

When the People of God go Off-Mission

Relevant Bible Verses: 1 Samuel 13,15 ; 1 Corinthians 13:2 ; Matthew 7:16 ; Philippians 4:4-8

Main Points: There are many things happening in the world all the time that bog us down and cause us to go off-mission. It is our job to not react with fear or anger to the events around us, but to stay on-mission and react with love and compassion.

Message Notes:

- Polarization is occurring both in the world, and in the church, and a lot of backlash is being directed towards the Church.
- When Saul was newly appointed as King, he attacked a Philistine outpost, which provoked them into a war. In the middle of this, Samuel told Saul to wait seven days for him to arrive. However, because of fear and backlash from his men, Saul chose to offer burnt offerings to seek God's favour *before* Samuel had arrived. In another instance, Saul had been ordered by God to leave none alive, and to destroy all the possessions of the Amalekites he was attacking. Instead, he saved some of the animals to use as a burnt offering.
- In both of these instances, Saul's actions could be perceived as worthy, or doing a good thing, since he was sacrificing to God, but he did so at the expense of *obedience* to God.
- God desires *obedience* over *sacrifice*.
- Sometimes sacrifice can be easier because "I am in control" rather than obedience where "God is in control". Instead of simply following God in obedience, Saul chose to react to outside pressure and made decisions that led to the eventual downfall of his Kingdom.
- When men and women of God decide they know better than God, especially in reaction to something, rather than seeking God's will, then what has been given is in danger of being taken away.
- The Spirit of God empowering his people, his people going into the world; we feel on track with these things because God's word *tells us* it's right. We can be so distracted by the minefield the world can seem to be that we react like Saul, feeling the danger and the pressure, and putting our eyes on the distractions instead of on God and his word.
- The world can be on fire, but **this is the day that the Lord has made**. God's mission hasn't changed. Love and compassion ruled the actions of Jesus, as it needs to with us. Though his rights were violated, his freedom taken, he remained on-mission, as did Joseph during his imprisonment.
- Our fruit is meant to reflect that God is in control. If the people around us are looking for answers, and we are focused on what's happening in the world, and our anger or frustration, there will be no help for them.

- ***How to apply to our lives:*** Consider the questions: How often have we done as Saul did? What do we know God has *actually* told us to do? Have we gone ahead of him, and made decisions we think are honouring him, without genuinely obeying what he has asked? We cannot react as Saul did, giving into pressure or because of fear, but instead need to stay on-mission and choose obedience. When we lose track of our direction, we need to go back to the last place we knew we were; the Word of God.
- ***Summary:*** Nothing is new under the sun. No matter what is happening it doesn't matter in the scope of eternity, and our mission on this earth is to show the world God's love.
 - Let our fruit be gentleness and compassion. Respond to the events around us with prayer, petition, and thanksgiving, not being anxious for anything.
 - We have a choice in what we think about, and how we respond. Are we staying on mission? Are we reacting like Saul or are we living in obedience?

For Further Study:

- Challenge yourself by examining your thoughts and your life and allow God to change you if you've not been dealing with them as you should.