

Portraits of Rebellion

Introduction

1. The Lord calls us to humility (cf. Matthew 5:3, 5).
 - a. God will only exalt the humble – 1 Peter 5:5-6
 - b. Humility before God is always submitting to His ways without question – James 1:21
 - i. **Meekness** – *prautēs* – “It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His (God’s) dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting.” (VINE)
 - c. We are to resist our desires and submit to Christ’s teaching through the HS – Galatians 5:16-17
2. A lack of humility before God leads to a failure to keep His will. At the foundation of every sin is pride, and that expressed in going your way instead of God’s.
3. Such is rebellion, and we must guard ourselves against it.
4. Part of guarding ourselves against rebellion is the perpetual willingness to recognize it for what it is in any form or context.
 - a. I.e., not allowing ourselves to downplay some acts against God’s will in comparison to others.
 - b. Rather, acknowledging that any matter contrary to God’s will is as egregious to Him as the next. (cf. Proverbs 6:16-19 – pride and lying together with murder.)
- I. What is rebellion?
 - A. Examples
 - a. Israel at Kadesh Barnea – Numbers 14:1-4 – reaction to the negative news from the 10 spies.
 - i. Joshua and Caleb’s plea – Numbers 14:6-9 – “do not rebel”
 - ii. Jehovah’s response to Moses – Numbers 14:11 – how long will they reject Me?
 - iii. Hebrews 3:7-11 – quoting Psalm 95:7-11 to warn of apostasy – rebellion.
 - b. Korah – Numbers 16:1-3 – gathered against Moses and Aaron concerning their God given role.
 - i. Moses to Korah – Numbers 16:8-11 – “gathered together against the Lord”
 - ii. They were acting out against Moses, but in doing so they acted against God.
 - iii. Jude 11 – concerning false teachers – “rebellion of Korah”
 - c. Israel’s Demand for a King – 1 Samuel 8:4-7 – “they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me”
 - d. Saul Failing to Destroy Amalek – 1 Samuel 15:7-9 – “unwilling to utterly destroy them”
 - i. Original instruction – 1 Samuel 15:3 – utterly destroy – actions OPPOSITE of command.

- ii. God's reaction – **1 Samuel 15:10** – **"not performed My commandments"**
- iii. Samuel's response to Saul's excuse – **1 Samuel 15:21-23** – **"rebellion"**
- e. Jewish Rulers Reject Jesus' Authority – **Luke 20:1-8** – refused to accept what the evidence pointed to.
 - i. **(vv. 5-6)** – not that they did not have the evidence, but that they refused to accept it.
 - ii. **(v. 7)** – Only thing they could do is say they don't know.
 - iii. Jesus' works (miraculous) were evidence of God being with Him – **John 10:37-38**
 - iv. **John 11:47-48** – obvious obstinacy. They knew what He was doing was real but didn't want to submit.
- f. All Involved in Jesus' Crucifixion – **Psalms 2:1-3** – break bonds, cast away cords (reference to rebellion against authority)
 - i. Viewed the authority of the Lord and His Anointed as oppressive – restricted them from doing what they desired.

B. Defined

- a. Note the language of Samuel to Saul – **1 Samuel 15:22-23**
 - i. **(v. 22)** – after Saul's excuse – **1 Samuel 15:20-21**
 - 1. **(v. 20)** – Claim to obedience.
 - 2. **(v. 21)** – Additionally, explaining away what he must have seen as a TECHNICAL departure from original command.
 - 3. He had NOT obeyed – **1 Samuel 15:11, 19**
 - ii. **(v. 23)** – calls disobedience rebellion.
 - 1. "For" – connecting "to obey is better" with "rebellion"
 - 2. He is making a contrast – REBELLION IS THE OPPOSITE OF OBEDIENCE.
 - a. **"YOU HAVE REJECTED THE WORD OF THE LORD" (v. 23).**
 - b. **1 Samuel 15:20** – claim to have done exactly what the Lord said – "UTTERLY DESTROYED"
 - c. SAUL REDEFINED THE LORD'S COMMAND – **1 Samuel 15:3**
 - 3. Obedience (antonym of rebellion) = doing EXACTLY as the Lord commands
 - 4. Rebellion = FAILING to do EXACTLY as the Lord commands – NO WIGGLE ROOM.
- iii. Therefore, REBELLION IS SELF-WILL – **1 Samuel 15:23**
 - 1. Parallelism – witchcraft is an identity of idolatry.
 - 2. Idolatry is self-willed religion – "Opposition to God is compared by Samuel to soothsaying and oracles, because idolatry was manifested in both of them. All conscious disobedience is actually idolatry, because it makes self-

will, the human 'I', into a god. So that all manifest opposition to the word and commandment of God is, like idolatry, a rejection of the true God." (Keil & Delitzsch, 1 Samuel 15:22-23)

3. SAMUEL PUTS AN ALTERATION OF A COMMAND OF GOD ON PLANE WITH IDOLATRY.

b. Rebellion defined:

- i. "the action or process of resisting authority" (New Oxford American Dictionary)
- ii. "opposition to one in authority or dominance" (Merriam-Webster)

c. While it often does, rebellion does not of necessity indicate an open attitude of defiance toward authority – i.e. a rebellious disposition.

- i. Any action that is contrary to the authority of God is rebellion.
- ii. ALL SIN IS REBELLION – **1 John 3:4** – lawlessness, or without authority.
- iii. If something is done AGAINST LAW, it is rebellion.

C. WE NEED TO AVOID SUGAR COATING ANY SIN BASED ON THE INTENTION AND ATTITUDE OF THE OFFENDER – ALL SIN IS REBELLION.

II. Portraits of Rebellion

A. Offenses of Ignorance

a. Ignorance does not excuse the sin or lessen the punishment.

i. **Acts 17:30-31** – "God overlooked?"

1. NOT EXCUSED BUT ALLOWED TO CONTINUE UNTIL THE REVEALED GOSPEL INTENDED FOR THE JEW AS WELL AS THE GENTILE.
2. **Cf. Romans 1:24-25** – God gave the Gentiles up to idolatry, but they were not excused of such.
3. If it is excused then why is God's wrath revealed against them? – **Romans 1:18-19**
4. **(vv. 30-31)** – the call to repentance and reference of judgment indicates SINS DONE IN IGNORANCE WILL BE PUNISHED.

ii. **1 Timothy 1:12-13** – obtained mercy because done in ignorance?

1. **(vv. 11-12)** – Paul's immediate thought is his ministry.
2. Why would God use a man like Paul, who openly persecuted the way, as a tool for His purposes? – **(v. 13)** – because he was not in an open defiance before God.
 - a. Therefore, when truth came, he channeled his energy toward the cause of Christ.
 - b. HIS IGNORANCE WAS MITIGATING IN REGARD TO HIS DISPOSITION BUT DID NOT MAKE HIS SIN ANY LESS DESERVING OF PUNISHMENT.

- c. Had he not repented he would have been lost, regardless of whether his ignorance persisted.
- b. A person guilty of ignorant sin is lost until they repent:
 - i. **Psalm 19:12** – secret faults.
 1. NOT committing what is known as sin in secret.
 2. **“Who can understand [know] his errors?”** – secret to the offender.
 3. I.e. he has committed sin but is not aware of it.
 - a. **(vv. 1-6)** – God revealed in creation.
 - b. **(vv. 7-9)** – God’s revelation in His word.
 - c. **(v. 11)** – such gives warning of sin and punishment.
 - d. **(v. 12)** – a prayer for coming to a knowledge of error (through the Law) and requested forgiveness.
 - i. NOT a request for forgiveness without repentance.
 - ii. Knowledge needed to turn away – **cf. Romans 7:7** – not known unless the law had said.
 - iii. **Psalm 19:10, 14** – such will come through time spent in the word. (NEED FOR GROWTH TO MATURITY.)
 - iv. **REBELLION? – RESISTING AND/OR BEING OPPOSED TO AUTHORITY – OPPOSED, THOUGH UNKNOWINGLY, TO GOD’S LAW.**
 4. **“Cleanse me”** – indicates the damning nature of ignorant sin.
 - a. It is still sin, though in ignorance – **Leviticus 5:17-19** – coming to a knowledge of the sin is implied.
 - i. IT IS A SIN BEFORE THE SINNER EVEN KNOWS.
 - b. **Leviticus 4:13-14** – “when the sin...becomes known”
 - c. Some act as if ignorant sin is less sinful before God.
 - i. God will not forgive sin that is unrepented of – **1 John 5:16-17**
 - ii. Repentance requires knowledge of the wrong.
 - iii. God’s longsuffering supplies us time to come to that knowledge – **2 Peter 3:15-18**
 - iv. Until the sin is repented of and forgiven that one is in a lost state.
- B. Presumptive Righteousness
 - a. Intended good does not make a transgression of law any less sinful and rebellious.
 - i. Jesus spoke of some who thought they were doing good in His name – **Matthew 7:21-23**

- ii. He also spoke of some who would think persecuting His disciples would be an act of service to God – **John 16:2**
- b. Some presume to know what God desires, or would be pleased with, but such is rebellion REGARDLESS OF THE GOOD INTENTION.
 - i. Such was the mistake Jews were making – **Romans 10:1-3** – seeking to establish own righteousness (presumptive righteousness)
 - ii. Zeal without knowledge – like a fire without a fireplace – will destroy!
 - iii. God requires zeal, but it must be rightly channeled – **cf. Galatians 4:18** – zealous in good thing always.
- c. David would have sinned by building God a house – **2 Samuel 7:1-7** – this, regardless of his good intentions.
- d. We must be careful about thinking what MAY be pleasing to the Lord, and instead focus on what we KNOW is pleasing to the Lord.
 - i. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – Scripture equips us for EVERY good work.
 - 1. This implies that what is not mentioned by God is not a good work.
 - 2. To do something without scriptural direction, NO MATTER HOW WELL INTENTIONED A PERSON IS, is to rebel in sin.

Conclusion

1. We must avoid sugar coating sin, and instead call it what it is.
2. All sin is rebellion, even if it is not known, or is done with good intentions.
3. God requires our obedience, which is the opposite of rebellion.