

Read 1 Samuel 13:1 – 14:23

I have a mixture of emotions as I read this passage.

On the one hand you have the courage & faith of the young Jonathan

On the other we encounter a man who started well but sadly finished the race badly.

Let me introduce you to:

### **Saul**

Chapter 10 Anointed king

*1 Samuel 10:1 (ANIV)*

*Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, "Has not the Lord anointed you leader over his inheritance?"*

### **Prophetic Words spoken over his life**

*1 Samuel 10:6-7 (ANIV)*

*The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. [7] Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.*

### **No one quite like Saul**

*1 Samuel 10:23-24 (ANIV)*

*... as Saul stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others. [24] Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the man the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people."*

*Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!"*

### **In chapter 11 we see Saul meet his first challenge**

*1 Samuel 11:1-9 (ANIV)*

*Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh Gilead. And all the men of Jabesh said to him, "Make a treaty with us, and we will be subject to you."*

*[2] But Nahash the Ammonite replied, "I will make a treaty with you only on the condition that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so bring disgrace on all Israel."*

*[3] The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days so that we can send messengers throughout Israel; if no-one comes to rescue us, we will surrender to you."*

*[4] When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and reported these terms to the people, they all wept aloud. [5] Just then Saul was returning from the fields, behind his oxen, and he asked, "What is wrong with the people? Why are they weeping?" Then they repeated to him what the men of Jabesh had said.*

*[6] When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he burned with anger. [7] He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel, proclaiming, "This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel." Then the terror of the Lord*

*fell on the people, and they turned out as one man. [8] When Saul mustered them at Bezek, the men of Israel numbered three hundred thousand and the men of Judah thirty thousand.*

*[9] They told the messengers who had come, "Say to the men of Jabesh Gilead, 'By the time the sun is hot tomorrow, you will be delivered.' " When the messengers went and reported this to the men of Jabesh, they were elated.*

### **Chapter 13 tells us that Saul was 30 when he became king, and what a start he made**

A bit like the Australians in the coxless four yesterday!

But as we read earlier in two short years things are very different ... Israel is on the back foot, the Philistines rule, not a man in Israel has a sword or a spear, apart from Saul & his son Jonathan,

In verse 3 we find Jonathan attacking the Philistines not Saul

In verse 4 the people were summoned to join Saul ... instead they ran for their lives.

*1 Samuel 13:6-7 (ANIV)*

*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. [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.*

In verses 8 to 10 we see that panic has gripped Saul's heart ... which sadly led to disobedience. Selective obedience defined his life and destiny.

Verse 13 we read these very sad words

*1 Samuel 13:13-14 (ANIV)*

*"You acted foolishly," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. [14] But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."*

I find these words so difficult, so sad, may they never be spoken over our lives.

Let us now turn to Jonathan

### **Jonathan**

One of my favourite characters in the Bible.

I love his heart

I love his courage

I love his confidence in God

Please turn to *chapter 13 verse 3*

*Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba , and the Philistines heard about it.*

In Chapter 14:1 we find him on the attack again! What a guy ... BUT ...

*What do you think the Israelites thought about Jonathan?*

*Some would have loved his fighting spirit*

*Others would have wished he'd keep his head down, because his actions affected their lives. Because of Jonathan they were now leaving their homes, others even left the country.*

I wonder what the 600 men without swords or shields thought?

I wonder what you think?

For many of us ... our default seems to be

Keep your head down  
Maintain the status quo  
Don't rock the boat  
Just Chill  
Enjoy the scenery

**Why wasn't he prepared to keep his head down?**

**1 He knew that God had a better plan for the nation**

Because God had given the Israelites the land flowing with milk & honey to enjoy. Instead they were living in fear. They were almost back in slavery.

In chapter 12:6ff Samuel reminds the people of God's deliverance from Egypt  
This was their land by right.

He was committed to bringing about God's purposes ... you can't do that without putting your head above the parapet.

Can I share with you a prayer I came across from a young Zimbabwean Pastor? It rocked my boat as I read it & as you listen you can hear his heart pound for His Saviour.

*'The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made - I'm a disciple of His. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, and my future is secure. I'm finished with low living, sight walking, smooth knees, colourless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving, and dwarfed goals. I no longer need pre-eminence, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognised,*

*praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, depend on His presence, walk by patience, am uplifted by prayer, and labour with power.'*

A man with Jonathan's heart, Jonathan's perspective!

Let me introduce you to another Jonathan ... this Jonathan's actual name is Joe ...

In 1998 a pastor by the name of Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of Kansas Senate in prayer. Instead of the politically correct prayer that everyone expected they got a passionate plea for the nation to be brought to repentance. Some of the legislators were so incensed they walked out as the pastor prayed. Here is the prayer in its entirety

"Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask for your forgiveness and seek your direction and guidance. We know your word says 'Woe to those who call evil good, but that's exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values.

We confess that we have ridiculed the absolute truth of your word and called it pluralism.

We have worshipped other gods and called it multiculturalism.

We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle.

We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery.

We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation.

We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare.

We have killed our unborn and called it a choice.

We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable.

We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem.

We have abused power and called it political savvy.

We have coveted our neighbour's possessions and called it ambition.

We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression.

We have ridiculed the time-honoured values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us O God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of Kansas, and who have been ordained by you to govern this great state. Grant them the wisdom to rule and may their decisions direct us to the centre of your will.

I ask this in the name of your Son, the living Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen."

Jonathan's heart!

Coretta Scott King wrote

*"It doesn't matter how strong your opinions are. If you don't use your power for positive change, you are, indeed, part of the problem."*

As you know my heart's desire is for each of us to have this heart, to be a church completely abandoned to the purposes of God and resolute in fulfilling the tasks God has ordained for us. That goal is to love people into the Kingdom of God in the hundreds and thousands! To be salt and light in a society that is in a terminal state of

decay! To offer hope to the hopeless, forgiveness to those crushed with guilt, healing to those broken physically, emotionally & spiritually. Life instead of death. Freedom instead of slavery!

There are some important lessons to learn from Jonathan

## 2 He believed his God was bigger than the obstacles he faced

1 Samuel 14:6 (ANIV)

Jonathan said to his young armour-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the Lord will act on our behalf. **Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.**"

I love that spirit! Nothing is impossible because we have God on our side

### The obstacles facing Jonathan

13:5 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 Michmash, east of Beth Aven.

1 Samuel 13:22 (ANIV)

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.

1 Samuel 14:4-5 (ANIV)

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. [5] One cliff stood to the north towards Michmash, the other to the south towards Geba.

He didn't ignore the obstacles he simply put them into perspective. He had God on his side and that made all the difference.

The Scriptures remind us that those who trust in God, those who are confident in Him are a blessed people.

One of my favourite verses is found in

2 Cor. 4:7 (ANIV)

*But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

Another is

Luke 1:37 (ANIV)

*For nothing is impossible with God."*

*I'm not trying to belittle the challenges facing us, they are as real as those Jonathan faced BUT my dear brother & sister we face them with the combined power & authority of the Holy Trinity behind us!*

When we know that in the depths of our being we truly become more than conquerors!

As an aside did you note in verse 6 that confirmation came after he moved!

Faith is never a static experience. Often we won't attempt anything for God until we have every 'i' dotted and 't' crossed. Faith doesn't work like that, it requires movement.

### **3 He didn't go alone**

*1 Samuel 14:7-11 (ANIV)*

*"Do all that you have in mind," his armour-bearer said. "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul."*

*[8] Jonathan said, "Come, then; we will cross over towards the men and let them see us. [9] If they say to us, 'Wait there until we come to you,' we will stay where we are and not go up to them. [10] But if they say, 'Come up to us,' we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the Lord has given them into our hands."*

*[11] So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost. "Look!" said the Philistines. "The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in."*

I won't say much on this due to time, but God never intended us to be islands, we need each other.

Lastly

### **4 They won an impossible victory**

*1 Samuel 14:13-15 (ANIV)*

*Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armour-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armour-bearer followed and killed behind him. [14] In that first attack Jonathan and his armour-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre.*

*1 Samuel 14:22-23 (ANIV)*

*When all the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit. [23] So the Lord rescued Israel that day, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven.*

Never be surprised by what can be accomplished by God through a surrendered, confident, courageous heart! You really can be the catalyst for change in your family, your workplace, your neighbourhood ... dear me some of you may well be called by God to be an instrument for change in our nation!

### **Let me finish**

How will history define us as a church? Saul or Jonathan ... those who made a good start or those who were so in love with Jesus they attempted the impossible and experienced remarkable victories. Let's pray