

A Man with God Is a Majority

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[0 : 00] 1 Samuel 14 is our text for tonight.

! We're not going to read through the entire chapter. In fact, I'm not going to take the entire chapter tonight, but the first 23 verses.

So 1 Samuel 14, 1-23. Now it happened one day that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said to the young man who bore his armor, Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison that is on the other side. But he did not tell his father. And Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree, which is in Migron.

The people who were with him were about 600 men. Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh, was wearing an ephod.

[1 : 20] That means he was the high priest at the time. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. Between the passes by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine's garrison, there was a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other side.

And the name of one was Bozez and the name of the other Seneh. The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash and the other southward opposite Gibeah.

So it's kind of in between the two locations. Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised.

It may be that the Lord will work for us, for nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few. So his armor bearer said to him, Do all that is in your heart.

Go then, here I am with you, according to your heart. Then Jonathan said, Very well, let us cross over to these men, and we will show ourselves to them.

[2 : 24] If they say thus to us, Wait until we come to you, then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. But if they say thus, Come up to us, then we will go up, for the Lord has delivered them into our hand, and this will be a sign to us.

So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden. And the men of the garrison called Jonathan and his armor bearer and said, Come up to us, and we will show you something.

Jonathan said to his armor bearer, Come up after me, for the Lord has delivered them into the hand of Israel. Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armor bearer after him, and they fell before Jonathan.

As he came after him, his armor bearer killed them. That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about twenty men within about a half an acre of land.

And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people, that's the Philistine people, that is. The garrison and the raiders also trembled, and the earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling.

[3 : 43] Now the watchmen of Saul and Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and there was the multitude, the multitude of Philistines, melting away. And they went here and there.

Then Saul said to the people who were with him, Now call the roll, and see who has gone from us. And when they had called the roll, surprisingly, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not there.

Saul said to Ahijah, Bring the ark of God here. For at that time the ark of God was with the children of Israel. Now it happened, while Saul talked to the priest, that the noise which was in the camp of the Philistines continued to increase.

So Saul said to the priest, Withdraw your hand. Then Saul and all the people who were with him assembled, and they went to the battle. And indeed every man's sword was against his neighbor, and there was a very great confusion.

Moreover, the Hebrews who were with the Philistines before that time, who went up with them into the camp from the surrounding country, they also joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

[4 : 51] Likewise, all the men of Israel who had hidden in the mountains of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, they also followed hard after them in the battle. So the Lord saved Israel that day, and the battle shifted to Beth-Abin.

All right, so I don't know if in your knowledge of church history you've ever heard of or read anything about John Knox.

John Knox was a famous reformer, a reformer of Scotland, the Church of Scotland during the 1500s, middle 1500s.

He had been exiled a number of times, you know, throughout the course of his life. He even chained to a French galley on one particular occasion.

But John Knox was greatly influenced by the reformers and was a reformer himself. He, on one occasion when he was exiled, he even studied with Calvin and others of the Reformation.

[5 : 55] But he is usually credited for reforming the Scotland Church and also credited as the founder of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland.

And although he had many supporters, you know, from the, during the Reformation of Scotland, he often stood all alone in his confrontations with Mary, Queen of Scots, which substantiates what Knox has been credited for saying.

And this is what he said. A man with God is always in the majority. He's famous for that, for that saying.

And it's a true statement. And so I've adopted this famous saying for the title for my message tonight out of this particular passage. And I've kind of changed it a little bit.

One man with God is a majority. By the way, I know I'm not just talking to men. And it applies to women, too. One woman with God, one man with God is a majority.

[7 : 10] Now, I've used that as my introduction and also as a title because in our text here, and surely you've noticed it, noticed this as I read through the passage, we find really another John, Jonathan, who possessed the same courage, the same faith as John Knox.

And that man was Jonathan. Jonathan, the son of Saul. Now, you might remember, and hopefully you do, chapter 14, we've just read, or at least part of it, it's really a continuing story from chapter 13.

And let me just remind you of the setting. The Philistines were attacking and plundering and the Israel, many different Israelite villages and towns.

And now a huge Philistine army had assembled at Michmash there in Israel, the land of Israel. The Bible says they assembled with 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and it just says people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude.

That's in chapter 13, verse 5. So that's a lot of people. Can't really put a number to it. Some have suggested we're talking about 350,000, 400,000 Philistines.

[8 : 38] And so that's a formidable force, without any doubt. And the Israelites, they are so terrified that they have retreated, basically, and were hiding out, the Bible says, in caves and thickets and rocks, behind rocks and in holes and in pits, chapter 13, verse 6.

But Saul and Jonathan, with 600 men, have taken their stand at Gibeah. Gibeah was just across from where the Philistines had encamped, Michmash.

And so they're in Gibeah, kind of a rocky mountain in the land of Benjamin, which would, of course, was, of course, Saul's home country, home territory.

And you also may remember that because the Philistines had taken control of all of the blacksmiths, remember, back there in chapter 13? Because they had taken control of all of that, essentially, I guess you could say, having absolute control, really ownership of the latest technology in modern weaponry of the day, metal.

And the Israelites, then, could only use wooden types of weapons, you know, spears that were just wood and bows and arrows and so forth.

[10 : 03] And the Bible, remember, said in chapter 13 that only Saul and Jonathan had metal swords. So I'm just kind of setting the stage here. Pretty dismal time, pretty hopeless time.

And so the well-armed Philistines, with an army that could not be counted, really, and the Bible doesn't count for us, they have positioned themselves there at the Pass of Michmash.

And across from them, Gibeah, a mere 600 poorly armed Israelite soldiers, they are positioned there on, you know, the only advantage is they're on the high ground of Gibeah.

So that is the stage of our story. And the battle is about to begin. It's the Philistines and the Israelites. It is here in the story that someone emerges.

Kind of a bright spot in the history we've been reading about here with Saul and the Israelites and so forth. So someone emerges to reveal his great faith.

[11:07] Great faith and great courage. Someone who is like a John Knox. One man with God is always a majority. And this man is, of course, Jonathan, the son of Saul.

Again, Jonathan is a bright spot in the otherwise dark times of Israel during this time. And I've just described those dark times, hopeless times. And I would say even more than that, that Jonathan is a bright spot in the pretty dismal life of Saul that we've already been reading about.

In fact, we're going to we'll see here in this passage some more about Saul's faithlessness, really.

And so Jonathan is a man of extraordinary character, courage, faith, conviction, and all of that.

So Jonathan's faith stands out really in bold relief from the hopelessness of the times. And so that's what I want us to see as we kind of work our way through this text as quickly as possible.

Well, Jonathan's faith, Jonathan's faith in God. And there are very quickly five things about his faith that we can learn in these 23 verses.

[12:21] And the first one is a bold faith. Jonathan had a bold faith. In fact, you I don't even hardly have to read it again. You you remember as I read it a moment ago.

But just just follow along as we kind of walk through the passage. Now, it happened one day. All right. So this is a continuation from the previous chapter that Jonathan.

So here's Jonathan mentioned son of Saul. So he's identified said to the young man who bore his armor. So he had a armor bearer with him.

And we're going to learn a little bit about him as well. And this is what he said to him. Come. Let us go over to the Philistine garrison that is on the other side. But he didn't tell his father.

All right. So that's pretty bold, isn't it? Now, Jonathan is just talking about himself and one other guy. And they're going to go over there and and do something, whatever God leads them to do.

[13:22] I mean, this is bold. As we're going to read a little bit later, he really didn't use any of what we would call wise military tactics either. And so this is very, very bold.

Someone might some even might say this is foolhardy. But, you know, Jonathan, he just doesn't want to sit there. And it's obvious that Saul is just kind of biding the time there.

You remember, God has already said that the kingdom is going to be taken away from him. So, you know, he's got his 600 men facing maybe 300,000 soldiers.

We don't know how many. And so Saul is just going on with life, sitting under a pomegranate tree and just sitting there and waiting and biding his time. And Jonathan, I think, has just had enough of it.

So he's just going to be the bold one and step out in faith. And he says to his armor bearer, let's go over there. Let's do something. Can't just sit here. So very bold.

[14:17] Let me just read on. Saul sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree, which is in Migron. That is really kind of set up his throne there.

And he's just conducting his kingly business from there outside. And the people who were with him were about 600 men. And Ahijah, the son of Ahitub.

Now, get these names. Ichabod's brother. That name rings a bell, doesn't it? So the priest there, present there, the high priest for the day.

Brother of a man whose name means the glory has departed. That's what Ichabod means. The son of Phinehas. Remember Phinehas.

Eli's son. Both Phinehas and Hophni, the sons of Eli, were killed in battle as part of God's judgment. They were wicked, dishonest, perverting the priesthood.

[15:19] And so they're killed in battle. Remember, Phinehas' wife is pregnant. And when the news comes to her that Phinehas has fallen in battle, she gives birth and dies.

And the name of the child that is born is Ichabod. He already had a brother. And this is the brother. Ahijah. Ahijah. And so I guess, you know, we could really say the blood is the same.

And so here's Saul sitting under a pomegranate tree. And Ahijah, the glory has departed, priest of the day.

And so this is what's going on. And so the Lord's priest is in Shiloh. He's wearing the ephod. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. Now between the passes, and so it describes Jonathan's track with his armor bearer to reach the other side where a garrison has been located. This is not the full army, but they would have several garrisons. And so very boldly, Jonathan's saying, let's go do something about these Philistines, these uncircumcised Philistines.

[16:30] So his bold faith. Second, I want you to notice his believing faith. Now that sounds redundant. Believing, faith, same thing, isn't it?

Well, his faith was a strong faith. He believed God and trusted God that he would not only guide him and open a door for him to do battle against the Philistines, but that God would protect him and use him and allow him to accomplish a great victory.

So it was a believing faith. Look at it, verse 6. Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised.

It may be that the Lord will work for us, for nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few. What a tremendous statement.

Yeah, the Lord can save through many. And I'm sure Jonathan could recollect down through the history of Israel where God used many to accomplish great victories.

[17:38] Or God can use a few. In fact, Jonathan really is saying, you know, God can use just you and me, armor bearer, if he wants to.

I'm trusting him for that. See, this is a believing faith. And verse 7 says, so his armor bearer said to him, do all that is in your heart. Go then, here I am with you according to your heart.

So it's a bold faith that Jonathan has. Let's go do something. Very bold, very brash. Very, very dangerous for the Lord.

I'm tired of just sitting here. Bold going against the enemy. And it's a believing faith. Who knows? God may use us. I'm just trusting him with that. And just use us to judge these uncircumcised Philistines.

Thirdly, it is a brave faith. All of these very similar. A little different nuance of his faith as it is expressed through his life.

[18:43] A brave faith. Look at verse 8. Then Jonathan said, very well, let us cross over to these men and we will show ourselves to them. If they say thus to us, wait until we come to you, then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them.

I want you to think about how un-military this is. I mean, it's just not much of a strategy. I mean, you wouldn't call this a very wise military strategy.

In fact, it defies all military logic. Notice it said there, Jonathan said, very well, let's cross over and do what? Show ourselves.

So, it's not even a sneak attack. They're not trying to sneak up on them. They're going to reveal themselves. Show themselves.

They're just going to start walking across this land between the two fronts of war. Out in the open. Toward this garrison that is up on a little cropping of rock.

[19:54] And we're going to let them see us. And Jonathan, I would assume under the inspiration of God in his heart and life, and now he was guiding him.

He said, we'll just, this is the way God wants to reveal whether or not he's with us. Or whether or not he wants to use us. If we come over there and they say, stay down there and we'll come to you.

Then we'll just stand, our grant stand still. And God is just saying, this is not what I want for your life. It's not what I want you to do. But, if they say thus, come up to us, then we will go up.

For the Lord has delivered them into our hand and this will be a sign to us. So, if they say, come up to us, then that's a sign from God that he wants us to go and fight with them.

And so, the Bible says, so both of them showed themselves to the garrison and of the Philistines.

[20:55] And the Philistines said, look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden. Rather insulting to them. Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armor bearer and said, come up to us and we will show you something.

Some other translations may use the word, other words there, like we will punish you. We'll make you live to regret it. And so, we're going to show you something, a thing or two here.

And so, Jonathan said to his armor bearer, come up after me, for the Lord has delivered them into the hand of Israel. You see how brave he is here. And look at how they had to get up there.

And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armor bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armor bearer killed them. And the first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about 20 men within about half an acre of land. So, think about how brave this is. I mean, we've already talked about how bold it is.

[22 : 01] And how much belief and faith Jonathan has here at this point. But how brave would this be? The enemy is up on a kind of a crop, a hill of rock.

The only way to get up there is to climb up there hand and foot. And you can imagine, I mean, if you're hand and foot, there's not much you can do with your weaponry. And there's no real guarantee that the enemy is not going to shower down upon you rocks and maybe arrows and kill you before you ever get up there.

I mean, how brave is this? I don't think I'd want to do that. And so, here they are climbing up there to the top of this rock hill to the garrison on top.

And Jonathan's convinced that because they asked us to come, that this is God's sign and he's going to give us the victory.

And indeed he did. And the two of them were able to destroy 20 of the enemy there within an area of about a half an acre. So, the fighting, we don't really know how long the fighting went on.

[23 : 12] Alright, so a bold faith, a believing faith, a brave faith, and then a beneficial faith. That is, Jonathan's faith was not just his own and didn't just simply benefit his life, but it also had an effect on many other people around him.

And so, look at it. I think you could first look at the armor bearer and see that Jonathan's faith had an effect upon, benefited the faith of the armor bearer.

And I go back to verse 7 again and look at what the armor bearer said to Jonathan. He said, Do all that is in your heart. Go then, here I am with you according to your heart.

That is, I am with you just like your heart is with you. And so, this armor bearer, you know, starts with Jonathan's bold and believing and brave faith.

And his armor bearer is going right along with him. And so, I think Jonathan is not only leading the way, but it's his great faith that has had a great impact upon his armor bearer.

[24 : 23] So, there is the commitment of Jonathan's armor bearer. That's the benefit of Jonathan's faith. But there is also the cowardice of the Philistine people.

Look at verse 15. And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people, the garrison and the raiders also trembled, and the earth quaked so that it was a very great trembling. What's the effect of Jonathan's faith? Well, one effect was the commitment of his armor bearer. The other effect of it was the cowardice of the Philistine people.

Suddenly, they're shaking in their sandals. I don't know if they wore boots back in those days. And it's interesting that this fear that came upon them caused them to retreat.

That's the idea here. In fact, there was such a stampede of retreating people that the ground was shaking. So, the cowardice of the Philistine people.

[25 : 24] There's another example of the beneficial faith of Jonathan. That is the conversion of the Israelite traitors. You say, I didn't read anything about some Israelite traitors.

And yet, it's there. Look at verse 16. Now, the watchman of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked. All right. So, Saul is there in Gibeah on the other side of the battlefield.

And he's under his pomegranate tree. And he's looking out. And his scouts are probably looking out at the Philistine camp. And something's going on there that they can't explain. And so, he looks out and sees this multitude, the multitude of the Philistines.

And they're kind of melting away. And they went here and there. So, they're running back and forth. And this is very perplexing to Saul as he sees all of that. And so, what's Saul's conclusion?

Well, some of our people are over there causing trouble. Some of my own army has gone over there to attack them. And that's the only logical explanation. And so, let's do a little head count here and find out who's over there.

[26 : 31] And so, they do a head count. They find out that Jonathan and his armor bearer are nowhere to be found. All right. So, and then it says in verse 18, And Saul said to Ahijah, Bring the ark of God here.

For at that time, the ark of God was with the children of Israel. And now it happened while Saul talked to the priest that the noise which was in the camp of the Philistines continued to increase.

So, Saul said to the priest, Withdraw your hand. Now, what's going on here? Well, by law, by the law found in Deuteronomy, before Israel could go out to battle, the priests had to come and speak to the people, speak to the army.

And you, you know, if you've got time sometime, you can look over there at Deuteronomy chapter 5 and find out that this was a requirement.

And so, the priests would be called and they would speak to the people and they would give certain regulations. And, you know, for example, if any of you out here just are engaged, but you've not yet married, then want you to go home.

[27 : 38] Anybody out here, in several scenarios, so that people who had attachments at home, they would go home and not bog down the army.

So, they had this and they would speak blessings upon the army. And so, this was the requirement. So, Saul knew that. So, he called the priest to come take care of that duty. But while the priest is kind of in the middle of taking care of that, Saul discovers that the conditions on the other side are getting even worse.

And so, he's getting impatient. And so, he says to the priest, basically, just stop right there. Don't finish that up. We need to go to battle. Now, that may sound really brave, but the problem was, it was a violation of God's law.

So, Saul's getting hasty here. And so, he says, you know, he stays their hand. He stops what they're doing. And so, then, verse 20, Saul and all the people who were with him assembled and they went to the battle.

Indeed, every man's sword was against his neighbor and there was very great confusion. Whose swords? Who are the men here? He's talking about the Philistine camp.

[28 : 50] They, so Saul and his 600, they go out to battle and the first thing they discover is in the Philistine camp, the Philistines are fighting among themselves.

Every one of their swords against one another. And so, what explains that? Well, it goes on to explain what had happened here. Moreover, the Hebrews who were with the Philistines before that time, who went up with him into the camp from the surrounding country, they also joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

So, here's what happened. The Philistines, at some point prior to this, had convinced some of the Hebrews to join their army. And so, they had on the Philistine garments and the Philistine weaponry.

And so, when Saul and his army come, they see Philistine fighting against Philistine. But really, what had happened was the Hebrews, who had been traitors, suddenly realized that they want to fight with Israel.

And so, they start fighting the Philistines even before Saul and the armies get there. And so, that's why they see, when Saul sees, them fighting among themselves.

[30 : 01] And the whole thing got started how? Through Jonathan and his bold, believing, brave faith that was beneficial in not only making his armor-bearer more committed in his faith, but also produce a cowardice among the Philistine people and also a conversion of the Israelite traitors.

So, they have now joined the fight. And then there's one more. The courage of the Israelites that were in hiding also was affected by Jonathan's faith.

Verse 22. Likewise, all the men of Israel who had hidden in the mountains of Ephraim when they heard that the Philistines fled, they also followed hard after them in battle.

So, it renewed some courage within their hearts. They'd been hiding out in holes and caves and behind rocks and they were fearful and cowardly.

And Jonathan's faith, what Jonathan did, got something started that caused them to have a renewed courage and they went out and fought against the Philistines as well. So, it's an amazing thing, isn't it?

[31 : 09] Jonathan's faith. Bold, believing, brave, beneficial. And the last thing would be blessed. It was a blessed faith. God honored it, blessed it, and rewarded it.

And that's why we have in verse 23, So, the Lord saved Israel that day and the battle shifted to Beth-Avon. So, the Lord did this.

He took the credit and the credit belonged to him. And God honored Jonathan's great courage and his faith and he gave the Israelites the battle.

And when it says that the battle then shifted to Beth-Avon, that Beth-Avon would be located in Philistia, the land of the Philistines. So, the battle caused the Philistines to retreat all the way home. So, God gave a great victory. Jonathan, his faith, a man with God is always in the majority.
[32 : 11]