Am I My Own Worst Enemy?
(The Tragic True Story of King Saul)

Scripture Text:  I Samuel 31:1-6

Read Scripture

PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

Within each and every one of us lies a great, God-given potential. A potential to be used by God to accomplish great things in this brief time we are here on earth.

Ephesians 2:10  For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

But in spite of all our God-given potential, many of us never live up to that potential through no one’s fault but our own.

Have you ever known someone who was “their own worst enemy?”

....I’m talking about that person who always seems to make foolish, unwise choices.

....I’m talking about that person who repeatedly makes the same mistakes over and over again without getting any wiser.
.....I’m talking about that individual who seems bent on self-destruction no matter how much anyone tries to help them.

Do you know anyone like that? Are you your own worst enemy?

A PROFILE OF KING SAUL

King Saul had the potential for true greatness. And he would have fulfilled it had it not been for one thing: SAUL WAS HIS OWN WORST ENEMY!

I would like for you to turn back a few pages in your Bibles to I SAMUEL chapter 9 and let’s look at what great potential this man had.

READ: I SAMUEL 9:1,2

(A) Notice first of all Saul was a man of ADMIRABLE CHARACTER

vs. 2 tells us Saul “was an impressive young man.”

That didn’t happen by accident. Notice what verse 1 says about Saul’s father, KISH…….

vs. 1 There was a Benjamite, a man of STANDING, whose name was KISH.

Do you know what this tells us about SAUL? It tells us he had the wonderful privilege of being raised by a man of great character, honor and integrity. But as we are going to learn in a little bit, just because someone is raised by great parents is no guarantee they won’t make some monumental mistakes in life.
Next I would have you to notice Saul was a man of **AWESOME STATURE.**

vs.2 tells us Saul was "*a head taller than any of the others.*"

At 6’ 5”, our son Seth is more than a head taller than Linda and me. He got his height from Linda’s grandpa Wheeler.

The world looks up to tall people, both literally and figuratively.

Saul’s physical size was quite impressive.

He was a man of **ADMIRABLE CHARACTER.**
He was a man of **AWESOME STATURE.**

(C) Saul was also a man of **AMAZING POWER.**

Flip over just one page in your Bibles to
CHAPTER 10, verses 6,7

God’s blessings and power were on Saul in such a way he was guaranteed success in all he set out to do.

Saul was a man of **ADMIRABLE CHARACTER.**
He was a man of **AWESOME SIZE.**
He was a man of **AMAZING POWER.**

There is NO WAY he could FAIL! The only one who could ever keep Saul from reaching his great God-given potential was SAUL HIMSELF!
We began today’s message reading the account of Saul’s tragic suicide. For a few minutes, let’s do a “flashback” on Saul’s life like they do in the movies and see how this man who was destined by God for greatness wound up taking his own life.

Let’s consider FOUR MISTAKES Saul made that turned him into HIS OWN WORST ENEMY.

Mistake #1: King Saul Chose An Ungodly Path

(Turn to I Samuel 13:13-14 and mark your place. First let me give you the background)

Saul and the Israelite army are camped at a place called 
*Micmash*, as they prepare to go into battle against the Philistine army.

But before they go into battle they must wait on the prophet Samuel who will make sacrifices to God and seek God’s favor upon the Israelite army.

After one day of waiting, Samuel had not arrived. Two days go by, then three, then four and Samuel has still not arrived.

Fearing they are in grave danger many of the Israelite soldiers defected and went home. After one week of waiting, Samuel had still not arrived.

In his impatience, King Saul decided to go ahead and take matters into his own hands. He ordered his men to bring animals for a sacrifice. And Saul himself offered burnt offerings to God, a duty that was strictly prohibited by God to anyone except a Levitical priest.
Well just as King Saul is concluding the sacrifices, the prophet Samuel arrives and gives him this scathing rebuke...........

**Read: I Samuel 13:13-14**

1. Do you realize what has just happened here? King Saul has just been told his kingdom is going to crumble, not at the hands of the Philistines, but by his own doing. By choosing the UNGODLY PATH of offering forbidden sacrifices, SAUL has become his own worst enemy!

2. There’s a lesson for all of us in this. And that is any time you or I choose an UNGODLY PATH we become our own worst enemy.

3. Think of those times when you have WILLFULLY DISOBEYED God......those times when you deliberately chose to do something you knew was against God’s will.

        .......Did it bring you PEACE or UNREST?

        .......Did it bring you SUCCESS or FAILURE?

        .......Did it make your life BETTER or WORSE?

4. You and I know the answers to those questions don’t we? You see it absolutely impossible to achieve success by doing something outside the will of GOD.

5. So the first tragic mistake King Saul made was that HE CHOSE AN UNGODLY PATH. This was just the beginning of more tragic mistakes in King Saul’s life.

*****************************************************************************
Next we see King Saul made the mistake of...........

Mistake #2: King Saul Yielded to Ungodly Emotions

Turn over to I Samuel 18:5-9

1. For a period of time in King Saul’s reign, the Philistines continued to be a constant threat to Israel’s national security.

   To use today’s terminology, we might say Israel was under a constant ELEVATED TERROR ALERT.

2. But by this point, the Philistines had been so successful in defeating the Israelites they didn’t even believe they needed an entire army to defeat the Israelites.

   The Philistines had one man on their side they believed could single-handedly defeat the Israelites with one arm tied behind his back........A 9’ 6” giant named GOLIATH.

3. Well you and I are well-familiar with this true story, so I won’t repeat it at this point, other than to say DAVID emerged from his victory over GOLIATH a “National hero!”  David became an instant “celebrity” in Israel.

   As David would pass through towns and villages throngs of women would come out and sing a victory song......”Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands.”

4. As King Saul saw his own popularity waning and David’s popularity soaring, he now yielded his mind, heart and spirit to the control of a very dangerous, all-consuming emotion called JEALOUSY!
5. From this point on, everything KING SAUL does is driven by his uncontrolled jealousy toward David. It was this jealous rage that set King Saul on the road to his own self-destruction.

6. Are you controlled by a negative, ungodly emotion? Are you driven by jealousy……or……bitterness……or……hatred……or ……anger………..or resentment?

7. EMOTIONS are natural. God created us to be “emotional beings.” But when those emotions take a negative turn, they can completely consume us to the point they control our lives.

8. Like King Saul, when you and I become driven by such a negative emotion like jealousy or hatred or bitterness, it takes us down a very dangerous path that sooner or later will lead to our own self-destruction.

*****************************************************************************

Now let’s consider a third mistake King Saul made……..

Mistake #3: King Saul Resorted to Ungodly Behavior

1. Consumed by his jealousy toward David, it was inevitable that King Saul would eventually resort to UNGODLY BEHAVIOR.

I SAMUEL 18:8-12 and I SAMUEL 19:9-12
2. Let me remind you at this point, this is the same man who had such **ADMIRABLE CHARACTER**……the same man who was of such **AWESOME STATURE** .....this is the same man who was so blessed with the **AMAZING POWER OF GOD** he was guaranteed success in all he did.

   Now he has attempted to murder **DAVID** on three separate occasions. **Saul** is literally self-destructing right before our very eyes.

3. There is a stern warning to all of us here. And that is any time you allow a negative emotion like jealousy or resentment or hatred or bitterness to simmer inside your mind and heart long enough, sooner or later it will lead you to do something ungodly.......something that is totally out-of-character.......something that leaves those who know you scratching their heads in disbelief.

4. Don’t ever discount the destructive power of negative emotions. Those negative emotions are Satan’s foothold into your life.

5. For King Saul it was jealous rage toward David, but you see, David wasn’t Saul’s enemy, Saul was his own worst enemy!

******************************************************************************

**Mistake #1**: King Saul Chose An Ungodly Path  
**Mistake #2**: King Saul Yielded to Ungodly Emotions  
**Mistake #3**: King Saul Resorted to Ungodly Behavior
Now let’s look at King Saul’s fourth mistake…..

Mistake #4: King Saul Sought Ungodly Counsel

READ:  I SAMUEL 28:4-10

1. It is interesting to note back in VERSE 3 that King Saul had expelled all the mediums and spiritists from the land following the death of the prophet Samuel.

2. Now in a time of total desperation, who does King Saul turn to for counsel……..A WITCH. Saul has now sunk so low he is getting advice from the WITCH OF ENDOR.

3. We are living in a time when many would have us to believe there are “good witches” and “bad witches.”

   The Bible tells us there is no such thing as a “good witch.”

   Exodus 22:18  Do not allow a sorceress to live.  
   (KJV-------sorceress = witch)

   Revelation 21:8  “Those who practice magic arts will have their place in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.”

4. What King Saul did is very typical of people who become their “own worst enemy.” Rather than seeking godly …….rather than seeking HELP from someone who will point them back to GOD……..they seek the counsel of ungodly people, and in so doing, they dig their hole even deeper.

5. Brothers and sisters, any time you are in a bad situation beware of the counsel of anyone who offers any other solution than GOD!
CONCLUSION

I believe GOD included the tragic true story of KING SAUL in the Bible for a very important reason. And that is serve as a warning to all of us not to make the same mistakes.

If King Saul were here today what would he tell us? I believe it would be this:

First of all I believe King Saul would warn all of us DON’T TAKE UNGODLY PATHS.

You and I have to make important decisions every single day. And without a doubt the most critical decisions we must make each day are those ones that have to do with God’s will.

Any time you and I make a decision that takes us out of the will of God, no matter how reasonable or logical it may seem to us at the time, that decision will always come back to haunt us.

I think King Saul would also warn us:
DON’T YIELD TO UNGODLY EMOTIONS

What negative emotions are simmering beneath your surface? What is it that is festering inside your mind and heart? Is there anyone toward whom you feel anger, jealousy, bitterness or resentment.
King Saul would warn you to deal with those dangerous emotions now, not tomorrow, not next week, but NOW! Get on your knees before GOD today and ask Him to let go of those destructive emotions and move on with your life.

I believe King Saul would also warn us:
DON’T RESORT TO UNGODLY BEHAVIOR

All these things are inseparably linked. When we choose an ungodly path that often leads to ungodly emotions, which eventually manifest itself in ungodly behavior.

The sooner we turn our ungodly emotions over to GOD the better our chances of staving off ungodly behavior we will later regret.

And finally I believe King Saul would warn us:
DON’T SEEK UNGODLY COUNSEL

Any time you are in trouble……any time you are confused about which direction to go……always, I repeat, ALWAYS seek the counsel of someone who is going to point you to GOD not away from GOD.

We can only wonder how differently King Saul’s life might have turned out had he not been his own worst enemy.

When you and I come to the end of our life, may the same thing not be said of you and me.