

5/18/25 Christ Fellowship

Hall of Shame – Saul – 1 Samuel 13

I hate going to the doctor. I went for something a couple of years ago. I don't remember why. But the doc asked if he could do a complete blood work analysis on me to just check me out completely, so we did that. He said the nurse would call me in a couple of days with the results. Later that same evening the nurse calls and says the doctor would like to see me the next morning at 9:00. She asks if I can make it. Of course, I can make it because obviously I now have every disease known to man, right? I mean, that's what I have to assume because she didn't give any details.

So, how do you think I slept that night? Well, I deliberated; I repined; I speculated over the situation for a while (which is pastor-speak for worry because I don't worry about anything) and I got a few hours' sleep maybe because how could I sleep? The nurse made it obvious (with her silence) that I had cancer. Probably stage 4 maybe 5, I don't know. No, I don't have cancer, surely. I probably have cancer **and** diabetes. Diabetes runs sort of in my family so now I have diabetes and I'm going to have to become a vegetarian which means I basically only have a few months to live because I can't do that.

What else could it be? Ebola? Mad Cow? Rabies? I know I don't eat right. I bet I got it from that Chicken Express I ate the other day. I knew that didn't taste right. I knew I should have gotten more exercise. Now, who do I want to leave my car to? Who's gonna take care of my dogs when I die next week? You can imagine the thoughts running through my mind – as I deliberated.

So, I went to the doctor's office the next morning bracing myself for the worst. He finally comes in. Of course, he's late but what does he care? He's not dying. He picks up my chart and begins to read. *"Let's see, your heart is good. Lungs are good. Kidneys, liver, spleen, all good. Oh, your cholesterol is about two points over where it should be so we'll keep an eye on that. All your PSA, NBA, FBI and KKK numbers are just right (or whatever they are). Looks like you're pretty healthy. See you again in a year or so!"*

So, of course, I punched him in the mouth. No, but I wanted to. All my ..."deliberating" was for absolutely nothing. Has something like that ever happened to you? For some of you it has happened and the doctor actually explained that you had cancer. But all of us have worried about something that never happened. So, what's the problem with

that? Everybody does it, at least some. It's sort of like going a couple miles over the speed limit. Everybody does it. What's the harm?

Today we are going to talk about **worry**. What is worry? What's the difference in being worried and being concerned? How do I keep from worrying? Why is worry a problem and why should I worry about whether it is or not? Those are all questions we will talk about this morning and if we don't answer them this morning, then we will work on them some more tonight at 6.

If you are a worrier, take some heart in knowing that you are not the first. Turn in your Bibles to **1 Samuel**. 1 Samuel is in the Old Testament between the book of **Ruth** and you won't believe it but **2 Samuel** which is before **1 and 2 Kings**. Samuel tells us the story of how Saul became Israel's first king. He was anointed by Samuel. He was picked by God and had he done what God had told him to do through the prophet Samuel, God would have blessed him but we see from the very first that Saul made some bad choices.

Let's read **1 Samuel 13:5-15**.

⁵ The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Mikdash, east of Beth Aven. ⁶ When the Israelites saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns. ⁷ Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. ⁸ He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter. ⁹ So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." And Saul offered up the burnt offering. ¹⁰ Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him. ¹¹ "What have you done?" asked Samuel. Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Mikdash, ¹² I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering." ¹³ "You have done a foolish thing," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. ¹⁴ But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of

his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command.” ¹⁵ Then Samuel left Gilgal and went up to Gibeah in Benjamin, and Saul counted the men who were with him. They numbered about six hundred.

Corrie Ten Boom said, “Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength.” How true that was for King Saul. The thing is though, Saul had good reason to be worried, didn’t he? We see that he had 600 troops and the Philistines had soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They were the big, bad Philistines, too, and Saul’s son, Jonathon, had attacked them near his hometown and killed a bunch of them but that made the rest of the Philistines fighting mad as you can imagine.

It wouldn’t have been a problem though because Saul knew God would be with the Israelites. The prophet Samuel had told him to just wait and he would come in a week and make the necessary sacrifices and God would speak through Samuel as to what to do. Can you imagine the look on Saul’s face as the week dragged on and he can see more and more and more Philistines showing up and Samuel is nowhere in sight?

Then Saul looks around and his soldiers are slinking off to hide in caves and behind thorn bushes and some just went home. Finally, the seventh day comes around but no Samuel. Saul had reason to be worried, right? You have reason to be worried, too, don’t you? Your situation is looking pretty grim, isn’t it? Maybe it’s your health or your finances. Maybe your kids are acting the fool. Of course, your kids are acting the fool just like you did. What did you expect? You can’t help but worry!

And yet Jesus says in **Matthew 6** that we are not to be anxious about anything in our life. That is worry. And Jesus says not to do it so doing it is a sin. Being anxious and worrying are the same thing but concern is different. If you look up the words worry and concern they may both use the other word as part of their definition but mental health professionals will tell us that worrying involves trying to solve the problem whereas concern is just a heightened awareness of the situation.

*“I’m **concerned** about this problem so I will take it to God in prayer since I can’t do anything about it.”* Or you might say, *“I am **so worried** about this problem because I can’t do anything about it so I have to figure out how to solve it.”* That’s the difference. What was Saul doing? He couldn’t make Samuel show up on time so he got worried and figured out a way to solve the problem, at least in his mind.

The problem with Samuel's solution to the problem is that God has never wanted a sacrifice just for the sake of sacrifice. God didn't instruct Samuel to make a sacrifice so that God could have a barbecue. He wanted a sacrifice to show obedience. God wants your obedience as well. But when you worry, you try to come up with a solution to a problem you could never solve and in doing so it's like telling God, *"Hey God, don't worry. I got this."*

The same basic situation happened just two chapters later and Samuel said to Saul,

*"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the Lord?*

*To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.*

²³ *For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.*

*Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,
He has rejected you as king."*

Worry is sin. God doesn't need or want you trying to figure out how to solve the problem. Let me give you three things to do when you are tempted to worry. You might want to write these down although they are pretty simple.

Wait for God prayerfully. **Philippians 4:6** says, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."* Wait for God prayerfully.

Obey God promptly. Like Samuel said, *"Obedience is better than sacrifice."* If Saul had just waited a few more minutes; if he had just been obedient, then, as Samuel told him in **chapter 13, verse 13**, *"You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time."* God would have blessed him because BOOCOD, right? There are blessings of obedience and consequences of disobedience. So, obey God promptly.

Until God speaks, rest patiently. **Psalms 46:10** says, *"Be still, and know that I am God."* We've talked about this before but what it literally means here is to be still and to let your hands hang down. Let your hands hang down; quit worrying and trying to fix it. Quit

telling God not to worry that you have this and let Him have it and you don't worry. Until God speaks, until He tells you to do something, rest patiently.

This life is full of problems. **Job** said, *"Man, born of woman is of few days and full of trouble."* (14:1) We all know that. I heard two young people talking the other day. The young girl said to her boyfriend, *"Honey, when we are married I want you to always tell me all your problems, cares and worries. I want to be there for you."* The boy said, *"Well, thanks but I don't really have any worries."* She said, *"Well baby...we're not married yet."*

Trying not to worry is hard work sometimes, isn't it? If it were easy, we wouldn't need to be reminded with messages like this but it can be very difficult especially when we find ourselves in a situation, like Saul found, where it looks so hopeless and the odds are all stacked against us and there is just no way out and it's hard to sleep and we are biting our nails and pacing the floor.

For some of us, this is when Satan comes to us and whispers, *"Why don't you just have a drink? That would make you feel better. Why not just do that drug? Your life is the pits anyway, at least feel good for a few minutes. Go look at some porn and take your mind off of it for a while. Go raid the fridge and eat yourself into happiness. That way you aren't worrying."*

The Bible warns us about this in **1 Peter 5:7-8**. *"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. ⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."*

Whatever your sin of choice is, that's where Satan is going to attack. He wants to make you sin on top of sin. That's what Samuel did. He was already worrying. He knew better than to make a sacrifice. That wasn't his job and it wasn't what God wanted. What God wants is for us to just come to Him and say, *"Lord, I can't do this. I can't solve this. I can't fix it. Would you please?"*

Now, this leads me to one last practical thing to do when you are tempted to worry. I said there were three but there are actually four. Write this down and keep your pencil handy. The fourth thing to do when tempted to worry is to **remember God's promises**.

Do you know that the Bible is full of God's promises? These are some promises of God that might help somebody tempted to worry. How about **Proverbs 3:5-6**? *Trust in*

*the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. **Matthew 11:28** says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” **Psalms 55:22**: Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.*

All three of those talk about bringing the problem to God in prayer and then just staying close to Him. Stay prayerful. Stay in the Bible. Surround yourself with things of God, not the world. Facebook might distract you for a minute but it won't help like God's Word will.

Now, there are thousands of God's promises but let me close with one that is one of our favorites although some people don't really understand what it means. **Romans 8:28** says, “*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*”

First off, who is this promise for? For those who love God, right? But if you ask anybody on the street, “*Do you love God?*” Of course they are going to say “yes”. But this promise is only for those who have a relationship with Him and we will talk more about that in a minute. But unbelievers? Unbelievers should probably just go ahead and worry. There is no comforting promise for them.

Next, does this verse mean that for Christians everything is going to work itself out and all is going to be fine? No. So, when it says that God works all things for good, then what does that mean? Let me ask it this way. In God's eyes, what is the best thing that could happen to you? It would be for you to look like Jesus.

Do you know that God is more concerned that you look and act like Him than He is your health? Or your wealth? Your job? Your comfort? Your happiness? Don't get me wrong. God loves to see you happy but He will sacrifice your happiness...for His likeness.

So, wait for God prayerfully. Obey God promptly. Until God speaks, rest patiently and remember God's promises; promises that include His peace and joy and His protection but with the goal of making you more like Him. God is in control and He loves you. Now act like it.

Music

I want to close by going back to talk about that relationship I mentioned a minute ago. Jesus said that all you have to do to get to Heaven and all you have to do to have

peace and joy in this life and to be able to claim all those promises was to believe in Him. That's it. But that belief will manifest itself in a growing relationship with Him as you learn more about Him and become more like Him.

If you don't have that today, I need to talk with you right now. Don't wait. We aren't guaranteed another breath. Ask Jesus to be Lord of your life and to forgive you of your sins and to start making you look and act more like Him right now and He will do just that.