

15. The Beginning of the End

- Part 2 Pride

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Last week I mentioned that these three chapters, chapter 13 through 15, contain sins of king Saul - Impatience, Pride and Disobedience. In the midst of the list of a person's sins, we find a young man, Jonathan, the son of king Saul follows the Lord with all of his heart, mind, soul and strength. It is such refreshing to see this kind of godly man.

Last 15 years of walk with Christ, I am learning that our God is a limitless God of wonders. But we are the ones who limit Him in our lives.

A. AN ARMY WITH NO WEAPON

1 Sam 13:16-23 Saul, Jonathan his son, and the people present with them remained in Gibeah of Benjamin. But the Philistines encamped in Michmash. Then raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned to the road to Ophrah, to the land of Shual, another company turned to the road to Beth Horon, and another company turned to the road of the border that overlooks the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. 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." But all the Israelites would go down to the Philistines to sharpen each man's plowshare, his mattock, his ax, and his sickle; and the charge for a sharpening was a pim for the plowshares, the mattocks, the forks, and the axes, and to set the points of the goads. 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. And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

The Philistines had superior military technology, and they wanted to keep it that way. They imported weapons and know-how from mostly Greek. It is very likely that in the former wars the Philistines carried away all the blacksmiths from the Israelites.

Satan doesn't want us to have the full armor of God and the weapon against him. He will do anything to take away the Word of God which is the sword of the Spirit from us. I am not saying that satan will take away our Bibles. What I am saying is that he does his best to take away the time we spend in the Word of God with any kind of distractions such as TV, newspaper, computer, car even our family members. We must guard our time with God and His Word as the first priority in our lives.

B. STEPPING OUT IN FAITH

1 Sam 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.

The Israelites were vastly outnumbered, and were greatly surpassed in military technology. Yet Jonathan is bold enough to go over to the Philistine garrison just to see what the Lord might want to do.

He considered there was no way the Lord had forsaken Israel. Sure, the odds were great against them. But God was greater than the odds. He had won great victories against great odds before, as in the days of Moses, Gideon or Samson. Even

though there were no metal weapons in the Israelite camp, Jonathan trusted his God over weapons.

Leviticus 26:8 Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.

Armor-bearers in ancient times had to be unusually brave and loyal, since the lives of their masters often depended on them.

1 Sam 14:2-3 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. 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.

What a contrast! The big tall handsome king is simply sitting under a pomegranate tree with his 600 personal body guards while his son boldly goes over to the Philistine garrison. Again we see another character flaw of Saul.

Pomegranate tree symbolize a victory. Saul was far from the battleline and thinking that he already won. Probably that is the reason why Jonathan did not tell his father about his attack.

Did you notice no one knew that Jonathan and his armor bearer were gone? This indicates that Jonathan did not go over to the Philistine garrison out of a desire for personal glory. If that was his motivation, he would have told at least a few people that he had gone over.

1 Sam 14:4-5 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. The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah.

Seneh means 'pointed rock' and Bozez means 'slippery.' They were two rocks between which Jonathan and his armor-bearer entered the garrison of the Philistines.

C. BIG GODDER AND SMALL GODDER

1 Sam 14:6 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."

For Jonathan, this was more than a reconnaissance expedition. He wanted to see what God could do through two men who would trust him and step out boldly. Jonathan knew God wanted to use someone. His father, king Saul, just wanted to sit under a pomegranate tree. Something had to be done, and Jonathan was willing to be used by God to do it.

Many Christians would say and agree that there is nothing for God cannot do. But do they really believe it? That is entirely different story.

Some people are big godder. Some are small godder. Now you are thinking, "That crazy Korean guy is making up his own word." That's right. But listen to me, please. A person with a complete trust in God and live as he believe is a big godder. A person who believes that God can do all things except his, is a small godder.

God cannot and will not do His work to the small godder as He would to the big godder.

Matt 13:54-58 And when He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?" So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Jonathan was a big godder and had a big God to trust.

1 Sam 14:7 So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart."

Jonathan's armorbearer didn't say, "What is this "WE," white man?" like Tonto of the Lone Ranger.

Almost always, when God uses a man, he calls others around that man to support and help him. They are just as important in getting God's work done as the man God calls. If you can't be a Jonathan, then find a Jonathan - and attach yourself to him as like Jonathan's armor bearer.

1 Sam 14:8-10 Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to these men, and we will show ourselves to them. 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. 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."

In his step of faith, Jonathan wants to know he is really being led by God. Jonathan is showing wisdom, not unbelief. To this point, he is not acting on a specific, confirmed word from God. Instead, he is following the bold hope and impression of his heart. He is humble enough to know his heart might be wrong on this day, so Jonathan asks God to guide him.

This is not the same as Gideon's setting of a fleece (Judges 6:36-40). Gideon had a confirmed word of God to guide him, and he doubted God's word. Jonathan was not doubting God's word, he was doubting his own heart and mind.

Jonathan is prompted by faith. Significantly, he does not demand to know the whole battle plan from God in advance. He is willing to take it one step at a time, and let God plan it out. Faith is willing to follow God without knowing the whole plan and being shown our part one step at a time.

1 Sam 14:11-12 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." Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something." Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the Lord has delivered them into the hand of Israel."

What an exciting moment this must have been for Jonathan! His bold trust in God had been confirmed by a sign, and now he knew God was going to do something great.

1 Sam 14:13-14 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. That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land.

This was a difficult climb. Jonathan was not the kind to say, "Well, it would be nice to do this. But the rocks are steep and there are a lot of Philistines up there. Let's just pray instead." No, he got down on his hands and knees and climbed! If we only want victory, or want to be used by God when it is easy, we won't see much victory and we won't be used very much.

1 Sam 14:15 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.

Jonathan and his armor bearer had done their part. Now God was doing His part. Often we wait around for God to do what we can do. But God will do miracles - what He alone can do - if we will do what we can do.

D. BATTLE, WHAT BATTLE?

1 Sam 14:16-17 Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and there was the multitude, melting away; and they went here and there. 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.

Why roll call? Does it matter? What Saul should have done was go and fight the Philistines at this strategic moment. Instead, he was probably worried about who was leading the battle, and who would get the credit.

1 Sam 14:18-19 And Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here" (for at that time the ark of God was with the children of Israel). 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."

Why the ark of God? If I found out that my kid is in the middle of a battle against my enemy, I'd be there instead of wasting time in trying to pretend to be spiritual. There is a time to pray, and there is a time to get a sword out and fight.

1 Sam 14:20 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.

It didn't matter if the Philistines greatly outnumbered the Israelites, and had far better weapons. God was more than able to set the Philistines against each other. If the Israelites had no swords, the Lord would use the swords of the Philistines against the Philistines!

E. ME TOO!

1 Sam 14:21-23 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. 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. So the Lord saved Israel that day, and the battle shifted to Beth Aven.

70 People were coming out of woodwork. The people who were with the Philistines turn their colors and joined the force with the Israelites and the people who AWOLed

from their Israelites' posts, also came out against the Philistines. It looks like right after a Super Bowl. The majority of football fans could care less about Green Bay Packers, New England Patriots, and Buccaneers before the Super Bowls. It is almost laughable to see all the cars and trucks start to sport the winning team bumper stickers right after the ball game.

These are the same kind people who join God's side when they need something, but desert Him when everything goes haywire. I guess we can call them "Fair weather followers."

F. APPLICATIONS

1) Satan wants to take our armors away from us.

Satan will do anything to keep us from praying and reading the Word of God. Let's not fall for it. but let's guard our time with the Lord and His Word.

2) We need to take a step of faith to find out the will of God.

In most cases, we do not know what the Lord wants us to do exactly. He wants us to believe in Him and take a step of faith. He is a big God enough to correct us if we were wrong.

In faith, we all should be involved with something in the Lord that is so big and so outrageously against all odds. So much bigger than our own capability that without God it is so obvious to fail. If we trust God and follow Him, He will do great things.

3) It is very important to take a step of faith, but it is also important to ask the Lord for His guidance and permission.

While the rest of us say, "Take it easy!" the people like Jonathan says, "Take a chance and see what God is going to do." Yet he was not presumptuous. He asked for a sign and permission from God.

Let's not try to kick the door open when the Lord is not opening it.

We see a beautiful balance in taking a step of faith in God, yet careful to listen to God to find His will and His way for our lives. A great application for us.