

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 7



JONATHAN'S FAITH BRINGS VICTORY

Scripture Text: 1 Samuel 14:6-23

Whenever a king disregarded the Prophetic Word as Saul did, God's judgment was quickly pronounced. David had his Nathan, Ahab, his Elijah, Hezekiah, his Isaiah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, their Jeremiah, and so on. In no case could the king disregard the Prophet's Words without dire results. God's Law of righteousness and justice had to be obeyed, or His judgment would fall on the kingdom.

The Psalms repeat our need for the Lord as our defense. Even in the face of what seems to us as insurmountable difficulties, He is perfectly adequate as such. The message down through the ages has been that the nations that forget God will be lost (**Psalm 9:17; Proverbs 14:34**). America is no exception.

The Lord is the greatest defense any nation can have. God answers the faith of those who risk all on Him with no alternative. Jonathan had such faith in this lesson today.

MEMORY VERSE: *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.*

—*Jeremiah 17:7.*

High Quality Faith

1 Samuel 14:6 In last week's lesson we saw the grievous oppression under which Israel was held. Now the Philistines were encamped at Michmash, north of Jerusalem, and Saul with his army – dwindled to six hundred men and with no sword or spear except those held by Saul and Jonathan (**1 Samuel 13:22**) – were at Gibeah. Jonathan proposed a secret attack upon the enemy, two men against a powerful army. This appeared to be a very foolish move. But Jonathan counted on help. **It may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few** – numbers mean nothing to God. Here Jonathan proved his great faith in God.

Complete Agreement

1 Samuel 14:7-13 **And his armor-bearer said ... Do all that is in thine heart ... I am with thee ...** Jonathan outlined the plan to his armor-bearer. They would plainly show themselves. They would act according to the Philistines' answer. **Tarry ...** they would **stand still**. **Come ...** they would **go up**, right into the enemy camp. Not said but clearly implied is that Jonathan had communed with God and agreed on this sign to let them know how to move. Come, from an unknowing Philistine tongue would mean the Lord had given them over into Jonathan's hand.

With sarcasm and arrogance, the Philistine responded – **Behold, the Hebrews come forth ...** a jibe at the fear that drove them to hide. Then, in an attempt to intimidate these brave men, they said, **We will shew you a thing**. But he didn't reckon with God. Looking at the visible and natural, one would think him surely right.

In speaking of Jonathan's faith, we must not forget there were two men. His armor bearer said, **I am with thee according to thy heart**. He was in harmony with all of Jonathan's feelings and intentions. Imagine the great dedication, love, and respect he had for Jonathan to make such a commitment. A life-and-death situation faced both of them. **Both of them discovered themselves ... his armor-bearer climbed up after him ... he slew after him.**

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There is power in agreement. If one can **chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight**, isn't there a multiplication of strength in agreement? (**Deuteronomy 32:30**). Jesus said, **If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father ... (Matthew 18:19)**. How much does agreement have to do with our work for the Lord? In praying with a soul seeking salvation? Could hidden disagreement or disharmony of heart or purpose among the workers hinder a seeker from finding a satisfied experience with God? Can disagreement in a congregation hinder its spiritual effectiveness? How can we reach unity of heart?

Victory Attained

1 Samuel 14:14-23 The Philistine garrison appears to have been protected by a natural barrier of a steep cliff and a high incline. Jonathan and his companion had to climb using hands as well as feet. No doubt they were perfect targets and almost helpless to fight as they climbed. Why didn't the Philistines send them tumbling down the steep incline? Once up, they began to kill the enemy, who, instead of resisting, trembled throughout their many thousands. The Lord helped by sending an earthquake.

Twenty men killed would not naturally defeat such a large army. But now: 1. Saul and his people saw it and came, 2. The Philistines in confusion turned on each other, 3. Hebrew defectors turned back again to fight with Israel, and 4. Fugitive Israelites came out of hiding to help rout the Philistines. What brought them out all at one time? The faith of those two brave men brought the initial victory and brought a hope and faith and an encouragement to the others to join into the battle for the right cause. The Lord saved Israel that day. Jonathan believed that there were no restraints to the Lord to save by many or by few.

Faith and Works

What brought victory that day? On the one hand, God's power, and on the other, Jonathan's faith. His faith was real. He proved this by putting works with it. Faith without works is dead (**James 2:17**). It reached God and brought the answer; it was effective. It believed; the only question was which way the Lord would lead. It was obedient. It listened. It was fearless. It was active; he moved to do his part. He risked ALL upon the Lord's handling of this. He made no alternate provision for escape. It was no accident that Jonathan came by such faith. He developed it by connection with God. Read **Acts 3:16; Romans 12:3; Galatians 5:6; Galatians 5:22**.

JUST A THOUGHT

*“Nature forms us, sin deforms us, education informs us,
but only Christ transforms us.”*

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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