

1 Samuel 14 - Victory Over the Philistines

v. (1-3) Jonathan's proposal.

It happened one day: At the beginning, there was nothing in this day to indicate it would be remarkable. But on this day, God would win a great victory through the bold trust of Jonathan.

Said to the young man who bore his armor: Every "officer" in the Israelite army had an "assistant" known as an armor bearer. The armor bearer helped the officer in battle and in the administration of the army. They often carried the armor and weapons of the officer, so they were known as armor bearers.

Saul was sitting: This was a big contrast to Jonathan. The bold, brave, king was simply sitting . . . under a pomegranate tree while his son boldly went over to the Philistine garrison. Saul and the priest with the ephod sat back while Jonathan bravely trusted God.

Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother: The mention of Ichabod seems almost unnecessary. Why would we need to know that the priest with Saul, Ahijah, was the nephew of Ichabod? Probably, God wants us to associate the meaning of Ichabod's name with where Saul is at spiritually. Saul's royal glory is almost gone, and it is appropriate that he associates with a relative of the man named "The Glory Has Departed."

v (4-5) Jonathan finds a strategic position.

Insert from last time about WW1

v (6-7) Jonathan's bold proposal.

It may be that the LORD will work for us: For Jonathan, this was more than a reconnaissance expedition. He wanted to see what God might do through two men who trusted Him and stepped out boldly.

Jonathan knew the need was great. Israel was hopelessly outnumbered and demoralized.

Jonathan knew God wanted to use someone. King Saul just wanted to sit under a pomegranate tree. Something had to be done, and Jonathan was willing to let God use him.

Jonathan knew God wanted to work with someone. Jonathan could have just prayed that God would rain down fire from heaven on the Philistines. But Jonathan knew that God uses the bold action and fighting spirit of His people. "It was not Jonathan that was to work with some help from God; it was the Lord that was to work by Jonathan." (Blaikie)

For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few: This is wise courage in God. Many in Israel probably believed this as theological truth but few believed it enough to do something. Jonathan's faith was demonstrated by his works.

Nothing restrains the LORD: The only thing that can be said to restrain God is our unbelief (Matthew 13:58). God's power is never restrained but His will may be restrained by our unbelief. He may choose not to act until we partner with Him in trust. God had a trusting partner in Jonathan.

Romans 8:31 heart: If God be for us, who can be against us?

Go then; here I am with you: These words from Jonathan's armor bearer must have cheered Jonathan greatly. When we step out in faith, encouragement can make all the difference for good and discouragement can make all the difference for evil.

God was going to use Jonathan, but He wasn't going to use Jonathan alone. When God uses a man He almost always calls others around the man to support and help him. They are just as important in getting God's work done as the man God uses.

v (8-10) Jonathan proposes a test.

Jonathan showed wisdom and not unbelief. To this point, he does not act on a specific, confirmed word from God. Instead, he followed the bold hope and impression of his heart. He was humble enough to know his heart might be wrong on this day, so Jonathan asked God to guide him.

This was not the same as Gideon's setting of a fleece (Judges 6:36-40). Gideon had a confirmed word of God to guide him, and he doubted God's word. Jonathan did not doubt a word from God; he doubted his own heart and mind.

Jonathan was prompted by faith. Significantly, he did not demand to know the whole battle plan from God in advance. He was willing to take it one step at a time,

and let God plan it out. Faith is willing to let God know the whole plan, and to know our part one step at a time.

v (11-14) Jonathan and his armor bearer attack the Philistines.

Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden: At this time of crisis the Israelites hid anywhere they could (1 Samuel 13:6). It was reasonable for the Philistines to think these were Hebrew deserters surrendering to the Philistines because they thought it was better than hiding in a hole.

v (15) God attacks the Philistines.

It didn't matter if the Philistines greatly outnumbered the Israelites and had far better weapons. God was more than able to set the Philistines against each other. If the Israelites had no swords, the LORD would use the swords of the Philistines against the Philistines.

The earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling: Jonathan used his heart and sword but God did what Jonathan could not do - send a great earthquake to terrify the Philistines. Often we wait around for God to do what we can do. But God will often do miracles - what He alone can do - if we will do what we can do.

v (16-19) Saul learns of the battle.

Call the roll: This was useless at the moment. Saul should go and fight the Philistines at this strategic moment. Instead, he was probably worried about who was leading the battle and who would get the credit.

Bring the ark of God here: This was useless at the moment. Saul is probably trying to look spiritual here, but there was nothing to seek God about. There is a time to go aside and pray, and there is a time to get your sword out and fight. Saul didn't know what time this was.

Saul was very good at making religious oaths and promises. But that didn't mean very much because he was not good at having a heart after God and he was not good at keeping the oaths he made.

Saul was willing to kill his son rather than to humbly admit that he was really at fault. Saul started out as a humble man (1 Samuel 10:21), but his once impressive humility was overtaken by pride.

v.45 key verse- Jonathon worked with God, not the other way around

We need not wait for a special day or time for God to work, be

1 Peter 3:15-16 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; (16) having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

Ephesians 5:15-21 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, (16) redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (17) Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (18) And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, (19) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, (20) giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, (21) submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Humility vs pride