

Wednesday Night Service - November 5th, 2025

So once again... I'll be sharing God's Word with you and we'll be digging into (1 Samuel 16), so if you want to turn there in your Bibles we'll get started...

But first, I'd like to remind you of *our last Wednesday night together*, when Pastor Brent was teaching from (1 Samuel 14 and 15) and shared a very basic but so important truth for all of us.

Does anyone remember what that Truth was?

That truth was, ***"To Obey Is Always Better"***

Now as much as we know that's true... *it's a truth that perhaps some of us might still be struggling with...*

So let's have a little review...

In (1 Samuel 15:22) Samuel it says: ***"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."***

It's been said by some scholars, that we should memorize this verse, because it's one of the classics in the Word of God, and it's so important to a Christian life. It's basically... ***Obedience first, last and always.***

It's the watchword of those who would serve and please the Lord.
*So let's repeat it together, **Obedience first, last and always.***

Church, if we truly desire to serve and trust the Lord with all our heart and *lean not on our own understanding and in all our ways submit to Him, **which means to obey***, then He will make our paths straight. Amen!

Does anyone Remember the old Don Moen song...

... When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word

What a glory He sheds on our way! While we do His good will, He abides with us still

And with all who will trust and obey...

... Trust and obey, for there's no other way

To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey

I would have sung that song for you tonight, but there's no way, you'd be happy today.

So remember, **Obedience first, last and always.**

Okay, just a few more verses from chapter 15...

15:24-26 - Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord.” 26 But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.”

I loved what Pastor Brent shared regarding these few verses and it ties in with the watchword we just reviewed, listen again to what Pastor Brent said,

“On the surface this looks like repentance. We should pat Saul on the back and raise him up as a model for this right? Unfortunately, what looks like repentance is actually a fraud. He said, This is evident in two ways.

First, for the rest of Saul’s life, he will repeat this same rebellious attitude. Repentance entails a change, but Saul *never* displays one.

Second, the phrase in verse 25 indicates that Saul is still thinking of the whole situation incorrectly.

Saul wants to “*worship the Lord*,” and he is not thinking of singing some God songs together or washing someone else’s feet.

Saul wants to have a national thanksgiving sacrifice on behalf of the victory.

He wants a big ceremony.

The problem with this is... that Samuel is the only one who can offer an official worship ceremony.

If Samuel refuses, this will be a major loss of face for Saul.

Sadly, this is what Saul is so worried about. *His main concern is still how he looks in the eyes of the people.* He is still concerned about his status.

Again, far too many people in our pews think along the same lines. Too many of us are more worried about being caught in our sin than about the fragrance of the offence before God.”

And Pastor Brent finished with, “We would be embarrassed if our sin was exposed, but we completely ignore the fact that the person most offended... most involved—**God Himself**—sees and knows our sin completely.”

Church... do you ever wonder about why we, as *believers*, sometimes think we can get away with sin. It's true that our thoughts are the most private parts of our human experience. No one can know our thoughts unless we communicate them, so we tend to imagine that anything we think is safe, as *long as it stays in our minds*.
But is that true?

No... *it's NOT true*, because there is one Person who always knows what we were thinking *and that's the one person we should be most concerned about*.

Church... what is the watchword of those who would serve and please the Lord, ***Obedience first, last and always***.

Now, as we get into 1 Samuel 16, and yes we will, we're going to see who the Lord chooses to be the new King.

*We're also going to see the continuation of Saul's fall, as he receives from the Lord... **a distressing spirit**. This distressing spirit will eventually send him into, what we would describe in our day, as an example of manic-depressive insanity, which will cause periods of intense gloom with occasional outbreaks of homicidal violence, for no apparent reason and the delusion, that good people are plotting against him.*

This manic-depression will haunt and control him until his death in the last chapter of the book of 1 Samuel.

Let's Pray....

So turn with me in your Bible to 1 Samuel 16 as we dive into this very interesting portion of Scripture.

David Anointed King

1 Now the Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.”

So *this is interesting to me*, based on the Lord's question to Samuel, "*How long will you mourn?*"

It would seem that Samuel was a little *too* distraught regarding our Lord's rejection of Saul and he was allowing his *emotions* to cloud his judgement and waste time.

It's possible he was sort of paralyzed, *stuck*, because of Saul's tragic rebellion and just didn't know what to do.

Perhaps he *feared Saul's reaction*, when Saul finally realizes that God had rejected him as king, *and that Samuel was being sent by God to go and find the new guy!*

Now... what I find so interesting about how God is responding to Samuel's *mourning*, is *how God is responding to Saul's disobedience*.

How so, well basically God told Samuel, enough with the mourning and moaning, *it's time to move on and there's work to do*. I can imagine Samuel saying something like, "But God, *I have reason to mourn, my heart is hurting and it's broken*".

And God is saying, " Yes, I get it Samuel and I grieve what Saul has done, *but I've moved on and so must you.*"

But all Samuel could see, *was that the old order had collapsed and there was no hope of fixing it.*

And that creates a problem, *the problem of getting stuck in the past.*

Yes, it's true, there *is* a season for mourning, but there's also a season for going on *and many people struggle with that.*

I'm sure everyone in this room has had pain in their past from circumstances, *like the death of a loved one*, or loss of a job, or people that wounded us and we struggle to emotionally deal with it and let go.

Frequently we find ourselves going over the same ground, thinking things like...

Why did this happen to me?

Why did they hurt me?

Why did I do this, or why did I do that? And we keep meditating on the past.

Church... What good will that do? We can't change it!

Well, we need to do something, because staying stuck helps no one and in reality, *we have choices to make*. We can keep talking about the hurt, or, start talking about God's goodness.

We can keep asking 'why?' ... *or get a hope from the Lord for the future.*

Samuel learned he needed to “**get over it**” before he could “**get on with it.**”

And so what God is saying to Samuel in this verse... He's also saying to us tonight... “**Let go of the past!**”

Put it behind you and like he told Samuel... ***I have new things ahead for you... focus on those things!***”

Church, we know God has emotions *and He understands our emotions*, because He created us.

But His emotions continually flow from His own perfection... ***ours... due not!***

God's perfection does not allow His emotions to cloud His judgement and He basically tells Samuel, *there is a time to mourn, but there is also a time to move on.*

So church, when things happen in our lives that are hurtful - regrettable - even when there are hard times- painful times - and disappointing times, we must move on! Why?

Because that's what God does and if we remain in the past problem, or hurt, or disappointment, then we'll miss out on the present move of God.

Now, continuing in verse one. God tells Samuel to “**Fill your horn with oil**”

And here's how God works in our lives. *God knew that this would excite Samuel.* God was telling him to go anoint someone else to be king over Israel and this would be just the thing, to move Samuel from *mourning... into moving.*

Church, *Please understand this...* God will never allow His work to die with the failure of a man.

If it's God's work, it goes beyond any man. **Amen!**

So God tells Samuel, *"I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."*

Pastor Brent recently took us through the book of Ruth and we learned of the wonderful love story between Ruth and Boaz and now we see the continuing of their story, as we hear from the Lord, that the next king of Israel, would be found among the sons of Jesse... Who was Jesse? He was the grandson of Ruth and Boaz.

So, God is telling Samuel what he's to do next...

What about us? When God asks us, *or perhaps tells us what we're to do next*, what must we do?

Be obedient. Remember **Obedience first, last and always.**

... but that isn't always our response is it?

Should you or I hesitate, *we must consider*, that when you sense that God wants to use you in some way, know that *He is the One* Who will do the work through you.

But should you say no, or I'm not ready, or I'm not able to do that, it's too much, or should you flat out disobey Him and refuse, to do His work, then please understand, *the work won't stop.*

He'll just choose another person and you and I will miss out on His incredible blessing because we wouldn't trust Him.

In the last part of verse 1 it says, "For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."

Church, how did things get to this point. We know from Scripture that Years before this, Israel rejected the LORD as their king and they wanted a human king instead.

So God gave them a human king after their own desire and that of course was (Saul)... but God was still on the throne.

The simple fact is, *that God has always ruled Israel* and always will, no matter what human President or Prime Minister is currently in human power. God is in control, and remember church, ***a time is coming*** when **Jesus will rule and reign as King** on this earth during His thousand year Millennial Reign.

So, as we get into the next number of verses we'll realize that in some unlikely place, God is raising up leaders for His people. He will keep them obscure and hidden until the right time, then He will raise them up.

2 And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears *it*, he will kill me." But the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' 3 Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you."

I think it would be easy to *understand* Samuel's fear. Samuel is a man with reason and emotions and what emotion do we see in this verse? *What is it church, it's fear!* What is he afraid of, *Saul killing him!*

Why? Because *Saul is a man* whose reason is skewed and who just so happens to be head and shoulders above other men. He's a big powerful man who has *a temper and is a bit on the impulsive side* and he also happens, to still be the *peoples King* of Israel.

It's possible, maybe even probable, that Saul would consider what God has called Samuel to do as *treason*.

And, as we're going to discover in the next few chapters, Saul is going to do his very best, *by force*, to hang on to that which is no longer rightfully his.

But that said, I must admit that I was a little surprised the first time I read this verse, *that Samuel feared what Saul might do to him*.

Did Samuel actually think that God would allow Saul to kill him? It's possible, that Samuel's excessive mourning over Saul *allowed an element of fear and unbelief to enter into his heart*.

Perhaps, like we can often do, he got his eye's off of the Lord and onto a man.

*But the reality is that Samuel didn't have anything to worry about, **Why?***

Because God is in control and he gave Samuel the game plan when He said, **“Take a heifer with you, and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’
3 Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you.”**

The first king of Israel was anointed *for the people*.

He was the *world's idea* of what a King should look like, head and shoulders above the rest, dark and handsome, unlike some of the Pastors we have here at Riverside.

Saul was the kind of king the *people* wanted and God allowed it.

But the “*people’s choice*” King, *failed and disqualified himself*.

So, “Now,” the LORD has said, “It’s time for a king **for Me**.” Now God was going to *choose for Israel, His king*.

4 So Samuel did what the Lord said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, “Do you come peaceably?”

As I’m sure most of you remember.

Bethlehem was a small town not very far from Jerusalem. It was the home of Ruth and Boaz, from whom the family of Jesse descended.

Now Bethlehem was a hilly, grain-growing region with many small grain fields carved into the hillsides, which was ideal for grazing sheep, *perhaps* a great place to find a shepherd who will become king.

But check out how *the elders of the town responded when Samuel arrived in their nice little town*.

They trembled at his coming, and said, “Do you come peaceably?”

When I read this verse, *My first thought was*, why were the Elders afraid of Samuel?

Well, perhaps word had reached Bethlehem of what Samuel had just done with the Amalekite king Agag ([1 Samuel 15:33](#)),

Church, do you remember what Samuel did to King Agag?
Yeah, Samuel hacked Agag to death, so *it's no wonder the elders of Bethlehem were a little on edge and I'm sure they were relieved when in verse 5 Samuel said,*

5 And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.

So Samuel tells the Elders to prepare themselves, or to sanctify themselves and come join him for the sacrifice.

As God directed Samuel, he also consecrated and invited Jesse and his sons to join him in the sacrifice, *which set in motion the choosing of the next King of Israel.*

Now, Samuel knew that the family of Jesse was the family that the next King of Israel would come from, but what he didn't know, was which of the *family* boys would be designated as King.

And there's an interesting principle here.

Samuel had taken the first few steps in obedience, but was not shown how things would work out. He had to be obedient... *step by step.*

God often leads His children to His desired goal for them, How church? *'Step by step'.*

He will often ask you to take the first step in obedience, *before you get to see the next step*, one piece of the plan at a time. **So be patient...** for your patience reflects your trust in His leading.

6 So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him!"

So Samuel looked at the oldest son of Jesse, Eliab, and thought "Wow! Impressive, *this guy sure looks like a king, he checks all the boxes.* He's got it all, I bet you this is the one God will tell me to anoint. ***That's a good choice God!***"

Now, I don't know what Eliab really looked like, but I'm thinking Samuel saw another tall, good looking, well built young man, who *looked* like a warrior and would be an obvious choice to be a great king and leader.

But sadly, *even Samuel has fallen into the mistake...* like the people of Israel did, *of judging a person by their outward appearance and what happened?*

Saul looked the part, *but he didn't have the heart*, that a king of God's people should have.

Now, listen to what God says after he hears what Samuel is thinking...

7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*"

Okay, I think there is a lesson here for all of us.

Here's a basic fact, *even the best of men and women*, will look **at the outward appearance and make a judgement about that person**, *right or wrong*. We have a tendency to do that, **would you agree?**

Here's an example. I have been told many times over the years, by people that were afraid to talk to me and did their best to avoid having to talk to me, because, based on my outward appearance, they thought I was just always angry and too intense looking.

*Now that's a true story and if that's how you judged me when you first saw me, **raise your hands**. It's okay, I totally understand if you're afraid to do so.*

Okay, now getting back to Samuel, *in the moment*, Samuel was guilty of judging Eliab from an outward appearance *and we must understand why that's not a good thing.*

Why? Because unlike God, we can't read the secrets of another persons heart as God does, so initially, we can only really judge by an outward appearance, but we can't leave it there.

But God shows us how we can judge a person and it's through an exhortation to godly thinking.

God told Samuel, *"Your natural inclination is to only judge on outward appearance. But I can judge the heart that you can't see. So, look to Me and don't be so quick to judge a person only on their outward appearance."*

Samuel needed to understand his natural inclination to judge based only on **outward appearance**, *but he didn't have to give into it.* He could seek the LORD and seek God's heart and mind when looking at people.

And so must we. *We need to get to know that person before we judge them.*

In recent years, there's been *one or two* of those *many* people over the years, *who thought I was angry and too intense looking*, who have said, *that after getting to know me better...*

I was an 'okay' guy.

And I'll confess, that was nice to hear, *both times it happened.*

So let's be careful about judging people by their appearance.

Now, to clarify, if someone enters the church claiming to be Jesus and waving a machete and looking demon possessed, *you should probably judge them by their appearance and act according.*

8 So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." 9 Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." 10 Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these."

So now, Samuel has seen the second son Abinadab, and *God said not him.* and the third son Shammah and God said, *"it's not him either, the Lord has rejected them"*.

So third time was not the charm and neither were son numbers four through seven.

Samuel has to be thinking, “What’s the deal, all of these sons could be seen as being worthy of fleshly Kingship, but God has rejected all of them, *what gives?*”

Well, God has someone in mind that was different from Samuel or Jesse’s expectations, *yet, Samuel had been told by Yahweh, the King of Kings and Lord of Lord’s*, that the next King of Israel would be one of Jesse’s sons and that prompted Samuel to ask.

11 And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all the young men here?” Then he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.”

So, it seems Jesse never even bothered or thought about the possibility of his young son David as a potential candidate to be King, he must have thought... surely God wouldn’t be interested in a young shepherd boy when God had already rejected all seven of his older boys, *three of which were warriors in Saul’s military.*

Jesse's reply is almost like saying, *you mean the kid we have doing the dirty work?* He hasn’t even consecrated himself like the other seven and tending sheep can be dirty, smelly business!

Are you sure you want me to send for him?

But Church, thankfully God’s ways are higher than our ways! He will pick an unconsecrated dirty shepherd boy over seven consecrated men every time, *if the heart is right.*

Why?

Because He was looking not for external consecration, *but for internal consecration.* He’s not looking at the outward appearance, He’s looking for a holy, set apart, **heart**... *a heart that was wholly His!*

That is always and forever the LORD's first choice, a whole heart, a heart after His heart and David was just that guy!

12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him; for this *is* the one!” 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

Now remember, it doesn't mean that if you're what the world considers 'attractive' you'll be excluded from being chosen by God into a position of authority, *because it seems David would have made a great movie star in our day, being ruddy, with bright eyes and good looking.*

By the way, did you know that 'ruddy' means having a healthy sun-kissed complexion with a reddish glow!

The deal maker, was that the young shepherd boy, *was a man after God's own heart!*

That said, I do want to take the time to share yet another Courson insight and hope it will encourage all of you wherever you are in your walk with God.

Pastor Jon had this to say, “Notice that Samuel anoints David in the midst of his brethren. David will eventually be anointed three times. The first time is here. The second time is in 2 Samuel 2:4, when he is anointed over the tribe of Judah. The third is in 2 Samuel 5 when he is anointed as King over all of Israel.

Sometimes a man will think he's anointed for ministry. His mom might agree. A few others might even recognize his anointing-and he'll wonder why everyone else doesn't see it. Most likely because it's not time. There is an unfolding of God's plan for a man or a woman in service or ministry.

You cannot rush it. Anointing is recognized by others in stages. It doesn't happen quickly. As it did with David, it comes when you fight battles on behalf of others, when you gain victory for others by caring for them, standing by them, helping them. David was an incredible man - a man after God's own heart, unlike anyone the world had ever seen -

yet it took many years before his anointing was recognized. Saul was impatient.

David on the other hand, patiently waited. **So must we.**

I think that is a very encouraging word for anyone who feels anointed to go into ministry, don't try to force it, just let God work it out in His timing.

Remember. ***“To Obey Is Always Better”***

Obedience, first, last and always.

So before we move on to the next very interesting portion of this book, let's consider the situation we have now. Saul is still on the throne even though David is now God's anointed and God's choice for the king of Israel.

In a true, rightful sense, David is king and the anointing of God and the power of His Spirit is resting upon David as king, *however*, Saul is still on the throne and over the next few months as we continue through this book, we're going to see Saul try to drive David out of the kingdom by force, *the kingdom which is now rightfully his.*

But church, there's the sequel to this story and it goes like this...

Jesus through His death upon the cross, has redeemed the world back to God and He is now the rightful King.

Jesus is God's choice and God's anointed.

However, according to scripture, satan is still upon the throne of this earth and satan is doing his best to hold what power he has by force, power that is no longer rightfully his and he's doing his best to hold back the kingdom of God from the earth.

*But also remember that satan can only use what power he has... and it is formidable... **as God allows!***

Jesus Christ is the rightful King... and as I mentioned earlier, one day soon, He will be coming to this earth to rule and reign. ***Amen!***

Now we're about to embark on an interesting bit of scripture that has troubled people over the ages and is not always properly understood and tonight I'm going to give it the old college try, *even though I only took a 'Graphic Arts' course in college and quit after one year.*

A Distressing Spirit Troubles Saul

14 But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him.

Where to start with this verse.

I want to try to quickly explain, *the simplest way I know how*, the workings of the Holy Spirit, *which I must admit is extremely limited, when it comes to understanding how the three Person's of the Trinity interact within humanity.*

What I have discovered, is that the more I understand about who God is, *the more I realize how little, I really know about Him.*

But tonight, I want to look at the roll of the Holy Spirit as we see Him here in the Old Testament and how the Holy Spirit works in our lives in the New Testament.

First off, The Holy Spirit hasn't changed and his role in the Old Testament is very much like [His role in the New Testament](#).

When we look at the role of the Holy Spirit, we can see four general areas in which the Holy Spirit works:

- 1: Regeneration
- 2: Indwelling (or filling)
- 3: Restraint
- 4: Empowerment for service.

Unfortunately tonight, I don't have time to elaborate on all 4 of these areas of the Holy Spirit's workings,

but I do want us to understand that the Holy Spirit was, just as present in the Old Testament as He is in the New Testament.

In the Old Testament *and as we see here in 1 Samuel 16*, the Spirit Of God could come and go in a persons life.

In the New Testament, the major difference is the ***permanent indwelling 'of the Spirit' in believers.***

Church aren't you glad that once we have become born again, Spirit filled Christians, the Holy Spirit indwells us and He will never be removed from us.
Amen!

But not so in the Old Testament.

In that time the Holy Spirit would come upon certain people for the specific purposes of the Lord.

The indwelling was a sign of God's favour upon that individual, which we just saw happen in verse 13, *when the shepherd boy David was anointed King and was indwelled with the Spirit of God*, but now in verse 14, we see the reality of the Old Testament, *which is God's favour being taken from Saul, because of his rebellious disobedience*. It says, "*the Spirit of the Lord departed... and... a distressing spirit from the Lord would trouble him*".

Now let's look at what's happening in this verse... it says "a distressing spirit from the Lord?" Does the Lord really give some people in the Old Testament a distressing spirit and is that spirit demonic?

Apparently yes, *and rightly so*, for the Lord's purposes.

I must admit that I struggled with that when I first really thought about the Lord sending an evil spirit to trouble someone *and I wrestled to reconcile it in my mind*.

If God is all-good, why did He withdraw the Spirit of the Lord and send a **distressing spirit** upon Saul?

Well, there are two basic ways in which God may send something. There is the active sense or, He may send something in a passive sense.

What does that mean?

Well, Actively means God never initiates or performs evil, but He can *allow evil* into a person's life.

Passively, God may withdraw the hand of His protection and therefore *allow evil* to come, without being the source of the evil itself.

In Saul's situation, **the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul**, meaning Saul lost his spiritual "protection" and covering.

It would seem to me that Satan was more than ready to be allowed to send a **distressing spirit** to fill the void in Saul and the Lord gave His permission, *with restrictions of course*, as we saw Him do in the Book of Job.

And just to clarify how this works...

In (Job chapter 1:12) we read, ***And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person."***

Satan was given permission to destroy all Job had... including his children, but not to touch Job himself.

And again in (Job chapter 2:6) we read, ***And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life."***

So here in verse 14, God is only allowing Saul to be distressed, which as we'll see is very debilitating to Saul, as he lives out the rest of his life.

But understand this, *that even in this state*, Saul could still repent, *he was not past the place of repentance and restoration*, but it was up to him to choose to receive God's correction and respond with a tender and repentant heart.

Have you ever thought about the days we live in, *where we see so many people who are struggling with so many different types of mental stresses or illnesses*.

In our day, Saul would probably be diagnosed as mentally ill and placed on medications to try and find the sweet spot to calm him down, yet his problem was spiritual in nature, *not mental or psychological*.

There are many people wandering our streets and in mental hospitals today, that are really suffering from spiritual problems. Our culture never seems to take into consideration the possibility of distressing spirits, *only chemical imbalances*.

Now, it's certainly wrong to assume that every case of mental distress is spiritual, because chemical imbalances and psychological problems are also real in this fallen world.

Even so, there are certainly some that need liberation from a **distressing spirit** and may never find it in our modern mental health system.

And to be clear, liberation from distressing spirits can really only come by your faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Now this brings up something else I want to share, before we look at verse 15.

Why does God even allow Satan and demons to exist?

Well, listen to what the late Calvary Chapel founder, Pastor Chuck Smith, had to say about it,

“Satan could not exist unless God allowed him to exist, and the very fact that God allows him to exist means that he must be serving a purpose for God, otherwise there would be no reason of having Satan around at all.

If he were not serving a purpose of God then God surely wouldn't allow him his freedom today.

But because he is serving a purpose of God... in order that you might be tested... in order that your love for God might indeed be a love of free choice...

God has allowed Satan the liberty... for he serves a purpose of God.

*So in a broad sense... all of creation is still serving the purposes of God. Even Satan... in his rebellion... for God has a purpose in that. You see... **to give us the power of choice**... and yet if there is no choice to make... what value is it to have a power of choice?*

In order to exercise choice... there has to be the opposing side. So God has allowed Satan's rebellion... has allowed Satan to go on... has allowed Satan the freedom... the freedom to come and to tempt you and to hassle you... and to work on you... and to make it difficult for you to serve God.

So that as you serve God... it is because of choice of serving God in spite of the obstacles... in spite of the difficulties.

"God, I do love You." My love for God is more or less proved by my choice to love Him in spite of the difficulty and obstacles that are placed in my way.

Thus... God is assured that my love is genuine and my love for Him is true.

If I would say to my son, "Stay in the backyard while I go downtown." and I go out and chain him to the big tree. When I get home... I go in the backyard and unlock him and say, "Aha, I'm proud of my boy; he's obedient to his dad. Stayed right there in the backyard. Good boy." Proud father.

*My neighbours say, "You should've heard him cursing and screaming trying to get free." **He had no choice.** There has to be the open door... the possibility... the opportunity to disobey in order that obedience is meaningful.*

God wants from you... meaningful love.

Church, I hope that helps you understand a little more of why God doesn't just remove Satan from our planet at this time.

But a time is coming, when God send an angel with a great chain in his hand, to bind Satan and cast him into the bottomless pit and seal him up until the 1,000 year reign of Christ is up.

*But notice this, while Satan is bound for a thousand years, God allows one last opportunity for those born during that time to choose Him. During the millennial kingdom, God will show us that, even in the absence of the tempter (Satan), there will be those whose hearts are "**deceitful above all things and beyond cure**" and who will be ripe for deception.*

*(Jeremiah 17:9) say's, "**The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?**"*

15 And Saul's servants said to him, "Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you. 16 Let our master now command your servants, *who are before you*, to seek out a man *who is* a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well."
17 So Saul said to his servants, "Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring *him* to me."

So those closest to Saul in the day to day, *his servants*, notice a change in his behaviour and it's not a good change.

It's interesting, because often our spiritual condition is far more apparent to others, than it is to ourselves.

Perhaps Saul is not aware of this change in his spiritual condition, but his servants are *and they offer him a suggestion.*

Basically, Saul's servants are telling him that he needs a "worship leader." They literally tell Saul, *to command them to seek out a guy who can, using music*, bring the love, peace and power of God to him because I believe they were concerned for him and *probably their own well-being.*

They realized that King Saul needed to be led in worship, *so it was important not just to Saul*, but also to them, for fear of what he might do to one of them, to *seek out the best man possible* to do the job.

Church, God created music and gave it the ability to touch people with great power. It is such a wonderful way to worship our Lord and to remember scripture and to take us away from our troubles for a period of time.

I love our times of worship at the beginning and end of our services here at RCC and the special nights when we have the 'Circle of Worship' and 'Praise and Prayer Nights' like we had last Wednesday.

What a sweet time of fellowship, worshipping our King. Sometimes Debbie and I will spend an entire evening at home just listening to *and singing worship songs.*

Over the years, after my Mom had passed, every so often I would go to my Dad's home and later in the care home and we would sit together and listen to and sing worship songs together. It was such a great way for a Father and Son to spend time together.

Just before my Dad went to be with the Lord a little over a week ago, two of my nieces and their husbands were visiting with my Dad and he had a moment of clarity and began to sing the words to the song '**How Great Thou Art**', and thankfully they were able to record it on video *and you know, being able to watch him sing was so precious and comforting to all of the family.*

Church, Music can be used for such great good and sadly, for great evil, *because it is so powerfully communicates to our inner being.*

So Church, please be careful of what type of music you, or your children, or grand children listen to, because it truly can be very good, or evil *and both can have a powerful effect on the mind.*

18 Then one of the servants answered and said, “Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valour, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the Lord is with him.*”

Wow, what a resume for such a young man!!...

David had confidence, courage, charisma and he was really sharp, at playing the harp!

The reality is, that David needed to be very skilled at the harp in order to lead Saul in worship and being such a young man, that was most definitely a divine gift from the Lord.

*But more importantly, David also had to have this one crucial attribute, that **the LORD was with him.***

Church, a true worship pastor, must be called by God, be willing to submit to God and be willing to submit to whatever leadership, the LORD has placed over them.

And one last thing, David would have to be quick on his feet and be agile and able to bob and weave and duck, because Saul’s distress would continue to progress over time and the music would no longer keep him calm and Saul would begin the insanity of throwing a spear at David trying to kill him.

Well, as we’ll see, Saul chooses the one who the Lord has equipped as worship leader and David is that man and this is his response to his servants recommendations...

19 Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, “Send me your son David, *who is with the sheep.*”

So it seems *not much has happened since Samuel anointed David as King*. Some time has passed and it's possible that neither David nor his family really understood the significance of what has happened regarding David's anointing, *or if David did understand*, he realized that God would be the one to set things in motion, *in His own timing*.

So David, *being patient*, had simply returned to the sheep.

20 And Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine, and a young goat, and sent *them* by his son David to Saul.

Now I'm pretty sure Jesse was not a wealthy man, but he understood that he needed to send David to the King with some type of gift.

So he took a donkey laden with bread, a skin of wine and a young goat, *probably the best he had* and sent David on his way to what would become, a life changing journey, that would be recorded for all of history to read, to study and learn from, as we're doing tonight.

Church, Do you remember how we started this message with *"To Obey Is Always Better"* David was being obedient to the call of God and it wasn't going to be easy.

Remember... ***Obedience first, last and always.*** It's the watchword of those who desire to serve and please the Lord.

21 So David came to Saul and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armour-bearer. 22 Then Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Please let David stand before me, for he has found favour in my sight."

Truly, David was an outstanding young man who was worthy of his name, *which means* ("Beloved" or "Loved One").

As we'll see, as we continue to journey through this wonderful book over the next few months, That *David was never bitter, never got angry with Saul, never allowed hatred to rule his heart and he would always be an admirer of Saul, even when Saul was out to kill him!*

And as we see from the verse, Saul took to him right away and gave him the *important and trusted position* of **armour-bearer**, making him his chief assistant in battle.

This is surprising to me, because David, *up until this point only fought with wild animals*, mind you, *lions and bears aren't exactly Childs play* are they.

But a soldier's life often depended on the courage and faithfulness of his **armour-bearer**, and there was something Saul saw in David that made him confident that he was worthy of his trust in this very important position.

This would also turn out to be a very important time in David's life and give him the training over the next 24 years, for God's plan to develop and prepare him.

David was now living in a royal court and he began to learn the customs and the manners he needed, to know to just how to be a good king later in life.

23 And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.

As we read in this verse, this is the exact result Saul's servants had hoped for, when suggesting a skilled musician to play for the king.

God rejected Saul as king due to his rebellion and God also removed His Spirit from Saul and allowed a distressing spirit to torment the sitting king. This distressing spirit that the Lord sent to Saul, *is not necessarily evil in the moral sense—because the Hebrew word used here, can also refer to sadness, adversity, or affliction.*

So as we close out tonight's message with this last verse, we learn that when David would play the lyre, which was a stringed, harp-like instrument, kind of like an early version of the guitar, Saul would become *refreshed in his spirit*, as the distressing spirit would depart from him for a time...

I can only imagine, that with the Spirit of the Lord upon David as he played and sang, God commanded the distressing spirit to leave *and I'm sure the the distressing spirit was quite willing to vacate during that time.*

God allowed David's music to provide the relief Saul sought and we can be sure that at least in this time in his life the distressing spirit did not possess Saul, *but only influenced Saul's thinking.*

As we leave here to tonight, please let us trust completely in our Lord and stand strong in the truth that

“To Obey Is Always Better” and remember the watchword of those who would desire to serve and please the Lord. ***Obedience first, last and always.***

Let's Pray