

The King of the Hill

Discussion Notes: March 15, 2026

1. Who was the most trustworthy person in your life growing up, and what made them that way?

This week's sermon walked us through Psalm 15, a question-and-answer psalm that asks: who belongs in God's presence? The answer is not someone perfect, but someone whose inside and outside match. They are a person who walks blamelessly, speaks truth, treats their neighbor well, handles their money with integrity, and keeps their word. The sermon organized this around four areas: being right with God, right with your neighbor, right with your money, and right with yourself. The unshakable promise at the end of the psalm is this: the person who lives this way shall never be moved.

Read Psalm 15:1–5 (ESV)

“O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend... who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.”

The sermon reminded us that you cannot change on the outside without first being changed on the inside. A real Christian does not just claim the truth, they live it and speak it. When someone hurts us, we give them free rent in our heads, but the call is to starve that anger rather than feed it. With money, the question is not just how much we earn but how faithfully we manage what God has entrusted to us. And when it comes to our own integrity, we are called to do what we say, shut the doors that belong in the past, and stop being lukewarm.

2. What does it mean to be the same person on the inside as you are on the outside?

Read James 1:22 (ESV)

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

It is easy to walk out of a sermon feeling challenged and inspired, and then return to the same patterns by Tuesday. James cuts through that gap directly. Knowing what is right and doing what is right are two very different things. Integrity is not just what we believe, it is what we actually do when no one is watching, when it is inconvenient, and when it costs us something.

3. What is the gap between what you know and what you actually do and what is keeping them apart?

Read 1 Peter 3:15–16 (ESV)

“But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”

One of the most countercultural things about living out Psalm 15 is that it requires us to speak truth even when it is unpopular and stand for what is right even when it costs us. The sermon warned us about the person who blends in with everyone, wears whatever mask is needed, and stands for nothing. Peter calls us to something different, to be ready to speak, but to do it with gentleness and respect. Courage and kindness are not opposites. They are meant to go together.

4. Why is sharing and standing for God's truth so challenging?

Read Psalm 15:5b (ESV)

“He who does these things shall never be moved.”

The psalm closes with a promise, not a warning. God does not describe this life to burden us; He describes it to show us what stability looks like. The person who walks this way is not tossed around by what others say, not shaken by past mistakes, not defined by bitterness or broken promises. There are things in some of our lives that need to come to an end, and there are things behind us that we need to leave there. Shut the door and walk forward. The sermon reminded us that God will rebuild you in front of the very people who tried to destroy you.

5. Based on everything from this sermon, what is one specific thing you are going to do differently this week? (Is there a door that needs to be shut, a promise that needs to be kept, a truth that needs to be spoken, or a person you need to stop giving free rent in your head?)

Deeper Dive — Two Paths, Two Outcomes

Psalm 15 describes a person whose integrity is consistent; the same on the inside as on the outside, in public and in private, when it costs them and when it does not. History is full of people who were tested on exactly this kind of integrity. Two of the most striking examples in Scripture are Daniel and King Saul. Both were placed in positions of significant influence. Both faced moments where doing the right thing came at a real cost. But the choices they made and the outcomes that followed could not have been more different.

Daniel: The Man Who Would Not Bend

Read Daniel 6:3–10 (ESV)

“Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. Then these men said, “We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.” Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever! All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.” ... When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.”

Daniel’s enemies searched his entire life for something to use against him and came up empty. The only vulnerability they could find was his faithfulness to God (which he refused to hide or compromise even when a law was passed making it punishable by death). Notice what the text says: he prayed as he had done previously. He did not make a dramatic stand. He simply kept doing what he had always done. That is the portrait of Psalm 15 in real life; a person so consistent in their integrity that there is no gap between who they are in public and who they are in private. The outcome for Daniel was not immediate comfort. It was the lions’ den. But God shut the mouths of the lions, and Daniel was lifted out without a scratch. His faithfulness did not go unnoticed by God or by the king.

King Saul: The Man Who Almost Got It Right

Read 1 Samuel 15:17–24 (ESV)

“And Samuel said, ‘Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. And the Lord sent you on a mission and said, ‘Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.’ Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the Lord?’” And Saul said to Samuel, “I have obeyed the voice of the Lord. I have gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gul-gal.” And Samuel said, “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king.” Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.””

Saul’s confession at the end of this passage is one of the most revealing statements in all of Scripture: “I feared the people and obeyed their voice.” That is the opposite of Psalm 15. Instead of a man whose inside and outside match, Saul was a man who performed obedience on the outside while his heart was tuned to the approval of the crowd. He did not disobey God out of hatred for God. He disobeyed because he was more afraid of what people thought than what God said. The sermon warned us about the person who stands for nothing because they are trying to keep everyone happy. Saul is the biblical portrait of exactly that. His kingdom was taken from him not because he was a monster, but because he was lukewarm, just obedient enough to look righteous, but not willing to follow through when it cost him something.

Discussion Questions:

1. If someone were to examine your life the same way as Daniel, what would they find? Is there a gap between who you are in public and who you are in private?
2. Saul said “I feared the people and obeyed their voice.” Where in your life are you most tempted to make decisions based on what others think rather than what God has said?
3. Both Daniel and Saul faced real consequences for their choices. How does knowing that God sees and responds to our integrity (whether faithfulness like Daniel’s or compromise like Saul’s) change the way you approach the decisions in front of you right now?