

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 14TH-15TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

HEAD ON (1 SAMUEL 14:1-14) NOTHING LIKE HIS FATHER

After the foolishness and selfishness of Saul has been exposed, we learn that Saul's son Jonathan is very different from his dad.

- Jon knew that **if he had a relationship with God and was faithful**, he could live by Deuteronomy 28:7—"The Lord will cause the enemies who rise up against you to be defeated..."

JON ALSO HAD COURAGE

As Saul was sitting under a pomegranate tree, Jon was planning an attack on the enemy. He had **courage, trusted the Lord, waited for an answer, and had a faithful friend** with him.

- **True Christianity involves courage. We gain courage through prayer, the promises of the Word, and godly relationships.**

FAITH OFTEN DEFIES LOGIC

Jon was outnumbered and, by all logic, shouldn't have struck down 20+ men. In this, we see that circumstances are no match for faith in God.

- Of course, **we balance this with the brain God gave us and the work of the Spirit through wisdom and discernment.**

ADDRESSING EVIL HEAD-ON

Each step Jon took was marked by him seeking God's will. **With courage, faith, and obedience, we can know and live in God's will and tackle evil head-on.**

- **Evil needs to be identified and addressed by the Word and repentance. When we lack a fear of God and ignore sin, we crumble.**

TRUE SUCCESS ONLY COMES THROUGH GOD'S WILL

Jon believed that he would have success if he trusted and obeyed God regardless of the circumstances.

- **The key to true success is to live in a relationship with God through prayer and obedience to His Word. In this relationship, we also live in His will.**

RELIGION VS. RELATIONSHIP (1 SAMUEL 14:15-35) "TERROR SPREAD..."

Jon's surprising victory struck fear into the "garrison and the raiding parties." On top of that, God caused an earthquake to further cause panic among the Philistines.

- After the enemy's panic, Saul finally takes some action, but we'll see **his consistent inconsistency will be his downfall.**

CREDIT WHERE IT IS DUE

V23 says, "So the Lord saved Israel that day." This reminds us that, yes, God works through willing vessels (Jon), but **ultimately, every victory in our lives belongs to Him.**

- **True Christians are dependent on God and humble because we understand that we are utterly lost without His provision.**

MANIPULATION THROUGH RELIGIOUS ACTION

As the battle continued, Saul thought forcing the soldiers to fast all food would ensure further victory. He also declared strong punishment if anyone broke the fast.

- What we see is a man with **no relationship with God trying to use religious actions to ensure success during a struggle.**

RELIGION WITHOUT RELATIONSHIP WEARS US OUT

Things like fasting, going to church, and listening to worship music are good, but without a relationship with God, they have no power.

- **Do we think we can manipulate God into blessing us without really knowing Him? Do we think repetitious religious acts without obedience to God work?**

WISDOM VS. SELFISHNESS

As the troops were walking, they saw honeycombs but were too afraid of Saul to eat and replenish their strength. Jon was unaware of the oath, so he dipped his spear in the honey and received energy from it.

- In learning about the oath, Jon realized how selfish and foolish his dad had been.

BACK TO THE FALSE SECURITY IN RELIGION

Fasting is good, but Saul did it out of selfish ambition and, in his selfishness, dishonored God and showed no compassion for others.

- **Obedience is better than sacrifice** (1 Samuel 15, Proverbs 21). **Do we sacrifice only in times of desperation without living in consistent obedience? If so, our motives are wrong.**

IT IS NEVER MY FAULT

After the Israelites "struck down the Philistines," they "rushed to the plunder" and improperly ate the meat (Leviticus 17). Saul then accuses them of unfaithfulness and gets a stone for them to prepare the food properly.

- Saul is more concerned with the rules he wants to honor than a relationship with God.

"IT WAS THE FIRST TIME HE HAD BUILT AN ALTAR"

Saul built an altar out of fear of God's wrath for breaking the Levitical law of how to eat meat. Ironically, Saul's selfishness led to the men's "sin."

- Not only do we see inconsistency in Saul, but **also the false idea that we can sin and simply do something religious to atone for it instead of true repentance.**

HEARING GOD (1 SAMUEL 14:36-52)

"LET'S APPROACH GOD HERE"

After a couple of victories, Saul gets a little cocky and suggests that they continue to fight and plunder. The weary soldiers are just trying to follow, but the priest suggests Saul pray.

- "Saul inquired of God." *Inquire* in this passage can also mean to *draw close*. Unfortunately, he received no answer.

THREE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF ASKING GOD

When one prays and inquires something of God, He may say yes, no, or nothing at all. More than likely, **God was silent because Saul was still unrepentant of his actions.**

- **In order to be in relationship with a holy God, we must repent and strive to be holy** (1 Peter 1:15-16, James 5:16).

"LET'S INVESTIGATE HOW THIS SIN OCCURRED..."

Notice Saul does what we often do when we have to wait on God, or things don't go our way—he tried to blame someone else.

- **Pride is at the root of all sin. If we're arrogant, we fail to repent because we've bought into the lie that we're okay the way we are. No one is "okay" without God's help.**

NOT BEING ABLE TO READ THE SIGNS

Saul calls for lots to be cast to determine who "sinned" and caused him not to hear God. After casting lots, Saul thought Jon was selected and must die for his "rebellion," though Saul was at fault and Jon had been blessed.

- **When we are not living correctly, we're incapable of recognizing what God is doing.**

FORTUNATELY, LEVEL HEADS PREVAILED

The soldiers had clearly seen the hand of God on Jon because of his miraculous victory. V45 says the people "redeemed Jonathan, and he did not die."

- Unfortunately, Saul "gave up" pursuing the remaining Philistines. Ironically, the Philistines would eventually kill him and Jon.

SAUL'S LEGACY IN A NUTSHELL (V47-51)

This summary comes at a very odd place in this book of the Bible. More than likely, this was a marker in time—though Saul was officially in power, he was not the true king.

- Saul may have been a successful military leader, but **he was not a moral leader. "Wherever he turned, he caused havoc."**

IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING SIN

- We cannot afford to turn a blind eye to or approach sin causally. **Sin has to be identified by the Bible, repented for, and turned away from.**
- If we will have the courage to address evil and sin, we will discover God's will, and He will bless us with true success.

THE FAILURES OF RELIGION AND LEGALISM

- **Religious action without a relationship with Jesus creates a false sense of security, no long-term results, and it wears us down.**
- Spiritual freedom and power come through a consistent and obedient relationship with Jesus through **prayer, the Word, godly community, and obedience.**

HOW TO HEAR FROM GOD

- We have to ask ourselves **who we really consider "king" of our lives.** Culture will tell you it is you, but the results of self-worship are consistently destructive.
- To hear from God, **we have to first want to hear a higher perspective.** We must then live in **obedience to God and His Word.**

THE RESULT OF NOT LISTENING

- When we choose to not live moral lives (humility, repentance, and obedience to God), we become incapable of hearing God and His will for our lives.
- **In our immorality, everywhere we turn, there will be havoc, and we will not have the power to overcome it.**

AN INVENTORY

- Are we identifying and addressing sin and evil in the world? Do we have the courage to ask God to examine us first?
- Have we let religion replace relationship?
- Are we inquiring from God for direction?
- Do we truly understand the consequences (havoc) of failing to follow God's will?