

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** Games That Fools Play

**SERMON REFERENCE:** 1 Samuel 26:21

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #0830

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) 1 Samuel 26:21
- b) No one ever got a better start than King Saul.
  - i) No one ever had a sadder finish than King Saul.
- c) When we first see King Saul in the Bible, he is handsome, winsome, courteous, humble and thoughtful.
- d) As we continue through the Bible, we find that Saul becomes a bitter, envious, murderous and wicked old man.
  - i) King Saul died by his own hand.
- e) Pastor and theologian Sidlow Baxter wrote that Saul was both a hero and a renegade, a king and a slave, a prophet and a reprobate, a man God anointed and a man Satan possessed.
  - i) What happened to Saul could happen to any person today.
  - ii) Saul gave himself over to certain influences, and the devil moved in.
    - (1) In Saul, we see the finished product of the devil's art.
    - (2) In Saul, we see what Satan can do with a person who yields himself to the devil.
      - (a) At first, Satan moves in subtly, almost unperceptively.
      - (b) But when Satan moves in, he takes over, even in the life of a child of God.

2) SAUL'S GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

- a) 1 Samuel 9:1-2
  - i) This is where we first meet Saul.
- b) Scripture describes his manhood:
  - i) 1 Samuel 9:2
  - ii) Saul was a handsome young man who was head and shoulders above everybody else.
  - iii) He was a manly man.
  - iv) He was the best of the best.
  - v) He had health, height and handsomeness.
- c) We see his modesty:
  - i) 1 Samuel 9:21
    - (1) Saul was saying, "Who am I that I should be the king of Israel?"
    - (2) He felt unworthy.
  - ii) Saul was a man who did not seek praise.
  - iii) He didn't seek publicity; instead, He ran from it.
    - (1) 1 Samuel 10:22
      - (a) The time had come to crown him king.
      - (b) They wanted to honor him, but they couldn't find him.
      - (c) The Lord told them that Saul had hidden himself.
  - iv) Saul was a humble, modest man.
- d) He had a magnanimous spirit.

- i) When they were taking Saul to make him king, there were certain vile people who ridiculed him.
  - (1) 1 Samuel 10:26
  - (2) A common king of that day would have put these men to death, but Saul held his peace.
- ii) 1 Samuel 11:12-13
  - (1) The sons of Belial were wicked and carnal.
    - (a) They hated God's man.
  - (2) According to the rules of that day, these men had blasphemed the king and deserved death.
    - (a) But Saul said no; he would not put them to death.
- e) We see his mighty anointing.
  - i) 1 Samuel 10:1
    - (1) Saul was anointed of the Lord.
  - ii) 1 Samuel 10:6-7
    - (1) He was a transformed man because the Spirit of God came upon him.
    - (2) God was with him.
  - iii) He was a man anointed of God, and God made him into another man.
- f) We see his men.
  - i) Not only was God with him, but there were a number of men with him.
  - ii) 1 Samuel 10:26
    - (1) The phrase "band of men" literally means "a host," which literally means "men of valor."
  - iii) Saul had some good, stout-hearted men who were with him.
    - (1) They followed Saul as their king.
    - (2) His battles were their battles.
  - iv) They were valiant and godly men.
- g) Saul had a mentor.
  - i) He had someone to teach him and to guide him.
  - ii) 1 Samuel 10:25
    - (1) On through this Scripture, we read how Samuel was there to guide Saul.
  - iii) Saul had a pastor who was perhaps the best pastor in all the Old Testament.
- h) Saul had his monarchy.
  - i) He was the king.
  - ii) 1 Samuel 10:1
    - (1) The Lord had anointed him to be captain over his inheritance.
    - (2) Saul was chosen to rule and to shepherd God's chosen people.
  - iii) Saul had a wonderful opportunity to bless people.
- i) In all of the Old Testament, there was perhaps no other man who had a better start than Saul.
  - i) God seemed to have poured on Saul blessing after blessing.

3) SAUL'S TRAGIC FAILURE (1 SAMUEL 26:21)

- a) 1 Samuel 26:21
  - i) Saul admitted that he had erred exceedingly and played the fool.
- b) Through Saul's example, we see some games that fools play.
  - i) This is a solemn warning to us.
  - ii) The game that fools play is a game that we cannot win and a game where the stakes are so high.
- c) There are five steps that Saul took as he started down the road to self-destruction:
  - i) Self-determination
    - (1) 1 Samuel 13:5-14
      - (a) God had told Saul that he was to do battle with the Philistines.
      - (b) Saul had already made a foray against the Philistines, whose anger is stirred and they attack.
      - (c) Saul's men are hard pressed, but Samuel told Saul to wait on him and not to go into battle until he gave Saul the signal.
        - (i) There was to be a seven-day waiting period.
        - (ii) Saul was to wait on the Lord.
      - (d) But Saul took matters into his own hands.
      - (e) Saul offered the burn offering.
        - (i) This was not Saul's job to take the priest's prerogative.
        - (ii) Saul was king, but he was not the priest.
          - 1. Samuel was the priest and prophet.
      - (f) Had Saul waited on God, God's man would have been there and God's plan would have been done.
    - (2) Samuel could see in Saul a character flaw.
      - (a) The seeds of his self-destruction were there.
      - (b) He knew that sooner or later, Saul would come to an untimely end because he was a man who would play the fool.
    - (3) What Saul did was to offer sacrifices to God, which sounds good; but he was running ahead of God.
      - (a) He was acting by self-will.
      - (b) He was acting by self-determination.
      - (c) He was not acting on the Word of God.
      - (d) He was not waiting for the will of God.
      - (e) He did that which seemed good to him rather than getting a word from God and obeying God.
    - (4) Saul was a self-willed, self-determined man.
  - ii) Stubborn disobedience
    - (1) A self-willed person not only runs ahead of God, but he will start going in the opposite direction from God.
    - (2) 1 Samuel 15:2-3
      - (a) God commanded Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites.
        - (i) God was not being cruel; God was being righteous.

- (ii) God judged the Amalekites because they were a people who loved to slaughter.
  1. They tortured others for the mad joy of destruction.
  2. For 500 years, they had left a trail of blood.
  3. They delighted in wars of ambush against the weak, aged and helpless.
  4. They were especially cruel to the people they captured.
- (b) The Amalekites corrupted other people, and God was saving millions from their idolatrous influence.
- (3) 1 Samuel 15:20-24
  - (a) Saul did not destroy everything as he was commanded to do.
  - (b) Saul gave a half-hearted apology.
    - (i) It was an apology with an explanation.
    - (ii) It was an apology with a blame on someone else.
    - (iii) It sounded reasonable, logical and economical.
  - (c) Saul had it all reasoned out.
    - (i) He had an excuse.
    - (ii) He was going to do wrong that he might do right.
      1. It is never right to do wrong in order to get a chance to do right.
  - (d) He somehow had the idea that the end would justify the means and that he could stubbornly rebel against God.
    - (i) He was a stubbornly rebellious man.
- iii) Swift degeneration
  - (1) The pace begins to quicken.
  - (2) 1 Samuel 16:14
    - (a) Sin is sweeping him along.
    - (b) God's Spirit has left him, and an evil spirit has come upon him.
  - (3) Ephesians 4:26-27
    - (a) When we have unconfessed, unrepented of sin in our lives, we have given the devil a place in our lives.
      - (i) This is what Saul did.
  - (4) The Spirit of the Lord was upon Saul; but he started out with his self-determination, then his stubborn disobedience, and then his swift degeneration was such that God's Spirit left him.
    - (a) In that vacuum, an evil spirit possessed him.
      - (i) It is unclear whether or not this was a demon spirit.
    - (b) In the Hebrew way of thinking, everything that happens does so because God has allowed it to happen.
      1. Therefore, this simply means that in 1 Samuel 16:14, God allowed judgment to come upon Saul, very much in the sense of 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11.

- (c) The evil spirit mentioned in 1 Samuel 16:14 could be referring to a malevolent spirit, such as a demented mind (like a man who lost his sanity).
  - (i) It could also mean a destructive spirit.
  - (d) It was God's righteous and just judgment that this thing happened to Saul.
- (5) Saul has gone from ignoring God to disobeying God, and not he begins to fight God.
  - (a) About this time, Saul is getting jealous of David, and he starts to fight David.
    - (i) David was God's anointed; thus, when Saul was fighting David, he was fighting God.
- iv) Spiritual depravity
  - (1) 1 Samuel 28:7
    - (a) Saul is now a bitter, confused old man.
    - (b) He wants some information about a battle, and he goes to a witch for the information.
      - (i) He begins to traffic with evil spirits.
      - (ii) Saul, who had once had the Spirit of God upon him and had such a wonderful commission from God, is now trafficking with the demon spirits of Hell.
  - (2) Saul had gone from ignoring God to disobeying God, from disobeying God to fighting God, and from fighting God to cooperating and fellowshiping with the devil.
    - (a) Samuel knew it would happen, which is why he had warned Saul of witchcraft.
      - (i) 1 Samuel 15:23
    - (b) When a person is rebellious and disobedient, he commits the same sin that the devil did.
      - (i) He puts himself in the company with the devil and opens himself to the occult.
- v) Self-destruction
  - (1) 1 Samuel 31:4-6
    - (a) King Saul is on the battlefield.
      - (i) His men have fallen by his side, and his army is in retreat.
      - (ii) Jonathan and his other sons have been slaughtered by the Philistines.
    - (b) He knows his end is coming, and he doesn't want to die by the enemy's hand.
  - (2) Saul died by his own hand.
    - (a) He died defeated.
    - (b) He died intimidated by the enemy, the Philistines, who were a demon-possessed people.

- (c) He died in such a way as to bring shame upon the nation that he was meant to be king over.
- (3) No one ever had a better start, and no one ended more tragically than Saul.

#### 4) CONCLUSION

a) There are some applications we can make to our own lives from the life of Saul:

- i) Circumstances cannot make you, and they cannot break you.
  - (1) Don't complain when you think that other people are wealthier than you or have better opportunities than you.
  - (2) Sometimes a person has opportunity, but he doesn't have ability.
  - (3) Sometimes a person has ability, but he doesn't have opportunity.
  - (4) Saul had both ability and opportunity, yet he failed humiliatingly and shamefully.
  - (5) David did not have the kind of opportunities that Saul had.
    - (a) When they were looking for someone to be the next king over Israel, no one even thought of him.
      - (i) He was insignificant.
      - (b) He wasn't head and shoulders above everyone else like Saul, but he became Israel's mightiest king because he had a heart for God.
    - (6) It is better to have a heart for God than to have all of the opportunities, wit, wisdom, beauty and wealth put together.
    - (7) A person may have every advantage in this world and play the fool.
    - (8) A person may have few advantages and be used of God.
      - (a) 1 Corinthians 1:27
  - ii) Whoever you are and wherever you are, you cannot be successful without obeying God.
    - (1) No one is smarter than God.
    - (2) Don't run ahead of God.
    - (3) Do not stubbornly disobey God.
    - (4) When you disobey God with your eyes wide open (when you commit presumptuous sin), you put yourself in danger of being possessed by an evil spirit.
      - (a) A Christian cannot be demon possessed.
        - (i) The devil can never possess that which belongs to God.
        - (b) But a Christian might possess a demon.
          - (i) God's people can open themselves to demonic influences and can be harassed, obsessed and perplexed by demon spirits because they have given a place to the devil.
      - (5) In God's work, there is no substitute for obedience.
    - iii) There is the horrible power of sin.
      - (1) Don't think of sin as a small thing.

- (2) Sin will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and will cost you more than you want to pay.
- (3) Have a holy fear of sin.
- (4) Saul at first dabbled in sin, and then he was destroyed by sin.
  - (a) He started down a road that seemed so small and insignificant.
    - (i) He was not waiting on God and ran ahead of God, then he ran against God and fought God.
    - (ii) Then, he cooperated with the devil and was destroyed by the devil.
- iv) Just because you're successful now does not mean that you will always be successful.
  - (1) Saul was successful for a moment.
  - (2) He had times of glory.
    - (a) But the seeds of destruction were there.
  - (3) 1 Corinthians 9:27
    - (a) The term "castaway" here means something that is useless, something that cannot be used; a relic.
  - (4) Saul was a man who had an experience with God, yet he dabbled with sin and was destroyed by sin.
- v) None of us are immune to the deceiving power and the deadening power of sin if we are self-willed rather than Spirit filled.
- b) We need to get clean and stay that way.
  - i) We need to get on our knees in prayer.
  - ii) We need to get in the Word of God.
  - iii) We need to open our hearts to the Lord and ask Him to keep us and guard us.
- c) If you are not a Christian, the first step to avoiding the deceiving and deadening power of sin is to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.
- d) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16