

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 14TH–15TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

JONATHAN'S BOLDNESS (1 SAMUEL 14:1–14)

JONATHAN'S SHOCKING PROPOSAL

Despite the disadvantage, he proposes to go and attack. His words to the armor-bearer reveal his character: "Nothing can keep the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few."

- In the face of overwhelming opposition, believers are called to stand faithful. When life gets difficult, will we remain faithful to God or run to worldly ways?

SAUL WAS SITTING

The bold, brave, king was simply sitting under a tree with 600 men while his son boldly went over to the Philistine garrison. Saul is accompanied by Ahijah, a member of the rejected priestly house of Eli.

- Saul has turned from the spiritual counsel of Samuel to the priestly line of Eli. Are we in Authentic Community with godly people?

"GO AHEAD! I'M COMPLETELY WITH YOU."

These words from his armor-bearer point to the beauty of community. Having this kind of community makes it easier to step out in faith, even when it seems impossible.

- Do we have people in our lives who are "completely with us?" Do we push others out of their comfort zones to look more like Jesus or remain comfortable like the world?

A SIGN

Jonathan walked closely with God and responded with wisdom instead of impulsiveness. Logically, this may have caused doubt, so he asked God for a sign to take the next step.

- He did not demand to know the whole battle plan from God. He took one step at a time. We need to make sure we keep in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).

GOD'S CONFIRMATION

Jonathan knew God's faithful character, and it gave him boldness to take the next step. It was a difficult climb, but he obeyed because he knew God was with Him.

- Do we only want to be used by God when it is easy? If we have a relationship with Him and know His character, we will be obedient even when it is difficult.

SAUL'S FOOLISHNESS (1 SAMUEL 14:15–35)

DIVINE CONFUSION

Jonathan's surprising victory started a panic that struck the whole army. A perfectly timed earthquake confirmed that this was a panic sent by God. Jonathan's obedience was the beginning of God's plan for victory.

- We need to do our part in obedience, and God will do His part.

DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP STYLES

Jonathan is a leader who takes action, while Saul simply responds. Saul should go out and fight, but he commands a roll call and then wants the ark brought to him.

- A lack of concern for the direction of God remained an ongoing issue with Saul's leadership. A self-centered leader has little concern for God and others.

GOD DESTROYS THE PHILISTINES

Saul was the leader, but it took him a long time to start leading. Now, he follows God and Jonathan into battle. The battle was designed in a way that pointed to God being in charge.

- Saul's impulsive patterns reveal his wavering character. We have to hold on to the hope of a faithful God without wavering (Hebrews 10:23).

FOOLISH OATH

Saul's careless actions continue. He placed an oath that banned them from eating food during the day of battle. On the surface, this sounds spiritual. However, the result led to his men being famished and exhausted.

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

JONATHAN UNKNOWINGLY BREAKS THE OATH...

They were all tired and hungry. They needed energy, and God provided honey on the ground. But the oath stopped them from eating. Jonathan didn't hear about the oath, ate the honey, and "had renewed energy."

- Jonathan says, "My father has brought trouble to the land." He knew how selfish and foolish his dad had been.

BLAME SHIFTING

The people were so hungry they broke God's command (Deuteronomy 12:23–25). Their obedience to Saul's foolish command led them to disobey God's clear command.

- Saul blamed the people for what was really his own fault. It's easy for us to blame others for our actions. If we will humble ourselves, Jesus can restore us.

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

Saul doesn't humble himself. Instead, he builds an altar out of fear of God's wrath. He knew he was in trouble, and out of desperation, he didn't run to a relationship with God but ran to more religious activities.

- When we sin, we can fall into the trap of doing something religious to help us get back on track instead of repentance.

SAUL'S PRIDE (1 SAMUEL 14:36–52)

"LET'S APPROACH GOD HERE"

After the Israelites were refreshed and fed, Saul suggested a night raid. His pride was obvious, and the priest recommended he inquire of God (draw near to God). Unfortunately, he received no answer.

- Drawing near to God requires humility, surrender, and repentance. Are we in position to hear from God?

ANOTHER FOOLISH OATH

In response to God's silence, Saul makes another foolish oath. He basically pronounces a death sentence on whoever ate honey.

- Waiting is an important part of the Christian life. The issue for us is that we don't like waiting long. We get impatient and "take control" of situations and, like Saul, disregard God's guidance.

SAUL'S PRIDE

Saul decided to cast lots to determine who was guilty, and he was so sure that Jonathan was innocent. The results shocked Saul, and Jonathan was taken.

- Saul was willing to kill his son rather than humbly admit he was really at fault. Saul started out as a humble man (1 Samuel 10:21), but he became prideful.

"THE PEOPLE REDEEMED JONATHAN"

Fortunately, the people finally stood up to Saul's foolishness. They knew that Jonathan worked with the Lord that day, not against Him.

- Saul "gave up the pursuit of the Philistines." The implication in this phrase is that the victory might have been greater if not for Saul's foolish oath. Ironically, the Philistines will end up killing Saul and Jonathan.

SUMMARY OF SAUL'S REIGN (VS. 47–52)

This is an odd time to read a summary of Saul's career. The author may be showing us that 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. Failure is being successful at things that don't matter.

PRIDE LEADS TO ISOLATION

- Saul has gradually alienated himself first from Samuel, then from his army, and now finally from his own son.
- A self-centered and prideful life will leave us isolated. When we are isolated, we are prone to wander deep into foolishness.
- God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

HUMILITY LEADS TO COMMUNITY

- We have to humble ourselves. We need God to shine his light on our paths (Psalms 119:105). He knows what's best for us!
- We are designed to be in community with God and others. If we live in community, we can have courage like Jonathan.
- Do we know the promises of God's Word? Do we have godly, authentic community?

WHAT WILL WE CHOOSE?

- The world tells us that life is all about us. Living a self-centered, prideful life will lead to destruction.
- The Bible tells us that if we draw near to God, He will draw near to us (James 4:8). This leads to human flourishing.
- The life we choose to live matters now and for eternity.