

## 2. Introduction:

### 1 Samuel 13

Before we can get into what took place in chapter 14, we need to get some background from the previous chapter.

**3-4.** 1 Samuel 13:3-4 *"Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, 'Let the Hebrews hear!' So all Israel heard the news: 'Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost and now Israel has become a stench to the Philistines.' And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal."*

5. The Israelites just experience A Small Victory.

The first chapter of this story is exciting for Israel. Saul and Jonathan are split up and Jonathan takes his group to attack an outpost and is successful in capturing it. The Israelites are fired up after this battle and now ready to come together and take on the Philistines.

**6-7.** 1 Samuel 13:5-6 *"The Philistines assembled to fight Israel with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven. When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns."*

8. The Israelites were Massively Outnumbered.

Suddenly their attitude changes dramatically. A huge army of the Philistines comes out as a result of this attack and the Israelite soldiers are sure that they have no chance.

**9.** 1 Samuel 13:7 *"Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear."*

10. The Israelites were Running Scared.

The story goes on to emphasize that even those who didn't run away from Saul were standing there shaking with fear. Saul also makes a mistake at this point by disobeying what Samuel had told him to do because he is afraid.

**11.** 1 Samuel 13:22 *"So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them."*

12. The Israelites were Weaponless.

We quickly transition from an exciting victory that has all of Israel fired up to hopelessness. In the previous few verses it says that Philistine raiding parties had gone out and captured all of Israel's

weapons except for the king's and prince's swords. I'm thinking it's usually pretty difficult to win a battle without any weapons. All of this activity leads us to our passage this morning.

### **13. I. The Importance of an Armor-Bearer:**

Let's read the first two verses.

**14-15.** 1 Samuel 13:23-14:1 ***"Now a detachment of Philistines had gone out to the pass at Micmash. One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing his armor, 'Come, let's go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side.' But he did not tell his father."***

We get introduced to Jonathan's armor-bearer in the first verse of this chapter and I want to take a few minutes to focus on him.

### **16.** Two of the basic roles of an armor-bearer were to **Carry Armor** and **Be a Bodyguard**.

An armor-bearer was usually a younger man and this person had a whole lot of responsibility. Royalty and other high-ranking commanders might have an armor-bearer. Like I already said, an obvious part of his role was to carry armor. These people had to be pretty strong because along with being prepared to fight, they would be carrying additional weapons and armor such as a shield for their commander.

### **17.** Armor-bearers and their commanders **Depended on Each Other**.

Armor-bearers were very important in war during this period because battles would be very chaotic. Even most of the best warriors didn't have eyes in the back of their heads so the armor-bearer would cover the commander's blind spot and vis-versa. Their lives often depended on each other so this alone requires and creates a significant level of trust.

### **18.** Armor-bearers and their commanders had a **Deep Connection**.

A couple chapters later we see another commander/armor-bearer relationship.

**19.** 1 Samuel 16:21 ***"David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers."***

This was back before Saul went off the deep end and started trying to kill David. You can see here that it says Saul liked David very much and chose him to become one of his armor-bearers.

Remember that just in the last chapter, the armor-bearer was likely by Jonathan's side as he attacked another Philistine outpost. He had probably already been through a lot with David and because of this his obedience to David's commands weren't based out of duty but commitment.

I still feel like the armor-bearer would be thinking, "Okay, but what exactly are we going to do when we get there."

Going up to a Philistine outpost wasn't a new experience for him, but last time there were 1,000 people and this time 2.

Let's look at what happens next in the story.

## **20. II. When You Do Nothing, Nothing Happens:**

**21-22.** 1 Samuel 14:2-3 *“Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree in Migron. With him were about six hundred men, among whom was Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod. He was a son of Ichabod’s brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord’s priest in Shiloh. No one was aware that Jonathan had left.”*

It seems like if it was up to Saul, nothing would happen.

These six hundred men that were hanging out with Saul weren’t just a random group, but many of the people who were responsible for leading Israel. It was their responsibility to act and to defend Israel. They are still alive, but they have been completely defeated.

God hadn’t given up on Israel, but the majority of Israel had given up on itself.

### **23. God waits for someone To Step Out.**

Throughout this series of events God is still as powerful as ever and is waiting for someone to act on his behalf so that he can make it known.

### **24. Look for others who share your Passion.**

Jonathan would have never acted if he waited for approval from everyone. Many if not all of the people would have thought he was crazy. They probably would have said the Philistines were too strong and there was just nothing anyone could do.

I think today we can often become paralyzed by how crazy the world around us has gotten. Christians around the world are losing their lives and so many sins have become normal expected behavior. The majority of movies or any kind of media blame everything from no-strings-attached romantic relationships to glorifying everything spiritual other than God.

We can let the enemy that looks like it outnumbers us zap all of our passion and paralyze us or we can believe that God can still do miracles.

I have found that sometimes it’s having the right people by your side that keep you trusting in God’s promises.

I probably wouldn’t even be here if it wasn’t for Amy.

Jonathan knew the promises God had made to Israel and he knew that God cared about his people. He was willing to act on his trust in those promises regardless of uncertainty about how it would all play out. We’ll come back to that later, just a little bit of foreshadowing.

He knew it would be difficult though and he brought with him someone he knew would stay by his side.

### **25. Jonathan knew he had No Easy Options.**

**26. 1 Samuel 14:4-5 *“On each side of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine outpost was a cliff; one was called Bozez, and the other Seneh. One cliff stood to the north toward Micmash, the other to the south toward Geba.”***

Just because you are on the path that God has called you to, doesn't mean that you won't face obstacles along the way.

It might not be as difficult of a path as Jonathan had before him and there are times where God does actually allow stuff to fall neatly into place. However, the majority of the time your experience with following God will be somewhere in between.

I have read this story many times and I often try to picture what exactly the author is describing here. As I was preparing this morning I looked at a lot of different maps of the area and most of them have so many details to them that it would be difficult for you to see even if I tried to show it to you. But I found this drawing that accurately represents the maps and might help you picture what Jonathan was facing. I don't know why there is a question mark after Beth-Aven, but it's in the same place on other maps.

## **27. Picture**

Remember from the previous chapter that the Israelites just recently captured Geba. Additionally, verse 2 of this chapter tells us that Saul is chilling out near Gibeah. In order for Jonathan and his armor-bearer to reach Micmash, they had to cross over two rocky cliffs. Not only were there just two of them, now we see that they were going to have to climb up rocks to even get to the outpost.

As we continue reading through this story we come to our third point.

## **27. III. Perhaps is Often as Far as You're Gonna Get:**

Sorry about the title if it is driving any grammar-lovers crazy, but going to just sounded strange each time I said it.

**28. 1 Samuel 14:6 *“Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, ‘Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.’”***

**29. The first key to being used by God is Believing God Can Use You.**

We see in verse six that Jonathan is entirely confident in God's power to save. Understanding that God is more powerful than any unknowns out there gives you the strength and courage to get up and do something.

What we believe God is capable of is directly represented by how we pray and whether or not we are willing to act.

**30. John 10:14-15 *“I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.”***

I'm not sure how much you know about sheep, but one pretty well known thing is that they are not all intelligent. Because they are not intelligent, they are not good at protecting themselves or taking care of themselves. If God is the shepherd, that means we are his sheep. A sheep thrives by relying on and staying close to the shepherd, not trying to find its own way.

**31.** The second key is understanding God wants to be your Guide not just give you The Directions.

The verse we just read says that Jesus lays down his life for the sheep. Jesus is looking for a relationship with you. He knows that if he gives you the road map for your life, you'll think you can do it on your own without him and you'll get lost.

This illustration should make sense for those of you who have seen the movie UP and if you haven't I'm sorry. If we had the roadmap of all the decisions we needed to make when and where in our lives it would probably look something like, "Okay, I'm doing pretty good. Hey this is pretty easy. 'Squirrel!' Suddenly we go running after some distraction over there. Now wait how do we get back?"

He knows that life here on earth is difficult to navigate, remember he experienced it and he had many opportunities to veer off the path. The way that you and I find our way through life is staying close to the shepherd and moving when he nudges us forward in some direction.

**32.** Hebrews 11:8 ***"By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going."***

Talk about people around calling you crazy. Abraham was well-established in a comfortable place and suddenly he is going to leave all that behind and he can't even tell them where he is going because he doesn't know.

Back to verse 6, there are some things that you can read and get definite answers about in scripture, but with many things perhaps is the best you're going to get.

I want to share with you a story I found and I tried to do a lot of research to make sure this conversation actually happened because I don't want to share stories that are supposed to be true that aren't actually true.

**There was a man named John Kavanaugh who was a well esteemed ethicist. Now an ethicist is someone who is looked to for advice by companies and organizations on morality. He went to work for three months at "the house of the dying" in Calcutta and one of his primary motivations was that he was seeking a clear answer as to how best spend the rest of his life.**

**On the first morning there he met Mother Teresa. She asked, "And what can I do for you?" Kavanaugh asked her to pray for him.**

**"What do you want me to pray for?" she asked. He voice the request that he had borne thousands of miles from the United States: "Pray that I have clarity."**

**She said firmly, "No, I will not do that." When he asked her why, she said, "Clarity is the last thing you are clinging to and must let go of." When Kavanaugh commented that she always seemed to have the**

clarity he longed for, she laughed and said, “I have never had clarity; what I have always had is trust. So I will pray that you trust God.”

**33. Clarity** - makes it about us.

Clarity is nice because it gives us security. It allows us to weigh all the options and avoid risks.

We think that if we can see several steps down the road we can do a better job of avoiding obstacles and preparing ourselves for each step. More often than not we would choose the easy or the safe way, but God knows that it often comes through overcoming obstacles that we are ready for other experiences farther down the road.

There are often times where there isn't just one right or wrong decision. For example, a decision that many students have had to make over the past months is where they are going to go to college if they are going. There may be several good options. God is more concerned about what kind of a Christian you will be when you get to college than which school you go to.

It doesn't matter if you pick the perfect school if you blow it once you get there.

What can prevent you from blowing it once you get there is having that guide by your side all along the way. Which school to go to is just one big decision and there will be many more small decisions to make each day when you get there.

This is just one example.

**34. Trust** - makes it about God.

Sometimes I like to ask for volunteers for games that are meant to be a little crazy before I say what the activity is. Now some activities that we have done are pretty interesting so this often leads to more hesitation.

God wants someone who will say yes before fully understanding what they are volunteering for. Now, with some of the activities that we do with the youth it might be a good idea to hold off on volunteering because you might end up doing something crazy.

If we go back to our verse in John, the first line is I am the good shepherd. We know that Jesus cares about us and wants us to experience life through him. Therefore, we can be confident that even if we don't know what the path will hold, we know that we can trust the one who will be by our side.

Let's look at the armor-bearers response to Jonathan.

**35. 1 Samuel 14:7 *“Do all that you have in mind,” his armor-bearer said. ‘Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul.’”***

This is the response that God is longing for and once you are ready to come to him with this attitude, there is no predicting the incredible things he can do through you.

There is another role of an armor-bearer that I didn't mention before.

I mentioned that the armor-bearer would go behind the commander. One of his responsibilities was to follow through and kill any enemies that the commander may have struck down but didn't die. This doesn't sound like the noblest of duties, but it was an important part of being an armor-bearer.

What's our role as an armor-bearer? It's to stay close behind our commander, the Holy Spirit, and to finish what he has started. Everywhere you go when you are following God, you are at earliest the second one there. The Holy Spirit has already gone before you to pave the way.

### **36. Conclusion:**

As we finish up this morning I would like to look at one other passage before I sum up the rest of this story with Jonathan.

### **Romans 8:37-39**

**37-38.** Romans 8:37-39 ***"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."***

These three verses are extremely powerful, but this morning I would like to specifically hone in on the first sentence.

**39. "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."**

**40.** It is not **Our Ability** that determines **The Outcome**.

Our victory doesn't come through our strength or our wisdom or even our planning. It comes through our connection with him who loved us.

To see victory in our lives through Christ, we have one responsibility, to stay close behind him. As you stay close to him, you will develop a trust and understanding of him like Jonathan's armor-bearer had for him. God might not show you what he has planned two steps from now. All you need to know is what the next step is and take it.

### **1 Samuel 14:8-14 Summation**

That's an unexplainable victory and what God's wants you to experience through him.

What I hope you understand from this morning is that if you wait for 100% certainty before you act on something you have felt God nudging you towards, you are likely never going to act.

What you can be 100% certain of is that God is by your side and it takes stepping out and doing something to experience incredible, unexplainable victories.

**“Unexplainable Victory”**  
**1 Samuel 14**

**Introduction:**

1 Samuel 13

1 Samuel 13:3–4

The Israelites just experienced \_\_\_\_\_.

1 Samuel 13:5–6

The Israelites were \_\_\_\_\_.

1 Samuel 13:7

The Israelites were \_\_\_\_\_.

1 Samuel 13:22

The Israelites were \_\_\_\_\_.

**I. The Importance of an Armor-Bearer:**

1 Samuel 13:23–14:1

Two of the most basic roles of an armor-bearer were to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Armor-bearers and their commanders \_\_\_\_\_.

Armor-bearers and their commanders had a \_\_\_\_\_.

1 Samuel 16:21

**II. When You Do Nothing, Nothing Happens:**

1 Samuel 14:2–3

God waits for someone \_\_\_\_\_.

Look for others who share your \_\_\_\_\_.

Jonathan knew he had \_\_\_\_\_.  
1 Samuel 14:4-5

### **III. Perhaps is Often as Far as You're Gonna Get:**

1 Samuel 14:6

The first key to being used by God is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

John 10:14-15

The second key is understanding God wants to be your \_\_\_\_\_, not just give you  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Hebrews 11:8

\_\_\_\_\_—makes it about us.

\_\_\_\_\_—makes it about God.

1 Samuel 14:7

### **Conclusion:**

Romans 8:37-39

It is not \_\_\_\_\_ that determines \_\_\_\_\_.

1 Samuel 14:8-14

## Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

1. Looking back at this week's message, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Would you rather have been an armor-bearer who was expected to follow someone else's orders or a commander who had to make decisions that could cost or save both of your lives? What are the pros and cons of each role?
3. What negative results could have come from Jonathan's decision?
4. Why were the leaders of Israel just sitting around?
5. Can you think of a time when you have had the opportunity to see God do something exciting through you? What led up to this experience?
6. God shows up when people step up. What is one way God can use your home group to make a difference?
7. Jonathan had a difficult path between him and the outpost. What are some of the obstacles you encounter when trying to follow God?
8. Why do you think God doesn't just tell us plainly what his plan is for our lives and what we are supposed to do? What would be the positives and negatives to this?
9. Read together Mark 9:23–24. Have you ever thought about praying that God would help you to trust him?
10. Reread 1 Samuel 14:6–7 aloud together. What did the armor-bearer mean by saying, "I am with you heart and soul"? Why not just stop at "Go ahead"?