

Week 6 - Self Reliance & Insecurity

I Samuel 13

Introduction

We have had hints of Saul's deep insecurity in his inauguration when he hid in the luggage.

We have also seen it when he was unable to tell his father that Samuel had prophesied that he would be king.

Now we will see it begin to really cost him, and God's people.

Saul Builds an Army, Goes on the Offensive

READ I Samuel 13:1-4

Saul builds a large army. A personal army, as well as another led by his son Jonathan.

Jonathan's army attacks a garrison of Philistine troops and wins.

This is a new offensive strategy that we have not seen before. In the past, Israel would typically wait to be threatened, and then God would fight for them in some way. Now with Saul as king, there is a very new attitude. They amass a large army, and attack the Philistines.

This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it is new. And it has consequences.

Namely, the Philistines now hate the Israelites. Before, the Israelites were just another bug to squash under their feet. Now there is a special disgust they have for them. (vs. 4)

READ I Samuel 13:5-7

The Philistines muster a massive number of troops and encamp around them. They are so outnumbered, that the Israelite army scatters and hides on caves.

This is what human bravado, self reliance, and false bravery looks like. It makes a big noise, but when things get truly scary you run and hide.

Saul and his people thought that because they had a king, and an army, and had one victory that they could handle anything. But then when they were confronted with a true size of the enemy, their courage drained completely.

This is such a terrible human temptation! We so often think that if we could just get all the right pieces in place and lined up just right, then everything will be great. Maybe one day you get all of it right, but you will only discover that the enemy is much larger than you thought.

You will never have things so together that you don't need God. You, on your absolute best day, under the best circumstances, with the wind at your back are no match for your enemies Satan, sin, and death. You need God to fight for you, and always will.

Samuel is Late, Saul Jumps the Gun

READ I Samuel 13:8-13

Samuel tells Saul to wait 7 days (7 days may have been customary for Samuel). **Then he would come and meet them at the battlefield to perform a sacrifice and bless them with God's blessing.**

It's good that Saul is acknowledging that they need God. It's isn't as noteworthy a move since he is now desperate, but it's good nonetheless.

Why is this such a mistake?

Samuel condemns him, but why does it matter?

Doing the offering himself was wrong for 3 reasons:

- Going to war required the prophet to say if God would bless it, and the king to execute it. It was a separation of powers. Samuel violated that principle by taking the role of the prophet.
- He did it because he was afraid of the Philistines. He was afraid because he did not trust God to be faithful.
- He is treating God like a force to have on your side, not like a real God. He is making the same mistake as they did when they lost the ark to the Philistines. He doesn't want to inquire of God, and trustfully obey. Instead, he wants to make God bless their battle.

Saul's insecurity is causing him to make devastating mistakes in his leadership decisions. He is self-sabotaging his own authority.

Saul Disinherited

The consequence of this is not that Israel will be cut off, but in God's mercy only Saul will be cut off.

READ I Samuel 13:13-15

Samuel tells Saul that God has already prepared his replacement, and his replacement will not come from his dynasty. God will start over with a new king, and a new line of descendents.

Insecurity is a much bigger deal than we realize.

Thinking little of himself led to thinking too much of his enemies. It made him easily intimidated and overwhelmed.

Thinking little of himself was a symptom of thinking little of God. It would be easy to simply dismiss Saul by just saying that he had low self esteem. But I think if you look at his actions, you will see a man that had low God-esteem which led to low God-esteem.

If Saul had been confident in the sovereign power of God, and his faithfulness, then Saul would have been able to accept his coronation without hiding in the luggage. He would have sought God's voice before going to battle the first time. He would have waiting for Samuel to come the second time.

Thinking little of God, and therefore little of himself, led to making fear-based decisions that cost him his legacy.

The "Self-Esteem gospel" only works for people that are already confident in their ability to be winners. It doesn't work at all for those that have been beaten down by life. It only makes them bitter.

Jesus never said anything like "believe in yourself". He said, believe in Me. Jesus himself established His identity in the Father and not in Himself.

We deal with our insecurity by admitting our weakness, as we learn to esteem Christ more each day. The more you esteem Him, the more you will see yourself more clearly.

Not dealing with your insecurity, will cause you to hurt people. You will be like Saul, who brought a lot of destruction into his life all the while feeling like a victim. You will hurt people, push people away, alienate those that love you, and all the while you will feel victimized by your own actions.

It will make you jealous, self-defeating, and double-minded. You will find rejection in places where it doesn't exist. It will cause you to manipulate people, and even try to manipulate God into blessing you.

The antidote is not to try to think more of yourself. No, the answer is to think more of Christ. Consider what it means to defined, shaped, and valued by Jesus.

Conclusion

In I Corinthians 6 and 7, Paul builds his theology on the idea that we are bought with a price. We do not belong to ourselves, but we are valuable beyond compare because of the price paid for us.

Genesis says that you are made in the image and likeness of God Himself.

You cannot behold that truth for long and have your low self-esteem survive it! And because it is coming from esteeming God, it will not sour into arrogance.