The fifteenth chapter of *I Samuel* 15 records one of many sad, tragic downfalls of prominent, powerful men in the Word of God who could have been a great asset in accomplishing God's eternal plan. It is the record of King Saul's intentional failure to obey the God who had him anointed as "king over Israel" when he was "little in [his] own eyes."

Saul had been given specific instructions from God through the prophet Samuel to "utterly destroy" all that the Amalekites had - "both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." The instructions could not have been more clear or understandable. But Saul consciously, willfully chose to ignore those instructions. He "spared Agag," king of the Amalekites, as well as "the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good." And as men are more than capable in doing, he justified his disobedience by saying that the animals had been spared for "sacrifice to the LORD."

His disobedience did not escape the notice of the LORD. Samuel, the LORD's prophet, caught up with Saul and pointed out to Saul his sinful disobedience. "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD?" No amount of excuse-making that Saul would offer could justify his actions. The stinging words of a sound rebuke and judgment came forth from God's servant: "Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king." Judgment was pronounced and there was nothing that Saul could do to change it. He could only confess, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD." Twice he confessed his sin: first in verse 24 and then again in verse 30. Perhaps he confessed his sin twice because twice it is written that he was "rejected" by the LORD - once in verse 11 and once in verse 35. Saul could only plead, "...please pardon my sin."

This was the beginning of the tragic end of Saul's reign as the "king over Israel."

Who among us today can come to the sacred Table of our King and not in some way relate to King Saul and his sin? As we approach the Table of our Lord today is it not a fair question for our LORD to ask of us: "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD?" Is there anyone among us who, like King Saul, does not have to confess, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD?" Is there anyone here today who can say that he or she has faithfully observed all the commandments of the LORD since the last time you took your seat at this Table? Are not you, like Saul, without excuse? After all, you know the Word...
of God; and, you know what the God of the Word expects of you. If we honestly "examine" ourselves at this holy Table as we are exhorted to do, do we not have to admit that we too have neglected God's will some time during the last one-hundred sixty-eight hours? Must not we also confess as did King Saul, "I have sinned?" The only thing that any of us can do before a holy God is to plea what Saul pled: "plead pardon my sin" knowing that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

This Table is a visual reminder not only of our need for forgiveness but also of the cost for making that forgiveness possible. It is a visual reminder of the horrible truth of what we once were when we were outside of the Lord Jesus Christ – a lost, unforgiven sinner. It is also a visual reminder of the wonderful grace of God – a perfect, atoning sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins has been made on our personal behalf.

King Saul was rejected forever by the LORD as "king over Israel." Not only did the LORD reject him but the last verse of this chapter even says that "the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel."

The book of Revelation says that Jesus, the Christ, "loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings..." As kings, let us come to this Table with our own confession and plea crossing our lips: "I have sinned. Please pardon my sin." If we do this with an honest and sincere heart, we have the assurance that our God will not regret that he has made us "kings" and He surely will not reject us from His presence but someday will welcome us into His eternal heavenly Kingdom where we will continue to dine with Him and He with us.