

## Lent 4    Sunday 11/03/2018    Sin as Self Deceit

This week we are looking at one of the most dangerous shadows of sin... that is, sin as self deceit. This shadow tells us that sin has an in-built blocking mechanism to actually stop us from hearing the truth about ourselves.

In fact, our self deceit goes even one step further and so makes our hearts quite unique. That is, our hearts have the ability to let some truths get through but, anything which is too painful or going to cut across how we see ourselves, will be blocked.

Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, **19** since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. **20** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

### Question 1:

What do these passages teach us about self deceit?

Our story of Samuel and King Saul is about self deceit and the tactics or techniques self deceit uses.

**Question 2:** Read 1 Samuel 15: 1-9 - List the key facts of this story.

- Who was behind the instruction given to King Saul? (v1)
- What was the instruction? (v2-3)
- In what way did King Saul not follow this instruction? (v8)
- What was the basis for deciding what to keep or kill? (v9)

**Question 3:** Generally the first technique of self deceit is to blame others. Who did Saul blame?

**Question 4:** The second technique is to justify it by looking at it from a different and positive perspective..i.e. “look at all the good I am doing”. How did Saul try and justify his disobedience to the Lord?

**Question 5:** The third technique is to minimise the sin or what we did. How did Saul do this? See v20-21.

*Read - 1 Samuel 15:17-19* Samuel said, “Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel.**18** And he sent you on a mission, saying, ‘Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them until you have wiped them out.’**19** Why did you not obey the Lord? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?”

**Question 6:** How do these verses give a clue to the changing perspective of Saul in terms of how he viewed himself?

John 3: 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

1 Samuel 15:22-23 “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.”

**Question 7:** Saul wanted to get his greatness from another source rather than God. (v17) Samuel also referred to Saul’s arrogance. (v23) What are some of the lessons we can learn from this?

**Question 8:** What does the light of Jesus allow us to see more clearly and how does this deal with the sin of self deceit?

**Question 9:** What have you found to be of assistance in your faith walk when it comes to the dangers of self deceit?