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SERIES: 1 Samuel, Part 2 (Who Are You Most Like – Saul or David?)

TITLE: Program 2 – But Lord...!

TUESDAY

OPEN

I have a tough love question for you Beloved. And it's a question about obedience. I mean, when God tells you to do something do you do it? And if He tells you to behave in a certain way do you stop and say, "But God, I mean, You don't understand. I have to adjust to the time, to the situation, to the culture"? O Beloved, can you say that to God and get away with it? The answer's no. We'll talk about it today.

PART ONE

Have you ever heard that expression, "Obedience is better than sacrifice and to harken than the sacrifice of rams"? Have you ever heard that expression? Now I didn't quote it exactly right, but you know what, it comes from the Word of God. "Obedience is better than sacrifice." And that's what we want to talk about today. And we want to talk about total obedience, not just partial obedience, because you're going to see that partial obedience just

does not swing it with God. Well we're looking at 1 Samuel, chapter 15, the place where this verse is found. And I want you to understand the setting of it. God has commanded Saul, the king of Israel to go and to put Amalek and all the Amalekites to death. He is to utterly destroy them. Now that word *utterly destroy* is from a root h-r-m, and that means to destroy it in a sense as a sacrifice to God. You know sometimes there are things in our life that God says, "Hey, that has got to go." Now it doesn't mean for you go and get a spear and a sword and put it in their side. He's not saying that. What He's saying is, "That can't stay in your life and I want it gone." And so many times we cling to it. I have talked to so many women and men when God has told them, that is not the man for you, that is not the gal for you; you are to put that person out of your life, and they didn't listen to God. And the way they knew was because that person did not really believe in Jesus Christ. I mean they were missionary dating or, or they were so lonely that they rationalized I'm not going to marry this person; I'm just going to stay with them and be with them for a while. And you know what? They ended up being a thorn in their flesh. And they ended up having the hand of God's blessing come off of them. If you want the blessing of God it only comes with obedience, as we will see. Well let's get into the scriptures. We're looking at the life of David. And as we look at the life of David you have to understand the transition from Saul to David and you're going to see a very important principle in this chapter that is going to show you why God is transitioning from Saul to David. Well we come to verse 7. It says, **"So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt."**(1Samuel 15:7) He went down into that Negev and he got rid of them. **"He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive..."**(15:8a) Agag, he ought to be gagging now because God told him that he was to get rid of him. He was to get rid of Amalek and the head of Amalek was the king. And what he does is he spares and he takes him **"...alive, and [he] utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword."**(15:8b) Now

one of the words that we're marking in this chapter that is so key is *utterly destroy*. This word for *utterly destroyed* is only used in this chapter in the book of 1 Samuel. And so you want to mark it. I colored it red and I put a black squiggly line underneath it. And this is what it said, **"He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites, alive and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But..., "(15:8)** and you want to watch for those terms of contrast. You want to watch for the *buts* in the Bible, all right. And it says, **"But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep...oxen...fatlings...lambs, and all that was good, and [they] were not willing..., " and here you go, underlining it again and marking it, **"...to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed."(15:9)** Now this is a key verse in this chapter in 1 Samuel, chapter 15. And so what I did because I want it to pop off the page and I really want to see it and have it be out there where I can understand it and grab it immediately. I put a black cloud all around this verse, so that immediately when my eyes look down I focus on what Saul has not done. Now when you read verse 3 of this chapter, God is telling him, **"Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."(15:3)** Everything is to be utterly destroyed. Now listen carefully; it is to be utterly destroyed as a gift to God, as an act of acknowledging who God is out of fear and respect and trust of God. Well, go down to verse 10. It says, **"Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, 'I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.'"(15:10-11a)** So what happens is Saul goes to battle; he spares Agag. He spares the best of the spoil and he gets rid of everything else that is utterly worthless, and he doesn't know that God has already spoken to Samuel. It's like Samuel's at home, Samuel's in bed, Samuel's asleep, and God taps Samuel on the shoulder and wakes Samuel up and says, ["Samuel,**

I've got something I've got to tell you. I am full of regret. I so regret that I made Saul the king. And I regret it that I made Saul the king," now listen, "for he has turned back from following Me. He started out, I gave him a job; I told him what to do and now he's turned back from following Me."] (Paraphrasing 15:10-11a) You say, "But wait a minute, wait a minute. I read what you said. He did kill some of them." Yeah, he did; he killed some of them. But did he obey God? See so many times we think, okay, I did part of what you said, so it's all right. Is it all right? Is partial obedience okay? Can you get away with it? I mean does God look at you and say, "You know, I told you to do this, but you know what, I just blew it, didn't understand the circumstances. I forgot what culture I was in and I shouldn't have told you to do that." No, God doesn't do that. God's omniscient, o-m-n-i-s-c-i-e-n-t. And you see two words, omni, all, and then you see science in there. He is all knowing. He has all knowledge. So when God gives you a command honey, He's got everything covered, or sir, He's got all the bases covered. He knows the culture. He knows the circumstances. He even knows how people are going to react. But you do not know that. All you know is what God said for you to do, and listen, if you want the blessing of God you just plain ought to do it. I mean that's all there is to it. Well, when this happened to Samuel it says, **"...Samuel was distressed and he cried...to the Lord all night."**(15:11b) I mean that was the end of his sleep. He just cried to the Lord all night. **"[And] Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, 'Saul came to Carmel.'"**(15:12a) Now that Carmel doesn't mean he went all the way up north to the Mediterranean coast, because there's a Carmel that is much closer than that and that's where he went. And so **"...[he] went to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself."**(15:12b) I mean he has gone, he has fought the Amalekites; he has won, he has Agag in his possession, he has all this good spoil, and so he sets up a monument for himself. You know so many times when we obey God just a little bit, then we set up a monument for ourselves

because we said, “Well I did this for God.” Big deal! If God told you to do this, I mean something big, and you only did a portion of it, you’re in trouble. Don’t set up a monument for yourself yet. Watch out what God says. “...[then] **he set up a monument for himself, then [he] turned and he proceeded...down to Gilgal.**”(15:12c) Now Gilgal was where he was going to make a sacrifice. “[And] **Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, ‘Blessed are you of the Lord! I[’ve] carried out the command of the Lord.’**”(15:13) [“Hallelujah, here’s my monument. I’m coming to make a sacrifice. I carried it out.”] (Paraphrasing 15:13) I mean sham, sham, sham, sham. And so many times we live lives of sham, don’t we? We do a little bit for God or we put on our religious garb or we put on our religious talk or we do something in a group that we want to influence and so we say some religious things or some Christian things and we think, hey, I have obeyed God. Well watch what it says. It says, “**But Samuel said, ‘What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of...oxen which I hear?’**”(15:14) You said you did the will of the Lord, that you obeyed the command of the Lord. Listen, listen, I hear the bleating of sheep. I hear the lowing of oxen in the background. But Samuel and “**Saul said, ‘They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed.’**”(15:15) Utterly destroyed? We’ll look at it when we come back.

PART TWO

May it ring in your ears Beloved, obedience is better than sacrifice. Now we’re going to see that phrase in a few minutes. But before we look at it I want you to understand what prompted God to say, “Obedience is better than sacrifice.” And it’s wrapped up right in this verse, in verse 15 of chapter 15. “[And] **Saul sa[ys], ‘They have brought them from the Amalekites....’**”(1Samuel 15:15a) The bleating that you hear of the sheep

and the lowing of the oxen, we brought those from the Amalekites. And guess what we're going to do with them? We're going to sacrifice them to God, that's what we're going to do." Now watch what he says. "...**'They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and [the] oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed.'**"(15:15) We spared the best to sacrifice to God. It sounds so noble, doesn't it? It sounds so high. It sounds so lofty. And I want to tell you something, your excuses can sound noble, they can sound lofty, but honestly they won't hold with God. If God tells you to do something, Beloved, He expects you to do it and He expects you to do it the way He tells you to do it. He doesn't expect you to put your own spin, your own interpretation on it. He wants you to do it exactly as He says. Or He wants you to everything that He tells you to do. He's God. And you see, not only is God omniscient, but God is sovereign. He rules over all. And so because He rules over all He has a purpose that He is carrying out. You may not see the purpose, you may not understand the purpose, but you are to obey. It's not yours to understand; it is yours to obey. Now watch what happens. "Then Samuel said to Saul, 'Wait...,'" (15:16a) You can just hear him saying, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute. Don't hang yourself anymore with your words. "...**'Wait, and let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night.'** And he said to him, 'Speak!' [And] Samuel said, 'Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made...head of the tribes of Israel? And the Lord anointed you [as] king over Israel, and the Lord sent you on a mission...',"(15:16b-18a) You were little in your own eyes. God lifted you up. God anointed you as king. God sent you on a mission. You are who you are because of what God has done. Now why aren't you going to obey Him?" He says, "...**'the Lord sent you on a mission, and [He] said, "Go and utterly destroy..."**' That's right, you want to mark it again. "[utterly destroy the sinners] **the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.**" Why then did you not

obey the voice of the Lord [your God]...?”(15:18-19a) Now the way that I mark obey is I just draw a blue circle around it. And because he did not obey it I put a slash through it. And so that’s what I have right in my Bible and I can see that this is a word that’s talking about obedience and with the slash I can tell just from a glance that they did not obey. **“Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord?”(15:19)** Have you ever thought of partial obedience as evil in the sight of the Lord? You need to think of it that way. And Beloved, the reason that you need to think of it that way is because God is God. He is the supreme ruler of all the universe. And when you come to Him, when you become His child you are saying to Him, “It’s no longer my life, but now it’s Your life.” And this is what Paul means when he says in Galatians 2:20, **“I have been crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ live[s] in me....”(Galatians 2:20 KJV)** And so when we come to the gospel and we believe the gospel, it’s called the obedience of faith. In other words we say, okay, this is what you say, and I am going to believe it. That’s faith. It’s taking God at His word. And it’s not excusing anything. And it’s not manipulating and it’s not diverting. **“Then Saul said to Samuel, ‘I did obey the voice of the Lord and [I] went on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and [I] have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and [I] have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.’”(15:20)** Liar, liar! And the thing that is so sad here is that he does not see it. Duh! He does not get it. And that’s true with so many people. Let me just give you one common incident right now. We think that it is better to live with somebody than to get married because divorce is bad. Well what we’ve done is we’ve had a partial kind of obedience to the Word of God. God says He hates divorce. And so we say, well, I don’t want a divorce so I want to live with this person and then I can find out if I can really make it and then I won’t get divorced, and then I won’t make God unhappy. Well you don’t know the whole counsel of God. Hebrews 13,

verse 4 says, God says that [“...fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”] He says, [“Marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”](Hebrews 13:4 Paraphrase) In other words, “Marriage is fine, but sleeping with someone outside of marriage is not fine.” You say, “But I’m going to marry him, it’s all right. We’ve got our plans; we’re going to be married in the church. We got our pastor.” It’s not all right. It is partial obedience, and partial obedience is not pleasing to God. But you know what? We’re going to give a large portion of our income to God. I mean you can give it, but it’s not going to get you out of partial obedience because partial obedience is really disobedience. **“Samuel said, ‘Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.’”(1Samuel 15:22)** In other words, “I don’t want your sacrifices. I want obedience; that’s what I want. Obedience is better than sacrifice. **“For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king.”(15:23)** What did Saul just do? He slit his throat. And he slit his throat Beloved because he did not fully obey God. Do you want God’s blessing on your life? I mean, do you want it? Then if you want it you’ve got to obey, because obedience is better than sacrifice. You say, “Well I can sin and I can confess it and God will forgive it.” That’s right, you can sin and you can confess it. But you know what? God will have to deal with it. Because you know why? You willfully chose to disobey God. You thought you could out maneuver God; you thought you could manipulate Him. You thought maybe that you could buy God off. Well God, I’ll do this, but then I’ll make it up to You. Beloved, you can’t. Just remember this; it is a precept for life: Obedience is better than sacrifice, and partial obedience will not do with God.