

Recap of 10/5/25 message by Pastor Joe Ricchuiti
("The Key to Success is Faithfulness to God") 1 Samuel 31:1-13

1. Saul had everything going for him; God's anointing, Samuel's mentoring, great natural attributes and gifts, and remarkable opportunities. Yet his life ends on the tip of his own sword on Mt. Gilboa; a monumental failure, a cautionary tale. What went wrong? In the words of Warren Wiersbe:

"Natural gifts and abilities mean nothing without the power of God. Natural abilities and great opportunities do not guarantee success. Saul was head and shoulders above everybody else, but he was not heart and soul yielded to God. Robert Murray M'Cheyne said, 'it is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus.'"

2. Biblical assumptions concerning life:

-Life is a gift from God and is sacred, for we are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27, 2:7)

-No one has a right to take a life, including their own life (Genesis 9:4-6; Exodus 20:13) God alone is sovereign over life and death (1 Samuel 2:6).

-Presence of life, not quality of life, is the Biblical criteria for the value of the individual. Even suffering can accomplish deep benefits in the life of the sufferer as well as those who care for them.

3. "...only God Who gave life has the right to determine its ending." (Mittlstaedt))

4. Saul went as far as he could go on natural gifts. He was a flawed ruler. He was weak and didn't trust God. He never cultivated a relationship with God, never cultivated the advantages and opportunities God gave him, never cultivated the Word of God, incorporating it into his life, and never cultivated obedience to God. Rather he made choices that led him away from God and His will for himself