

# 1 Samuel 13-14 • The Pride of Saul

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The very first verse that we deal with here tonight in 1 Samuel chapter 13 is incomplete in the Hebrew. Your Bibles may make this sentence sound complete because your translations attempt to fill in the missing pieces.

In the ESV that I'm reading here tonight, it goes like this. "*Saul lived for one year and then became king, and when he had reigned for two years over Israel,...*" (ESV) It goes on to tie in verse 1 with verse 2.

Many of you may, if you have a different translation, whether that's a New American Standard Bible (NASB) or the New King James (NKJV) or the NIV, you're going to have some different wording here. And the reason is, in the Hebrew this verse literally is missing some components. Let me read this for you. You can look at it at verse 1 in your Bible but in the Hebrew here's what it says, okay? With nothing added.

It says, "*Saul was ---- (blank) years old...*" Literally, there's a blank there. He reigned "*(blank) and two years... over Israel.*" That's the way the verse reads. There are obviously some things missing in this verse and in the Greek version of the old Testament, which was copied much, much later on, they omitted it altogether.

Honestly, there really isn't a whole lot in this verse that is vital information for us. The reason your Bibles have filled in the gaps is that they wanted to make it more readable based on information from the rest of Scripture. So it's just one of those challenges. It's a rare instance, frankly, in your Bible that this sort of thing would happen. Very, very rare, but there it is.

As I said it isn't even all that necessary because verse 2 goes on to tell us, "*Saul lived for one year and then became king, and when he had reigned for two years over Israel, <sup>2</sup> Saul chose three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan (and that's our first mention of Jonathan the son of Saul) in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent home, every man to his tent.*"

What that means is that for the very first time in Israel's history, they were maintaining a regular now army. It wasn't that many people. It was basically,

3,000 men. Up to this point, they had operated much like a militia and they simply brought people out as they needed them. And they're still going to do that with some of the army, but they're going to maintain at least a full time army fighting force that can respond quickly.

And this is needed because right now, the Philistines are dominating Israel. They're bloodying their nose, if you will. And so we're going to see how they, they deal with it.

Verse 3, it says, *“Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines that was at Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, “Let the Hebrews hear.”*<sup>4</sup> *And all Israel heard it said that Saul had defeated the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become a stench to the Philistines. And the people were called out to join Saul at Gilgal.*

Jonathan did the work, yet Saul blew the trumpet, and got the word around that Saul had defeated the garrison at Geba. And you'll notice that this shows signs of the beginning of an issue in Saul's heart that is going to continue to be a problem. He just couldn't seem to let other people take the credit for anything. And that's just...

He started off so humble, but somewhere along the way, Saul became a prideful man and his pride led him to the place where he couldn't share the spotlight with anybody, even his own son. It's crazy, isn't it? Well, it's not so crazy because we understand it. We understand what causes somebody to do that.

When we begin to enjoy the pleasure of being noticed and being somebody and people look at you and I don't know if that's ever happened to you. If you've ever been in a position where people looked at you and they looked at you as somebody. As somebody even important and then suddenly someone else comes along whom the people look at instead of you, or who's doing something that is honorable, it's a difficult thing. And for Saul, it was an unbearable thing.

Jonathan defeats this garrison of Philistines and a garrison is basically a troop of Philistines that were stationed all around Israel. They were basically set up to just flex their muscle and remind the Hebrews whenever they looked around, oh, yeah, that's right, we're under Philistine domination right now. And so the Philistines had these pockets of soldiers all around the country to just keep the law, keep the people in order, and make sure they knew and understood we're in charge. Right?

Doesn't the enemy love to do that in your life sometimes? But it says Jonathan defeated this particular garrison, and it doesn't give us a whole lot of information about it, but what it does say to you and I is that it stirred up the bee's nest. And I don't know if you noticed that or not.

It says that the Philistines heard of it, right? He defeated this garrison of soldiers and the rest of the Philistines heard about it. They're like, oh, okay. What's going on here? It seems like as long as the Israelites were content to live under Philistine rule, and to let the Philistines flex their muscle whenever they wanted, and just don't get in their way, don't resist them, life would be okay.

But as soon as the Israelites decided, like Jonathan did, no, we're not going to do this. This is not right. This is not the way God wants us to live. He doesn't want us to live like slaves. As soon as he begins to do that, they obviously sit up and take notice because you know what? They weren't slaves. They weren't living as God intended them to live.

You know what's interesting about this is that this same principle applies to our own spiritual lives. We get things happening in our lives. Some area of sin begins to flex its muscle in our lives. And if we don't buck it, if we don't resist it, if we don't make trouble for that sin by trying to get over it or resist it, it's like it's not going to press too hard on our lives, or the enemy isn't going to press too hard.

The enemy loves you to be in a subservient position. The enemy loves you to be in a submissive position in some area of your life. If some area of sin, the enemy wants to keep you down. The enemy wants to keep you quiet. The enemy wants to keep you surrendered.

But let me tell you something. The minute you stand up and you say, like Jonathan did, you know what, this isn't right because I was not meant to be a slave. The fact of the matter is, in Jesus Christ, I have the victory over sin, and I'm not going to stand for this in my life. And you decide that sin is not going to be your master, right? And you decide to resist that sin, guess what? You're going to stir up a bee's hive in your life too.

And your enemy isn't the Philistines, but your enemy, the enemies that you and I fight, are those principalities and powers and rulers of this dark world, right? The spiritual powers that are at work in our lives to keep us enslaved and down.

And you can, and you can keep those powers probably at bay by just compromising, surrendering. I'm not saying your life's going to be good. At

least you won't have the enemy to fight with because you're just going to be going along with his program. But the minute you stand up and you say, no, I'm not doing this, you can expect the enemy to mount an attack. You can expect the enemy, he's not one to take things lying down.

Just like the Philistines, when they heard that Jonathan had resisted one of their troops and defeated them, that was not something that they could take lying down. It's time to do something.

And it says in verse 5, *“And the Philistines mustered to fight with Israel, (in fact) thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen and troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude.”* A poetic way of saying, don't even try counting them, there's too many. And *“They came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth-aven.”*

What's going on here? Israelites, well, Jonathan, anyway, dared to resist the Philistines. So now they come out with this huge army to crush Israel. Don't think the enemy isn't going to try to do that same thing in your life.

Whenever the enemy makes a large showing in your life, it's a very fearful thing. Very difficult thing to put up with a very, very large army that is coming after you and wants to take you out. And in fact, that's exactly how the Israelites responded. With fear.

Look at verse 6. It says, *“When the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble (isn't that great? They were in trouble, and they saw it) (for the people were hard pressed), the people hid themselves in caves and in holes and in rocks and in tombs (yeah, you heard right, in tombs. They went to go stay with dead people because they themselves were dead in their fear) and in cisterns,”* Oh, good grief. Of course, a cistern was just something that caught rainwater that they could, but those things get stinky and stuff after a while. And unless they're dry, of course.

But it says that *“<sup>7</sup> and some Hebrews crossed the fords of the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.”* So here's the Israelite army. Okay, I mean, just get this picture, okay?

Jonathan has this great victory. Instead of the people getting all jazzed and thinking, yeah! Instead they, they see the approaching Philistine army flexing its muscle and they get frightened and they run for their lives. They scatter. Wherever they can find a scatter in between a couple of rocks. In a cave, in a

tomb, wherever they can go. And the people who didn't scatter, stayed with Saul. I suppose that's, good of them, but still their knees were knocking together, even those who stayed. It says that people are all trembling.

And we're told here that Saul, verse 8 “...waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him.” Stop there, let me explain what's going on.

There was a system of seeking the Lord that had been established between Samuel and Saul when before the army was to go to battle, they were to wait for Samuel to come and seek the blessing of the Lord. And he would come, and as the priest, he would do certain offerings, and prayer, and bless the army before they would go to war. It was a standing thing. And the idea was you'll wait for Samuel, right?

But guess what? Faith is not ruling this camp. Fear is ruling this camp. Can you relate? And when fear rules the camp, fear becomes the dominant voice that we follow. Look what it says. As we just read, “Saul waited (the) seven days... people (are) scattering...”

It goes on to verse 9. It says, “So Saul said, “Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings.” And he offered the burnt offering.” And this was wrong. This was just, for starters, Saul was disobeying Samuel's command to wait the full seven days. Secondly, Saul was not a priest, and only the priests were allowed to offer the sacrifice. Thirdly, Saul showed here something that you and I have probably showed many times, and that is that fear can trump the voice of God. Right.

All fear has to do is just get big enough and bad enough, and it will trump the voice of God. In other words, we will obey fear over the Lord. And Saul, what a change. What a change. Just in the last study, in Saul's first attack of the Philistines. He rose up with a holy, righteous, anger when he heard about what was going on with the Philistines, or with the with this other, these other group that were attacking the Israelites. It wasn't the Philistines at the time, but it doesn't really matter.

He rose up with just the righteous indignation of God and with great courage, he went and attacked the enemies of Israel. And it was a great victory of the Lord that day. And now what's changed? Well, Saul has changed. Saul doesn't have a heart after God. He has learned to have a heart after the people. And he's into the recognition of the people. And pride has taken over in his heart. And now he

quakes in fear when he faces an enemy. And what does that fear demand that he do? Things that he shouldn't.

And in verse 10. This is so, I mean, talk about timing. *“As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came.”* So was Samuel late? No, Samuel wasn't late at all.

In whatever time it took for him to say, all right, bring the offering, we're just going to do it. And to do it, immediately after that, Samuel shows up. Yeah, he's not late. He's not early, but he's not late. He said, wait seven days. I'm here. It's on the seventh day. And if Saul had just waited a little longer before acting.

Have you found that to be the case in your life when it comes to responding to fear? Have you found when you look back at those times when you become fearful and you do something that you know you shouldn't do? Whether it's just stretching out to fix the problem on your own or whatever the case might be, that if you just would have waited a little bit longer, it would have been okay. The answer would have come. But we jump and we get right to the end of our patience, right to the end of our rope, and fear is just screaming in our ear, and finally we've just had it, and we just move. And that's what Saul did.

And Samuel says to Saul right away in verse 11. *“What have you done?”* This is by the way whenever anybody asks you, if God asks you, even what have you done? This is a great time to repent by the way. When you've done something wrong and somebody asks, what have you done? It's a great time to say, I messed up, but we're going to find that Saul doesn't do that.

Pride has now so overtaken this man that all he's going to do is throw out excuses. Look what he says. *“<sup>11</sup> Samuel said, “What have you done?” And Saul said, “When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, (actually he did) and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, <sup>12</sup> I said, (to myself, self) ‘Now (yeah, I know what’s going to happen) the Philistines will come (rushing) down (the hill) against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the LORD.’ (right, that’s the right thing to do) So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering.””* Your Bible may say, *“I was compelled.”*

Did you hear those excuses and explanations? There are no less than 5 of them. And they go like this. The people were scattering, I had to do something. Secondly, you didn't come on time, so essentially, Samuel, it's partly your fault. Right. Thirdly, the Philistines were mustard. What was I supposed to do? I can see him right over there at Michmash. They're all, it's like, and my guys are

telling me they're spread out like sand on the seashore. There's so many we came and count them all. What did you expect out of me?

Fourth, he said, I had to seek God's favor. Doesn't that sound spiritual? Then that sound good. Well, I just wanted to seek God's favor. We can come up with some of the most spiritual sounding excuses for sin if we're given an opportunity. Saul's not done doing this. He's going to do the very same thing. He's going to bring up a spiritual sounding excuse later on in just a little bit here in our study. And he's going to use it to try to explain why he did something wrong again.

And then look at what he says in verse 5. *“So I forced myself, ...”* That's a way of saying, I didn't want to do it, but I was forced. All right. I mean, he's essentially telling Samuel, I had no choice. This is what I had to do. I had...

Do you hear anything there of sorrow or repentance? Is there anything there that says, I was wrong. I shouldn't have done this. If Saul was ignorant of what he did, when Samuel said, what have you done? He would have said, why did I do something wrong? But the fact that he's throwing out excuses at the speed of light here shows that he knows he did something wrong and he's attempting to excuse himself. That means attempting to justify himself. Here's why I did it, right?

And I want you to notice Samuel's response. Verse 13. Look with me in the Bible there. It says, *“And Samuel said to Saul, “You have done foolishly.”* By the way. Don't take the word fool or foolish as a small thing in the Bible. When the Bible uses the word fool, such as in, *“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”* (Psalm 14:1) It's not talking about somebody who's just a little bit dumb.

The term fool in the Bible refers to someone who is morally and spiritually lacking. Okay. So when Samuel says to Saul, this was very foolish, he's telling him in no uncertain terms, this was morally and spiritually really bad. You really messed up. And he tells him why. *“You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you.”* The bottom line, Saul, despite all your excuses, you did wrong. Do you hear that he's still giving Saul the opportunity to repent?

*“For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.  
14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his*

*people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.” And so the Lord tells Saul through Samuel that his kingdom will not endure.*

It's interesting though, you and I would think, oh, well, the Lord just told him your kingdom isn't going to endure. God has sought a man after his own heart, so Saul, you're out. We've got a new man coming in. You might as well just pack your bags and head on down the road. Go back to farming, whatever, because you're out of here.

Do you know that Saul is, I'm not positive about the timing. Saul is probably going to maintain the throne for another 20 years. So his time on the throne is not going to just instantly end, but neither is his family line going to continue on the throne. That is going to come to an end. When David takes the throne, a whole new family, takes the throne at that time.

Now, this is important. It would be easy for you and I to say, because Saul sinned, God removed him and his family line from the throne of Israel. That would be easy to say. He sinned. He messed up. That's what you hear Samuel saying here to him. And to a degree that is true, to a degree.

But I need you to remember something. For those of you that have read on in your Bibles, you know how the stories go. You know who's going to be king next. It's going to be David. David sinned too. Lots. And God didn't take the kingdom from David. Nor did He take the kingdom from David's family. It stayed in the family. All the way to Jesus.

You see, just quickly saying, well, Saul sinned and so he lost the kingdom. It's not exactly the whole truth. Yes. Saul sinned. Yes Saul lost the kingdom, but Saul did not have a heart after God. And that is the primary reason that he lost the kingdom. David, however, had a heart after God. And that is why even when David sinned, the kingdom remained. Do you understand how God views our lives?

We are so fixated on sin as the biggest issue. And so what we do is we come up with questions and people do this all the time. Pastor Paul, is it a sin to, and then they'll mention something that they probably want to do, but they just want to see how close they can get without sinning to that thing. And sin becomes the descriptive aspect of our relationship with God.

And we forget that it's not about just sinning because guys, we all sin. What does John tell us in his first epistle? 1 John chapter one, verse 8, he says, anyone who claims they have not sinned, is not dealing with a full deck. That's a



paraphrase, but you know what he means. He says, the truth is not in him, right? He's not dealing with reality. Why? We all sin. In fact, he goes on later to say, he's a liar. These men who deny the simple reality that we all sin. We all sin every day. So what keeps us? What holds us? What maintains us?

See, God is not so concerned. Well, I got to be careful how I say this. Sin is going to happen in your life. Do you know what God cares more about than the sin that happens in your life? It's how you respond to the sin that happens in your life. That's what God cares most about. Your heart! Do you care?

You see, when confronted with his sin, Saul made excuses. When David was confronted with his sin, he broke! He broke before the Lord. He didn't make excuses. He said, I have sinned before the Lord. I deserve death.

And you know what? David did some things that deserved death under the law. God spared him. God forgave him. What's going on? You see, it's not all about just this three strike rule or it's not all about sinning. What if you do this pastor, is that the final one that's going to put me over the point of no return, or something. We don't get it. Sometimes it's about the heart.

God cares about your heart. God cares about how you feel about sin. Does it break your heart when you sin against the Lord? Do you care? Saul didn't really care. He cared about himself. He didn't really care about what he had done. He made excuses for what he had done. Well, this is why I did it. It's like the man, who cheats on his taxes and then, somebody convicts him about the thing, and he's like, what else was I supposed to do? We didn't have enough money. What was I supposed to do? That's an excuse.

How about trust God? How about wait on the Lord? How about put Him first? How about not give in to fear and instead lay hold of faith? Do you understand? So this whole issue about sinning, or have I done too much sin, or is that the one sin or... Oh, we get so fixated and we forget God looks to the heart.

God looks at your heart and what He saw in Saul was a heart that couldn't be broken. So He said, your kingdom will not endure, but I have chosen a man. I've sought a man whose heart will break when he sins, and yeah, he'll sin. He'll mess up big time. He'll do some royally stupid things.

But when I bring my prophets before him and convict him of his sin, he will break like a dried twig. And what I care about is a broken and contrite heart. Right? Isn't that what David even prayed? Isn't that what David said in his

prayer of repentance after he was caught by the Lord after sinning with Bathsheba?

God, he said, You know what? I bring You offerings, but that's not what You want. I bring sacrifices, but it's not sacrifices You're looking for. You're looking for a broken heart. I know that. And so I'll bring You what You really want. I'll bring You that broken heart.

I don't how many of you as parents have seen that brokenness in your children and you're just like it's the most beautiful thing in the world. When your kids have done something wrong and you confront them with it, and they're just, and they're broken. They're like, yeah, you're right. And we've all seen different. And you remember when you were a kid, how did you respond? I did not respond usually with a broken heart. I didn't. I was the kid who would respond with excuses, and I have to really watch that, even to this day. It's an issue of the heart, remember that.

Verse 15, look with me there. *“And Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal. The rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the army; they went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.*

*And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men.<sup>16</sup> And Saul and Jonathan his son and the people who were present with them stayed in Geba of Benjamin, but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.”*

And so there was no battle. There was no, Saul did his own sacrifice, and it was like, and so Samuel basically just confronted him and said, I'm going home. And they just, Saul just said, well, let's take the guys, whoever we've got left, and let's just go meet up with Jonathan and his group, and we'll just see what's going on. That's really what's going on.

And in verse 17, we're told, *“And raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shual;<sup>18</sup> another company turned toward Beth-horon; and another company turned toward the border that looks down on the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.”*

So, there was no battle. The Philistines, they're so confident of their presence there in Israel. And there's so many men there that they just send out raiding parties every so often whenever they want food and stuff and whatever. They just, they say, okay, we're going to raid another Hebrew village today. Which one should we go after? Oh yeah, that's a good one. I hear they have really good

donuts there. We're going to get their guys, head over there and just take what they want, their crops or whatever. That's what raiding parties did. They raided whatever they wanted. So the Israelites are just being subjected, to the Philistines taking whatever they want. And it's just further demoralizing the Israelites.

And then here, this is to add insult to injury. Verse 19. *“Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, ‘Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears.’”*

What that means is the Philistines forbade the Israelites from having blacksmiths in their land. They basically went in and flexed their muscle, and wherever they found a blacksmith shop, they just would probably burn it to the ground or whatever. And threaten the guy and say, you're out of the job. And they wouldn't let them make anything in a blacksmith shop. Why? Because they were afraid that they would make weapons of war. What would the Israelites do then? Well, they still, blacksmith does more than make weapons of war. They make implements of agriculture.

So it says in verse 20 that, *“...every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines”* Did I say that right? *“...every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his (implements of agriculture, so his) plowshare, his mattock, his axe, or his sickle, (whatever)”*

And they even charged them, of course. Charged them *“...two-thirds of a shekel for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads.”*

I'm not sure why the cost of those things is important for you and I to know, but what's interesting about that and in your Bible, instead of two thirds of a shekel may say the cost was a pim. Does anybody have that in their Bible? A pim, p-i-m. You do? A couple?

Do you know what's interesting? In archaeological digs of that area, they found little units of measure and with the letters pim, on it. And it was basically a unit of measure that related to a monetary value. And they would use it to, back then they would measure. They put things on scales to measure a monetary value of things. And so it, it's just interesting that the actual Hebrew there is pim instead of a third of a shekel, because that's what it was worth.

*“<sup>22</sup> So on the day of the battle there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people with Saul and Jonathan, ...”* Ah, this is why it's telling

us this because nobody had a weapon. It's pretty tough to get an army together when nobody's got a weapon. Can you imagine sending guys out into the field to battle and just saying good luck, here's a shovel, or something like that? That's basically how these guys were armed.

It says, “...*but Saul and Jonathan his son (they) had...*” weapons, but nobody else in the army had any weapons. And that's probably Philistines were so confident. These guys don't even have a sword.

*“<sup>23</sup> And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.*

*One day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, “Come, (on) let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side.” But he did not tell his father.”* Sometimes it's, what, easier to ask for forgiveness than ask for permission.

So it says that *“<sup>2</sup> Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah in the pomegranate cave (your Bible may say, under a pomegranate tree) at Migron. (I wonder if pomegranates were as expensive back then as they are today, anyway, and again) The people who were with him were about six hundred men, <sup>3</sup> including Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.”*

So Jonathan, we're learning some interesting things about Jonathan. He had an interesting heart. He had a different heart than his father. His father, who used to be a great warrior, is now sitting under a pomegranate tree.

And Jonathan is out patrolling around with his armor bearer, and he comes to this garrison of Philistines. And he says to his armor bearer, let's go over there. What do you say? Well, it sounds like maybe a reckless sort of an act. Let's see what happens.

*“<sup>4</sup> Within the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side and a rocky crag on the other side.”* And tells us the names of the crags. Not sure why that's important, but here's the point.

What Jonathan saw was a means by which he could approach this garrison without being detected at first. He was going to be detected by them on purpose after he got there, but he didn't want to tip his hand too quickly. So he finds this narrow ravine with a rocky crag on each side. And the name of the one side was

that, and the other side was that. And one rose to the north, and the other to the south.

And it said, look at verse 6. *“Jonathan said to the young man who carried 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 can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few.””* Stop there.

It's a great thing to underline in your Bible because it's a very powerful statement and it's true. God can save whether by many or by few. Here's the problem. Only Jonathan was the only one willing to test it that day.

There's all kinds of wonderful promises for you and I in the Word of God if we're willing to walk them out. If we're willing to lay hold of them, by faith. And that's how promises are laid hold of by faith. Remember faith activates the promises of God. Okay.

So there's wonderful promises, but they can go completely dormant in your life if you never test them. If you never determine in your heart, we're going to, we're going to give this a shot. We're going to do this thing, trust the Lord and see what happens. And it's like, you might think to yourself, well, what if it doesn't work? That's a chance. It's a chance. Listen, Jonathan didn't know.

Do you guys understand how faith has become redefined to many people in their minds to say that, faith is believing in this absolute foolproof plan that God gives you from start to finish. That's how they define faith today. And this is exactly the opposite of what Jonathan is experiencing.

He's got faith in God. He believes with all his heart, God can save by many or by few. He's probably heard some stories. Maybe from the days of the judges, about some of those great deliverances that happened in Israel by a very few, like with Gideon. Remember God whittled the army down to 300 men against this absolute sea of enemies, enemy soldiers, and a great deliverance.

Jonathan heard about those things. He understood the principle behind it. The battle belongs to the Lord. God can deliver. Does it matter how many people He's got? Right? Question is, do we believe it? Did anybody else believe it? Jonathan was willing to put his life on the line related to that principle and that promise that is laid out in God's Word. Romans 8:31 says, *“If God be for us, who can be against us?”* That's the New Testament promise along those same lines. *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”*

So let's see how it goes. *“<sup>7</sup> And his armor-bearer said to him, “Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul.””*

I got to. This armor bearer, he doesn't even get his name in the Bible. He's just the armor bearer. But you know what? He had faith too. When Jonathan came to him and said, hey, let's see what the Lord can do for you and I against up this garrison of soldiers. He didn't say, are you crazy? That's a garrison of soldiers, we're two guys. Get real dude. You got delusions, what's your problem? I'm going back home, I'm hungry.

What does he say? Yeah, let's do it. I'm with you man. He's just, he's got a heart of faith too. Someday, you're going to be walking, I'm telling you. You're going to be walking in heaven and you're going to see some dude. And you're just going to go, who are you? He's going to go, armor bearer. JAB, Jonathan's armor bearer, my name. You'll be like, dude, you had faith, you had faith.

So his armor bearer says yeah, I'm with you. Jonathan says, he says alright, here's the deal, *“...we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them. (and) <sup>9</sup> If they say to us, (hey) ‘Wait until we come to you,’ then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go up to them. <sup>10</sup> But if they say, ‘Come up to us,’ then we will go up, (and that would be our signal that) for the LORD has given them into our hand. And this shall be the sign to us.”*

By the way, this is not the same thing as Gideon's fleece. Don't confuse it. Gideon got a word from the Lord, I am with you. I am going to use you. I am going to defeat the Amalekites. He got a clear word from the Lord. Gideon doubted the veracity of that word and needed a confirmation. In fact, he needed two confirmations before he would even go out and assemble his army. And even then God had to keep reassuring him that this was really a God thing, right? That's Gideon. Gideon needed assurance.

This is not what's going on with Jonathan. Jonathan does not have a word from the Lord except for this promise, this general promise that God can deliver, whether by many or by few, he knows it. He believes that God is able. So he says to his armor bearer, all right, here's what we're going to do. We're just going to reveal ourselves to these guys in the open area and when they see us, if they say this to us, we're going to run. But if they say that to us, we're going to go and attack them because that means God has given them into our hands. You with me? Armor bearer's like, yeah, let's do it. So he's just going to see.

Do you guys understand that, that faith sometimes is just, let's see what happens. And that's the part that we don't... We're waiting around going, God, I

want to know exactly what you're doing and I want to guarantee, it's going to turn out just that way. And then I'll have all the faith in the world. People, that's not faith. That's not faith. That's trusting in facts.

Faith is when you don't know how it's going to turn out. Let's see what happens. Let's just see, let's see what the Lord will do. Do you know what you have to be willing to do to have that faith? You got to be willing to be wrong. Because sometimes you can have all the faith in the world, and that's just not what God's going to do at that time, right? Just because you have faith doesn't mean that it's always going to move the hand of God exactly the way you want. Although some people will tell you that.

And the ultra-faith, hyper faith movement, whatever you want to call it. People on TV, usually that are asking for your money. If they had so much faith, do you think they'd be sending you their money? But they're asking for yours instead. That's a whole nother message. But they're telling you essentially that faith is, faith in a thing. And faith is trusting God when you don't know what the outcome is going to be. It just trusts God because of His character. God, Your character is such that...

This is reason I love this story so much because Jonathan's let's see what happens. God can certainly, do this thing, I mean, if He chooses not to, that's His business, but let's see what happens.

You can apply that same mentality to just about anything that you feel the Lord may be prompting you to do in your life; whether it's inviting your neighbors to come to church or over to your house for a Bible study, or whatever. It's like, hey, let's see what happens, let's see. Let's see what the Lord will do because the Lord can save whether by many or by few. Let's see what the Lord will do. That faith that's willing to step out, like Peter. When we call it stepping out in faith.

I always think of Peter because he stepped out in faith right on the water. Temporarily, we know that. He saw the wind and the waves and we know that fear battles against faith. In fact, it deteriorates faith and caused Peter to sink into the water and need to be saved by the Lord. But you know what? He did it for a while. He walked and who knows whether the other disciples chided him a little bit. Hey, you get a little wet there, Pete. But you know what? They didn't walk on the water. They couldn't explain what it was like to walk on the waves. Peter could, even though it was brief, he was willing to step out,

Anyway, so verse 11 says, *“So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, “Look, Hebrews are coming out of*

*the holes where they have hidden themselves.”*” And we know that, before the Hebrews were actually hiding in holes and in the rocks and caves, so they're mocking now. Oh look, the Hebrews are coming out of their holes isn't that cute, sort of a thing.

*“<sup>12</sup> And the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said, “Come up to us, and we will show you a thing (or two, youngster).” And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, (alright buddy, that's it, that's the sign, let's go get your sword) “...(come on) the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel.” (and) <sup>13</sup> Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, (this was not an easy sort of a climb, he had to actually get down on all fours. It was such a high sort of a cliff) and his armor-bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him. <sup>14</sup> And that first strike, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, killed about twenty men within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land.” Or your Bible may just say, “in a half an acre...”*

They killed 20 guys. Two guys, two little peewee, Israelites against this garrison of soldiers. Jonathan knew that the battle was the Lord's, but he also knew something else. And this is important. He knew that God was, if God was going to do this thing, if God was going to work through him this way, then he was going to work through him as he fought. Does that make sense?

In other words, the principle here is this. God gives the victory, but you still have to fight. God gives the victory, but you still have to fight. He wants to see you step out in faith. He wants to see you draw your sword. And our sword, of course, is the Word of God, right? The sword of the Spirit.

He wants to see you. God is able and will do amazing things and He will bring a victory and the victory ultimately is the Lord's. But He wants to see you get up and fight, whatever the battle might be. If there's a sin issue in your life, I knew a guy years ago who had an issue with some sin. I forget now what it was. He was, in fact, he was a guy that I worked with on the radio, in Christian radio.

And oh, I remember it. I don't mean to offend anybody if this is a particular issue in your life, but he was he was a smoker. And he knew that it was something the Lord didn't want him to do because, our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and, it's not up to us just to be unhealthy toward these bodies and so forth. And violates the whole idea that body belongs to the Lord and so forth.

So we were talking about it, and we were just bringing up because he would stay outside. He'd actually go out on a porch during long songs and have a



cigarette. And we just got to chatting about it one time and he goes, yeah, God, I know I probably shouldn't be doing this. He said, I'm just waiting though. I'm waiting for God to just give me the desire to quit. I remember thinking about that, and I was a pretty young believer at the time, and I was thinking, I don't really know how to answer that, but that really sounds dumb.

And later on I learned this principle that, we all have issues that we need to be victorious over, issues of sin in our lives, but, God wants us to step out in faith. And believe and begin to take steps.

If you believe the Lord has a path of obedience that's laid out before you, start walking on that path and expect the Lord's grace and power to attend you along the way. Don't just wait for him to pick you up out of your chair and walk you and, move your legs one by one. Step out in faith and trust God. We're waiting for something. Sometimes we're sitting on our chairs waiting. God, I'm just willing here to, if You want to do it for me, but meanwhile, I'm just going to do my own thing. That's not the way the thing works.

Jonathan could have said, okay, they said, come up here. That's the sign. Alright, let's pray that fire comes down from heaven. Or the ground opens up underneath them and just sucks them in. I read about that once. Surely God can do that again. No, he climbs up the thing. Pulls out his sword when he gets there. And starts whacking and God gives a great victory because he moved out in faith. Very important that we see that.

And it caused a panic, it says in verse 15. *“And there was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and even the raiders trembled, the earth quaked, and it became a very great panic.”*

<sup>16</sup> *And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude* (and this means the camp of the Philistines) *was dispersing here and there.”* What's going on? Jonathan stepped out in faith, and now God is moving. He's on the move.

And now, God is doing things that Jonathan can't do. These two guys probably aren't going to put a whole army of soldiers into a panic. Two guys probably just aren't going to do that. But you know what? It happened. You know why? It was the panic of the Lord because Jonathan stepped out and believed God for this thing.

It says, and they're seeing this and they're going, this is incredible, these people are just absolutely running for their lives.

And <sup>17</sup> *Then Saul said to the people who were with him, "Count and see who has gone from us." And when they had counted, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there.*

<sup>18</sup> *So Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For the ark of God went at that time with the people of Israel.* What Saul is doing is he's saying, okay, the people are running, we need to ask the Lord, do You want us to pursue them?

<sup>19</sup> *Now while Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the camp of the Philistines increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, (never mind, we just got to go. That's what it means when it says) "Withdraw your hand."*

Because when it says withdraw your hand, the way they would determine the will of the Lord was through the Urim and the Thummim. Do you remember that? We don't know much about them. We think that they were maybe a couple of rocks with different colors on them and they would use them to cast before the Lord and they would give a response from God. Again, we don't really know how it works. We know they were kept close to the breast in the priest's garment. But obviously the priest is reaching in to get these things, and Saul says, yep, forget it. Withdraw your hand. We're just going to move out.

<sup>20</sup> *Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle. And behold, every Philistine's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion.* So these guys are killing themselves. Okay, the Philistines are turning on each other.

This is what God does when you don't have enough soldiers to fight the battle. He just uses some of their soldiers to fight against them. And it works really good.

<sup>21</sup> *Now the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before that time (and that means deserters) and who had gone up with them into the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.* Yeah, when the tide turns, they're all sudden with the winners.

<sup>22</sup> *Likewise, when all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed hard after them in the battle.*

It's, these are not people with faith. These are people who have to wait until the battle's going their way, then they'll join in the fray. But they're not the people

like Jonathan who will just go up there and say, we'll see what God will do.  
“<sup>23</sup> So the LORD saved Israel that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.”

Now, the chapter, I'm running out of time. So I'm going to summarize the last part of this chapter. It eventually it goes on to tell us here that even though the men of Israel were being pressed very hard and that means that they were expending a great deal of energy in chasing the Philistines, and finishing the battle as it were, that the Lord was bringing about in their life. They were hard pressed because Saul had foolishly put them under an oath saying, “*Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on my enemies.*” Very dumb, just very dumb.

When an army is expending energy, they need nutrition. And so what happened was, they're now they're all fainting because they don't have enough energy to continue. And even though, verse 25 and following, they were coming through a forest, where they saw honey sitting on the ground. No one dared taste any of it. Any of it, is that right? Any of the honey. Because of what Saul had said, and the oath that he had put everyone under.

Well, Jonathan didn't hear what his dad said, so he's walking through the forest with these guys, and he sees the honey. He takes his stick, and he pokes in there and grabs it, and he eats it. And his energy comes back. The Bible actually says his eyes brightened, which is a way of saying he regained his energy.

And so somebody comes up to him and says, hey, verse 28, “*Your... (dad) strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, ‘Cursed be the man who eats food...’*” And Jonathan responds in verse 29 by saying, “*My father has troubled the land.*” That's a very, very nice way of saying, that was really dumb. It was a really dumb thing my dad did.

And then he goes on to tell him why. He says, how much better would it have been? How much better had this battle been if we would have been strong from eating food and being able to defeat the Philistines.

And, nonetheless, it says, “<sup>31</sup> *They struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very faint.*” And eventually, when nighttime came, it says in verse 32, they “*...pounced on the spoil (meaning animals) and (they) ...slaughtered them on the ground. And the people ate them with the blood.* (still in it)”

What they would do back in those days is they would slaughter animals on a rock and they would use a rock to drain the blood from the animal before they

would cook the meat. But they were so hungry, they were so famished, they just killed the animals and without draining the blood, they just began to consume the meat. And that was against the law of Moses.

God said very clearly in the Word, do not eat the meat of an animal with the blood still in it. Why? God said, I have reserved the blood for sacrifice. Right? So God had told them never to do that.

Well, word gets to Saul about this whole thing, and he's told that the people are sinning against the Lord. Look what he says at the end of verse 33. "*You have dealt treacherously;...*" So he blames the people for what was really his mistake rather than saying, you know what, this is my fault. I made a stupid oath and kept him from eating.

And so he tells them to roll a big stone over, and then tells everybody to bring their animal, and to properly drain the blood, so they don't sin against the Lord.

And there Saul built an altar and begins to inquire of the Lord, verse 36 and following, about going down and finishing the job of the Philistines. The priests encourage him to inquire of the Lord, but the Lord doesn't respond. The Lord won't answer. And Saul rightly discerns that this is because something has gone wrong, someone has sinned.

So he begins to take, they begin to cast lots among the people to find out who it was who sinned. Eventually the lot comes to Jonathan and he says to Jonathan, what have you done? Verse 43 and Jonathan says, hey, "*I tasted a little honey,*" now I just have to die. And his father, if you look at verse 44, it's pretty sobering. He says, "...*Saul said, "God do so to me and more also; you shall surely die, Jonathan."*"

And basically what Saul was willing to do was he was willing to kill his son rather than just to humble himself and admit that he was at fault. And you're seeing now a more hardened character and pridefulness that just won't say, I'm wrong.

Have you ever met somebody that just has never apologized in their life? I've had women come to me. I've had men come to me and talk to me about their spouse. And say, I have never once in our entire marriage heard my spouse ever say these words, I was wrong. I'm sorry. Can you imagine?

If I couldn't say I'm sorry, I wouldn't have anything else to say. I mean, I have to say it so often. I, yeah, I can't imagine somebody who is just so quick to always share, to move the blame.

And the people basically verse 45 and following rescued Jonathan So that he didn't die. They said far be it from us to take Jonathan's life because God worked a great salvation in Israel and not one hair of his head will fall to the ground for he has worked with God this day. So the people rescued him that day.

And verse 46 says, *“then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.*

*<sup>47</sup> When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned he routed them. <sup>48</sup> And he did valiantly and struck the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them.*

*<sup>49</sup> Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchi-shua. And the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn was Merab, and the name of the younger Michal. <sup>50</sup> And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. <sup>51</sup> Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.*

*<sup>52</sup> There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he attached him to himself.” Or he took him into his service.*

We'll stop there.