

Title: Biblical Faith
Scripture: 1 Samuel 14:1-14
Series: God, the True King!

1. Introduction:

- a. The last time we studied the book of first Samuel, we understood that King Saul was a religious man but not a converted one.
 - i. Saul had acted foolishly in offering the sacrifice himself instead of waiting for Samuel the prophet, as he had been commanded to do.
 - ii. Saul's disobedience, a disobedience that would mark the entirety of his life, caused God to reject his family from ruling. Because of this disobedience, Samuel abandoned Saul, which was indicative of God's presence is removed. From this point forward, the reign of King Saul was destined to fail.
 - iii. King Saul finds himself without the guiding presence of God's word as given to him by Samuel. In essence, Saul is left in the darkness of his disobedience.
 - iv. In our previous chapter, the hope we had for a godly king quickly vanished. We were left with a feeling of foreboding.
- b. Today we see the results of a man ruling but without divine guidance. We encounter a broken and helpless king—a pale picture of what could have been.
- c. However, where one man fails, God often raises another. God loves his people and will not leave them

without godly leadership. Our passage begins with such a man. Today we study the faithfulness of the Prince Jonathan.

2. Verses 1-5: Johnathan, a Man of Faith: One day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." But he did not tell his father. (2) Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah in the pomegranate cave at Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men, (3) 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. (4) 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. The name of the one was Bozez and the name of the other Seneh. (5) The one crag rose on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

- a. Our story opens with Jonathan taking the initiative to engage the Philistines in battle by climbing two very steep craggy rocks impassable by the biblical account. This decision would seem rash and foolhardy to the average person. After all, we reason, what can two men do against such great odds? But all is not as it seems! We have come to understand that one man, empowered by God the Holy Spirit, can become an unstoppable

force. This is a lesson that Jonathan had learned from scripture.

- i. Johnathan understood well what is recorded in **Joshua 23:10-11** One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, just as he promised you. (11) Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God.
- b. However, our scripture tells us that Jonathan did not let his father know of his plans. The most probable reason for this was that he thought that his father would forbid him from going in the first place. After all, as our story unfolds, we see that Saul was missing the boldness of a faith that trusts in the sovereign God.
- c. But what about the rest of Israel's leadership? The author of the book of Samuel describes the deplorable spiritual condition of this group. We find Saul the king and Ahijah the high priest unable to defeat the enemy. Both men are sitting helplessly while Israel is being decimated.
 - i. But why have Ahijah in the camp? If you remember, at God's command, Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, had left King Saul. With Samuel's departure, King Saul had no prophetic guidance. Therefore, Saul settled for the rejected priestly line of Eli. Both Eli and King Saul's rejected line are leading the people of God.
 1. We must ask ourselves, what help can such a king and a priest provide? What hope can we find in Ichabod (the glory has departed)? None! Most of

the army has either fled and hid or defected to the enemy.

- d. But Jonathan is not cut from the same cloth as his father. Jonathan is a man that loves, believes and obeys God. The king and the high priest sit by powerlessly while the Crown Prince chooses to instead stand upon faith. Jonathan is a man that all Christians should desire to emulate.

3. Verses 6 and 7: Faith in God the Savior: 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." (7) 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."

- a. We can hardly claim that Jonathan's faith was a product of his environment. His father had failed in that regard. But somehow, by the grace of God, Jonathan's roots had sunk deep into the fertile soil of faith. He had learned to trust God in the impossible. He understood that without faith, a man could never please God.
- b. What we see in Jonathan is biblical faith. We must be careful not to think that Johnathan possessed a spirit of optimism. A quick look back at the details of our passage should convince us that there were no grounds for optimism at this point. What we have here is not optimism but pure and unadulterated faith. Faith can arise even when no reason for optimism exists.

i. Faith arises in such a situation because it looks not to circumstances but to the sovereign God. Johnathan's words teach us a great deal about faith:

1. Faith is bold: **Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised.**

a. Faith leads into battle and does not look at the enemy's power; instead, it trusts in the power of God. Notice with what contempt Jonathan addresses these enemies of the Lord. They are uncircumcised. The excess flesh of unbelief has never been removed. How dare men like this presume to fight against God and His people.

i. **Psalms 2:1-4** Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? (2) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, (3) "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." (4) He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.

2. Faith calls a man to place great expectation on God: **It may be that the LORD will work for us.**

a. Faith empowers a man to believe that God can and often does work his great purpose in our lives. It believes that God is a God of the impossible.

- i. **Genesis 18:14A** Is anything too hard for the LORD?
3. Faith does not presume upon God: **It may be that the LORD will work for us.**
 - a. Here, Jonathan indicates that God can or can choose not to act. There is no assurance in the words, **it may be**. How can anyone know what God will do at any given time? We cannot see unless we place ourselves in God's hands.
 - i. There is no limit to how God can save!
4. Faith has a clear conviction about God: **for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving.**
 - a. What great truth to consider. Both physical and spiritual, Salvation is work that only God can accomplish. No power, man, or angelic being can hinder God.
 - i. **Isaiah 14:27** For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?
 - ii. **Job 42:2** "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
5. Faith recognizes God's usual manner of working: **by many or by few**; we can add by some or by none. God does not need us!
 - a. **Acts 17:24-25** The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by

man, (25) nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

- ii. In other words, Jonathan is not trusting in his daring scheme. Jonathan's boldness expresses his trust in God and his past faithfulness.
- c. Faith encourages Faith. Jonathan's armor-bearer said, **"Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul."** To be encouraged in our faith by fellow people of faith is a great gift.
 - i. **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10** Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. (10) For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!
 - ii. **1 Thessalonians 5:11** Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

4. Verses 8-12: Faith's Leading: Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them. (9) If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go up to them. (10) But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up, for the LORD has given them into our hand. And this shall be the sign to us." (11) 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." (12) 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." And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel."

- a. The philistines spotted the two Israelites and immediately ridiculed them. They called Johnathan and his armor-bearer cowards that hid in holes and offered to teach Jonathan and his armor-bearer a lesson.
 - i. How easily does this world mock and ridicule the people of God? To the world, Christians are weak. They do not represent much of a threat to the formidable armies of darkness that currently surrounds us. However, the weakness that the world sees in us is not indicative of the power of God that acts on behalf of his people.
 1. The philistines were right to think that two lowly Israelites could pose no harm to a Garrison. But if God is for those two men, then those two men become a real threat.
 - a. Remember what was said about the apostles in **Acts 17:6B** ...These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also,
 2. We find in the scriptures many examples of the outnumbered and outpowered people of God defeating what appears to be the world's formidable forces.

- a. This truth should spur us to the work of spiritual warfare before all Christians. We must confess that we are outnumbered, weak, and often fearful. But for those who trust in God, great victories are promised.
- b. Jonathan now waits for the Lord's response. If the garrison were to bid them to stay while they came down to them, Jonathan would know God had not called them to fight. If the garrison invited them up, something that most sane men would immediately reject, then Jonathan would understand that the Lord had given their enemies into his hands. Fear would have no place in his heart, for he would be assured that this was the Lord's battle.
 - i. The scripture often calls us to remember this truth. We are not to look at the size of the opposing army. We are not to let fear dictate what we are going to do or how we will stand. We are to trust in the Lord of hosts. We read in **2 Chronicles 20:15** And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's.'"

5. Verses 13-14: Faith in Action: Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him. (14) 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.

- a. When we believe that God is able and possibly willing to use such marred vessels as ourselves, we then must act upon our faith. We must quash the fear and the uncertainty that arises in each of our hearts. We must launch ourselves into the battle, trusting that the battle is not ours but his.
 - i. Faith does wait upon the Lord. But then, having been commissioned by God, faith must take action.
 - ii. Jonathan and his armor bearer head into the battle. They climb on their hands and knees. Jonathan does the initial fighting, and his armor-bearer behind him finishes the enemies. The Bible records that 20 men from the garrison died that day.
 1. Faith moves forward, trusting that God will accomplish his very purposes.
 - a. **Isaiah 46:9-10** remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, (10) declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

6. Preview the rest of the story.

7. Benediction:

- a. **Isaiah 45:5-6** I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, (6) that people may know, from the

rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other.

**Public Reading of Scripture:
Isaiah 45:1-13**