

1 Samuel 13-14.23

LEADERSHIP LESSONS-STEP OUT IN FAITH

DON'T SIT STILL WHILE OTHERS DO THE DIRTY WORK

DON'T TRY TO TAKE THE CREDIT

Good morning and thank you for joining us. I hope you had a great thanksgiving. Would you please turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 13?

Over the last few weeks, we've seen the rise of a man named Saul, who is now the 1st king of Israel. And if you recall from last week's study, Saul was riding high as the Israelites were victorious under the Ammonites. Afterward the prophet Samuel led the nation to repentance, and God promised the nation that as long as they obeyed Him, and trusted Him, He would still bless the people. What we studied last week was in fact King Saul's finest hour.

This morning we're going to have an uncomfortable front row seat of the beginning of the fall of King Saul. We're going to study chapter 13 and the 1st half of chapter 14, and the title of this morning's message is FORWARD BY FAITH

Let's pray

Every job or vocation has a job description. Even if it's not in writing, every role a person has comes with it essential job expectations, duties, and responsibilities. And that is of course true of a nations king. The king of Israel was expected to rule the nation, and lead the nation, and protect the nation militarily. However, nowhere was the king permitted to also take on the role of priest. And this is what we'll see this morning from Saul.

1-2

1 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,[fn] 2 Saul chose for himself three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent. After Saul's victory over the Ammonites, he sends the Hebrew army back to their homes. He keeps a small militia to protect himself as the king. And we learn here he also gives 1k troops to Jonathan. And we'll learn later on that this Jonathan is actually Saul's son.

3 And Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear!" 4 Now all Israel heard it said that Saul had attacked a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel had also become an abomination to the Philistines. And the people were called together to Saul at Gilgal. It was Jonathan who slew the Philistines, but Saul blew the trumpet, trying to make it appear as though the victory was his own. This is a concerning peek into the heart and character of Saul. His own sense of insecurity will not allow any of his own people, even his own son to receive credit.

It's wisely been said that the limb that bears the most fruit always hangs the lowest. If we're truly fruitful, there won't be a lifting up, but a bending down in humility. This was not the case with Saul.

5 Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty[fn] thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. This is a terrifying army that is set up to crush the nation of Israel.

6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. The troops were so frightened at the size of their opponent, they abandoned the battlefield. They went AWOL. Notice they were so panicked they would hide anywhere they could-didn't matter if it were a cave or a field of thorns. It's utter terror.

7-8

7 And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. 8 Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. Saul is face to face with a huge test of faith. The philistine army is gathered against the nation. Evidently Samuel, the priest and prophet told Saul to wait so that Samul could offer a sacrifice to God, and pray for Israel's victory.

But 7 days has past, and Samuel is nowhere to be found.

From a military standpoint Saul needs to act! The longer Saul waits to launch his strike against the Philistines the more his troops unravel. Every moment that Saul delays, the panic spreads among the troops and the pressure mounts.

Yet Saul doesn't dare go into battle without committing the battle to God – but a sacrifice is not a king's privilege. Nowhere in the responsibilities of king is it permissible to make an offering. It takes Samuel, a priest, to initiate a sacrifice.

What's a king to do?

Waiting on the Lord is hard, isn't it? I'm convinced waiting on the Lord is one of, if not the hardest part of walking with Jesus.

FB Meyer once said, “God can only use those who trust Him absolutely; and He often tests them by long delays.”

How many messes have we found ourselves in because we failed to wait upon the Lord?

Back to our text, the seconds tick by, and Samuel the prophet is nowhere to be found.

So Saul decides to take matter into his own hands, he can't wait on Samuel anymore...

9 So Saul said, “Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me.” And he offered the burnt offering.

10 Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; Pause here: the blood is still dripping from his knife, when Samuel shows up.

That's often how it works with waiting—the last moments of waiting are usually the most difficult and they powerfully tempt us to take matters into our own hands.

Saul the king has now performed the role of a priest, something clearly forbidden by God, and now Samuel shows up

...10 and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him. This is not a ‘hey man how are you, I missed you’ type of greeting. Literally, the Hebrew word is baw-rak, which means that Saul wanted to bless Samuel — much like a priest blesses the people.

It appears that Saul has changed his own job description. Being king isn't enough, no now Saul decides he will take on the role of priest by first offering sacrifice and then giving a blessing.

You can almost picture king Saul, you've likely met people like this, trying to show Samuel how spiritual he is.

We're going to break down verse 11

11 And Samuel said, “What have you done?” Pause here: Samuel is not fooled. And what you’re about to read in Saul’s response is a classic example of 3 part excuse making and failure to trust God.

...11 Saul said, “When I saw that the people were scattered from me, **SHOW THIS** Excuse #1-“I had to do something to motivate the people so they would do the will of God”

But if Saul had obeyed and trusted God, God would’ve brought the victory over the Philistines with or without the people. **CLOSE**

Excuse 2:

...11 and that you did not come within the days appointed, **SHOW THIS** Excuse 2:‘You see Samuel, it was really your fault. If you had arrived on time, I wouldn’t have done this.’ **CLOSE**

And excuse 3:

...11 and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, 12 then I said, ‘The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD.’ Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering.” **SHOW THIS** Excuse 3 is “We really needed God’s help against the Philistines, and we needed it now, so I had to do it.” **CLOSE**

The way Saul explained his reasoning for offering the sacrifice makes it clear his making a sacrifice wasn’t a simple, honest mistake. Saul didn’t say to Samuel, “Did I do something wrong?” He knew exactly what he did and perhaps even thought of the excuses ahead of time.

You know what’s happening here-Saul acted on his feelings, not his faith. Feelings, and pressures, and snap decisions get us into deep trouble don’t they?

Samuel now proclaims God's judgment upon Saul and his household...

13-14

13 And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you. Pause here...Despite all the excuses, all the reasons, all the blaming of someone else, the bottom line was that Saul didn't obey God.

I want to be clear-we all make mistakes. We even make mistakes when we think the Lord is leading us in one direction to only find out that wasn't so. That's not what took place here. This is a blatant disregard of God's command.

...13 For now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.

14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you." This was a defining moment. Saul fails the test, and God declares Saul can't be trusted.

Saul will continue to sit on Israel's throne for 20 more years. He will still be on the throne as a king, but it will never be the same because the end of his kingdom is certain. A king was to establish a dynasty, where their sons would sit on the throne after their death. God now tells Saul that his descendants would not reign after him.

God is still seeking for Himself men and women after His own heart. We can have all the outward signs of service to God, we can wow others with all the wonderful ministry we do and even

influence with others we may have. But what God wants most is our hearts.

15 Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.[fn] And Saul numbered the people present with him, about six hundred men. Remember it was just 3,000, but many of Saul's entourage have fled.

16-18

16 Saul, Jonathan his son, and the people present with them remained in Gibeah of Benjamin. But the Philistines encamped in Michmash. 17 Then raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned onto the road to Ophrah, to the land of Shual, (northward)

18 another company turned to the road to Beth Horon, (westward),

and another company turned to the road of the border that overlooks the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. (eastward).

These commando raids of the Philistines were intended to immobilize Israel's army. Their mission was to cut off travel and supply lines and prohibit Saul from rallying and supporting Israel's troops.

Verses 19-21 give us shocking information of the state of Israel's army at this time

19 Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make swords or spears." 20 But all the Israelites would go down to the Philistines to sharpen each man's plowshare, his mattock, his ax, and his sickle; 21 and the charge for a sharpening was a pim[fn] for the plowshares, the mattocks, the forks, and the axes, and to set the points of the goads. And you can be sure no Israelite left

with a really sharp edge. The Philistines didn't want the Israelite farmers turning tools into weapons.

Remember the Philistines were a sea-faring people. They'd imported the ability to smelt and sharpen iron from Greece. It was a significant military advantage they wanted to keep.

22 So it came about, on the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan. But they were found with Saul and Jonathan his son.” Only the royal family had a sword or spear. Any army Israel might muster would be vastly unarmed. This is a dire situation for a people lacking of faith.

23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash. So picture the scene. Israel is dramatically outnumbered. The troops are melting away. And on top of that, there's no weapons to fight, and not only that the Philistines have a ridiculous number of chariots and horsemen.

The only way the Israelites could ever win was to trust in God for everything.

This is where we find ourselves as Christians isn't it? We're vastly outnumbered, we're outranked, and we have no weapons in of ourselves. The only way to be victorious is to fully trust God in everything, even when it doesn't make sense.

Chapter 14

1 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 Philistines' garrison that is on the other side.” But he did not tell his father. An armor bearer was more than just a servant who carried your helmet and shield. He was a sidekick - a brave and trusted battle buddy.

The Israelites were in a military conflict where victory seemed impossible. They were vastly outnumbered and greatly surpassed in military technology. Yet Jonathan was bold enough to go over to the Philistine garrison just to see what the LORD might do.

Perhaps Jonathan thought of Shamgar - **Judges 3:31 After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.**

Hey if God could do it through Shamgar, He could do it through Jonathan!

2-3

2 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 six hundred men. 3 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. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone." Saul's actions are the exact opposite of Jonathan's. Saul, the bold, brave, king was simply sitting under a pomegranate tree while the Philistines wreaked havoc in Israel.

Saul and the priest with the ephod sat back while Jonathan bravely trusted God.

SHOW PIC It was the largest oil spill in American history and in a sense, it was largely the fault of one man. The tanker Exxon Valdez, you might remember, ran aground on a reef in Alaska's Prince William Sound. The resulting oil spill did incalculable damage to the local fishing industry, to the environment in that very majestic piece of America, and to a lot of wildlife. The Commander of the Coast Guard said the passage there is ten miles across. He said, "so wide your children could pilot a tanker through there!" So how did this happen? Well, an unlicensed

third-mate was on the bridge that day, piloting the vessel. He was where the captain should have been. The captain was down below! That disaster happened largely because the man who should have been on the bridge - wasn't! **CLOSE PIC**

4-5

4 Between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' 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. 5 The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah. During his reconnaissance, Jonathan noticed two sharp rocks that formed a narrow passage between them. The rocks even had names: Bozez (which means glistening), and the other Seneh (which means thorny). Jonathan realizes at this location a couple of guys could fend off a multitude.

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." The only thing in the Bible we ever seen that restrains God is unbelief. Remember when Jesus was in Nazareth in **Matthew 13:58 Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.**

God's power is never restrained, but His will can be restrained by our unbelief. He may choose not to act until we partner with Him in trust.

William Carey, famous missionary of generations past said, "Attempt great things for God and expect great things from God. Every believer ought to be involved in something so big that, unless God is in it, it's doomed to fail."

We all need to be willing to take some ventures of faith. Are we warriors for God who cross back and forth through enemy territory - on the lookout for opportunities to count for Jesus?

Sadly, when it comes to faith, many Christians act more like Saul than they do Jonathan. Saul was focused upon himself and self-preservation. He was massaging his bumps and bruises. But despite daunting circumstances, Jonathan was willing to step out in faith and see what the Lord might do.

7 So his armorbearer said to him, “Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart.” This is one of the great benefits of having a church board. Before we take a venture of faith as a church, we pray about it together, and assure unanimity.

8-10

8 Then Jonathan said, “Very well, let us cross over to these men, and we will show ourselves to them. 9 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. 10 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.” Although Jonathan and his armor-bearer said, “Let’s step out and see what the Lord might want to do,” they weren’t being presumptuous- they said, “If the Lord doesn’t want us to go, we’re not going to plunge ahead.” Here we see a wonderful balance.

A lot of people wait for something to happen—but they wait at a great distance. It’s like they’re saying, “Lord if You want to do something with me, you know where to reach me.”

I think a better way is to do what Jonathan did. He stood on the edge. He was at the door. He wasn’t going to force it, but he was in a place to storm through it.

The Lord has promised to close doors no man can open and to open doors no man can shut **Revelation 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":[fn]**

But there's one important fact about a door we can't miss. You can't see if a door is open or closed from a long distance. You've got to be there. That's what Jonathan did-he put himself in the position to see if the Lord was going to use him in this way.

11 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." 12 Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something." This isn't show and tell-they're inviting them to be slaughtered.

...12 Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel." 13 And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them. Notice the journey BEFORE the battle began which the Lord had given them. they had to climb on their hands and knees. This is often how it is-it's a struggle before the battle even begins.

I wonder how often we get tired, discouraged, and give up before the Lord is about to deliver us in the battle??

14 That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land.[fn] 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. Before we

move on, let me sum up the five components of Jonathan's venture of faith. **SHOW THIS**

First, a daring faith... v 6

Second, a deliberate plan... v 8-10

Third, a discernment of God's will... v 10

Fourth, a discreet approach...v 10 They didn't just charge into the camp kamikaze style. Jonathan climbed discreetly to the top of the rock where he could gain an upper hand.

And fifth, a divine intervention...v15 ...God joined the venture.

CLOSE THIS

Jonathan used his heart and sword, but God did what Jonathan could not do — send a great earthquake to terrify the Philistines. Often, we wait around for God to do what we can do. But God will often do miracles — what He alone can do — if we will do what we can do.

16-17

16 Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and there was the multitude, melting away; and they went here and there. 17 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 armorbearer were not there. This was a useless exercise at the moment. Saul should go and fight the Philistines. Instead, he was probably worried about who was leading the battle and who would get the credit.

18 And Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark[fn] of God here" (for at that time the ark[fn] of God was with the children of Israel). Saul is probably trying to look spiritual here, but there was nothing to seek God about. There is a time to go aside and pray, and there

is a time to get your sword out and fight. Saul didn't know what time this was.

19 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." Eventually, the noise of God and Jonathan fighting against the Philistines became so loud that Saul knew he had to also fight. So, he told the priest "Withdraw your hand." This meant, "Stop seeking an answer from God with the urim and thummin," which were held in a pouch in the priest's breastplate.

We'll end our study this morning in verses 20-23

20 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 very great confusion. 21 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. 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 the battle. 23 So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle shifted to Beth Aven. As this amazing victory unfolded, the Israelites who previously sided with the enemy suddenly found courage to change alliances. Others, hiding away because they were intimidated left their caves and began to fight.

It took only two young men who were willing to say, "Let's go see what the Lord might want to do" to cause fearful men to surface and join the battle. They only came out for Israel when victory was assured.

Sadly that's how it often is today. A few people have the faith and courage to step out for the Lord, and only when victory is guaranteed, will others join in the effort.

Night church OTR-need volunteers

Childrens ministry

Cleaning ministry

Engage outreach

Nursing homes-alf's