

To Obey Is Better Than To Sacrifice

In 1 Samuel 15, king Saul is commanded of God to completely annihilate the Amalekites, including their animals (vv. 1-4). Saul gathers the troops, goes to Amalek and attacks. "But, Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to destroy them" (1 Sam. 15:9).

Samuel learned of Saul's actions and confronted him (1 Sam. 15:10-33). He asked Saul why he had spared the king and animals. Saul explained they were a sacrifice to God. He even stated he had obeyed the commandment of the Lord. However, Samuel pointed out he had NOT obeyed the Lord, even though he (Saul) thought he had. Samuel summed up the situation with these words, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Sam. 15:22-23). Saul had two problems, he left off part of God's command and added his own thoughts/actions.

Today, there are people who act just like Saul, they leave off part of what God commands and add their own ideas. For instance, the gospel teaches us that during the worship assembly, we are to sing, pray, study, give, and observe the Lord's supper (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 14:15; Eph. 5:19). However, many people do not follow God's command. They leave off the Lord's supper and add instrumental music. This, friends, is rebellion just like Saul's.

Some object, "But the Lord's supper loses meaning if it is done each week, and we use instruments to praise God." As for losing interest, is this said about singing, giving (not by the preacher!), praying, or preaching? As for praising God with instruments of music, Saul thought he would praise God by sacrificing the best of the animals to Him. Samuel called this rebellion and iniquity. It is the same today as it was then.

Friends, it is "better to obey than to sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams."

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