

# (1 Samuel) Blessings to a Bold Faith

by David Guzik

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*Jonathan's bold trust in God and his willingness to take risks, despite the odds against them, led to a great victory over the Philistines.*

**Duration:** 37:46

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 13:15, 1 Samuel 14:6, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:31, Hebrews 11:6, James 2:17

**Topics:** "Bold Faith", "Trust God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having bold trust in God and being willing to work hard for His purposes. He uses the story of Jonathan and his armor bearer to illustrate this point. Jonathan, motivated by his trust in God, boldly attacks a detachment of Philistines and defeats them. The speaker highlights the contrast between Jonathan's faith and Saul's hesitation, pointing out that when God works, He uses people. The sermon encourages listeners to have the same bold trust in God and willingness to work hard, even in difficult circumstances.

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## Transcript

Beginning at 1st Samuel chapter 13, verse 15. Often as I stand before you, I'll talk about a certain passage of Scripture being one of my favorites or favorite chapter. This time I really mean it because this is just one of the greatest passages of Scripture that you'll find.

A real wonderful example of what it means to step out in a venture of faith. We begin at 1st Samuel chapter 13, beginning at verse 15. You know, whenever God gives you an opportunity to step out in faith, oftentimes it's because you're in some kind of crisis.

We all want to see God move gloriously and do great things. It's just we hardly ever want to be in any kind of circumstance where we would need God to move gloriously and do great things. Well, Israel is going to be just in that kind of circumstance.

1st Samuel 13, beginning at verse 15. Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people who were present with him about 600 men.

Saul, Jonathan his son, and the people who were present with him remained in Gibeah of Benjamin. But the Philistines encamped in Mithmash. And raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies.

One company turned to the road that leads to Orpah, the land of Shual. Another company turned to the road to Beth Haran. And another company turned to the road of the border that overlooks the valley of Zoboam toward the wilderness.

Now, do you understand what that means? Let me sort of translate to you and give you the thought of what's behind verses 15 through 18. Israel's in a lot of trouble. The Philistines have a total military domination over the land of Israel at this time.

Now, the Philistines had been longstanding enemies of the Israelites. But at this time, the Philistines were very strong and very oppressive towards the Israelites. And it came to a point where the Israelites didn't want to take it any longer.

And their king Saul amassed an army, 3,000 men. You're thinking, well, that's a pretty good army. You could do some damage with 3,000 men.

And a detachment of 1,000 under the leadership of Jonathan, the son of Saul, ran out and attacked a garrison of the Philistines. This is all what we took a look at last week in the first part of 1 Samuel 13. And that garrison of the Philistines was attacked by Jonathan and his troops and it fell.

Did that make the Philistines feel like giving up? No, it just made them angry. And they said, we're going to get a real army together and crush these rebellious Israelites. So the Philistines got together an army numbering tens and thousands of troops with chariots and horsemen.

And as I said, thousands and thousands of troops. And they were going to just crush the Israelites. So Saul and his army of 3,000 get together and do some interesting events that we spoke about last week.

His army starts deteriorating away. So verse 15, how many men is that? 600. When you lose 80% of your army in just a week or so, not on the field of battle, but from just men walking away and going home, you're in a lot of trouble.

And that's where the army of Israel was. They were vastly outnumbered. 600 men against tens of thousands of Philistine troops.

If you want a description of the army, take a look at verse 5 of 1 Samuel 13. When the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen and people as the sand, which is on the seashore in multitude. That's the kind of enemy Israel's facing.

Vastly outnumbered. So it doesn't look good for Israel. Can it get worse? Of course it can.

And friends, you know, a small army can defeat a big army if you've got the right kind of technology, right? If you've got military technology, superior weapons, superior things you can use against your enemy, a small army can overcome a big army. Well, did Israel have military technology on their side? Take a look at verse 19. 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 sharpening was a pimp for plowshares and the mattocks and 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 Saul or Jonathan.

But they were found with Saul and Jonathan, his son. And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the paths of Michmash. Well, there was a sophisticated new military technology available in these days.

It was called iron. And the Philistines were careful to monopolize the market on iron. Matter of fact, they took away all the blacksmiths from the Israelites.

So if they couldn't even sharpen a sickle that they would use to harvest grain in the field, you had to go to the Philistines. Not only were the Israelites disarmed, but they were humiliated before the Philistines. You've got to go out and fork out your... What was it? Verse 21 called it a pimp.

I don't know how much a pimp was, but I'm sure a pimp didn't go as far as it used to in those days. And you had to fork out a pimp and get your things sharpened. I bet those Philistines, they didn't sharpen them very sharp and make the guy come back a little sooner for another pimp to charge him.

And, you know, it's just a mess. The Israelites are defeated. They're humiliated.

They're vastly outnumbered. They have military technology against them. It just looks horrible for the Israelites.

They are about to be crushed. And let me tell you, it looks like at the end of chapter 13, that pretty soon you're not going to read about a nation of Israel anymore, that they're just going to be wiped out by the Philistines. It's just going to be a nation of the Philistines.

So what do you do when the situation is that desperate, when it's that dark, when the odds are that stacked against you? Well, you attack. And that's what Jonathan did. Look at verse 1 of chapter 14.

Now, it happened one day that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said to the young man who bore his armor, Come, let us go to the Philistines' garrison that's on their side. But he did not tell his father. Would you see what Jonathan did? Jonathan, as we come through this book of 1 Sam, you get to know more and more this man, Jonathan.

You're going to love this man, Jonathan. We met him last week. He was the one who led those thousand troops against the garrison of the Philistines and defeated that garrison.

But it just made the Philistines all the more angry. Now the Philistines have established a huge army to come and overtake the Israelites. And what does Jonathan do? Jonathan's sitting in camp one day, and this is bothering him.

He says, You know what? This isn't right. Here we are. We're the people of God.

And we've got the God of Israel on our side, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We've got the mighty God who's helped people out many times before. And here we are, cowering in fear before the Philistines.

Sure, they outnumber us a hundred to one. Sure, they've got iron. And all we have is a bunch of sticks and stones and flint arrowheads.

But we've got God on our side. This isn't right. And I can just imagine Jonathan, and I picture it in my mind, there he is laying on his bedroll awake at night.

He can't sleep. This is bothering him so much. This isn't right.

And I'd like to think that a name popped into Jonathan's mind. As he's laying there, he thinks, Shamgar. Yeah, Shamgar.

We've got to remember Shamgar. You remember Shamgar, don't you? Everybody's so quiet. You remember Shamgar? Come on.

You guys know the name of the boat that got shipwrecked in Gilligan's Island. But you don't know who Shamgar is? All right. Keep your finger there.

In the book of 1 Samuel, turn back to the book of Judges. That's just to the left in your Bible. Judges chapter 3, verse 31.

I'd like to think that Jonathan thought of Shamgar at a moment like that. You're not going to find that name in baby name books. But I'll tell you this.

This is a remarkable man in the Scriptures. Judges chapter 3, verse 31. After him was Shamgar the son of Anab, who killed 600 men of the Philistines with an ox goad.

And he also delivered Israel. Well, one man. Shamgar.

This is the only time he's mentioned in the whole Bible. One verse. That's all he gets.

But man, what a great man of God. Do you see what he did? He killed 600 Philistines with what? Do you know what an ox goad is? It's a sharp stick. 600 Philistines.

And I'd like to think Jonathan was laying on his bedroll that night, and he said, Lord, if you could do that through Shamgar, you could do something great through me. Why not? Why couldn't God? Hey, the Lord hasn't forsaken Israel. He's still on his throne.

God gave this land to Israel. He didn't give it to the Philistines. God's given us his promises in his law that five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put 10,000 to flight.

Your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. God's won great victories against great odds before. Think of what he did in the days of Samson and Gideon.

And yes, even Shamgar. God, you could do something great. Why not now? Why not today? Why not through me? So Jonathan says, forget this sitting around the camp waiting for the Philistines to come.

Let's go check out what they're doing at the garrison of the Philistines. So he gets up and he tells his army, let's go over there. Let's check it out.

But if you notice at the end of verse one there in 1 Samuel 14, he did not tell his father. Now, this is what's interesting. You read all the Bible commentators and the Bible scholars.

Well, Jonathan was in sin for not telling his father. He broke the chain of military command. And if he was really walking right with God, he would have told his father.

And you get the other one. So, oh no, Jonathan was wise and not telling his father because if he would have told his father, his father would have said no. And it would have defeated the work that God wanted to do.

And he was an adult. And he was able to make the decisions on his own. And I don't know.

Well, that's Jonathan when we get to heaven, if it was sin, whether or not he didn't ask his father. I don't know. But he just went out and he did it.

And look what happens. Verse two. It's a good thing he didn't tell his dad, I think.

In verse two, it says, and Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree, which is in Migron. You get the contrast here? Here's Jonathan boldly going out in faith. And what's Saul doing? Sitting under the pomegranate tree, probably eating pomegranates.

His finger in his mouth is all stained with that red stuff that comes from the pomegranates. And there he is. All he is is just sitting under the pomegranate tree, waiting for God to do something.

Well, Lord, whenever Jonathan says, God wants to do something and maybe he wants to do it through me. Verse two. The people who were with him were about 600 men.

And Ahijah, the son of Ahitab, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's priest, and Shiloh was wearing an ephod. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. Now, I think this is a good thing.

Because I think it shows that Jonathan's motivation was not personal glory. I think if he was motivated by personal glory, he would have advertised the fact, at least to some people, that he was going to go. But he didn't.

He just went. He and his armor bearer. And they went out.

And they said, let's go see what we can find at the garrison of the Philistines. So they make their way out there and take a look at verse four. Now, 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 Bozes and the name of the other was Senna. And the front of one faced northward, opposite Michmash, and the other southward, opposite Gibeah. Well, Jonathan comes upon something very interesting here.

As he's making his way to the Philistine camp, this huge encamped army of Philistines, enemies of Israel, he notices they're situated in this valley. And the only way into this valley or the only pass between us and them is this pass of rock. It's a narrow trail going through two large rocks, one on one side, one on the other.

Jonathan looks and he goes, this is an incredible strategic position. He's thinking one man could fight a bunch of troops because through this rocky pass, they got to come at you one at a time. What good is it if you have a thousand troops against two men if they have to come at you one or two at a time? So Jonathan, this is perfect.

Now, let me point something out. Jonathan would have never saw this incredibly beneficial, strategic position unless he had gone out to the camp of the Philistines. He wasn't going to see this sitting back in the camp of Israel, but he had a bold trust in God and said, hey, who knows what the Lord wants to do? Let's go out and check out the camp of the Philistines.

And he saw this strategic position. Friends, this was a remarkably strategic military position. Matter of fact, thousands of years after the days of Jonathan, a British general in World War II was fighting some Turks in that very area.

And he's thinking of the area and the geography and he's reading his Bible because I recognize that name somewhere, Mikdash, Mikdash. And he turns his Bible to First Samuel 14 and he goes, there must be the same pass here with these two same rocks. And he goes, that would be a perfect place to engage the battle.

And so he went and he sent out some reconnaissance and he saw that the Turkish troops were settled in the same area that the Philistines were. So he sent out a small detachment of his troops and they positioned themselves in the same path that Jonathan's going to. And they won a great battle because the guy read his Bible and believed it.

And he said, well, it must be true today as it was back then. Well, that's the kind of strategic position it was. Jonathan found it in his very day.

Now look at verse 6. Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, come, let us go over to the garrison and he's uncircumcised. It may be that the Lord will work for us for nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few. There's two things that Jonathan says there that I think are just spectacular.

First of all, he says, it may be that the Lord may work for us. Hey, what if? What if? What if? God just might want to do something great through me today. Maybe he does.

No, it's that kind of bold trust in God that God really honors. It's just kind of this this reckless abandon for the Lord. This is, hey, let's go out and let's see what the Lord can do.

God may want to do something great. Jonathan isn't back at the camp of Israel playing it safe, waiting till everything's in his favor. No, he says, hey, who knows what God might want to do to me today? Wouldn't it be exciting if we could wake up every day of our lives with that kind of heart? Who knows who the Lord would want to touch to me today? Maybe God wants to bring somebody to Jesus Christ who I talked to today.

Maybe God wants me to encourage a discouraged believer. Maybe God wants me to make a difference by speaking up on his behalf. Maybe God wants to pray in a certain situation or just help somebody out today.

Who knows how God could use me today? And every morning when we wake up, we've got the same amount of time set up in front of the same potential that God could use us in a glorious way. But let me tell you, God uses people who trust him boldly the way that Jonathan was. It's a wonderful, wonderful thing that Jonathan had this in his heart.

And he said, yeah, who knows what God might want to do? Let's just try. How many times we just sit back and just say, well, Lord, whatever you want to do, you want to do. Jonathan had a different heart.

He said, let's step out and see what God might do through me. That's the one good thing he said. But the other great thing he said in verse six was he made a very astute theological statement there in verse six.

Did you see it? For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few. It's not too hard for God. What, like it's easy for God to save through ten people, but it's harder for him to save by one? God doesn't need a lot of people to do a great work.

God revolutionized the world. With twelve apostles, God did work all the time through a few number of people. God doesn't need a great number of people to do a spectacular work.

Nothing restrains God by saving by many or by few. Do you know what restrains the Lord? Our unbelief. Now, it's not that our unbelief restrains God's power.

God isn't any less powerful because we don't believe. What it does is sometimes God allows our unbelief to restrain his will because God is looking for willing partners on this earth to work with him in the accomplishing of his will. And when he finds willing partners, people who will boldly trust him, just like Jonathan was saying, Hey, Lord, why not me? Then we can go forth and see the work of God done.

You know what I love about Jonathan's statement? Nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few. As I bet that's a statement that if you went through and polled all 600 in the army of Israel. Well, what do you think? Does anything restrain the Lord from saving by many or few? Oh no, nothing restrains the Lord.

He can save by many or by few. But only Jonathan was the one out there doing it. It's one thing to say you believe it.

It's another thing to step out boldly knowing that God really can do that. Friends, do you believe it? That nothing restrains the Lord? Maybe the title of a book by a man named J.B. Phillips kind of describes your situation instead. J.B. Phillips wrote a book titled Your God Is Too Small.

Because for a lot of us, our God is too small. Our God has a hard time doing things. Our God is sort of handcuffed in His ability.

Friends, that's not the God of the Bible. That wasn't the God of Jonathan. God knew that it didn't matter for God whether it was many or few.

Who cares about the odds when God is on your side? The odds were already against Israel. Did it really matter if it was a million to one or a thousand to one? Jonathan never read the New Testament, but he had a Roman's 831 heart. He knew if God is for us, who can be against us? So he says, look, let's just see what the Lord could do.

There's something else very important in this situation. That's found in verse 7. Did you notice that with me? It says, So his armor bearer said to him, Do all that is in your heart. Go then.

Here I am with you according to your heart. Oh, friends, it's so important. Yes, it was great that Jonathan had this bold trust in God and he was going to go out there and see what the Lord could do.

Jonathan was to do this, but he wasn't to do it alone. God was going to call somebody alongside Jonathan to support him and to help him. And can you imagine what a critical place this anonymous armor bearer held? Now, do you know what an armor bearer was? An armor bearer was an assistant to an Israelite officer.

You know, there would be the Israelite officer and the armor bearer would be there to help him in battle, to carry his stuff, to take care of the needs. And he had to be a very loyal, a very brave man because the life and death of his master was oftentimes in his hands. And the armor bearer, if he would have responded to Jonathan and said, Hey, what do you say we go out and just see what God might do against us, Philistine Garrison? What do you think the armor bearer would go? What, are you nuts? There's ten thousands of them.

And what about us? We're just a couple of guys. We can't do anything. I'm going home.

I don't know about you. Just fight him if you want. That would have put the cold water on Jonathan's bold trust in God.

But you know what? God had a different plan for that armor bearer. Instead, the armor bearer says, Hey, let's do it. Let's do whatever is on your heart.

We're of one heart. We're of one mind. I'm behind you.

Let's go and see what God might do. Now, let me encourage you with something right now. You might be thinking, Jonathan, that's pretty great.

I don't think I could be a Jonathan. You might be thinking. You don't have to be.

Maybe you'd be a Jonathan's armor bearer. Right? I mean, God needs both kind of people. And if you can't be a Jonathan, then find a Jonathan and attach yourself to him or to her like Jonathan's armor bearer.

And just say, I'm going to stand behind you. I'm going to support you. I'm going to see God's work accomplished through you.

Well, going on here, verse eight, Jonathan knows he has the support of his armor bearer. And so he says, verse eight, Then Jonathan said, Very well, let us cross over to these men and we'll 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. Oh, Jonathan, he is so wise because he gives God the opportunity to confirm his willingness. Now, let me explain.

Jonathan never received some specific word from God that he was supposed to do this. Right. We know we're reading the text that the Lord spoke to Jonathan that Jonathan goeth forth and smiteth all the Philistines, only you and your armor bearer.

Jonathan never heard that. He's just simply following the bold inclination of his heart. Now, that's a good thing, I think.

Well, let's be honest. Sometimes you're wrong, aren't you? Sometimes you boldly step out in the inclination of your heart and you think God wants to do so. Yeah, I think so, Lord.

Yeah, yeah. And you're wrong. Jonathan says, Lord, I'm going to give you the opportunity to confirm this.

Maybe I'm right. Maybe I'm wrong. Lord, let's just make a little test.

I don't think Jonathan did this out of unbelief. I think he did it out because he wanted to know what God's will was. So he says, Lord, I'll tell you what.

Here's the test. This is what we're going to do. We'll go up to the Philistines and say, hi, Philistines.

Here we are. If the guards say, you guys stay there. We're going to come down and talk to you.

Then we know God's not in this. Let's just head home. But if the guards say, hey, come on up here.

We've got a thing or two to show you. Then we'll know God's in it. OK, that's the test.

So they go and take a look at what happens here. Verse 11. So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines.

I would have loved to see that. Yoo-hoo. Hi, here we are.

We're Hebrew troops. And the Philistines said, look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they've hidden. And the men in the garrison called to Jonathan and his armor bearer and said, come up to us and we will show you something.

So Jonathan said to his armor bearer, come up after me, for the Lord has delivered them into the hand of Israel. What faith. There they are, two men.

And Jonathan turns and he says to his armor bearer, praise God, we got them right where we want them. They don't have a chance now because God's with us. Isn't that beautiful, bold faith? Now, friends, let me tell you something.

You can have this kind of bold trust in God. You really can. You shouldn't think that Jonathan was some kind of superstar of the faith and he has this thing that none of the rest of us can have.

He has a faith in God that each and every one of us can have boldly trusting in God. But I want to show you something that you're going to have to have if you have that bold trust. You got to be willing to work.

Look at verse 13. And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armor bearer after him and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armor bearer killed them.

The first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about 20 men within about half an acre of land. Now, friends, this touches on a theme that I see repeated over and over and over again in the Bible. That when God does a work, He uses people.

Jonathan could have said, praise God, the Lord has given them into our hands. OK, Lord, now we just pray that you'd send down fire from heaven and that you do something to smite all these Philistines. But you know what? Jonathan knew if the Lord had given them to Israel, that it was going to be Jonathan's sword and Jonathan's spear and Jonathan's fighting that would accomplish this work.

And so he says, OK, use me, Lord. But do you see what Jonathan did? Yes, he had the bold faith, but he was also willing to work. It says in verse 13 that he climbed up on his hands and knees with his armor bearer after us.

Friends, that was hard. That wasn't easy work. He had to scale a difficult piece of rock climbing up on his hands and knees.

It was a difficult climb. But Jonathan was not the kind of person to say, well, it would be nice to do this, but the rocks are steep and, you know, there's a lot of Philistines up there. Let's just pray instead.

No, friends, you can have that bold trust in God. But if you really have it, you'll also be willing to work. You'll also be willing to say the battle isn't easy.

It's a hard climb up there, but I'll do it. I think this is where a lot of us really get tripped up. We want victory.

We want to be used by God. But we want it when it's easy. If it's hard, if it means getting down on your hands and knees and climbing up, well, you know, maybe some other time.

But I want you to see, you've got to have that bold trust and couple it with a desire to work hard and to be used of God, even when it isn't easy. Jonathan got up to the top of that rock. I wish I could have seen it.

I'm going to get the video on this when I get to heaven, because there they are. And better than any martial arts movie, Jonathan takes on this detachment of Philistines, this guard outpost, and 20 Philistines are falling. I don't know how long it took.

Maybe it took 15 minutes. Maybe it took an hour. There they are fighting back and forth.

Jonathan would knock them down. His armor bearer would come behind him and finish him off. And before you know it, there's blood all over the place.

And there they are, 20 dead Philistines on the ground. I'll bet I know what Jonathan's thinking at that exact moment. He's thinking, OK, there's thousands and thousands of Philistine troops.

It took us, let's say, an hour of hard, hard work to kill 20. I'm going to be at this about three weeks of killing Philistines to get through all these guys. He's probably thinking, God, You've got to do something.

I can't do this on my own. I've done all I can, God. What are You going to do, Lord? Well, you want to see what the Lord's going to do? Look at verse 15.

And there was trembling in the camp and 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. Do you see what God did? God said, OK, Jonathan, you're doing all you can do.

Praise God. God went forth and God said, I'm going to do what only I can do. God sent a mighty earthquake and He totally upset and confused and I think probably put a spirit of confusion and darkness over the Philistines.

The bottom line is the Philistines started attacking each other in the midst of all this confusion. Skip down to verse 20 and you'll see what I'm talking about. The second part of verse 20 says, And indeed, every man's sword was against his neighbor and there was very great confusion.

God put this spirit or sense of confusion all over the Philistine camp. It's as if they rushed out of their tents and they said, we're being attacked. There's an enemy in our midst.

Where's the enemy? Maybe you're the enemy. Ah, and they stuck him down. And pretty soon they're all, well, why are you fighting him? They're all fighting each other and God just put a spirit of stupor or confusion or I don't know, just plain stupidity on the Philistines and they start fighting each other.

Isn't this so like the Lord? There's Israel, totally outnumbered. Totally outclassed in military technology. Where are they going to get the men to defeat the Philistines? Where are they going to get the swords to kill the Philistines? Well, they'll get the men out of the Philistine camp and they'll get the swords out of the Philistine camp.

Let them kill themselves. And that's how God engineered it. So there the Philistines have seen a mass confusion.

There they are fighting each other, killing each other. Jonathan and his armor bearer did his work. Now the Philistines are doing the work for them.

Notice what happens here, verse 16. Now the watchman of Saul and Gibeah, Benjamin, looked and there was the multitude melting away and they went here and there. Well, can you imagine the reconnaissance, the watchmen there for Saul's army there, the 600 there that are gathered? They say, King Saul, we don't know what's going on but for some reason the Philistine army is just kind of melting away.

We don't know what's happening but they're just kind of... And Saul looks up, his face is all red from the pomegranate stuff. And look what happens here, verse 17. Saul said to the people who were with him, now call the roll and see who's gone from us.

And when they called the roll, surprisingly, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not there. Friends, do you realize something? I think this shows something getting worse and worse in the heart of Saul. You're going to see more and more in the book of 1 Samuel, Saul slipping into doing horrible things out of insecurity.

Can I ask you a simple question? Why does he have a roll call right now? That's got to take a little bit of time to have a roll call of 600 men. Why? What does it matter? Do you know why it matters to Saul? He wants to know who's leading the attack against the Philistines because who's going to get the credit? Not him. That's what he wants to know.

Saul is more concerned about his own reputation and his own place and his own status than he is about the victory that the Lord wants to win. And so Saul isn't saying if he was, I think, being really motivated by God, if he was really walking in the spirit, you know what Saul would have said? Mount up. Let's go.

Let's join in this fight. They're on the run. Let's finish them off.

Let's have a roll call. And we see the next thing that Saul does. That's in verse 18.

And Saul said to Ahasuerus, bring the ark of God here. For that time, the ark of God was with the children of Israel. So what are you doing? Let's have a church service.

Let's pray. Let's seek the Lord. Now, friends who can be against prayer? Who can be against seeking the Lord? But can I say there's a time to pray on the run? And that's what Saul should have done.

He should have said, let's mount up and let's pray on the way. We've got an enemy to defeat. I think Saul is trying to show a false spirituality there in verse 18.

Oh, yes. Let me show everybody how spiritual. Let's all seek the Lord together now.

But it wasn't the time to pray. It was the time to fight. Pray on the way.

Look at what happens here in verse 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 Philistine, withdraw your hand.

In other words, stop seeking the Lord. Probably had his hand in the breastplate seeking the Urim and Thummim for guidance from God. You don't need guidance from God.

God showed you what to do. Go wipe out those Philistines. They're on the run.

Finish them off. So finally, he does it in verse 20. Then Saul and all the people who were with him assembled and they went to the battle.

Indeed, every man's sword was against his neighbor and there was very great confusion. Well, now they're finally on the track. Saul had just been sitting under the pomegranate tree.

Saul, Jonathan was out there boldly trusting God for the victory. But Saul, motivated by insecurity, was holding back. You know, in these last few verses that we're going to take a look at together this morning, I want you to notice four different classes of people.

The first class of people is Saul and his army. I call those the holdbacks. They're holding back.

Listen, why did Jonathan go out and boldly venture in faith when Saul was sitting in safety under the pomegranate tree? Did Saul want Israel to win a victory? Sure he did. Did Saul want to see the Philistines wiped out? Sure he did. It's just Saul wouldn't do anything until it was safe.

Until the odds were in his favor. Now, when the Philistines are already being wiped out, oh sure, he'll join in. That's not the kind of heart God wants us to have.

He wants us to have the boldly trusting heart that Jonathan has. And friends, we're very far from a bold trust in God when we will only step out and do what seems to be a sure thing. And I tell you, if you're not doing things for the Lord that have the potential to totally blow up in your face and make you look foolish, then you're not stepping out in faith very much.

God wants us to boldly go out and do something for Him. And you know what? If we fail and if God really wasn't with it the way that we thought He would be, then you've still tried. I think God is still on it.

Have a humble heart about it. Be able to say, well, I was wrong. Oh well, I trust God will guide me better next time.

Go ahead. That's fine. But it's better to go out and do it and to occasionally fail than it is to stand back and to never boldly trust God.

Friends, God wants us to step out. And let me tell you, don't worry about the armchair quarterbacks and the backseat drivers who would want to sit back and say, well, you shouldn't have done this. You shouldn't have done that.

They're like the holdbacks back in Saul's army just sitting back there. Well, you know, I don't know if Jonathan should have gone out. Listen, he was boldly trusting God.

You don't have anything to say about it. That's where Jonathan was at. But Saul's army, they were a bunch of holdbacks.

They were fighting. They didn't enter the battle until the odds were in their favor. It was better to come in late than never.

But how much better to have the bold trust of a Jonathan? Well, there's another group of people described in verse 21. These are the sellouts. Look at this.

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. Well, now we find that there was a bunch of defectors, a bunch of people who sold out to the Philistines. What did they do? They said, look, man, I'm going with a winner.

The Philistines, look at how many people they have. They got two swords in all of Israel. One of them for Saul and one for Jonathan.

I'm going with the winner. I don't know about you. And so they say, well, we're going to go after that.

That's where we're at. Yeah, we're right there with the Philistines. But suddenly when the Philistines are melting away and Israel is starting to be victorious, what do they say now? Oh, now we're for Israel.

They'll go with the winner. And is that how you are? You're in that social scene. And as long as it's cool and popular to be a Christian, yeah, you'll be a Christian.

But when it's not cool, it's not popular, when it's winning to be worldly, that's what you'll be then. And that's the kind of sellout kind of heart that these Israelites have. And let me say, listen, they were the kind of people who supported the Philistines when it seemed like Israel was a loser and the Philistines were the winners.

Now, it was better to come out now than it was never. But friends, how much better for them to have the bold heart that Jonathan had. So you have the holdbacks, you have the sellouts.

And then in verse 22, here you have the hideouts. Check out these people, verse 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.

Well, here you had people who just said, man, the Philistines are here, I'm checking out, I'm hiding in the hills. But when they see that the Philistine army is melting away, they say, well, I kind of like how this battle is going. I can join in now.

They would join in once the odds seemed okay. But not when it seemed like a desperate struggle. Friends, again, it was better to come out then than never.

But how much better to have the bold trust. So we got three categories of people, and I told you there were four. You've got the holdbacks, the sellouts, and the hideouts.

And finally, look at verse 23. So the Lord saved Israel that day, and the battle shifted to Bethlehem. Well, who did God use to really win this battle? He's Jonathan.

People with a bold, trusting faith like Jonathan. Now, friends, I'm here to tell you that if you take a look at your life right now, and you're a holdback or a sellout or a hideout, God loves you. God says even if you've been hiding out or holding back or selling out, come to Me today, join in the battle right now.

It's better you do it and join Him right now today than never, right? It's better than the alternative. But God wants to build in your heart from this day forward the kind of bold trust in Him that Jonathan had. I want that kind of heart.

I want to be like Jonathan. I don't want to be like these other groups. I pray that God would build that kind of heart in me to go out and just step forward and be bold and to try something big enough for the Lord where only God can make it work.

That's the heart Jonathan had. I think the Lord wants to raise up a lot of Jonathans here this morning. And you know what? For everybody here that's not a Jonathan, I think the Lord wants you to be an armor bearer for a Jonathan.

Get behind somebody and what the Lord wants to do through them. Together we'll see the work of God done in a great way. Let's pray.

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