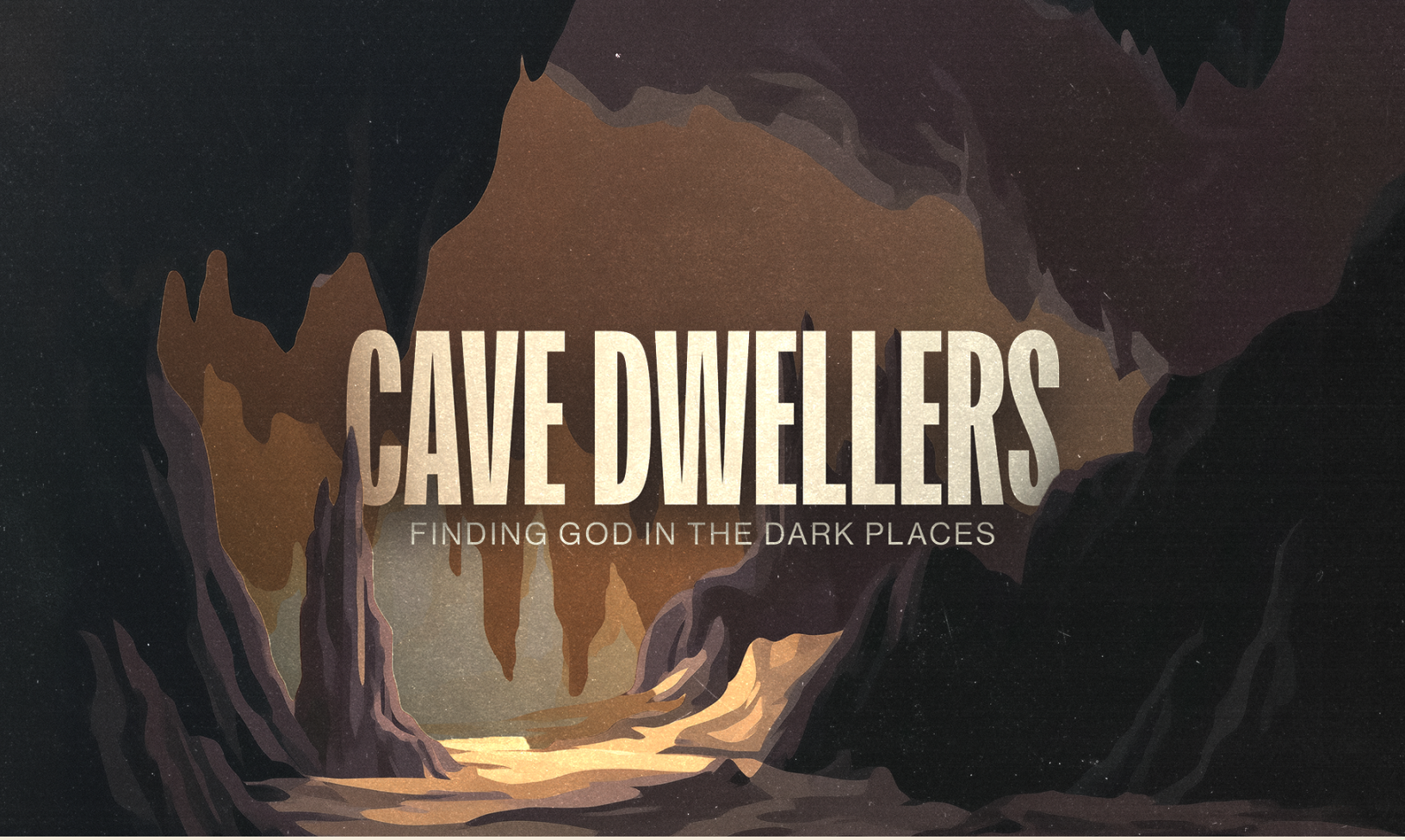


SPECIAL GUEST · PASTOR ERIC BOGGS

The Difference Makers

1 Samuel 14:1–23

5-DAY DEVOTIONAL · SMALL GROUP GUIDE

5-DAY DEVOTIONAL

Answering the Call

DAY 1 Stop Hiding, Start Moving

READING · 1 SAMUEL 14:1–14

Jonathan refused to stay in hiding while the enemy held ground. He did not wait for perfect conditions or guaranteed outcomes. He simply said, “Perhaps the Lord will help us,” and moved forward. That word “perhaps” is not weakness. It is honest, courageous faith. It acknowledges that we cannot control outcomes, but we can control our obedience. Many believers remain spiritually dormant, waiting for certainty before they act. But God rarely hands us certainty before He asks for movement. Where have you been hiding? What enemy has you pinned down through fear or passivity? Today, take one step forward.

REFLECTION

What is one area of your life where fear has replaced forward movement?

TRY THIS WEEK

Identify one thing you have been postponing out of fear and take a single concrete step toward it today.

DAY 2 Walking on Water Requires Leaving the Boat

READING · MATTHEW 14:22–33

Peter is often criticized for sinking, but consider this: he is the only disciple who walked on water. The other eleven stayed dry and safe, but they never experienced the miracle. The text describes how Peter, seeing the wind and waves, became afraid and began to sink. His doubt was real, but so was his cry, and so was Jesus reaching down to catch him. God does not disqualify you when you waver. He catches you. The guarantee was never that Peter would not struggle. The guarantee was that Jesus was already standing on the water waiting. You cannot walk on water from inside the boat.

REFLECTION

What boat are you sitting in right now that God may be calling you to step out of?

TRY THIS WEEK

Share one God-given dream or calling with a trusted friend or mentor this week as an act of accountability and courage.

DAY 3 God Refuses to Make Faith Unnecessary

READING · HEBREWS 11:1–6

Hebrews 11 describes how it is impossible to please God without faith. This is not a suggestion. It is a design principle. God intentionally orders the lives of those who follow Him in such a way that faith is always required. He will not hand you a life you can fully figure out on your own. If everything in your life makes complete logical sense, you may not be walking at the edge of what God is calling you toward. This is not recklessness. It is surrender. The men and women described in Hebrews 11 did not receive everything they were promised in their lifetimes, yet they kept believing. That is the kind of faith that moves heaven.

REFLECTION

In what area of your life is God asking you to trust Him beyond what you can logically calculate?

TRY THIS WEEK

Write down one promise from Scripture that speaks to your current challenge and place it somewhere visible as a daily reminder of God's faithfulness.

DAY 4 Stand in the Gap

READING · EZEKIEL 22:29–31

God searched the land for one person willing to stand in the gap and found no one. That is one of the most sobering statements in all of Scripture. Not because God was powerless, but because He chooses to work through people. He is still searching. He is still looking for the man, the woman, the family that will say, “Here I am.” The gap in your family, your neighborhood, your workplace, someone needs to fill it. The question is not whether God is calling. The question is whether you will answer. Somebody, anybody, everybody, and nobody are not the answer. You are. The call has your name on it.

REFLECTION

What gap in your family, community, or church has God been nudging you to fill?

TRY THIS WEEK

Choose one specific area, a relationship, a ministry need, or a community issue, and commit to one act of intentional presence or service this week.

DAY 5 One Person Changes Everything

READING · LUKE 22:31–32

In Luke 22, Jesus tells Peter that after he has gone through his season of trial and returned, he is to strengthen his brothers. God does not waste suffering. He does not waste failure. He does not waste the hard seasons. He redeems them and then sends you back into the world carrying something that only comes through having walked through the fire. One person who says yes to God can alter the course of an entire family tree. One act of obedience, one moment of surrender, one decision to stop hiding, these things echo across generations. You may never fully see the ripple effect of your faithfulness, but it is real. Say yes today.

REFLECTION

How has God used a difficult season in your life to prepare you to serve or encourage someone else?

TRY THIS WEEK

Reach out this week to one person who is going through something you have already walked through. Offer your presence, your story, and your encouragement.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

The Difference Makers

OPENING PRAYER & ICE BREAKER

> *Open your time together in prayer, asking God to stir fresh courage in each person to step out of hiding and answer His call.*

Ice Breaker: When was a time you stepped out in faith and did not know how things would turn out? What happened?

SERMON OVERVIEW

Pastor Eric Boggs drew from two Old Testament passages, 1 Samuel 14 and Ezekiel 22, to challenge believers to step out of passivity and answer the call God has placed on their lives. Using Jonathan and his armor bearer, the message calls every follower of Jesus to recognize that they are not ordinary, that they are in full-time ministry wherever they go, and that the world around them is waiting for someone to stand in the gap.

KEY SCRIPTURE · 1 SAMUEL 14:6

“Perhaps the Lord will help us, for nothing can hinder the Lord. He can win a battle whether he has many warriors or only a few!”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Section 1 · The Enemy of Passivity

1. The Israelites were hiding from the Philistines, and the enemy's goal is to keep us in obscurity, just surviving, just getting by. In what areas do you feel like you've been “hiding in the caves,” holding back from something God may be calling you toward?
2. The enemy's trick is to keep believers at a place of passivity. What does passivity look like in everyday life for a follower of Jesus? What are the most common reasons people stay passive?
3. Do you ever feel like your faith life is more about attending than advancing? What would it look like to shift from one to the other?

Section 2 · The “Maybe” Faith of Jonathan

1. Jonathan told his armor bearer, “Perhaps the Lord will help us,” and stepped out without a guarantee. How comfortable are you with “maybe” faith, moving when you're not certain of the outcome? What makes that kind of faith difficult?
2. “There is no greater enemy to your faith than your ability to reason.” Do you agree or disagree? Can you think of a time your logic talked you out of a step of faith?
3. The armor bearer said, “I am with you completely, whatever you decide.” Who in your life plays that role for you? Who are you playing that role for?

Section 3 · Getting Out of the Boat

1. In Matthew 14, Peter walks on water, but it was his idea, and the other eleven never walked on water because they never got out of the boat. How do you discern the difference between your own ambition and a genuine call from God?
2. Peter began to sink when he shifted his focus from Jesus to the wind and the waves. What are the “winds and waves” in your life right now that tempt you toward doubt?
3. “I cannot guarantee you won't sink. But I guarantee if you stay in the boat, you will never walk on water.” What is the cost of never getting out of the boat?

Section 4 · Standing in the Gap

1. Ezekiel 22 describes God searching for someone to stand in the gap and rebuild the wall of righteousness, and finding no one. Where do you see a gap in your family, neighborhood, workplace, or community that needs someone to step into it?
2. The things we complain about that we could actually do something about are areas of responsibility. What is something you've been complaining about that you could take action on?
3. “You can wait on somebody else to do it, or you can be the man, the woman that does the right thing.” Is there a situation where you've been waiting on someone else to act?

Section 5 · The Ripple Effect of One Life

1. Pastor Eric shared the story of his great-grandfather, Uncle Bud, whose life was spared and transformed by an encounter with Jesus, and how that one decision changed the entire family tree. Can you trace the faith in your life back to one person who stood in the gap? How does that change the way you think about your own influence?

2. One man or one woman changes everything. Do you truly believe that about your own life? What would it look like to live as though you believed it?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ You are already in full-time ministry. Engineer, nurse, teacher, highway department, wherever you go, you are on mission for God.
- ✓ Active faith means stepping out before you have all the answers. Jonathan moved anyway: “Perhaps the Lord will help us.”
- ✓ God refuses to give you a life where faith is unnecessary. Following Him means situations that require trust, not certainty.
- ✓ Staying in the boat is a guaranteed way to never walk on water.
- ✓ God is looking for someone to stand in the gap. That gap still exists in families, neighborhoods, schools, and communities.
- ✓ What you can complain about but could actually do something about is an area of responsibility, not just frustration.

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Choose one or more to put into practice this week:

Option 1 Identify Your Mission Field

Write down three to five people in your everyday life, at work, in your neighborhood, in your family, who do not know Jesus or who need someone to stand in the gap for them. Begin praying for them by name this week.

Option 2 Take One Step Out of the Boat

Identify one area where you've been holding back out of fear or uncertainty. Take one concrete step forward this week, even if the outcome isn't guaranteed, and tell someone in your group so they can pray and follow up.

Option 3 Fill a Gap You've Been Avoiding

Think of one situation, a difficult conversation, a relationship that needs repair, a need in your community, where you've been waiting for someone else to act. Commit to stepping into that gap this week.

Option 4 Strengthen Someone Else

In Luke 22, Jesus tells Peter to strengthen his brothers after his trial. Think of someone going through something hard, and reach out this week with a word of encouragement or a practical act of support.

Option 5 Audit Your Complaints

List two or three things you regularly complain about. For each, ask honestly: is this something I can actually do something about? If yes, write down one action and commit to taking it.

CLOSING REFLECTION & PRAYER

> *Sit quietly for a few minutes and ask God: where are you calling me to step up, and what has been holding me back? Then close your time together in prayer, asking God to give each person the courage of Jonathan, to step out, to trust that perhaps God will show up, and to leave the outcome in His hands.*

FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Memory Verse · Hebrews 11:6. Without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

> *"I cannot guarantee you will not sink. But I guarantee if you stay in the boat, you will never walk on water.*
>
> PASTOR ERIC BOGGS