

The Sins of a Self-Made Man
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
October 6, 2024

Text: 1 Samuel 9:1-3; 15-21

Purpose: In today's world, the self-made man is highly praised. There are potential areas of weakness that may be manifested which can result in a self-made man's undoing. Thinking too little of yourself can lead to seeking other's approval. Thinking only of yourself can lead to leaving God out of your life. Staying away from God too long can hinder our life view with God and cause us not to nurture the relationship as we should.

Jim and Sally were deeply and desperately in love, so with the wisdom of youth, they decided to forego the formalities of a traditional ceremony to simply and secretly elope.

Their plan was the soul of simplicity: they would drive to a nearby town, find a Justice of the Peace and by nightfall would be man and wife.

As they drew near a small municipality, they saw an older man on a tractor, cutting the grass and weeds on the shoulder of the road.



Jim slowed down, Sally rolled down her window and they asked if the town had a Justice of the Peace.

"Yep." Was the reply.

"Where is the office?" Jim enquired.

"On the right as you come to the town square. Can't miss it." The old fellow informed them.

The eager couple thanked him and sped off.

When they came to the town. They immediately located the office of the Justice of the Peace. Entering, they found a clerk who helpfully told them that the Justice of the Peace was not in, but should be returning soon.



They found chairs and waited rather impatiently for the magistrate. After what seemed to the couple to be an inordinate wait, the door opened and a freshly showered gentleman appeared.

Jim said, "Say, aren't you the fellow who was driving the tractor?"

"Yep, that's me," said the Justice of the Peace, "The mower, the marryer"¹

If you look at the history of the people of Israel when they came into the land, led by Joshua, they were not organized and governed like other nations. The Lord had led Moses and the people of Israel through the desert for 40 years and fed them with manna each day. They followed as the Lord led.



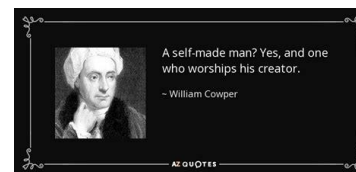
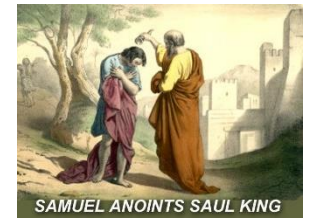
The Judges of Israel

1. Othniel (3:7-11)
2. Ehud (3:12-19)
3. Shamgar (3:31)
4. Deborah (chapters 4-5)
5. Gideon (chapters 6-8)
6. Tola (10:1-2)
7. Jai (10:3-5)
8. Jephthah (11:1 - 12:7)
9. Iboan (12:8-10)
10. Flan (12:11-12)
11. Abdon (12:13-15)
12. Samson (chapters 13-16)

When Joshua entered the land, they began pushing back the enemies in the land and taking possession of the land the Lord had given them. After Joshua's death, the people began to be led by the word of the Lord through various Judges and Prophets. Samuel was one of those prophets selected by God.

The people of Israel longed to look like their neighboring countries – lead by a king. Samuel was heartbroken that they would turn from the Lord's guidance for the people and seek to put their trust in a King. The Lord assured Samuel they were not rejecting Samuel's leadership, instead they were rejecting the Lord. The people of Israel wanted a king to lead them into battle to defeat their enemies.

With God's blessing and with the reluctance of Samuel, a man who was at least a head taller than his fellow Israelites was appointed and anointed as king over Israel. King Saul represents what many in America hold and value so dearly. Saul represents a person who rose from a background of personal obscurity to become not just a figure of prominence, power and prestige, but the political head of an entire nation. Over time, Saul was an effective leader and warrior. During his reign, Israel reclaimed a lot of the land the Philistines had taken.



Because of his height, he must have been a person that was athletic; he must have been charismatic and handsome in

appearance. With all this success, he initially was a person guided by his conscience because he often admitted his guilt. It takes a big person to say “I was wrong,” while smaller people blame others and never look at their faults. From the view of the world, Saul was a prime example of a “Self-Made Man.”

Yet if you read to the end of Saul’s life, you will find that it ended in abject failure. Even today, a person of great prominence, highly respected, followed by millions, can fail because they fall into some of the traps I want to highlight today. Every week we read of the self-destruction of self-made men. The story of Saul is actually one of the great tragedies found in the Bible. What started out so well, ended up so badly. Where did Saul go wrong? What did he do in his life that caused him to self-destruct? There are some “tell-tell” sins of a self-made individual.

**I. Thinking too little of yourself.
The Result: Playing to other’s approval**

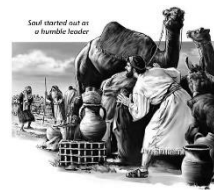


Thinking too little of Yourself

The first sin is thinking too little of yourself.

A. The Details of Saul’s Anointing

In 1 Samuel chapter 9, we read about the details that led to Saul’s anointing as king of Israel. It would appear that Saul’s family was fairly wealthy because his father had sent Saul out to search for some missing livestock. While he was gone, Saul encountered the prophet Samuel. God had already told Samuel who he was to anoint so he was prepared.



Saul’s response to Samuel’s desire to anoint him is revealing. Saul said, “I am from the smallest tribe and I am from the smallest family.” Saul never imagined

God would choose him for this task. He thought too little of himself. Let me say, it is just as wrong to think too lowly of yourself as it is to think too highly of yourself. We need to realize that each of us are made in the image of God.

Even on the evening of Saul’s appointment as king over Israel among the tribes gathered together, Saul was found hiding among the machinery, unwilling to step forward and lead when called. Saul eventually stepped forward and claimed the title as king. He was successful in rallying troops from every tribe and they went out into battle and defeated the Philistines.

But there was an underlying issue of “thinking too little of yourself.” This only led to playing to the approval of others.

B. The Sin that Caused Saul to Lose His Kingdom – Disobedience

The Sin of Disobedience

The bitter fruit of that sin is seen in 1 Samuel 15:12-21. The word of the Lord came to Samuel to instruct Saul to attack the Amalekites and utterly destroy them. They were to surround them, kill every man, woman, child, and livestock. The sin of the Amalekites was to be removed from the land and they were to be blotted from history.

But the people of Israel wanted a trophy for their victory, so Saul spared the king of the Amalekites, King Agag. The people of Israel also hated to see all those fine sheep and cattle destroyed, so Saul relented and allowed them to keep the spoils of war, so later, they could present them as a sacrifice to the Lord. But in allowing the commandment of the Lord to be partially obeyed, Saul disobeyed the word of God. Instead of obeying God, he sought the approval of the people.



Samuel came and confronted Saul. But Saul only offered excuses and in a twisted way, he thought he had obeyed the word of God. But with the “bleating of sheep” in his ears, Samuel knew Saul was disobedient. In the presence of Saul, Samuel killed Agag and thus began the first step of Samuel and the Lord turning away from Saul. Saul’s attempt to please others instead of God, put him on a path of losing his kingdom.

A healthy respect for who God made us to be can liberate us from craving the approval of others.

**II. Thinking only of yourself.
The Result: Leaving God out of your life**



A second sin we find in a self-made man is only thinking of yourself. Thinking only of me, myself, and I.

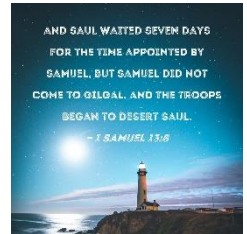
A. Taking all the Credit

Self-made individuals are usually prone to take all of the credit for themselves. Thinking only of yourself and your

world leads to failure to see yourself and your world through the eyes of faith. Saul only thought about himself. He completely forgot that God was a part of the picture. This narrow-minded view led Saul to commit the second great sin that sealed his fate and caused Samuel to withdraw from Saul forever.

B. Saul camped at Gilgal

Samuel came to Saul and instructed him to gather the troops at Gilgal to attack the Philistines. Samuel said to Saul he would come in seven days and present a sacrifice unto the Lord before they went into battle. He was told not to proceed into battle until Samuel came.



Saul gathered the troops and they waited. After seven days, the troops began to get restless and some began to return home. Saul panicked. Samuel had not come to present the offering unto the Lord so Saul decided that he could do it just as well as Samuel. Saul took the offering and presented the sacrifice unto the Lord.



Just as he finished, Samuel came and asked what Saul was doing. Once again, Saul was seeking the approval of others so much so that he was not even aware that he had left God out of his life. Saul probably reasoned, “I can do the same thing that Samuel can do. I have a sharp sword. I can pray just as good as he can. I will do this because I don’t need the approval of God’s man Samuel. This act of a self-made man was the final straw for the Lord and Samuel. From that day until Samuel’s death, he never advised or talked with Saul again.

It is true Saul became king at the age of 30 and ruled Israel for over 42 years, but the anointing of God was removed and given to another man by the name of David. It was many years before David assumed the throne of Saul, but Israel had to live with their decision to have a king like Saul.

SAUL WAS THIRTY YEARS
OLD WHEN HE BECAME
KING, AND HE REIGNED
OVER ISRAEL FORTY-TWO
YEARS.
- 1 SAMUEL 13:1

C. The Delusion of a Self-Made Man

It was Saul's lack of faith and pride that led him to disobedience in a time of crisis

The danger a self-made man faces in life is that he begins to believe that all that he has is a result of his own effort and work. A self-made man is deluded and becomes prideful.

You actually begin to act and behave as if you are god. A self-made man begins to take all the credit and leave God out of the equation. You forget that life is actually a partnership with God. If we ignore God, we do it to our peril. God will allow us to choose a path that is separated from God. When that happens, God becomes the silent partner that watches as we fail and self-destruct.

III. Thinking Too Long by Yourself – Or – Staying Away from God The Results: Failing to View Life with God as an Ongoing Relationship



The third sin of a self-made man is “thinking too long by yourself.” Or another way to put that is “Staying away from God too long.” The ultimate result of this sin is our failure to realize that we need to view life with God as an ongoing relationship: one that needs to be nurtured and maintained.

When we feel God is far from us, guess who moved?

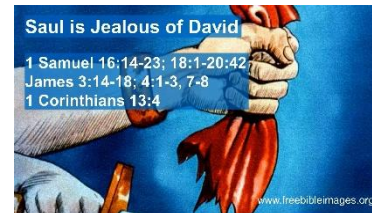
A. An Attitude of not Needing God



A self-made individual may think they do not normally need God. Saul stayed away from God too long. He only came to God when there was an emergency. You have met many people that have treated God in the same manner. I have met many people who show up at the church doors, asking for help during a crisis in their life. Only then do they come. Some may say, I only pray when my family is sick. I only seek God when all the bills are due and there is no money left. Some may even feel that they are “bothering” God if they bring their day-to-day issues to God.

But God desires for us to enter into a daily walk with Him. Self-made, independent, isolated individuals lose one of the best resources they have when they turn from God and depend only upon themselves.

B. The Sad End of Saul's life



During Saul's life, he became consumed by jealousy over David. This young man killed Goliath and led the soldiers into battle and was receiving the praise of the people instead of Saul. Saul hunted David in the wilderness for years and was unsuccessful in killing him. Saul was self absorbed.

Towards the end of Saul's life, we find that the prophet Samuel died and the Philistines were threatening to invade again. Early in Saul's reign as king, he was instructed by the Lord to banish and/or kill all the mediums and spiritualists in the land. Saul had tried to seek the will of God through the Urim and Thummim, but found no answer there nor in his dreams. Saul was desperate for a word from the Lord as to what he should do.



Because Saul did not have an ongoing relationship with God, he went to desperate measures in this time of crisis. We read of Saul's last days in 1 Samuel 28:3-14. Saul sought out the Witch at Endor to conjure up the spirit of Samuel. In doing so, he learned his fate, and literally self-destructed and killed himself with his own sword.

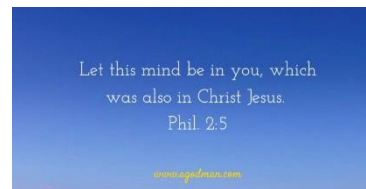
We need to realize that our relationship with God is something we need to nurture daily. We do not need to wait until a crisis occurs. What we do throughout our life is cumulative. We cannot expect to come to God at the age of fourteen, turn away and do our own thing, and then when we turn forty-five expect to find much of a relationship to be there. While God is always seeking us, we need to seek Him too.



The story is told of a seventy-year-old woman who broke her hip. She asked the doctor if there was anything she could eat to help her heal quicker. The doctor replied, "Lady, it is what you have been putting in your body all your life that will provide the healing." We

live in an instant world. We think all we need to do is add water, and stir the pot for a few minutes, and it is all resolved. But we need to walk with God steadily and daily in order to reap the reward of a God centered life.

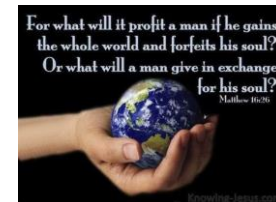
Conclusion



What we see in the life of Saul, a self-made man, is a tragedy. I want to encourage each of you to realize that we need to strive to be a "Christ-made" person instead.

We need to take on the mind of Christ every day. We need to put Christ at the center of our life. We need to be obedient to what God calls us to do. In our obedience, we will find a relationship far sweeter than any self-made plans we may have for ourselves. Saul was disobedient and the result was separation from God's influence and guidance in his life.

I want to challenge the men here today to realize you have a great responsibility to lead in your homes. You are the key to the success or failure of your life, family, church, and community. A self-made man is a great title to obtain. The world will applaud you until you fail. But if it causes you to lose the most important relationship you will ever have, your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, then it is not worth all the money, prestige, power, or influence in the world. Put God first in your life, obey what He has taught in His word, and walk with God daily through the twists and turns of life.



I recently read a statistic that startled me. If a child comes to Christ and attends church regularly there is a 3.5% chance that the rest of the family will come to Christ. If a mother comes to Christ and attends church regularly there is a 17% chance the rest of the family will come to Christ. But if the father comes to Christ and attends church regularly, then there is a 90% chance that the rest of the family will come to Christ.

Today's message would make a perfect Father's Day message. But this truth applies to men and women as well. The ball is in your court. Your family, this church, and our community, needs you to step up and live a "Christ-made life."

LET US PRAY

Notes:

¹Mickey's Funnies, An Elopement Funny, August 21, 2024 (forwarded by Al Keeney)