



**COME BOLDLY,
OBTAIN MERCY,
FIND GRACE.**

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The LORD sent Saul with very specific instructions (1 Samuel 15:1-35) - to utterly destroy the Amalekites - as in to literally wipe them out and not spare anyone, not even women, infants or animals. While that sounds gruesome to us, at the time that is what the Lord told Saul to do. He was to utterly destroy them, sparing none. *Spoiler alert, Saul did not do what the Lord told him to do!*

Let's move past the violent details of what Saul was supposed to do, the why, or even the historical implications of Saul's disobedience, and pause for a moment to glean wisdom from another aspect of this Biblical account.

Saul was fully aware of what the Lord asked him to do. So Saul and his people set out, but rather than utterly destroy the Amalekites, he spared the Amalekite king and they took the best of the Amalekite animals.

When it was over, Saul announced that he had performed the command of the Lord. Then Saul was confronted about the animals that were taken (that should have been destroyed). Saul said they took the animals to sacrifice to the Lord. That sounds like a good reason, it even sounds like a godly reason. Saul was saying he disobeyed the Lord (didn't do what the Lord asked) so that he could sacrifice to the Lord. Was the blame being given to the Lord for Saul's disobedience?! Have we ever said, even just in our hearts, but Lord, I did _____ for You, Lord - even when it was not what He actually asked us to do?

Was Saul's choice to disobey the Lord for the sake of religion? (Remember, making sacrifices and offerings to the Lord which was appropriate then, before the once and for all atonement for sin provided by the Blood of Jesus).

Ah, but no! When Saul is confronted again by the Lord through a man of God (Samuel the prophet), the truth finally comes out! Saul recognizes his sin and confesses that it was actually because he feared the people and obeyed their voice - instead of obeying God's voice. Saul's fear of man was greater than his fear of the Lord.

Yes, because of Jesus Christ - His blood shed for us - we are under a new covenant (Hallelujah!). But lest we think the fear of the Lord was only an "old covenant" / Old Testament thing, Jesus teaches us directly, saying:

"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matthew 10:28

Even the disciples in the early church walked in the fear of the Lord (see Acts 9:31). Revering the Lord, acknowledging that there is none other above the Lord our God.

May we always come honestly and humbly before the Lord! Disobedience (doing our own thing - for any reason!) is rebellion, and we see in Scripture that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as the iniquity of idolatry (see 1 Samuel 15:22).

The Bible does not tell us if Saul set out to intentionally disobey the Lord from the start, presumptuously sparing the king and taking animals. Nevertheless, even if he had not initially desired in his heart to rebel against the Lord, his actions of disobedience were sin.

If we look at Saul's actions after the battle, could it have been that he even convinced himself that his disobedience was okay? Had Saul deceived himself? Saul set up a monument for himself, and proclaimed:

"But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag the king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal." 1 Samuel 15:20-21

Except that bringing back the king of the Amalekites did not equate to "utterly destroying the Amalekites" and blaming others was an excuse that goes as far back as the garden with Adam and Eve. But let us not dare judge Saul! Rather, take these things to heart before the Lord, as they were included by the Holy Spirit in the Holy Bible, the living and active Word of God.

Have there not been times when I have deceived even myself, thinking I've obeyed the voice of the Lord, but maybe not completely, perhaps like Saul choosing actions

based on the fear of men or some other reason? Before just doing something (even that sounds good, godly) do I inquire of the Lord, to know what He desires? And then do I obey what the Lord says rather than submit to the fear of men? No shame or condemnation here, rather conviction! For each of us shall give account of himself to God (see Romans 14:12).

Beloved, through the Blood of Jesus there is grace, mercy and forgiveness for those who repent. Jesus gets it, He can sympathize with our weaknesses (yet He never sinned), so we can come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace for help in time of need! (See Hebrews 4:16) By His power, we can walk in the Spirit!

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:1-2

Beloved, have we not **"spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles..."**? (See 1 Peter 4:1-5) Arise, shine! Is it not our desire to please the Lord, the One we love because He first loved us? And if we love Him, will we not keep His commandments?

"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." Romans 13:11-12

Beloved, today we can make the choice to follow Jesus - completely. If there is something the Lord shows you to confess, you can turn to Him and receive His forgiveness now, let His love pour over you afresh this day! Yesterday is not ours to dwell on and tomorrow is not ours to worry about, but *this* is the moment you have with the Lord. No longer is there a veil of separation, come boldly, obtain mercy, find grace.

Not counting ourselves to have apprehended; but one thing we do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, pressing toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (see Philippians 2:13-14).

May we always lean upon and look to the Lord, praying as Jesus taught us, not rushing through because it is so familiar to our eyes and ears, but letting it flow from our hearts sincerely, asking the Lord to reveal His heart to us, that we might not stray from Him:

**“Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come. Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.”**
Matthew 6:9-13