelize or don't have a role to play, but He alone has numbered all of our days.

- Our God is right, and good, and just, and he always does that which is right. And in our fallen minds, we tend to judge God. We tend to judge his actions here and we can easily place ourselves in the role of moral judge. And friends, that is just arrogant. In our sin we are arrogant. That we think WE can judge God for his actions.
- And what does this total destruction of Amalek foreshadow? What does it point forward to? The total destruction in Hell. The ban forever from God's presence. A reminder for all, then and here now, to listen to **God's voice through His Word, while you still have time, and to be made right with God through Christ.**
- Those who are against the people of God, against God himself, will be judged completely. Those who attack God's people will one day, as we see here, be judged. God will always exercise perfect vengeance at his appointed time. God's people find His favor, but God's enemies face his wrath and vengeance. And this, friends, is an encouragement to the saints. Justice will one day take place. That as Revelation 6 says, those who had been slain for the Word of God and their witness to the World cry out to God, "How long O Lord before you judge and avenge?" At his appointed time it will take place.

Do not neglect the Voice of the Lord to you today. Jesus' message 2,000 years ago is the same one proclaimed to you today: Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Trust in Christ, you have no other hope.

God's command comes, and Saul follows through... or does he?

2. Disobedience and Excuses

Notice here the perceived obedience that is actually disobedience.

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.

The Word of the Lord comes, and Saul and the people obey to an extent. Notice he keeps Agag alive, but also that which *they judged* as worthless and despised they devote to destruction. But the best? They decide to keep that for themselves. Partial obedience is still disobedience. Good intentions do not hide disobedience. Part of being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is that you are called to obey. The Great Commission that Jesus tells us is that his disciples are to make other disciples, *teaching them to obey all he has commanded*. He can say in John 14:15, "If you love me you will keep my commandments."

Obedience is a good thing. Obedience is required for a disciple of Jesus. 1 John 5:3 – For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

Obedience, as we will see later on, is what the Lord requires. Obedience that is wrought from faith. Not as any form of legalism. Daniel did such a good job explaining how legalism creeps in to the faith last week. So when I say obedience don't hear legalism. It is not legalism to say obedience is required of the Christian. Obedience will reveal your love for the Lord.

But two things to emphasize here. First, obedience is expected for all

Christians. It is expected that you will obey your Lord and follow his commands. For his commands are not burdensome, but are blessings. But second, we can praise God that in the midst of not being able to fully keep the commands of the Law, to practice a perfect obedience ourselves, we have been given the obedience of another. We have been given the righteousness of Christ such that we are clothed with it before the Father. Praise God for that obedience!

But obedience here is what Saul fails to do demonstrate. Partial obedience is still disobedience. Saul does devote some things to destruction, but not everything. **How often can we trick ourselves into thinking that we are obeying God** because we practice a partial obedience? God says don't do this, and we *mostly* don't do that. God says do this, and we *mostly* do that.

- It's like the person that says, "the bible just says don't have sex before marriage, everything else is okay." They play with Scripture, seeking to obey some of it and ignore other parts. Every parent knows this. Asking their teenager to clean their room and they hang up a few clothes and push the rest under the bed. Did they really obey?
- Where in your life are you lying to yourself by partially obeying? Where in your life, then, are you in disobedience to God?

So rather than obedience, what Saul offers up instead is disobedience and excuses. Let us keep reading.

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. 12 And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on

and went down to Gilgal.” 13 And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed be you to the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord.” 14 And Samuel said, [such a great and amazing line] “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?” 15 Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the Lord your God, and the rest we have devoted to destruction.” 16 Then Samuel said to Saul, “**Stop!** I will tell you what the Lord said to me this night.” And he said to him, “Speak.”

17 And Samuel said, “Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. 18 And the Lord sent you on a mission and said, ‘Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.’ 19 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.** I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. 21 **But the people** took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.”

Let me highlight a few things here.

First, notice Samuel’s care for Saul. He truly cared for him such that he is angry, he is grieved at both the actions of Saul and the Lord’s judgment. We will talk about that judgment. But notice his love and anguish, such that he cries to the Lord all night. **If you have ever had a close friend that professes to love God**, maybe even for years, for all intents and purposes shows a life that is seeking to follow God, but then they forsake God. They no longer want to follow him. The emotions involved in that are heavy. Even in here today, the burden of lost family members (maybe you were reminded of this at

Thanksgiving), lost sons and daughters, lost parents, who might have made a confession but aren't living anything out, aren't evidencing it. It brings us grief and anguish like no other, our tears are poured out in prayer before God. The Christian knows the anguish Samuel has here. The Lord sustains us, yes, but it is hard to walk through. And samuel clearly loved and cared for Saul.

Second, notice what Saul so foolishly does. He sets up a monument for himself! Remember the stone of remembrance just a few chapters back? Our Ebenezers of "till now the Lord has helped us." Monuments and altars are to God, not to us! What is this guy about? He is self-absorbed. Focused on himself. Prideful in his victory.

In the midst, though, of his disobedience Saul is caught. And what does he offer up? Excuses. In the midst of the bleating sheep and the lowing oxen that Samuel can obviously see and hear, he says he has obeyed! Notice v. 13 – I have performed the commandment of the Lord. Notice again v. 20 – I have obeyed the voice of the Lord. I have gone on the mission, I have brought the king, I have devoted them to destruction. But the people took the spoil.

Saul here, like so many of us when caught in sin, is self-deceived. He offers up the people and what they wanted to do as an excuse, and he offers up his partial obedience as his reasoning. He is self-deceived. We can do the same thing can't we?.

- We can go to an early morning prayer meeting and then not show the slightest care for a coworker that same day, can't we?
- We can read the Bible and then yell at our spouse or children, can't we?
- We can sit under God's Word being proclaimed this very day and disregard any prompting of the Spirit for meaningful change, can't we?
- Or even like Saul, setting up a monument for himself, we can

figuratively do the same. Little monuments to our accomplishments so that others can see and take notice. We keep a catalog of the things WE accomplish compared to other coworkers... little monuments in our heads.

The self-deceiving nature of sin is no light matter. Like that faucet leak that you can't see, just slowly dripping until it's leaked through the ceiling and into the basement, sin deceives us, friends! Like the cancer cells slowly ravaging us from inside until the sudden diagnosis comes, we often have no idea. In our sin, we can think we are actually obeying God, we can think we are actually doing what we ought to do, we can think we got this Christianity thing figured out. And we can be so quick to blame others when caught! Notice how Saul says, **"it's the people who took these things!"** Nevermind that he is the king, nevermind that they did these things ultimately under his command, nevermind that he is held responsible. Like Adam in the garden blaming that woman God gave him, here we have Israel's first king blaming the people God gave him. Like Aaron blaming the people and just "making a golden calf," Saul doesn't lead them with a strong hand. And then a Word from God comes and cuts through the self-deception.

Samuel tells Saul, "Stop!" Maybe some of us need to hear that this morning... (maybe the Holy Spirit has been convicting you of certain hidden sins and you are self-deceived and ignoring that conviction... maybe you need to hear this "stop!") Samuel tells Saul, "Stop! Stop your lies, your excuses, your self-deception. Listen to what God has to say to you and the judgment He will deliver."

- My friend, may you hear this warning now. Do not let sin continue to deceive you. Do not paint yourself as a better person in your mind, subtly looking down on others. There is one thing we can do when we are deceived and that is to run to the God of truth, the one in whom there is no falsehood, the

one who cleanses us from all unrighteousness, the one who has sent his Son to rescue His people.

I said earlier that the “voice” or the “word” of the Lord is repeated throughout this chapter. Here, Saul thinks he obeyed the Voice of the Lord. But he didn't. He actually rejects Yahweh's Word and to reject Yahweh's Word is to reject Yahweh Himself. It is the height of arrogance.

Instead the prayer we should pray as members of CCC is that we would collectively be not only hearers but doers of the Word. Recognizing when we or others are self-deceived and holding one another accountable in grace & truth.

3. What Really Matters

The Lord through Samuel is going to teach Saul a lesson. A lesson concerning true obedience, but a lesson more so on what type of heart and worship the Lord is ultimately after. This lesson isn't just written here for us but progressively unfolded throughout the Old Covenant as that covenant points forward to something new and greater; what you and I experience in the new covenant. Look with me at how the Lord reveals Himself, 1 Samuel 15, starting in verse 22 - famous passage of Scripture.

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.”

What is Samuel saying here? What about all of the sacrificial system set up in the Mosaic covenant? Doesn't the Lord require sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins?

Yes, that is true. But that is not the main point here. The Lord is revealing His heart. [[go slow]] He is saying that formal worship (like sacrifices) cannot be substituted for an obedient life. We cannot have external devotions and no internal submission. We cannot pride ourselves on our church attendance, our Bible reading, our prayer life, and fail to obey God's Word at the same time. The Lord is after the heart. So Samuel can clearly say, to obey is better than sacrifice, to listen [is better] than the fat of rams.

And then v. 23 is striking. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Why is rebellion like divination? Because in both we are trusting in something other than God. This rebellion is in the context of obedience. Samuel is saying through the Holy Spirit, that when you do not obey, it is like divination (possibly foreshadowing Saul and the Witch of Endor). It is as bad as that sin. Samuel is showing the true importance of obedience. And then presumption is as iniquity and idolatry.

Just as Samuel was not pulling any punches back in chapter 7, so he is straightforward here in calling out the sin. And it's the comparison he wants us to see. God doesn't tolerate a halfway devoted heart. He will have all of it or none of it. Lukewarmness as we see in the book of Revelation is like something he wants to spit out of his mouth. And Saul's arrogance to presume upon the Lord, to think he can hear a command from God and modify it as he sees fit, is arrogance, it is rebellion, and it is ultimately idolatry. For what is idolatry? Worshiping something other than God. And when we do that, when we do not fully obey, and we change the command in our mind like Saul does here, it is the idolatry of putting ourselves in the place of God. We know better than him... I hope we see that this morning.

- May we never presume upon the Lord's grace. May we never presume to change his commands to fit our lifestyle. May we never presume to think that He is wrong and we in fact know what is right. God forbid that to ever be true of us.

The Lord has been after the heart all along, since the garden onward. It is as Hosea 6:6 says, For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. God desires that we know him. That knowledge reveals itself in faith, in love, and in obedience. Do you know God? Is your life showing an obedience to him?

To the unbeliever here this morning, the one not trusting in Christ alone, even if you think you are spiritual in some ways, or you want nothing to do with God, it does not matter. You are lost all the same if you are not in Christ.

- In love I want to tell you that sin is deceiving you; you are self-deceived. And apart from knowing God you have no hope in this life nor in eternity. That's the bad news, and you must wrestle with that reality before coming to see the good news. **Because the good news, is that God through His Son offers you hope. Jesus Christ has come and taken the punishment and wrath that you and I deserve.** A punishment that was ours, he took. But learn from Saul here, this hope is not offered on our own terms but on God's terms. (we don't get to change how salvation comes to us). You must turn to him in faith, you must come to Christ in faith, recognizing that in and of yourself you are sinful and you have no hope. But Christ is enough. Look to Christ this morning and learn what really matters.

4. Judgment

I'm going to read the rest of the chapter, and it is not pleasant.

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. 29 And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.” 30 Then he said, “I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the Lord your God.” 31 So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the Lord.

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.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. 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.

Judgment comes upon Saul. The Kingdom is taken from Him and will be given to another. I want to discuss two things here in closing. Saul’s repentance and the Lord’s regret, in the context of God’s judgment. First, Saul’s repentance. Saul’s repentance isn’t a true repentance. Notice how he is all about saving face. Come back with me Samuel, at least honor me before the elders.

Some years back my oldest Jed mouthed off to his mom while I was at work. Every parent has been there... But he mouths off and later that day they were supposed to go visit some friends and the kids would play at the park. As the time draws near, Jed is getting ready to go and tells mom shouldn’t you be ready and Laura says, “no, we aren’t going anymore. I texted the mom. Your behavior towards me

was sinful and wrong and there are punishments for our actions.” Jed starts crying, apologizing profusely, to which Laura said, thank you for your apology, I forgive you, but we still aren’t going. Just as children must learn that the Lord disciplines those he loves and that a consequence motivated apology is not enough, so Saul must learn the same. His sorry is just an attempt to stave off any punishment. He has no true repentance.

Saul here wants to save face. He just doesn’t want to suffer the consequences.

And then Samuel does what Saul the King should have, and kills Agag.

Sure, Saul recognizes that he has “sinned,” but just don’t let me lose face before the elders. Just come back with me Samuel so I still have a good standing before them. **Brothers and sisters, hear me here clearly**, Coming to know that you’re a sinner is not conversion. Confessing yourself to be a sinner is not conversion. Even desiring forgiveness is not conversion. Conversion is an act of God’s Spirit that both brings us to repentance and enables us to have faith in Christ. It is a supernatural act of God. If Saul was truly repentant he would have grabbed a sword and taken care of Agag himself. He would have obeyed God. Instead Samuel does it. This repentance of Saul’s is ultimately a sham.

Second, The Lord regrets. In v. 11 and 35, the Lord regrets, or you bible might say, he repents. And then in v. 29 – And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.”

What do we do with this? Is the Bible just full of contradictions? Is it confused? he Lord regrets, he doesn’t regret. But notice that it happens in the same chapter doesn’t it? Is the writer confused?! No,

he is not. The writer clearly knew what he was doing, as we have seen elsewhere. This isn't about contradictions or confusion. This book is beautifully and purposefully written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He's wanting us to wrestle with something. It's a good thing to wrestle with God's Word (to ask questions to pray over it in a Spirit of humility. Those who seek after God do that). At the beginning and the end the Lord regrets, but in the middle we have this stalwart statement of him not regretting. So let's think about this.

First, this is God's Word. This is the voice of God for us. This is true and without error. And this revelation is what we submit our lives to. Second, some would argue that this means that God didn't know that Saul would fall away. That he doesn't know the future because of this expression. **Like he wants to re-do the play he has drawn up.** Now we have dealt with this before but let me just say this – there are scores of Biblical texts that say otherwise. That God clearly knows the beginning from the end. That he is working out all things according to His plan. God is not surprised by Saul.

But he does regret something in a sense. And this is what the writer wants to communicate. In v. 11 and 35, the idea of God regretting is to convey that we serve a God who is personal. He is not dead in his emotions and so transcendent that He does not care. He feels. He is brought to anger, he loves, he is jealous for his people, and he grieves. Our God is a personal God.

- Yet in v. 29, we are reminded that he does not regret like we do. His character does not change. As the classical doctrines would affirm, He is simple and does not change, He alone is self-derived. He is our Rock. And while there is some *anthropopathism* taking place here (fancy word that means just ascribing human emotions to God), God is still revealing himself to us. He ordained Saul, yet even in the moment he feels grief over Saul. **A parent knows this intuitively, even if not perfectly.**

You can know what will happen to your children based on the lifestyle they are living, the choices they are making, the friends they are with. We can recognize where the road is leading, right? But even so, when our predictions and warnings come true (and they do the very thing we hoped they wouldn't) don't we still grieve for them in the moment? We do.

- We still *feel*. Such is the case with the preeminent one of Israel. (The one who truly sees what will happen) The God who does not change, who is not controlled by emotions, the God who knows all things from beginning to end, yet in the moment the God who feels for His people.

Friends, it is only in the consistent God of v. 29 and the sorrowful God of verses 11 and 35 that we have the God of the Bible, the God alone who is worthy of our praise. As one writer says, "He is a God who is neither fickle in his ways nor indifferent in his responses." When you take away one for the other, you have a lifeless God, or you have an emotion-driven God who cannot control himself. But the God of the Bible reveals both and is worthy of our praise.

And this is what we see in the cross is it not? God's justice must be met, his wrath must be poured out for the sin that has taken place against him. Your and I's sin. A judgment had to take place like it did here for Saul. Yet he is moved for his people, he is moved to save his people by sending His Son to die in our place, to take that judgment. This is the God we serve! The God of 1 Samuel 15 is the same God revealed to us beautifully in the new covenant. May we be astounded all the more at the God who pities His people and saves!

The Kingdom is taken from Saul and will be given to another. We will see who this other is next week. But let us remember this: God's sheep hear his voice, and obey his voice. A trusting faith will show itself in obedience. Not perfection, but a trusting obedience. Look to Christ this morning for that perfect obedience and righteousness that

has been given to us. Let us pray.

Communion:

As the worship team is up here and I invite the ushers to go ahead and come up and start distributing, in a moment we are going to take communion as Christ's Church. This is an act of remembrance, and a tangible reminder of God's grace to us in Christ. And so I want to be clear, this communion is for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who are Christians and have repented and trusted in Christ alone. If that's not you friend, then we would love to talk to you after the service about what that looks like, but we would kindly ask that you hold off from taking communion this morning.

But saints, in the midst of our disobedience, may we look to Christ's obedience. May you rejoice this morning at what He has done for us. And rest in him. Have faith and trust that He is enough. Let us remind ourselves of our Christ this morning.