

1 Samuel 28

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[0 : 00] Right, let's begin with a prayer and then we'll crack into our study.! Father, I just want to take this moment to ask you to quieten our hearts, quieten our minds.

May you use this moment to protect us from the enemy, because the enemy loves to pull at our minds and send us thinking about other things. May your Holy Spirit be the teacher, not me.

May you guide us, lead us, speak to our hearts, make them open. But yeah, open our minds to understand these scriptures.

Help us to set our minds on the things that are above. And may this time be a time where you're guiding us, transforming us to be more like you.

In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. So I've entitled this The Contradictory King. We're looking at 1 Samuel chapter 28. Whilst we were singing some of those songs earlier on, I was kind of drawn by the fact that the songs were talking about trusting in God alone.

[1 : 14] What we're going to see in this chapter is what it looks like when you trust in the Lord a lot. There's a bit where you're not fully following.

And you may also argue he's not trusting in the Lord at all. We'll see as we progress through the study. I was having a conversation with a Christian a few weeks back about the fact that I was preaching today and they were asking me about what I was going to be looking at.

And I was explaining 1 Samuel chapter 28. Oh, that's that one where Saul gets to go and see a medium. And quite foolishly, I suppose, I pointed out that many people think that such things are not real.

And then kind of flippantly relayed, you know, went off with this list of things which are in a similar kind of bucket. Things that are the occult like Ouija boards, seances, clairvoyance, crystals, mediums, tea leaves, demon possessions.

Oh, I believe in crystals. They piped up. The Bible shows them in a positive light. I have them in my home for healing. Then they gave an argument about how there are crystals in the Bible.

[2 : 36] They're in heaven. There are crystals on the breastplate of the high priest in the tabernacle. Well, I had stumbled into a debate that I was completely unprepared for and did not expect.

Because I kind of assumed that we would all be on the same page with this one. So, yeah, maybe I need to go back and finish that conversation with them. But, yeah, I mean, before you get too excited about there being crystals on the breastplate, I would also point out that Satan, when he was first created, had nine of those 12 crystals on him as well.

But that was in his unfallen state. So the Bible often portrays things like idols as being both wooden and powerless. But this isn't the whole story.

They sometimes do have some power. But they are powered, as Deuteronomy 32, 15 to 17 will tell you, they are powered by demons. Right?

Satan doesn't have the power to create life, but he has power. Jesus, God the Father, they have the power to remove Satan's power.

[3 : 45] But Satan does have some power. Speaking of things like demons, Jesus casts out demons several times in the Bible. In Mark 5, around 2,000 pigs die when an undefined plural number of demons enter them from Legion.

And then the pigs rush into the lake and are drowned. Mark 20, verse 9 tells us that Jesus drove out seven demons from Mary Magdalene. Jesus also casts out the mute demon in Matthew 9, 32.

The Apostle Paul in Acts 16 casts out a spirit of divination from a slave girl who's following him around and being a nuisance. So we can see that some of this stuff is actually real.

But before we get into that bit about the medium, let's find some common ground. Let's first of all define what a medium is, so that we're all on that same page. So the long and the short of it is that a medium is a size somewhere between a small and a large.

Problem solved. Oh, sorry, that's not the right page. What does a medium do? So I asked Dr Google what a medium was, and this was the definition. They listen to spirits and relay those messages to others in the room.

[4 : 59] They can allow spirits to speak through them directly or by making them do some drawing or writing a message. According to Google, mediums can be helpful.

This is their words, not mine. As they can help people who are grieving by connecting them with the spirits of their deceased loved ones. How do they do this?

By tuning into the spirit energy surrounding a person. They can hear thoughts, voices or mental impressions from the spirit world. Some mediums say that it is a natural gift and others say it can be learned.

Everyone else feeling icky? Yeah, me too. So pseudonyms, they're also known as things like spiritist, a clairvoyant, a mind reader, fortune teller.

So what does the Bible say about mediums, you might ask? So in Leviticus chapter 20, verse 27, it says, A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death.

[6 : 03] You are to stone them. Their blood will be on their heads. So please remember the context that this is given to corporate Israel.

Those governing Israel should put such people to death. I am not telling you the individual to go outside and start murdering anybody who claims to be a medium. Leviticus chapter 20, verse 6. I will set my face against anyone who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute themselves by following them. And I will cut them off from their people. Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 10 to 12 says, Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft or cast spells or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord. They're detestable to the Lord because of these same detestable practices. The Lord, your God will drive out those nations before you.

OK, Deuteronomy 19, 31. Do not turn to mediums or spiritists. Do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the Lord, your God. Isaiah chapter 8, verse 19.

[7 : 23] When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists who whisper and mutter, shouldn't a people consult their God instead? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? I could also read you passages as when King Manasseh does great evil in the sight of the Lord when he's using mediums and spiritists.

Suffice to say, the Bible is saying that mediums should face death by stoning and going to a medium defiles you and you should be cut off from your people.

They are not endorsed by the Lord. Modern day mediums are annoying. When Sabrina and I first started dating, there was this pub on the A27 that we used to go to on a regular basis for food.

They did fantastic food. I loved going there. Then one day they have this sign up outside saying, Clairvoyant evenings. I miss that pub. I remember running past there during COVID lockdowns.

With cancelled written all over the sign. I was so tempted to go and deface it with, due to unforeseen circumstances. I mean, they've stopped having those evenings in that pub.

[8 : 37] But they've now moved to another pub we go past in Fair Oak. Yeah. Used to like that pub as well. Anyway, this sermon could be one sentence.

Don't go to mediums. Fantastic. Tick. We can all move on. But that would be meaningless to most people because we wouldn't touch this stuff with a barge pole. So we're going to look at chapter 28 of 1 Samuel.

So verse 1. Now, in those days, the Philistines gathered their forces for warfare against Israel. So Achish said to David, You must understand that you and your men are to go out to battle with me. David replied, Then you will come to know what your servant can do. Very well, said Achish. I will make you my bodyguard for life. So Achish, many sources will tell you, is a title within the Philistines that is akin to the term Pharaoh in Egypt.

But obviously for the Philistines. Joe, a few weeks back, said he didn't buy that explanation and it wasn't a title. It's just a name. I'm not sure I concur with him, but it's not material.

[9 : 50] Either way, whether it's his name or a title, we are referring to the king of the Philistines in Gath. Or a man named Achish who happens to be in charge in Gath.

Which, if that city doesn't ring any bells with you, Goliath was Goliath of Gath. It's possible this guy's got a bit of height to him as well. But we don't have that detail.

Verse 3. Now, by this time, Samuel had died and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. Ramah is up here.

It's at the top in the north. Its full name is Ramathaim Zophim. This verse actually offers nothing new.

1 Samuel chapter 25, verse 1, said, Now Samuel died and all Israel assembled and mourned for him and they buried him at his home in Ramah. So nothing new is being said at all here other than reminding us that Samuel is dead.

[10 : 54] It's helpful that God knows that we're forgetful and sometimes we need reminding. I imagine that it's more useful in the modern age where we have the attention span of a gnat to be reminded.

So God future-proofed the Bible. And Saul had removed the mediums and spiritists from the land. Well done, Saul. You're doing something right. Right.

Verse 4. The Philistines gathered together and camped at Shunem, while Saul gathered all Israel and camped at Gilboa. So Shunem is this red dot here.

So that's where the Philistines are. And Gilboa is here. So that's where the Israelites are camped. So when Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid and trembled violently. Not the first time he's been a coward.

[11 : 55] But anyway, he inquired of the Lord. But the Lord didn't answer him by dreams or oracles or prophets. So Saul has inquired of the Lord and there's no response from the Lord.

So those things that we're saying it didn't come by, didn't come by dreams. Just in case you need your memory jogged. Think of Joseph and his dreams of the sheaves of wheat bowing down to him. Or Nebuchadnezzar dreaming of that big tree that gives everybody else shade that gets felled. God does speak to us in dreams. Urimah, sometimes referred to as the Urim and the Thummim.

These are two stones that are used in conjunction with the breastplate that's on the high priest with the 12 gems on it. And they use that to inquire of the Lord.

The Bible is not specific as to exactly how they are used. But a common belief suggests that one stone is used as a yes and the other is a no. Anyway, God isn't answering Saul.

[12 : 55] And Israel normally inquire of the Lord as to whether they should attack an enemy and maybe which tribe should lead the attack. So let's ask ourselves that question. What should you do when God is silent?

Well, one thing that we could do is continue praying. But if he's already given you an instruction, is there any point in him giving you more instructions until you're obedient over the first instruction? What else could we do? Well, we could spend some time just listening. Listening is a skill that in the modern world people struggle with. But God gave us two ears and one mouth, which could indicate that he wanted us to listen twice as much as he wanted us to speak.

On the subject of speaking, Proverbs chapter 10 verse 19 says, When words are many, transgression is not lacking. But whoever restrains his lips is prudent.

Ecclesiastes chapter 5 verse 3, a fool can be recognized by his many words. Ecclesiastes chapter 10 verse 14, a fool multiplies words.

[14 : 06] So in summation, speaking lots makes you look foolish. Listening. To add to that the positive side of listening, James chapter 1 verses 19 and 20 says, Everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

Proverbs 18 verse 2, a fool finds no pleasure in understanding, but delights in airing his own opinions. Proverbs chapter 18 verse 13, to answer before listening, that is folly and shame.

Come on, we all know those people who, with every interaction with them, you get no chance to truly be involved in the conversation. You just go from one monologue to a soliloquy back to another monologue.

There is no opportunity for you to give an opinion, ask questions, be involved in the conversation. I often find those kinds of interactions very difficult.

They do teach us patience, though, and grace. Ecclesiastes chapter 3 verse 1a and 7b say, There's an appointed time for everything.

[15:17] And the 7b bit says, a time to be silent and a time to speak. There are times to talk. But if God isn't speaking to you, shut up and listen.

Remember Samuel as a wee lad said, speak, Lord, for your servant is listening. The Lord may have been speaking to you all along, but you weren't listening.

Think about Elijah's experience in 1 Kings chapter 19 verses 11 to 13. That's that chapter where Elijah is at Mount Horeb listening for the Lord.

But the Lord wasn't in the earthquake or the tornado or the fire, but he was heard in a gentle, quiet breeze. So, in our chapter, God is silent.

Sometimes he's just quiet. Let's press on and see how Saul deals with this problem. Then Saul said to his servants, find me a woman who is a medium so I can go and consult her.

[16:20] There's a medium at Endor, his servant replied. Why is it known that there are mediums in the land? They're either in the land or they're out, right?

It said that Saul was trying to get rid of the mediums. How comes without any research or consultation, they know exactly where the mediums are? Great job they did getting rid of them. Bravo, guys. So, this is the king who executed 70 priests and wiped out their entire village. Because they inquired of the Lord for David and gave him some food and allowed him to take a weapon. It's no wonder that this guy is struggling to inquire of the Lord. If Saul has executed 70 priests, how many are left?

How many are willing to help him inquire of the Lord? He destroyed all of the telephones to the Lord when he executed the priests. You've got to say he's slow to learn.

[17:21] So, he wants to go to a medium, specifically a woman. I don't know why, but anyway. He had asked them to get rid of the mediums and let's say he meant it.

Well, they would have got rid of them. Aren't we lucky, though, that our ability to speak to God isn't subject to the middleman of a priest? Jesus is our middleman, our high priest, interceding for us with the Father.

We are so blessed. Now, let's reread the second half of verse 3. And Saul had removed the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Now, if you'd asked me about mediums before I got saved, you would have heard words like nonsense, balderdash, poppycock, garbage, claptrap. Actually, to tell you the truth, you actually would have heard much stronger words than that, but you get the picture. I think it's more important for us to understand where this medium is. His servant has said that the medium is at Endor.

If we turn to the map, do you remember the other week when I was preaching, we were looking at En Gedi? En Gedi was fountain of the young goat.

[18:40] It's filled with Nubian ibexes. Endor is the fountain of a generation. It's this spot here. So this is where the Shunam is, where the Philistine army is.

Saul is at Mount Gilboa and he's going to travel to Endor. So Saul disguised himself by putting on different clothes and he set out with two of his men.

So Saul is taking off his kingly regal clothes and putting on the clothes of a regular Joe voluntarily. This is symbolic of the kingdom being stripped from Saul.

But it also makes me think of Christ stepping down out of heaven to come to earth to wear the clothes of a regular person, a poor and humble man. Just so you know, Endor is a real place.

This is what it actually looks like now. It's rural. It's got fields, small houses, some rich person with a swimming pool and hills.

[19:46] Anyway, they came to the woman at night. Why would he travel by night? He's traveling by night. Could be that he doesn't want to be recognized. That's why he's changed his clothes.

Makes sense. He's also going close to the camp of the Philistines, so he won't want to get captured. However, I put it to you. It's also because he wants to mask his sin.

He doesn't want people knowing there's King Saul off to see the medium. Maybe they all know where the mediums are. I don't know. And we know that he knows that it is sin because he removed the mediums and the spiritists from the land.

So this goes to show that Saul knows his actions are wrong and yet he's going to do them anyway. Romans chapter 13 verses 11 to 13 say this.

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

[20 : 52] The night is nearly over. The day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. So Romans is showing us to put aside the deeds of darkness.

That is why he's traveling at night. Because he wants to get his deeds of darkness out. And Saul said, consult a spirit for me. Bring up for me the one I name.

But the woman replied, surely, you know, what Saul has done, how he has killed the mediums and spiritists in the land. Why have you set a trap to get me killed?

So at this point, she clearly does not recognize Saul. Earlier, it said Saul had removed the mediums. We can now see in more detail.

[22 : 03] Saul has been obedient to an extent and he's been killing them. Whether he's been using stones, I don't know. But yeah, he's been killing the mediums.

So then Saul swore to her by the Lord, as surely as the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this. Whom shall I bring up for you? The woman asked.

Bring up Samuel, he replied. But when the woman saw Samuel, she cried out in a loud voice and said to Saul, why have you deceived me? You are Saul. So she cried out in a loud voice.

Is she surprised that it's working? Is she used to this not working and having to fake it? Or perhaps maybe she's just surprised that it's Samuel.

But one thing's for sure. Samuel's presence has given Saul away to the woman. Do not be afraid, the king replied. What do you mean do not be afraid?

[23 : 06] You are the guy people in Israel should be most afraid of. This is the guy who, if you don't do what he asked, he wipes your entire village out. Carrying on, Saul then carries on to say, what do you see?

I see a God coming up out of the earth, the woman answered. What does he look like? Asked Saul. An old man is coming up, she replied, and he is wearing a robe.

So Saul knew that it was Samuel and he bowed face down in reverence. So he's now worshipping the dead. Seriously? How far from the path can you get?

Then Samuel said to Saul, why have you disturbed me by bringing me up? I am deeply distressed, replied Saul. The Philistines are fighting against me and God has turned away from me.

He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. Or, I mean, Thumin you mentioned earlier. So I have called on you to tell me what to do. Why do you consult me?

[24 : 14] Asked Samuel. Since the Lord has turned away from you and become your enemy. He has done exactly what he spoke through me. The Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David.

Because you did not obey the Lord or carry out his burning anger against Amalek. The Lord has done this to you today. So, so far, it is a repeat of the information that Saul was previously given in 1 Samuel chapter 15.

But Samuel doesn't stop there. He carries on. Moreover, the Lord will deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me.

And the Lord will deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines. What? Say that again. Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me.

What's this saying? Tomorrow Saul will be dead. So will his sons. Quick reminder of Saul's family tree.

[25 : 26] So here you've got Saul in the middle. His father is Kish. And you've got all of these children here. Two girls down the end.

Abner is his general of the army. Abner will get killed later on. He's murdered by Joab, who gets him to step just outside the city of refuge and stabs him at the gate.

Over on the left here, you've got Jonathan, Abinadab and Mekishua. These are the three that are going to die with Saul in battle. Ish-bosheth, as I said before, is going to be slaughtered by his servants.

And the remaining males are going to be the ones that get executed for the benefit of Gibeonites. For the benefit of the Gibeonites in 2 Samuel chapter 21.

Michal is David's wife. Merab was the one that was promised to David and not given. Anyway, what's Saul's response? Immediately, Saul fell flat on the ground, terrified by the words of Samuel.

[26 : 37] And his strength was gone because he had not eaten anything all that day and night. When the woman came to Saul and saw how distraught he was, she said to him, Look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice.

I took my life in your hands and did as you told me. Now, please listen to your servant and let me set a morsel of bread before you so that you may eat and have the strength to go on your way. Saul refused, saying, I will not eat. But his servants joined the woman in urging him and he heeded their voice. He got up from the ground and sat on the bed.

See how remorseful and humble Saul is. He's going to have no last meal. Verse 24. The woman had a fattened calf at her house and she quickly slaughtered it.

She also took flour, kneaded it and baked unleavened bread. She served it to Saul and his servants and they ate. And that night they got up and left. Changed his mind pretty quickly, didn't he?

[27 : 44] I love the way that the Bible makes that sound like it happened in the blink of an eye. I also note that the unleavened bread got baked.

It doesn't actually say anything about her cooking the meat. My brain presumes and kind of hopes she roasted it. But it easily could have been served very, very rare, which would obviously be unbiblical.

But we are dealing with Saul and a medium here. So I dare not presume anything. That said, the parable of the prodigal son leaves out the cooking of the fattened calf that gets slaughtered to feed the returning wasteful son.

But the point is, this all implies that it took hours. What would you do if you found out you were going to die tomorrow? I did some research on some of the people on death row, what foods they like.

I spent, wasted an hour, researching the food that people choose for their last meal. The headlines are that people choose either steak, KFC or lobster or all of them.

[28 : 46] Maybe they hate the food. I mean, they've been there 20 years normally by the time they get to being executed. I found an example of one person who was due to be executed about nine times and kept getting stays of execution.

And they had their last meal six times. It's kind of... Just do it already. Death by stoning, but, you know, judicial process.

What did Jesus do with his last hours? He had a last supper. Yes, he had a last meal. But it was with the disciples. The point being that it was with the people that truly mattered.

And he had things to say. Saul's there with a woman he's just met and two gods. Okay, that's what you want to do with your time, mate. But what a gift.

Not everybody knows when they're going to die. What would you do if you were given 24 hours to live? You know, if you're not saved and you've been holding off in giving your life to Christ, please reconsider.

[29 : 51] Because not everybody gets that kind of notice. Oh, I'll worry about it later when I'm old. But, as I've said before, sometimes people get this amount of notice.

Mind that bus. What bus? Splat. What's that? Three seconds at best? If you die with Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, it makes all the difference.

If you haven't given your life to Christ, you are going to hell. Come talk to me afterwards if this is you. Perhaps we can resolve areas of unbelief or deal with what's holding you back.

But God's desire is for all to come to repentance. Right, so we've covered the whole chapter. But there's some key things we really do need to look at.

I talked about the contradictory king, didn't I? So contradictions. Contradiction number one. In 1 Samuel 28, verse 6, it said this.

[30 : 54] He inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him by dreams or orima or prophets. So he inquired of the Lord. Great. How's that contradiction, Tone?

Good question, I might say. In 1 Chronicles 10, verses 13 to 14, it says this. Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord.

He did not keep the word of the Lord and even consulted a medium for guidance. That's what we're talking about here. And did not inquire of the Lord. So the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David, the son of Jesse.

So hang on a minute. What's going on? 1 Samuel says, Saul inquired of the Lord. 1 Chronicles says, he did not inquire of the Lord. So which is it?

Did he? Or didn't he? Well, the answer is yes. He did inquire of the Lord. And no, no, he didn't inquire of the Lord. Clear? No, of course not. What the heck?

[31 : 55] OK. So there are two different Hebrew words here in play. Sha'al and Darash. I've probably completely butchered that. But that's what you're getting from me, I'm afraid.

I'm not fluent. But the first one, Sha'al, means to inquire. Fine. Darash means to inquire, to seek, to require, to investigate, demand.

The difference is that the first one, Sha'al, is a casual inquiry. The other one, Darash, is a persistent pleading inquiry. I'm sorry, Tone.

That doesn't make any sense. What does that mean in plain English? OK. Think about this. Lord, what do you think I should do? Versus, Lord, I will continue to wait for you to answer.

Please, Lord, what is it that you want your servant to do? This version might go on and on and on to give you a parallel. It's stereotypical in the West for a man to be the one who proposes.

[32 : 57] Suppose, whilst taking out the rubbish, bin bags in hand, the idea pops into his head that it might be nice to get married. And he blurts out at that very moment.

No prep. Notice that he's living with his girlfriend because that's just how things work in the West. And he just blurts out goofily. Will you marry me? No, I didn't think so. Versus the Hollywood level of effort, creating the perfect evening, the perfect event, perfect weather, string quartet playing in the background, starlight, it's peaceful, beautiful.

A pleading and persuasive and persistent and patient proposal. One requires effort and consistency. The other requires nothing.

Why am I talking about contradictions? Well, there is another contradiction. If you look in the book of Proverbs, chapter 26, verse 4, this is relevant to why maybe the Lord wasn't answering Saul.

Chapter 26, verse 4. Do not answer a fool according to his folly or you yourself will be just like him. Yet Proverbs, chapter 26, verse 5 says, answer a fool according to his folly or he will be wise in his own eyes.

[34 : 12] So for the benefit of most of us, well, let's just look at it. You might be asking yourself the question, you should answer a fool, but you shouldn't answer a fool.

Clear. It's worth noting that elsewhere in Proverbs, it tells us that a fool despises wisdom. They're right in their own eyes and fools are deceitful and scornful.

For those that haven't been paying attention there, those two verses I've quoted are sequential verses. Chapter 26, verse 4 and 5. OK.

Book of Proverbs often uses parallelism. And it shows us that you can answer a fool in such a way that makes you a fool. This means things like answering it on their own terms, stooping to their level and making ourselves as foolish as them.

This could mean bringing your anger or your frustration into the conversation with them and making yourself look even more foolish. Maybe it's being facetious, but it inflames the situation and makes you out to look a fool.

[35 : 16] Me, I fall into this trap very regularly when I'm drawn into conversation that becomes a debate and then becomes an argument. Yet verse 5 encourages us to answer the fool or they will be wise in their own eyes.

So this is encouraging us to consider both paths. Should we remain silent or should we say something? Well, there's a time for each. I hate it when I see another Christian choosing the path of being obnoxious with the truth, when they're more interested in being right than showing love, compassion, patience and grace.

It's so much easier to see that chaff than the log in my own eye. But God is certainly not answering this fool, Saul. Samuel, Jonathan and David were all recorded as calling King Saul out on some of his nonsense.

But God has gone silent on him. Why? We've already discussed that he wasn't obedient, that he'd already been told. What else is there to say?

Contradictory orders. Think about Saul. His words and his actions didn't measure up to each other. They didn't measure up to obedience. Get rid of all the mediums.

[36 : 33] OK, can you find me a medium? Hang on a minute. You killed mediums. You want a medium. Make your mind up. He starts off with good intentions. But Saul can't just follow things through, which is why this medium is still alive, despite the fact that everyone knows that this medium is there.

Ah, God has directed me. Let's go to the Amalekites and kill everybody and destroy everything. Right, men, let's go. Kill them all. Oh, no, no. Keep that. Oh, that looks nice. Don't king the king or their king, mind.

Watch out for that cute goat. Let's keep that. Yep. Totally obeyed here. The guy was deluded. He wanted to ensure that his family name survived.

So he made a covenant with David. Great plan. Yet he throws spears at his own son. Saul hates it when people sing that David's killed more people than him. Yes, he's too cowardly to step up to go and kill Goliath.

Saul, to borrow an expression from Winston Churchill, was a riddle wrapped up in a mystery inside an enigma. Trying to fully understand Saul is a waste of time.

[37 : 45] It would be very easy for me to say, be less like Saul and more like David. But that amounts to Christianity. So let's talk about the contradiction of your own life. I believe that it's more fruitful for us to say that we should consider the contradictions in our own lives than looking at the contradiction in Saul's life.

I believe that many here will be saved, professing that Jesus is their Lord, believing in your heart that the Father raised him from the dead. Fantastic. That's brilliant. But does your life live up to your intentions?

Do your intentions match up to God's standards? Are you full of contradiction? I mean, please don't misunderstand me. I'm not speaking here from a place of perfection. But come on, let's be honest.

Are you more like Saul than David? Isn't it fantastic that our salvation isn't based on our ability to obey? Our track record. We have all of these examples in Scripture of terrible men.

Not obeying, sinning, and those who took up the fight with their sin, still failing miserably to meet the mark. The Old Testament is there, in my eyes, mainly to show that you can't live up to the standards of God requires.

[39 : 01] That's the only path to salvation. Perfection. Are you perfect? No. No. But it's just our luck, though, our blessing, that God chose to sort this problem out through an undeserved gift, grace.

We have a God who has saved us by grace through faith, which means we don't have to obey to get saved. But here's the kicker.

You're not trying to obey. You aren't wrestling with your sin. That is a huge problem. Why? Well, I would suggest to you it's an indicator that the Holy Spirit isn't sanctifying you.

It should bother you that you're sinning. If the Holy Spirit isn't there bringing your sin into your mind and in your heart, I would suggest to you that it's because you've got a hard heart and you may have become deluded into thinking you're saved when actually you're not.

The Bible makes it clear that we all have sin. 1 John 1, verse 8 says, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

[40 : 10] It also makes it clear that we can't lose our salvation. John 10, 27 to 28 says, my sheep listen to my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they will never perish.

And no one, no one will snatch them out of my hand. My father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of the father's hand.

I and the father are one. And then they wanted to stone Jesus as well. We've been talking about contradictions. I think it's also worth thinking about dilution of quality.

Earlier, I talked about the Disney franchise Star Wars. When George Lucas was in charge, he was interested in producing high quality. As a result, there were six films made over a period of 35 years.

Let's be fair. Everybody hated Jar Jar Binks. But the films were very carefully made. They might not be your cup of tea, but for what they were, they were very well made.

[41 : 22] With two of them ranking in the top 30 movies of all time, according to IMDB.com. Since Disney bought the franchise in 2012, they have been pumping out content like a scattergun.

With some fantastic hits like The Mandalorian or Rogue One. And some utter garbage like The Rise of Skywalker, Skeleton Crew and The Acolyte. When it comes to souls saved, God is more interested in quality, not quantity, because it's quality that glorifies him.

So a disciple that follows and trusts and obeys him is much more valuable than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. We could have pre-programmed, you know, God could have pre-programmed us

to worship him like a droid.

Love God, we worship you, we worship you. But there's no glory in that. There's no love. There's no relationship in that. God had pulled his relationship with Saul.

The Holy Spirit departed from him. That doesn't happen to believers. The Holy Spirit is a seal. Ephesians chapter 1 verse 13 says, In him you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of the promise.

[42 : 41] 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 22 says, Who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our heart as a pledge.

Ephesians 4 verse 30, Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Point being, Holy Spirit is a seal.

You are saved. But take up the battle against your sin. Let's pray. Lord, we ask that you would be doing a work in us.

We ask that you would be reassuring us of our salvation. That we haven't got to earn it. Shine your light in us, in our hearts, in our minds, and bring our sin into the light.

Let it come to the top of the melting pot. So that it can be scraped off, removed, and increase our purity. We want to be holy because you are holy, Lord.

[43 : 47] We want to reflect you. We are image bearers. We want to reflect your image more clearly. Bring our sin into our minds and in our hearts right now.

If need be, give gifts of knowledge to others. We ask that you would humble us.

That you would change our path. Sanctify us. We want restoration, Lord. We know that you forgive us.

Help us to repent of these things where we are acting like Saul. Inconsistent and behaving in the totally opposite direction that we should. May your Holy Spirit be our compass, our map.

May your word be a light unto our feet. Your word be a lamp unto our feet and a light for our path.

May the remaining time we have together today be a time of sanctification.

[45 : 00] A time of love. Building up the body, not smashing it down. Give us love, patience.

While we all walk forward with these things. There's any word I've said that's out of your, not in with your agenda, Lord.

May it quickly be forgotten. But if it is your word, Lord. Keep bringing this back to us. Daily. Till we deal with it.

May the mighty name of Jesus be proclaimed by this. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.