

“The LORD’s Victory through Saul”

1 Samuel 11:1-15

INTRO:

King Saul started out very well as the King of the people. We remember Saul was anointed king by Samuel privately in the beginning of **Chapter 10** and then later in that same chapter, Saul was visibly demonstrated to be the LORD’s choice as king through the casting of lots. However, this great ceremony and acknowledgement did not change Saul’s life much. When we meet Saul, here in **chapter 11**, he is not living in a palace, he is working as a farmer in a field.

All of this is going to change as God brings a victory to take Saul from the farm to the monarchy. It all started with a violent attack from Nahash the Ammonite king on Jabesh-gilead. It ends in a restoring of the kingship in Israel. We will explore this chapter

I. An Attack to Open the Door (v. 1-4)

II. The LORD, Saul, and Israel to the Rescue (v. 8-13)

III. Renewing the Kingdom (v. 14-15)

I. An Attack to Open the Door (v. 1-4)

A. Although Saul the son of Kish has been anointed to become the new king in Israel, he was not readily accepted by all. Something must happen to cement the deal and show that Saul is truly to be king. God did that in **1 Samuel 11**. First, there was a crisis.

“Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh-gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, ‘Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you.’ And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, ‘On this condition I will make a covenant with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel.’ Then the elders of Jabesh said to him, ‘Hold off for seven days, that we may send messengers to all the territory of Israel. And then, if there is no one to save us, we will come out to you.’ So the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and told the news in the hearing of the people. And all the people lifted up their voices and wept.” (vs.1–4)

B. Nahash the Ammonite was not a nice man. His desire was to humiliate Israel. (v.2)

“And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, ‘On this condition I will make a covenant with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel.’”

The LORD’s name and honor was inextricably connected to the fate of His covenant people Israel. Nahash hated Israel because he hated Israel’s God.

C. We also face folks who do not hate us, but hate us for Christ's sake. These folks will always be in the world. When we come up against someone like this, remember the Lord Jesus Himself is our only refuge.

II. The LORD, Saul, and Israel to the Rescue (v. 8-13)

A. When Saul comes in from the field he finds his friends weeping and something important happens to him. (v. 6)

“Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul mightily when he heard these words, and he became very angry.”

The Hebrew literally says, the Spirit of God rushed upon him.

1. This phrase echoes the experience of an earlier leader in Israel. A man named Samson. We read how three times the Spirit of God came rushing strongly upon him to help him perform acts of superhuman strength. Saul was about to lead Israel into victory they could have no other way.

2. We might be tempted to ask, “Why did God give Saul the Holy Spirit in this powerful way and He doesn't do the same for us.” In fact, God does. In the New Testament age we are told that the Spirit of God dwells in us. (Romans 8:9)

“However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”

He does in us something even the most powerful army in the world cannot do. He transforms us and enables us to work for Him. (1 John 4:4)

“You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”

B. Saul and his army marched to Jabesh-gilead and attacked the Ammonite camp early. The morning watch was between 2 and 6 am. Saul's troops caught the Ammonites by surprise and completely routed them.

C. Israel's victory was not just the result of Saul's gifts and resourcefulness. It was a victory given by God to validate His choice as king. Immediately after the victory, Saul's approval ratings went up. Some wanted to kill his loyal opposition, but Saul extended mercy instead of justice to them (v. 12-13).

III. Renewing the Kingdom (v. 14-15)

A. *“Then Samuel said to the people, ‘Come and let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there.’ So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they also offered sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.” (1 Smuel 11:14-15)*

1. They went to Gilgal because it was the place that they began in the land. Do you remember what was at Gilgal? The LORD had Joshua place the twelve memorial stones from the middle of the Jordan to Gilgal. The stones were to remind Israel of all the LORD did to bring them into the land of promise and to demonstrate to all that the LORD God was mighty.

2. God sometimes sends us back to the beginning to remind us of all that He has done. We are not here by accident. Like Samuel and Saul, God is at work in our lives. We must remember and camp on **Philippians 1:6**;

“And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

B. The second lesson we learn in **verses 14-15** is how we must continually work at getting our priorities right. We are told that Samuel brought them to Gilgal to *“renew the kingdom.”* It appears from the text this renewal involved two elements.

1. They all reaffirmed their allegiance to Saul as king. We know some had not done that before verse 12.

2. Second, they offered offerings to God. They reaffirmed their relationship with the LORD. We all must do that from time to time. We must again and again turn to God, check our spiritual commitment, and reaffirm that He alone is Lord.