

he may take, he is certain to find some excuse for it. But it was this sort of excuse-seeking which led to Saul's rejection. Better admit one's wrong than defend it as being right.

8. EXPEDIENCY. v. 12.

Saul's words in this verse are a confession that he knew he had disobeyed God. It was contrary, he said, to his own inclinations. The tragedy is--this was not the truth. How much is passed off to us in these days under the guise of expediency. The verb for "forced" is also found in Gen. 45:1 where Joseph could not "refrain himself". Saul claims to have done violence to his own conscience. But what about 1 Cor. 14:32? The flesh operates in this fashion--it will force itself to do things contrary to God because it is not subject to a living faith!

Conclusion

Samuel's reply to the whole situation is both startling and heart-breaking. It is found in three phrases (vv. 13, 14): a. "Thou hast done foolishly." Divine wisdom would have directed differently. Faith would have reacted with another course. b. "Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God." Samuel is saying: "What excuse can there be for disobedience?" To guard His Word is everything; to neglect it is to be rejected! c. "The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart." The verb "sought" is related to the common word heard in the Middle East "baksheesh" (a gratuity).

It is not always pleasant to face up to some weaknesses of one's self before God, yet it is the path to usefulness. If we but subject ourselves to His will, act by faith, and employ the wisdom of the Word, then we can count on our way being "prosperous" and an experience of "good success" (Joshua 1:8).

BOOK OF FIRST SAMUEL

"Reasons for Rejection"
1 Samuel 13:1-14

Introduction

1. One of the tragedies of our time is the number of people who walk alone. Even the popular and the successful may be lonely.

2. A child may be tested by sociometric techniques to learn how he rates with other children. Why? To find some of the reasons for rejection or isolation either of a single child or a group of children.

3. Take a Christian--could he ever be lonely? Is it conceivable that in a fellowship where love is supposed to be dominant that one could actually feel unloved? Are there people who were once charged with great responsibility and opportunity only to find their whole castle crumble at their feet? If so, why do some of these things happen?

4. The text for our study today examines some of the experiences of Saul. It uncovers some of his personal weaknesses which led to his untimely rejection by God for an abundant service. Perhaps a notation of these items will assist you--where you sit and live--to avoid his mistakes and thus not fall into the pit of rejection.

1. SELF-CONFIDENCE. v. 2.

This is a very popular term today, yet there is a sense in which one may have too great confidence in self. A comparison of 1 Samuel 11:8 with this verse will accent the tremendous self-confidence of Saul. Was he now to go it alone in the defense of his people? Self on the altar for God is important, but flesh which is not submissive to God is nothing

more than SELF (take the "h" off and invert flesh and the word derived is "self").

2. FAITHLESSNESS. vv. 3, 6.

Jonathan is mentioned for the first time in our Bibles right here. He's a beautiful character, a kind of forerunner of David. His name means "gift of God." He took the initiative against the enemy of Israel. How? By faith! But not so with Saul. The verses sizzle with the activity of Jonathan, albeit the words are few. One gets the full picture of Saul in his faithless apathy in the sullen words: "As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal . . ." (v. 7). The concomitant of this was a fearful fear amongst the people (v. 6). Faith does not run, but laughs at impossibilities!

3. LACK OF DECISION. v. 4.

When Ammon came against Israel, Saul rose to the heights. Reread chapter 11 and the thrilling account of God's blessing upon Saul. See too how he inspired Israel against their oppressors. If they didn't come out with him, a dreadful punishment would be meted out to them. But not now--the picture has changed! No wonder the "people followed him trembling" (v. 7).

4. PRIDE. v. 3.

One of the six things which the Lord hates is pride (Prov. 6:17). Jonathan had gained the victory over the Philistines at Geba, but who claimed to have won?--Saul! Something accomplished by another is not for Saul to affirm was his! He had a trumpet to blow and how he blew it. Saul should have known the wisdom of Solomon, but he didn't (Prov. 16:18; 29:23). How he had changed from his attitude described earlier (9:21; 10:21,22).

5. IMPATIENCE. v. 9.

Perhaps this is the central thought about Saul here. It certainly is an important one. He could have afforded to wait! But the agitation of the people made him turn his eyes from the Lord (cf. v. 8). Big words in our Bibles are these: "wait on the Lord," "trust the Lord," and "fear Him." It may be necessary for God to step in at the nick of time, but He never comes too late! As men view situations, God is often very slow about taking action. Saul had not learned the lesson of patience. Have we?

6. INTRUSION. v. 9.

Samuel had told Saul to go to Gilgal and wait until he came to offer sacrifices (10:8). God had a man chosen for this holy exercise. All did not qualify. But the flesh felt it could take over where God had laid down specific rules! Others did not learn the lesson of Saul (cf. 2 Sam. 6:6-8). Many today have not learned that God has an order in His household. Not all are called to be pastors and teachers or evangelists or deacons or whatever the office might be. Wherein a man is called of God, there let him serve. But let him not try to occupy the place nor position of the brother who is called elsewhere! For Saul, it cost him the kingdom. For Uzzah, it cost him his life. What will it cost you or the people of God, if you intrude where He has not called or placed you?

7. EXCUSES. vv. 5, 8, 11.

Saul could marshal some real excuses for what he did. At least three are mentioned in the text: a. The Philistines were ready to battle. b. The people were scattered and needed help. c. Samuel had not yet come. Most can vindicate themselves if they want to. For whatever action