

Harris Creek Baptist Church  
Jon Green  
Series: BC  
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Saul and the Dangers of Disobedience  
1 Samuel 13: 5-15 NIV

**<sup>5</sup> The Philistines mustered to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude; they came up and encamped at Mikmash, to the east of Beth Aven. <sup>6</sup> When the Israelites saw that they were in distress (for the troops were hard pressed), the people hid themselves in caves and in holes and in rocks and in tombs and in cisterns. <sup>7</sup> Some Hebrews crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.**

**<sup>8</sup> He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people began to slip away from Saul. <sup>9</sup> So Saul said, “Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the offerings of well-being.” And he offered the burnt offering. <sup>10</sup> As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived; and Saul went out to meet him and salute him. <sup>11</sup> Samuel said, “What have you done?” Saul replied, “When I saw that the people were slipping away from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines were mustering at Mikmash, <sup>12</sup> I said, ‘Now the Philistines will come down upon me at Gilgal, and I have not entreated the favor of the LORD’; so I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering.” <sup>13</sup> Samuel said to Saul, “You have done foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which he commanded you. The LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever, <sup>14</sup> but now your kingdom will not continue; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart; and the LORD has appointed him to be ruler over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.” <sup>15</sup> And Samuel left and went on his way from Gilgal. The rest of the people followed Saul to join the army; they went up from Gilgal toward Gibeah of Benjamin. Saul counted the people who were present with him, about six hundred men.**

Good morning, Harris Creek! My name is Jon if we've never met before. I'm excited to be here. I'm part of the staff scene here at Harris Creek. My wife, Amanda, and I have two small kids. We have an almost three-year-old named Micah and a barely one-year-old named Elsie. There are a lot of milestones in parenting that happen; some of which you know to expect, like crawling and walking and talking, and they're really, really exciting. And then there are some milestones in parenting that I end up just mad at my friends who are older than me and also have kids that they didn't warn me that that was a thing that was going to happen. One of those happened a couple of months ago when we switched Micah out of his crib into his toddler bed. And so, we knew it was coming. We knew it was time. We knew that he could climb out of his bed at any given moment, whenever he wanted to. He just hadn't really done it yet. And then, at

the end of May, he just went for it, and then we couldn't keep him in his bed. We couldn't convince him to stay in. He just crawled out whenever he wanted to. And we were like, "All right. It's time. We're ready." We were about to go on a big trip, and we were like, "Well, better here than some random Airbnb that we try to learn this life skill. And so, we were like, "All right. Let's make the switch." One day after work, I came home, switched it out, turned it into a toddler bed, sat him down that night. We talked about it all through dinner, and he was like, "I'm ready! I'm ready! I'm excited!" And we're like, "All right! You're ready! You can do this!" And so, I said, "Hey, buddy! Should you ever get out of your bed? Once we turn out the light, should you ever get out of your bed?" And he said, "No!" I said, "Great! But what if you want to play with a toy? Should you get out to play with that toy?" And he was like, "No!" I said, "Great! What if you want to read a book? Should you get out to read a book?" And he said, "No!" And I said, "Okay. Final question. When should you get out of your bed?" And he said, "When my light turns green." I said, "Yes! When your light turns green." We have one of those sound machines that you can set the alarm, the light turns green, and that's the green light to get out of bed." Like, all right! He's got it! Child genius! He's ready. And so, I say, "All right! I love you, buddy. Good night. I'll see you in the morning." And I step out. I pull out the monitor.

I'll walk you through the next 15 minutes of my life. (Pictures projected on the screen) Picture 1. (Micah lying in bed.) Look at him! He's doing it! Got those beady eyes, but he's trying to fall asleep. He's doing it. Picture 2. (Micah leaning over, looking under bed.) Kind of curious what might be underneath that bed. He's never been able to look down below like that before. Just a little curiosity. Picture 3. (Micah on the floor playing with blocks.) Just full-on rebellion. Like, he's past the partial disobedience and he's full-on building a tower. I think he told me that was a grocery store. He's building a grocery store with his blocks. Picture 4. (Micah kneeling by his bed with head bowed.) Now, I don't want to give him too much credit. It looks like he's prayerfully repenting here. I know he's a pastor's kid, but that's good. That's what we want. Picture 5 (Micah's face fills the screen.) He's just straight up trying to turn the camera off, which we found out that he knows how to do. He knew how to turn off the camera. And so, the problem with Micah that night, the reason Micah got into trouble that night, and many more nights to come on this journey of switching to the toddler bed, was that he knew the expectations, he knew the rules, he knew the guidelines that I'd laid out before him, he understood them, but he disobeyed. It started off with just a little partial curiosity, a little bit of disobedience, just kind of seeing what's underneath the bed. And then it turned to full-on disobedience.

And the thing is, we're all disobedient. We all make compromises. We all take matters into our own hands. We all cheat a little here, we're all a little bit dishonest over here. Sometimes we try to play the role of God ourselves. Take matters into our own hands. Sometimes we shrug off our sin like it's not that big of a deal. Maybe you do what I find myself doing sometimes, as a recovering Pharisee. Well, I know that wasn't good, but have you seen So-and-so? Have you seen what they do? Now, God, you should really take that up with them because that's bad. When it comes down to it, Micah didn't trust me, his father, that staying in his bed was what was best for him. And some of you are like, "Cut him a break! He didn't hurt anybody. He didn't hurt himself. He just played on his floor." But that's the point. The goal is not partial obedience. The goal is full obedience. We want full obedience, and that's what God wants from us as well.

So today, we're going to look at a story that shows us just how dangerous that line of thinking is and just how dangerous that line of thinking can be. We're going to look at the story of Saul, and we're going to talk about the dangers of disobedience, because Saul is a wildly complicated figure in the Old Testament. Some of you may be familiar with him, some of you may not be. It's okay if you're like, "I've never even heard of him." That's fine. We'll talk about why he's important and why he matters and why he's such a tragic, complicated figure in this story.

So, all summer long, we've been in this series called B.C. where we're looking at these stories that happened before Jesus was born. These stories that happened before Christ was born, but we all know - if we're a believer in Jesus - we all know that every story in Scripture points to Jesus. In this entire narrative, all 66 books from Genesis to Revelation, it all tells the same story of God redeeming humanity through the person of Jesus. That's the whole point. When we look at these stories that don't have Jesus physically present, we know that the presence of Jesus is all throughout these stories, so this is another example of those. These stories are so important because... And I've done this, I did this for a long time as a believer. Sometimes we treat these Old Testament stories as too complicated, too hard to understand, the names are funny, the places sound weird, and so we chalk them up as not that important. We're like, "I'll just read the New Testament again." But these Old Testament stories are really important, because the more we understand the Old Testament, the more we understand Jesus. The more we understand the Old Testament, the more we understand the God whose story is being played out over all 66 of these books. So, I love these stories. I've loved this series. I hope you have, as well.

If you've followed along in the Bible Reading Plan this summer, you will have read the story of Saul in 1 and 2 Samuel. We just finished 2 Samuel this past week, so we've read these stories. Today we're going to look at three lessons we can learn from the stories of Saul about the dangers of disobedience.

1. *We should never fear the people more than God*
2. *We should never get ahead of God.*
3. *Disobedience always comes at a cost.*

Before we dive into this story, we need to understand Saul a little bit better. Last week, if you were here, Rich talked about the story of David and Goliath, and he said that David was the king-in-waiting. Today's story really answers that question of why Israel needed a new king in the first place, because this is the beginning of the end for Saul. This is the beginning of his downfall.

Saul was the first king that Israel had had. Prior to this, they had what was known as judges. A judge was like a military leader over a smaller group of people. But the people of Israel looked around, and they said, "Everybody else has a king. We want one of those! We want a king like everybody else has." So, the people go to Samuel. Samuel was a priest. He was kind of the middleman between the people and God. They come to Samuel and say, "We want a king. Everybody else has a king, and we want a king, too." Samuel says, "I don't think you do." The people say, "No, but we really do!" Samuel takes that back to God, and he tells God, "Hey, the people really want a king." God says, "This is a rejection of Me, not you, Samuel. Give the people a king. The people want a king; give them a king."

Samuel goes out to find a king, and he stumbles across Saul. He finds Saul. Saul is everything that you would want in a king. Everything you're looking for: "I want to follow THAT guy!" Saul had that. Saul was handsome, he was a head taller than everybody else. He was from a wealthy family. He had all these exterior traits that you're looking for in a leader. 1 Samuel 9:2 says, "**as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else.**" He's a good head taller than everybody else, do this is the guy Israel wanted. This is the king that they wanted. This was the guy that they had hoped for; the king that they had hoped for. And then, what we see with Saul is that his reign started off really well. In chapter 11, there's this scene where he's overcome by the Spirit of God, and he leads the Israelites victorious in battle. Everybody's so excited! Everybody loves him! They said, "This is why we wanted a king! This is the whole reason we wanted a king in the first place!"

Then in chapter 12, there's this anointing ceremony. Think of a coronation. Everybody's there. Everybody's there to see it. Saul is the king, and Samuel gives the blessing and a warning. He says this in chapter 12. This is important for today's story. He says, "**If you fear the Lord and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God – good! But, if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your ancestors.**" 1 Samuel 12:14, 15.

That gets us to 1 Samuel 13. That's where we're going to pick up today. There's another looming battle, and Saul is again given the chance to fully obey the instructions of God. Let's pick here in verse 5. "**The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore.**" The author is trying to get us to realize that's a lot of people. They're up against a lot of people. "**They went up and camped at Mikdash, east of Beth Aven. When the Israelites saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns. Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter. So, he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offering."** And Saul offered up the burnt offering."

Now, there are a couple of things in this passage that stand out to us. And here's what's fun about these Old Testament stories is that you can kind of close your eyes and get a mental picture for what's going on. The author does a really good job of explaining to us exactly what's happening here. The first thing we need to know is that the honeymoon is over for Saul. Chapter 12 - exciting ceremony, think parade, everybody's excited. "This is our king! This is our king! Here's the guy!" And here we are, one chapter later; and the honeymoon is over. There's a philosopher named Ferris Buehler, and he says, "Life moves pretty fast, and if you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." That is exactly what has happened to Saul in this moment. His life has moved pretty fast, and all of a sudden, he looks around and people are deserting. People are walking away. He sees a swarm of people headed his direction, and he sees his own people leaving. That's not the position you want to be in as a leader. Little pro tip, you can write this down: As a leader, you never want your followers hiding in rocks and in pits and

to be described as quaking with fear. If that's how your people are described, that's a sign that you've lost them. We see point one here in this part of the text.

### *1. Never Fear the People More than God*

We should never fear the people more than God. He's losing credibility; his people are losing faith in him; and so, he panics. The Israelites were vastly outnumbered in this moment, and Saul knows that they should make a sacrifice before God, because this is what would happen: a battle would be looming, a priest would make a sacrifice in hopes that God would bless their efforts and they would be victorious in battle. But the problem was Saul wasn't a priest. Saul was a king. Kings weren't allowed to offer sacrifices. Priests could. Samuel could. Saul wasn't a priest; he wasn't allowed to do that. He needed Samuel, and Samuel told him to wait seven days. So here we are, it's Day Seven. Samuel is nowhere to be found, and Saul is done. He says, "We can't wait on this guy anymore." It's the perfect storm for Saul to compromise. He knew the deal. He knew that he couldn't make a sacrifice. When you're the king of God's people, it's really important that you know God's rules. Saul knew God's rules, and he knew that he needed a priest to make this sacrifice. But Samuel was late and so he did it on his own. Because he was so consumed by his standing before others and his desire for people to follow him that he compromised. He did exactly what he knew to be wrong because he feared the people.

So put yourself in Saul's shoes for just a second. What would you have done? You see your people deserting. You see this huge hoard of people headed your direction who are intent on killing you. What would you have done? I think we often put on a façade like we have it all together. We like to project confidence. We take shortcuts. We do everything we can because we've elevated the opinion of people, the approval of people, over the approval of God, and we live with our life completely out of balance, instead of living authentically like God's called us to. In Galatians 1:10, the apostle Paul writes this: **"Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ."** He's saying you can't serve Jesus and serve the opinion of others at the same time. It can't be done. That's exactly what Saul falls prey to here in this moment. We let our fear of other people and our desire for the approval of others to dictate our obedience to God.

When you're a kid, your parents are like, "If all your friends jump off a cliff are you going to do that, too?" That's never a scenario that's happened. Nobody has ever said that to me. "Hey, we're all gonna go jump off a cliff. Want to go?" But I think as we get older, the stakes change. The measurables change. But we still have to ask ourselves the question. Just because everybody else is doing it, should we be doing it, too?

When I was in high school, this is one of the dumber things I did in high school. I'm just going to preface it with that. When I was in high school, I was sitting at a softball game with some of my friends, and one of my friends said, "Hey, do you want to learn how to drive my Jeep?" I said, "Yes! Yes, I do!" Keep in mind, I had no permit. I was going to get it the next day, actually. Fun fact. So, I wasn't licensed; it was illegal for me to do this, and I was like, "Yeah! That sounds great!" All my friends were sitting around. I don't want them to think I don't know how

to drive a Jeep. I don't want them to think I don't love fun. I love fun! I was like, "Yeah! Let's go! Let's go drive your Jeep." We go a couple of blocks away to the middle school. There's a little shed in the middle and a circle drive and some tennis courts over here. We start driving his Jeep around in circles, and I'm a natural. (Jon moves his hand around in continual circles.) I'm just so great at this. We're going about 15 miles an hour, and I'm like, "Yeah! I'm so good at this."

So, we're driving, and we're driving, and we start to pick up a little speed, and pick up a little speed, and he was like, "Hey, you should hit the brake. You need to slow down a little bit." (Jon keeps pumping his right foot up and down.) I said, "It doesn't work! The brakes don't work!" And my friend said, "No. Hit the brake! Hit the brake!" I said, "I'm trying! Your brakes don't work!" I'll just sum it up by saying we hit a pole that took down the fence, and we ended up in the middle of the tennis courts. Then the chain link fence got stuck on the bottom of the Jeep, so there was no getaway at this point. That choice was completely dependent, and it was solely the result of, I didn't want to look dumb. I wanted the approval of my circle of friends that were all sitting there when he asked the question, "Hey, you want to go drive my Jeep?" There were consequences involved. There were repercussions. I broke trust with my parents. And when you're trying to do something to boost your social status, let me tell you, this is not it. Word traveled around the school pretty quickly. It wasn't that big of a school, so within about 12 hours everybody heard the story of the time I took down the tennis courts. I just wanted to gain status, but that certainly didn't help. If we're not careful, we can find ourselves trying to live in that world of managing perception, getting the approval of others, trying to fit in, and we completely take God out of the equation. Even this week, guys, even this week I wrestle with this. I don't want to look dumb up here; I hope people like me. All those thoughts go through my head all week long. Saul compromised his integrity in his leadership to appease the people who were losing their trust in him.

Let's keep going and pick back up in verse 10. **"Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him. "What have you done?" asked Samuel. Saul replied, "When I saw (underline that) that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Mikdash, I thought, (underline that) 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord's favor.' So, I felt (underline that) compelled to offer the burnt offering."** Can you just picture the interaction here for a moment? You can hear the disappointment in Samuel's voice as he talks to Saul. He sounds like a frustrated, disappointed parent in this moment. He says, **"What have you done?"** And then Saul, doing what any of us would do in this moment, starts trying to rationalize his thought process. Saul got ahead of God here, and he's trying to justify his actions. He ran about 10 steps ahead of God, and now he's trying to justify why he did it. That leads us to point number two.

## *2. Never Get Ahead of God*

Never get ahead of God. It turns out that Samuel wasn't late at all. He wasn't late after all. He got there a couple of hours after the burnt offering had been sacrificed. Saul likely jumped the gun here by a couple of hours, max. So, Samuel, smelling it in the air, walks toward Saul, and says, **"What have you done?"** Then here we see the brazenness of Saul. Saul just goes out to

say, “Hi.” Saul is so numb to his own sin, and just so irrationally confident in himself in this moment, that he walks out to see Samuel like nothing is going on. Some of you, in this room right now, are caught up in something. You’re caught up in an addiction, in an affair. There’s something going on and you are so numb to it that you have the exact same attitude as Saul in this moment. We see this irrational confidence in Saul, like he knows best.

Another parenting milestone that nobody warned me about is that Micah’s become a subject matter expert on just about everything in the last three to four months, where he doesn’t even need me as wise counsel anymore, because he knows how everything works. In the past 72 hours, just since I started really thinking about it, here are a couple of things Micah has told me, with complete certainty that he’s correct about:

- The spiciness level of a food that he’s never tried
- How pool floaties work
- Potty training tips and tricks because he’s all of eight days into it
- How a record player works. That was an exciting one.
- And then, with complete confidence, told me the other day that Jesus could fly. It’s not Biblical; I haven’t seen it, but he is completely confident that that’s true.

I’m not trying to bully my two-year-old here, I promise, because we all act like this. When push comes to shove, I think we defer to ourselves because we think we know best. The worst thing about what Saul did here is that his jumping ahead of God was all disguised as a religious ritual. He cloaked it all in religion. Notice how Saul explains his rationale here. He says three things. He says, “I saw, I thought, and I felt.” First, he points out that he saw the men scattering, which is just what we talked about in point one. He saw the men scattering; he was losing his followers, and he knew it. Then he pins it all on Samuel. He says, “Hey, you’re the one who didn’t come when you said you were going to come. So, if we’re going to assign blame here, Samuel, I think this one’s on you.” How often do we do that ourselves? We try to prop up ourselves; at least diminish our own sin by pointing to the sins of others and trying to pin it on them. We see Adam do this in the garden in Genesis chapter 3. What does he tell God? He says, “This woman that you gave me; it’s on her.” He pins it on her. We say stuff like, “I wasn’t going to vent, but then they started, and so I just joined in.” Or “I wasn’t trying to be unethical, but it’s just kind of what we do. It’s just company policy. It’s just something we’ve done.” We pin our sins onto other people.

It says he trusted his own mind. He was doing the math, and he could tell that they didn’t stack up to the Philistine army, so he needed God to intervene. He needed God to intervene fast, so he did the quickest thing he knew to do, and he offered the sacrifice himself. Then it says he felt compelled. He felt compelled, so he let his feelings take over. How often do we justify our missteps, or our mistakes, or our sin, or our disobedience with the caveat of, “Well, I just felt like...” or “I feel like ...” We make excuses that way. I’ve heard J.P. say it no less than a dozen times in the last couple years that your feelings are real, but they’re not always reliable. When we let our feelings dictate our actions, we end up making the same mistakes here that Saul does. All three of these “I” statements in this part of our chapter tell us something about Saul. It’s that ultimately Saul didn’t trust God all that much. He said he did. He acted like he did, but at the end of the day, he didn’t trust God.

The Old Testament is full of these stories, and some of them we've covered this summer. Some of them we haven't. Some of them we won't be able to get to, but all throughout the Old Testament there's story after story after story where people just ultimately want to play the role of God themselves. They don't trust God, so they do their own thing. It happens in the Garden of Eden. It happens with Abraham who wants a son, and he thinks his wife is too old, he sleeps with the servant. We see it with the story of Jonah. God says, "Hey, go preach to the Ninevites." Jonah says, "I don't really like them. I'm going to hop a ship and go somewhere else." We make our own choices. We think we know best.

But then, we get to the New Testament. Some of you say, "Ah, but that's Old Testament." All right, then we get to the New Testament. There are explicit instructions in the New Testament that a lot of us completely gloss over. We treat it like a Suggestion Box. Stuff like **"Love your wife like Christ loves the church."** The Great Commission: **"Go make disciples. Baptize them."** We treat that like it's a Great Option. **"Take up your cross and follow me. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Let your yes be yes and your no be no. Don't show favoritism to others."** Ephesians 5 says, **"Don't let there be a hint of sexual immorality among you."** We just treat those like good ideas that we might follow someday. We get ahead of God when we ignore what He says, and we do our own thing.

So, what does it look like to trust yourself more than God? In ministry, I've seen it; done it. It's when you rely on your own strength, and your own abilities, and you take God out of the equation. You just trust that you're good enough to do it yourself. Some of you have been blessed financially, and so you take those resources, and you stash them away. You're not generous to anybody because what if something happened? What if God fell through? Sometimes we try to create these really perfect, safe bubbles where our kids will be safe, and our families will be safe, and we can control every possible element, like *The Truman Show*. We treat our family like that. And then one I see a lot is isolation. You remove yourself from community, you remove yourself from God's people, and you try to figure it all out on your very own. That is the very definition of what we're talking about. You trust yourself instead of the counsel of the others that God has placed in your life. When we become self-reliant, we get ahead of God because we show that we trust ourselves more than we trust Him.

Let's finish up this passage. In verse 13, **"You have done a foolish thing," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."** So, another pro tip here, if a person who functions as the mouthpiece of God, like Samuel in this case, tells you you've done a foolish thing, you've done a foolish thing. And it's not going to end well for you. Samuel has to deliver the bad news here. Saul's kingdom isn't going to endure, and God's going to pick somebody else to do the job. Saul's kingdom is not going to endure, and God's going to pick somebody else to lead his people. This shouldn't be a surprise, because one chapter before this, Samuel gave the warning. We read part of it, here's another part of it. He gave this warning to Saul and Israel, to the people, **"But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you**



**and your king will perish.”** Saul’s disobedience here was extremely costly. That’s point number three.

### *3. Disobedience Always Comes at a Cost*

Our disobedience always comes at a cost. Saul had been warned that his kingdom would fall if he didn’t trust and obey what the Lord asked of him, so the result here shouldn’t have shocked anybody. There’s something that we have to understand. This is pivotal. If you don’t hear anything else I say today, let’s talk about this. Sin always has consequences. Sin always has consequences. Here’s what that doesn’t mean: That doesn’t mean that there’s not grace and mercy and forgiveness and redemption. If you’ve believed in Jesus if you’ve believed in the resurrection of Jesus for your sins. Jesus came and lived a sinless life on your behalf. If you believe that truth to be true, absolutely there’s grace and mercy. But it does mean that we can’t just sin recklessly, and that we can’t live with the posture of, “Yeah, but there’s grace there for that. I know I shouldn’t, but there’s grace there that covers that.” That gets really dangerous, really fast. It cheapens grace is what it does. Dieterich Bonhoeffer, a theologian, had a lot to say about that topic. He gets that idea from Romans 6:1, 2. It says, **“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?”** So absolutely there’s grace and mercy there, but absolutely we should stop sinning. That’s what is communicated here.

There’s always the ripple effect to sin. In Saul’s case, in this chapter, this begins the end of his kingdom, and it’s a long downfall. This is the beginning of the end for Saul. His kingdom begins to fracture, and God removes His hand from Saul’s kingdom. God also makes it abundantly clear. He’s going to go choose somebody else. “Saul, you’re not the guy. I’m going to go find somebody else.” It has a generational consequence, too. Saul’s sin affects his son, Jonathan. Jonathan is not going to be the king anymore, either. He was the heir to the throne; but because of this generational sin, Jonathan’s place as heir to the throne is gone as well.

The truth is, I think we’re naïve. I think we’re often naïve to the consequences of our sin. Here’s what I mean. I think we often treat sin like speeding. In that we go a little over, we pass the cop, and as long as the lights don’t come on and the car doesn’t turn around and pull us over, we think we got away with it scot-free. No consequence. We’re fine. Try to do better next time. Or, on the flip side, you just become a little bit more invincible, and you think your sin has even less consequence, because you keep getting away with it time and time again. It doesn’t always cost you a kingdom. It doesn’t always cost you the throne, but it always has a cost. Sin is always going to lead to destruction and death. That’s what it does.

So, what’s the cost? Let’s play it out. If you come in here every week, and you sit here, you sing songs, listen to a sermon, maybe take Communion, but then you go out and you live a life that is completely disassociated from faith. You don’t pray, you don’t spend time in Scripture, you don’t live in community, you don’t take the gifts and the abilities that God has given you uniquely. The ways God has uniquely wired you to further the kingdom. And you come back the next Sunday and you do it all again. Nobody knows. You can look around. Nobody knows, but that’s costing you joy, and peace, and an intimacy with God. It’s costing you the full life that God has promised His followers, so it does have a cost. You just don’t see it right away.

For some of you, it's different. It's more tangible. You're caught up in some kind of affair, or you're caught up in some kind of addiction. You drank too much last night, and you're sitting here today with a headache. You're playing with fire, and it's about to explode. It's going to have a huge ripple effect, a huge consequence. If we ignore God's instructions, if we don't take steps of obedience in our lives, God may just pick another group of people to use. He may not pick you; He may pick somebody else to use to further the Kingdom. He may pick a different church. There's a movement of God happening right now at Harris Creek. We are extremely fortunate to be a part of it, but God may pick somebody else if we're just going to go through the motions, be disobedient, pretend like we have it all together. God may pick somebody else. Sometimes I think we look at our lives, crumbling all around us, that are a direct consequence of our sin, and we're like, "Oh, why is God doing this to us?" God is not doing it to you. Your sin is doing it to you. That's the better question. What is your sin doing to you?

I think these three things we learn from Saul can really change how we view disobedience, and how we view what full obedience should be.

- We should never fear the people more than we fear God
- We should never get ahead of God
- Disobedience always comes at a cost

If we had no bedtime rules at my house, every night Micah would go so hard. He would play with every toy, he would read every book, and at some point, he would just crash. And the next day, if you have a small child, or if you've ever had a small child, or if you've ever met a small child, you know that the next day would be a complete train wreck. And then we would do it all again. Some of you, you're in this room today, and your life is a train wreck. You disobeyed all God's commands, and you've crashed. You've crashed on the floor. You've played with every toy, you've broken every rule, and your life is a train wreck.

Some of you are like, "Hey, cute story about your kid!" And I get it. It's not a one-to-one comparison. The concern for you is not a really tired day the next day and a lot of emotions. The concern for you is that you'll waste your life, and that the whole thing will just slip by. You'll never even realize it.

The reason I picked this passage when J.P. told us a couple of months ago that we're going to do this series this summer, everybody can pick what they talk about. The reason I wanted Saul was because I see this story play out time and time again, where somebody starts off really well; their life starts out really promising. They're full of passion; they're full of commitment; they're surrendered to the Spirit of God; they follow God's commandments; they follow God's instructions. And then over time, they compromise; they cheat; they give a little here; they take a little there. And all of a sudden you look up and a decade goes by, two decades go by, and they've completely drifted away from the heart of God

I said earlier that I think Saul is a tragic figure in Scripture, and this is why. Because this started off well. Remember everybody was so pumped. This was their king! It was awesome. Everybody loved it. But he didn't finish well.

And then up next came King David. Same story. Started off really promising; this is a man after God's own heart. David made some colossally poor choices, and eventually, he didn't finish well. After David came Solomon, his son. Solomon was the richest, the wealthiest, the wisest person who had ever lived. Solomon's reign as king started off really promising, but in the end he didn't finish well. So, we see this story repeat itself time and time again, but out of the line of David, a thousand years later, we get a picture of complete obedience in Jesus. Jesus stepped in, in our place, because we couldn't handle it. We're too disobedient, we wander too much. Jesus stepped in, in complete obedience, in our place, despite our drifting, despite our disobedience, despite our sin, despite all of our problems, and paid that debt for us. Philippians 2:8 says that **"He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross."** That's the answer. That's the picture of obedience that we get to look to is Jesus.

We're going to pray; we're going to sing a couple more songs. Then at the end, when we're all done here, there's going to be a team of people down front who would love to pray with you. If you're sitting there today, and you're like, "I don't know that I know that Jesus." This group of people would love to talk to you. They would love to tell you what Jesus has done in their life. I'm going to pray, and then we'll sing a couple more songs.

Heavenly Father, we love you, and we're thankful for Scripture. We're thankful for stories like this one where we can open up a Book and read stories that are thousands of years old and figure out how they apply to us today in Waco in 2021. God, I pray for the people in this room; the people watching online, that our lives won't be marked by disobedience, but instead, that our lives would be marked by submission to you. Understanding that there's freedom that comes from obedience to your commands. For the people who feel like they've wandered too far, God, I pray that right now your Spirit tells them that they haven't. There's grace and mercy for those who seek repentance. God, we're thankful for the opportunity to come together today and sing songs, hear your Word proclaimed, and spend time with other believers. God, we give you the rest of this morning. We pray that you'll use this time to change lives; that we'll look back, years and years from now, and say, "You know what? There was a Sunday in 2021 when things started to change." We ask all this in your name. Amen