

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Good King, Bad King, The King

PART

2

TITLE

A Fearful King

SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 13:8-14, 15:1-30



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Well, good morning, Providence. If you're a guest with us, we're really glad you're here. We're in a series on the kings of the Old Testament. There were 43 of them, and with very few exceptions, these kings took the God-given authority that they had, and they torched everything in their path. They torched their heart, their conscience, their own morality, their own standards. They torched their marriages and their children, their homes, their families. And then they looked at culture and they torched their culture, the nation, the institutions of that culture. Some of the kings barred the temple from being opened. We would call them a hot mess is what the kings were. There were just a few good kings, but even their sin is pretty startling.

And what's amazing about these kings of the Old Testament is that God was so patient with them. He continued to persist and to pursue them and even make resounding and pretty astounding promises to them that he would do good to them, that he would show them mercy. And he continued to do good to them primarily because of his character, but also because of his promise that he was going to use this royal line in order to bring us Jesus, who is the king, the great king, the king of all kings.

Last week, we looked at how the people, they rebelled against God by rejecting him as their unique king and demanded a human king, a moral king so that they could be like all the other nations. And the very first king to wear Israel's crown was Saul. If a man's life and legacy could be boiled down, could be condensed or perhaps even explained by just a few words, Saul's life would be explained by the words, fear of man. And that's why it's so important for us to listen, because although our fear of man, what people think about us is probably scalable and different seasons of our life, it may be higher or lower, or perhaps your personality or your faith causes that to be not the dominant issue of your life, I want you to know that you struggle with the fear of man.

When we look at Saul's life, what you're going to see is your own reflection in the choppy waters of his life. You see the fear of man though, it leads us, if you think, "Well, I don't know if I'm really controlled by the fear of man." Well, the fear of man is the fuel of all anxiety or at least most of our anxiety. It's the fuel of most of our deceit. If you've ever felt the urge to lie to somebody, it's because the fear of man was involved. It's the reason behind our restlessness, our compromise, our inconsistency, our insincere repentance, our incomplete obedience. It's the reason behind for some of us, we spend an innumerable amount of time putting up walls to keep people from really seeing who we are. We spent all kinds of energy casting an impression to some people that even though if they really knew, we would be devastated. We spent all this time, it's generated by the fear of man.

If you have trouble saying no to people, if you have a trouble making decisions or keeping the decisions that you made, fear of man is involved in all of these things. The Bible says that everything that was written in the past was written to teach so that through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope. And this is what Saul gives to us. It's choppy water, but it's water that we are able to peer over and see our own reflection. We're able to see our weakness. We'll see our insincere repentance. We're going to see our incomplete obedience. We're going to see our fear of man and how it robs us of so much life, but then we're

going to see in it, the hope of Christ and mercy that in spite of the fact that we resemble Saul in so many different ways, no matter how deep our sin is, his mercy is still deeper.

So let me pray for us as we get started. Father in heaven, we ask that you would give us the eyes to be able to see and the heart to be able to desire and the mind to be able to understand the truth of your word. We know that when we are thinking about you, that we are thinking about someone who lives on a higher plane, that your ways are not our ways, that your level of understanding is not ours. And when you use language to tell us what you're like, you're condescending, you're straining to help us to understand who you are. And so, as we read these words in 1st Samuel, and as we consider our own life, and then as we consider and celebrate the mercy that we receive and the greatest king, the king of all kings, we ask God that you would send us out of this room, not only repentant of our sin, but celebrating mercy and grace. And so I ask for your help, would you speak through weakness and bring glory to your son? We pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen.

If you have a Bible, turn with me to 1 Samuel 13, if you don't have a Bible, there's lots of Bibles near you. And if you don't have one at home, please take that home as a gift. If there's not one near you, go out to the welcome desk when we're done and you say, the guy in there with the gray hair said there's free Bibles here. And so you go get a Bible there, okay. We want you to have a copy of the Bible. From Saul's life, we're going to learn a few things about the fear of God. And the first thing I want you to see is this. And that is the fear of God. The first point leads to restless compromise. We're going to see this in chapter 13.

Before we get to 13, let me tell you that one of the first responsibilities that God gave to each of the kings had to do with his word. This is what we are told in the Law of Moses. Before they ask for a king, God says, you're going to ask for a king, and when you do, this is the first thing that a king is supposed to do, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law. That's not to create a rival scripture. It was to ensure that the king internalized, processed, looked at every word and wrote down every word so that it would ingrain upon his own heart. And not only to write it down, but he was to read in it all the days of his life. He was to spend time in the word.

And why? And he tells him, tells us there's three reasons. By the way, when I ask you and encourage you to read the Bible, same three reasons. That he may learn to fear the Lord, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, meaning being proud. And that he may not turn aside from the commandment. Now this is what's happening, God is saying the first thing that the king must do is to reorient his life in such a way that it gives perspective of how he's supposed to live in relationship with God, in relationship with other people and in relationship with what God said.

Well, early in Saul's reign, we don't know if he did that, by the way, there's probably more evidence that he didn't in the way that he lived his life. But I don't know if he did that or not. But early in his reign, there was this people group. And they said, you know what, we're up for a good fight. And so the Philistines, they picked a fight with Israel. They amassed this enormous army, and this is what it says that happened to the

people of Israel when they saw the amazing army. It says in verse six and seven, it says the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble. And that this is their response. The people hid themselves in caves and in holes and in rocks and in tombs and in cisterns. And some Hebrews crossed the fords of the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead and Saul was still at Gilgal and all the people followed him trembling.

This is what it means. When we are faced with a threat that is in front of us, the fear of man, we typically respond first with one of three responses. We either hide from that threat, we run from that threat, or we shake in the presence of that threat. And this is where they were at. They were terrified. Now this is really important, okay. Before Israel would ever fight, they would have an offering. They would have a burnt offering in order to atone for any sin in the army in order to secure the favor of God. When the Law of Moses, which the king was supposed to write, Leviticus chapter six, we're told that only a priest could make that offering.

So what happens? Look what it says in verse eight. It says that Saul waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel and Samuel did not come to Gilgal. And the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, bring the burnt offering here to me, the and the peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And as soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel, if you're new, Samuel is a priest. He came and Saul went out to meet him and greet him. Well, Saul was pretty uptight when he saw what had taken place. So much so, the first thing that comes out of his mouth in verse 11, what have you done? Like there's nobody here that's qualified to do this. Why did you do this? And what follows is so important. Because he's going to explain to us the process that leads to our compromise.

The first thing that happens is we see something. And the second thing that happens is we say something. So what do we see? He says, look, it's all said, when I saw, and this is what he saw, the people were scattering from me and that you did not come within the days appointed. And the Philistines had mustered at Michmash. So this is what he saw. And this is amazing. Each one of these areas were the areas of his fear. And then after his compromise, they became the areas of his blame. In other words, he looks and he says, look, I was so terrified. Like Saul, you don't or look, you don't understand my work environment. You don't understand how stressful it is. All of my army, my people, I was afraid that they were going to leave. And I was also afraid that you weren't going to show up in time.

Well, this is the seventh day. Yeah, but it's later in the seventh day, then I thought you were going to be here. And then he says, not only that, I saw this great big army out in front of me. And I was just convinced that I needed to take things in my hands. So what did it say in verse 12? He says, now I saw those things and therefore my mouth opened up and I said, now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal and I have not sought the favor of the Lord. So I forced myself and offered the burnt offering. What he's saying here is this. He said, I know, I know, like God's work's supposed to be done God's way. But the events that were in front of me forced me to take things into my own hands.

Let me just tell you something. This is so important you see this. Forced sin will never secure the favor of the Lord. I know some of you, you imagine I got away with one. No, you didn't. No one gets away with any sin. It is appointed to man to die and then to face judgment, where we will have to give an account for everything that we did in the body, whether good or evil. We have not gotten away with anything. And for those of us who have been forgiven because of Jesus Christ and we are not going to bear the shame or the judgment of that sin, the son of God had to die for it. We never secure the favor of the Lord, the blessing of the Lord, the pleasure of the Lord by forcing ourself to sin.

So why does fear make us so susceptible though to compromise? What we find here is three things. First of all, fear makes us selfish. When we see things that are happening, that are threatening, we naturally, even in our movies, everyone's like, everyone get inside the wall to the castle, secure things, close the door, man the towers. We begin, when we see threat and we feel threat. The first thing we do is we turn inward and we start imagining, how do we protect our comforts, our kingdom, our people, our interest, our future, our reputation. We start inward and we start imagining the question, how do I sustain my little kingdom? You see we're all little Kings.

And then this fear, it moves from selfishness and it moves to skepticism. Fear makes us skeptical. We begin to dismiss the good and sincere promises, not only of God, but of people. God had said to his people, I will never leave you, I will never forsake you. Samuel said, I will be there on the seventh day. But when we get in that moment where the fear of God seems bigger than everything else, or I should say the fear of man seems bigger than everything else, what happens is we begin to find within our heart, this enormous ability to be skeptical that God is going to fulfill his promises and that the good and kind people who promised to help us, that they're going to show up in time. And so we start taking things into our own hands. And that leads to one last thing, and that is the fear makes us shortsighted. In other words, we lose our long-range vision. We start imagining that this is all that there is, I need to protect this. And so we forget enormous valuable things in front of us.

You're like, what things, how about these things? How about there are decisions we're going to make today that one day we're going to stand before a holy God and give an account. But when we are overwhelmed by fear in today, we don't think a whole lot about judgment. We don't think about our little decisions and little compromises, because we're only trying to get through today. And not only do we not think about judgment, but there's a lot of decisions that we make in our life that years later we feel ashamed about, which means that when we are threatened by harm, by the fear of man, we can make decisions today, forgetting that in 20 years, we're still going to feel a level of shame over what we have just done.

And then there's relationships. Some of us are single, one day we'll be married and we don't compensate for the fact that my wife or husband and my future marriage is going to have to bear the weight of the consequences of what I am deciding right now in the here and now. And add to that future generations. One day we're going to have kids and our kids are going to ask us, what was it like to date in your day? What did you

do with sexual desire? What did you do when you went to college? How did you entertain yourself? What did you do with pornography? What did you do with the bottle? We forget what's coming because the threat of harm is near.

We become so shortsighted, which opens up all kinds of compromise, where we just today, I just need to cheat on this test. Just this one. I just need to lie to my parents just today. Just need to, he keeps saying, if I don't, he's going to leave me, so I just need to sleep with him today. Your future marriage will wish that you didn't. Sin never obtains God's favor. So the fear of man not only leads to restless compromise, it also leads to incomplete obedience. And this is probably the story that most of us know about Saul, it's in 1st Samuel chapter 15. When Israel left Egypt, there was another people group, the Amalekites. And they looked at Israel and they're totally disorganized, because they've been slaves for 400 years. So they have no army, there's no organization, there's no systems of protection and provision over them. They're just walking out of Egypt. And they're like, "Hey, this is a new place. This is a wilderness." And so they're vulnerable, they're sitting ducks. And so the Amalekites say, "Let's attack them."

This was an evil people that God had seen over a long period of time, exercising wickedness, and so God determined it was time for justice. And he says something that's very troubling to us in particular, in our generation in America, he says, God says, God's speaking. I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all they have. Do not spare them, kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey. Now we have to pause in Saul's story to talk about God's story.

Anytime you come to something like this, you have to ask the question. I hope you ask the question. How do we worship a God like this? Like the one true living God commands this and obedience is this, how are we supposed to deal with that? Anytime I come across places in the Bible where I look at it, and I'm like, okay, I don't get that one, that's a lot, that's a whole lot from my mind to process. The first thing, let me encourage you to do when you get there is don't sweep it under the rug. You sweep everything under the rug, what happens is over a long period of time, your heart begins to fill with what feels like a growing list of suspicion for the credibility of the Bible in God. And so don't just go, wow, that's a weird one, let me just move on. Now, ask and look for answers.

The second thing I'll always do when I find things that are troubling such as go and kill everybody, including the babies, because the Bible says that God is the judge of all the earth and as such that he always does what is right. And so I prayerfully try to remind myself of his goodness, his kindness, his righteousness, and that what he does is just. And then the third thing I do is I look at other places of the Bible to get clarity on God's character and his activity and what he is and what he's doing and what he's like, clear places of scriptures so that I can build the walls. I can lean on that wall and that wall can help me interpret and understand places that's hard to understand.

Now I can't stack up that wall for you today, but I already have at least a portion of that wall. I wrote an article a few years ago and you can find it, it's at pray.org/justice. It's simply called finding mercy in the face of justice. And in that article, it just stacks up things that we know are true about God, things such as he's the creator of the universe, and as the creator, he has creator rights over our life, which means our life is in his hand. When Jesus Christ determines no longer to uphold your physical life, you will die. That's what the Bible teaches, right?

God is the judge of all the earth. And as the judge of all the earth, he always does what is right. That God entrust a measure of his authority to human government in order to bring about justice in the world. So there is such thing as a just war, right? When you have dictators and they're literally annihilating millions of people and people groups, God says justice needs to take place. Government was given by God in order to hold back the tide of human depravity so that it doesn't flood the whole world. And so this was an evil people, generationally evil, and God determined in his wisdom, in ways that I won't ever really be able to understand that justice was needed.

And so what does Saul do? Well, he goes out and he does what God asked him to do, kind of. It says in verse seven, it says, Saul defeated the Amalekites. And he took Agag, the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword, but Saul, and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fat and calves and the lambs and all that was good and would not utterly destroy them. What is this? This is incomplete obedience, which in God's economy is complete disobedience. Verse 11, God says, I regret that I made Saul king for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments. Samuel was angry and he cried out to the Lord all night. Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Saul came to Carmel and behold, he set up a monument for himself.

Now you remember one of the things the king was not supposed to do was to elevate himself above his brothers. You don't make a monument for yourself. And so what do we have here? The response to this battle was this, is Saul is arrogant and setting up monuments for his glory. Samuel is exhausted, because he's been up all night, preparing a speech of rebuke for the king. He's angry and God, he uses the word regret. Now that's an interesting word. One of the things you have to remember when you study the Bible is that his ways are higher than our ways. And so therefore he uses language that we use and sometimes it means something a little different than how we use it, but he's trying to identify and empathize with us.

There's an entire theology called open theism that says that God sits in heaven. He has no idea what's next. And so he's like, wow, I'll just do it this way. And it's like, oh man, that was a train wreck. I really regret that. So he gets a no regrets tattoo and then he looks over here and I'll try over here. I'll try a little bit better this time. I learned my lesson for that time. I have regrets in my life. That's not what it means when God says I regret, he doesn't regret like we regret. What he's doing is he's using language that we can understand that when we do something and it turns out bad and we grieve the consequences and we grieve what it does to

other people, he says, this is not the way that I had hoped this would go down, even if I knew it was going to go down.

It's clarified, of course, in verse 29, when he says the glory of Israel, it's God, will not lie nor have regret for his not a man that he should have regret. His regret is different. Well, verse 13, notice what happens. Samuel comes to Saul. Saul says to him, blessed be you to the Lord. I performed the commandment of the Lord and Samuel said, what then is this bleeding of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear? I hope you can see the blindness in Saul. There's literally surrounding him evidences of his rebellion and disobedience and yet he's going around spouting out and God bless you and God bless you.

But even more than seeing his blindness, I hope that you can see our reflection in these choppy waters. That when we hit pause on our pornography, when it comes to Sunday morning and we hit pause on our emotional abuse, our verbal abuse, our immorality, our deceit, yelling at our kids, slapping our kids. And we walk in these doors and we sing songs and we look at each other and we say, oh, and God bless you. God bless you. God give you a good week that it is utterly offensive. And for people who observe our life and who observe the show, it's so confusing. So many confused kids.

Let me just move on. Verse 15, Samuel said, though you're little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil on the sight of the Lord? You see what he's saying? Was king not enough for you? I mean, do you see who you are? Then you're the king and you need to illegitimately pounce.

And for those of us who go, yes, Saul, he was a loser. Boy they really started with a loser. It's our reflection. Do you see how blessed you are? How blessed we are. And we would sit on that blessing and illegitimately pounce for more. It's amazing as Saul doubles down, verse 20, look what he says. Saul says, look, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord. I have gone on a mission to which the Lord sent me, but the people took the spoil, it's their fault. I obeyed it. They sinned. The best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God, this is just stunning to me, but we do the same thing. It's just so, it's so sad.

Surrounded by evidences of our sin, we justify our obedience. And then when we're forced to look at the evidence of our disobedience, we attribute it to worship. I was just going to use it to please him. The sacrifice to give him an offering. This is religion. This is not the gospel. This is religion. Religion is trying to appease God with what we perceive we have in excess of when we are deficient in everything that is necessary such as obedience and righteousness. We say, my heart is cold and my mouth is corrupt, my life is crooked, but I have a few extra dollars and two Sundays every month.

And Samuel doubles down. Verse 22, he says, has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord. Do you know what he wants more than a song on a Sunday that's obedience Monday through Sunday, every day. A glad obedience, a joyful disposition to show preference to the creator of the universe who loved us enough to kill his son on our behalf. He says, behold, to obey is better than sacrifice. And to listen than the fat of rams. We assume authority over our kingdom. And we say, I get to rule these things. And because I rule these things, I'll take whatever I have in excess and I'll give it to God to compensate for what I don't want to give him in love.

Verse 23, he says for rebellion is as the sin of divination. Divination is the process of securing guidance and blessing by going to consult with evil means as opposed to the word of God. And he says, this is what rebellion is in the eyes of God. When we rebel against God, he says, this is what you're doing. You're imagining all the benefits that would come to your life if you simply obeyed. But instead of obeying, you're seeking all of these sources of evil in order to bring about the life that I could give to you if you would simply look to me. And then therefore he says, because you've rejected the word of the Lord, he's rejected you from being king.

Now, what is at the heart of all of this? Watch verse 24, this is so important. Saul says, look, I've sinned for I've transgressed the commandments of the Lord your God and your words, because. This is why, why? Because I had as overwhelming fear of man. This is the cause of incomplete obedience. And that leads to the last thing. And that's the fear of man leads to insincere repentance. Saul, even though there was this entire angle of disobedience, Saul wanted to keep the national Thanksgiving sacrifice that would take place after a military success, but he needed Samuel to be there to do that. And so notice what he says in verse 25, he says now, therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the Lord. I need you there. We're going to have a big party. You caught me. I get it. But come back for the ceremony. Samuel doesn't come, it's public shame.

Verse 26. Samuel says 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. As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe and it tore. 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. This is David that we'll look at next week.

He basically says, I simply can't fake it for you. And so he doubles down again. He says, you got to be there. Verse 30, I've sinned; yet honor me now before the elders. Let me just say something. Repentance never says I sinned, but honor me. It just doesn't do it. And so, well, what is repentance then? Let me tell you what repentance is. Repentance. It's really five things stacked on top of each other.

Repentance feels the weight of God's sorrow. That doesn't mean you have to cry, it means you do feel, you feel his displeasure, you feel his sadness on our behalf. And second, it welcomes the light of truth. Meaning, when we open up the Bible and suddenly we read of what we're doing, we feel conviction of sin, we don't close it and say, I don't want to look at that anymore. If we have a friend who loves us enough, who comes and he says

“Man, I love you too much.” So our light will continue to walk down a path, I think it’s going to be perilous to you. We don’t end that friendship. We welcome the light of truth. And not only that, repentance confesses the sin as sin, we don’t justify the sin, we don’t redefine the sin, we don’t say, well, it was good intentions. It was just kind of like a, it was a hard left at the very end. I didn’t know it was going to be that way. No, it was, I was wrong.

It cuts off provision that aid the sin. Meaning we look around our life and for some of us, there’s one particular sin we keep committing and there’s like four or five things that literally we give hospitality to that fortify that sin. Repentance says not only does the sin have to go, but all the triggers that lead to that temptation, all the things that trip me up that constantly lead me to that failure, they have to go as well. I have to rid myself of those provisions of the flesh.

And then last we have to turn. We turn away from the sin. That’s what repent means. It means turn. But when we turn, we don’t just turn anywhere. No, we turn to God. We turn to him. So Samuel does turn around. He goes back and he kills Agag. We’re like, what’s that about? How come he killed Agag? This is why. Because when a king went out and won a war and captured the king, it was his trophy. And Samuel says, the people should not be confused that this was a success. Not only has God commanded it, but you should not have a trophy for this. What happens next is perhaps what’s so telling about our own country, last two verses. Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. Now hear this. And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death. Do you know what that means? It means for a span of at least two decades, the word of God and the throne of Israel never touched. Doesn’t that sound familiar.

And as a result of that, this continued disobedience in Saul’s life when there was no repentance, what it did was it created this growing irrational behavior, where you keep reading a story and you find this unbelievable fear and suspicion and jealousy and envy. And on the last day of his life, the day before he literally stood before God to give an account of his life, we’re actually told that he needed some guidance. And so he went into the living room of a witch to ask for it. And the consequences that this leadership had upon his country were staggering. And yet not only in Saul’s life, like some of you are like, well, this is bad, was he going to get better after this? Saul isn’t even the worst king. He’s kind of like a five. There’s a one. Well, we’re going to look at him. Like, wow, this is discouraging.

And there was hope for all these kings. And the reason is because while all these kings were stumbling over themselves, God kept making promises that a better king was coming. And all the government would rest upon his shoulders, and his name was Jesus. He’s the true and better king. He never grows selfish, skeptical or shortsighted. He’s the true and better king who never is ruled by the fear of man, suspicion or jealousy. He’s the true and better king, he never seeks to fill his own deficiencies with our adoration, but rather he seeks to fill our moral deficiencies with his perfection. As a true and better king, Jesus was pure in heart, perfect in obedience, he lived without sin, he died for our sin and then the prove he’s the son of God, just as who he said, he rose from the dead in order to give us a relationship.

And so that being the case, let me just finish with just a couple applications. First is this, let's examine our heart for a relationship with God. This is so important you understand this, you read through Saul's life and there's no evidence whatsoever that this was anything more to him than religion. You find ritual, you find sacrifice, you find offering, but you never find prayer, you never find singing, you never find worship, you never find adoration, relationship. He was religious, but had no relationship. And my question is always to you, do you have a relationship with God?

You can look at your fearful moments. You see fearful moments tend to be like that test tube that you can look and you can see what's in there. You can look at fearful moments that you may be in now, or perhaps if you're not afraid right now, you can look at the last time that you went through a fearful moment and you kind of ask this question. What was I like then? Was God on my radar then? Was his word important to me then? Was he near?

And the other thing you can look at to test if there's a relationship with God is glad obedience. The word glad is very important. Not miserable obedience, but glad obedience. 1st John says it this way, this is love of God that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not burdensome. See, anytime we have an obedience problem, we have a love problem. Remember Jacob and Rachel? If you don't, there's these two people, they fall in love, but in order for them to be married, the guy has to work for seven years, seven years. But the Bible says this. It says they were, they felt like to him just a couple days. And the reason is because of his great love for her.

Here's the question. When you imagine protecting your integrity and purity in order to be obedient to what God says in his word, does that feel like seven years or a couple days? It is love that will differentiate those two. Second thing I would encourage you to consider is trusting Christ. The version of the gospel was given to Saul, you were nothing, god made you a king, that's grace. He comes to us and he says, you're a sinner, but I hung on the cross to make you a son and a daughter. That's grace. You can trust him today by admitting your sin, by putting your faith and belief in Jesus Christ, confessing him as the Lord of your life. And the Bible says he will forgive you. You can do that right now.

And the last thing is this, is let's repent of our sin thoroughly. Any feeling over the last 40 minutes that God was too hard on Saul that you might have felt is simply an alarm clock that says that you're too comfortable with sin. That we do not appropriate correctly just how holy God is. The story is a reflection of our life, it's also an invitation of a more refreshing day that comes through the path of repentance. Acts three says, repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing can come from the Lord. So before we sing our last song, I want to give you just a moment, just a moment, just a few moments to pray. Pray about what you've heard, confess your sin to him. So you take a moment now.

Father in heaven, in these reflective waters of Saul's life that are recorded in the pages of the Bible, we all see the devastating darkness of our own insincere repentance, our own carelessness, our compromises, our incomplete obedience. We see our selfishness and skepticism and shortsightedness. We see so many things about ourself that are not pleasing. And yet as a people who have gathered not to earn a place in the family, but because you have given us a place in the family, we celebrate for no matter how deep our sin is, your grace and mercy are deeper still.

And it gives us reason to sing and to worship and to celebrate it. It gives us reason to hope because you have the power to lift our shame from our own hearts when we do the same things that we see in these pages. You have the ability to lift our shame and you have the ability to replace it with peace. And so we thank you for your forgiveness. We thank you for your refreshment and we sing to you now as an expression of faith and celebration. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.



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