

1 Samuel 14:1-23 — Faith That Dares

May 8, 2022

Good morning CrossWinds! Happy Mother's Day! If you can spend time with your mother, I hope you are able to let her know she is loved and appreciated.

Two quick items of business before we get to our study.

A few of you have asked if this is our new stage configuration. No, it isn't. We are experimenting with a new rear projector so for Easter we took down our old front projectors and front screens. We installed one rear projector but needed to set the screen far to the side of the wall to get it to work. The good news is the new rear projector is working great. We have a second rear projector on order. In addition, we have two screens on order. When they come, we will cut them into the sidewalls on the stage and open the front up again. So for those of you straining your head to see one screen off to the side, things will get better.

Speaking of the stage, technology, and the worship team, Tyler, our AVL guy, is building his team. If you would like to help, get some tech training, and get on the rotation, head to one of the tech booths in the back after the service and ask for Tyler. I also know that Jeremy, our worship director, is also expanding his team. He is auditioning for vocalists and instrumentalists. If you think you might be able to serve in that capacity, talk to me or someone on the worship team after the service. Jeremy would like to meet you.

Let's pray, then we will get to our study.

Has anyone spent time rock climbing? I did it in my teenage years. One thing I learned is the higher you go, the scarier rock climbing becomes. What keeps you climbing in the safety of the rope. If you fall, the rope will catch you.

Not all rock climbers have the safety of a rope. There is a style of rock climbing called free solo climbing. It is where you climb a rock face without a rope. This means you have zero room for error. One slip and you fall to your death.

Alex Honnold is a world-famous free-solo rock climber. In June of 2017 he climbed El-Capitan in Yosemite free-solo style, that is, without ropes. El-Capitan is two times higher than the Empire State Building. It is a sheet wall of granite that sometimes has almost no handholds. Many did not think it was humanly possible to climb El-Capitan without ropes. On that day in June, a film crew set out to capture the climb. Here is some of that video footage to give you an idea of what it feels like to free solo climb a mountain.



I know what you are thinking after seeing that clip. That is crazy! I can't imagine what it would feel like to know one slip would send you to your death. Free-solo rock climbing sheer rock walls is not new. People have been doing it for years. There is even a high-risk free solo rock climb in the Bible. It is in 1 Samuel 14, which is the chapter we are studying this morning.

Background

Take out your Bibles and your notes. As a church, we are studying our way through the book of 1 Samuel. Today we find ourselves in 1 Samuel 14. We will be looking at the first 23 verses of the chapter. 1 Samuel 13, which we looked at last week, and 1 Samuel 14, which we begin this week, belong together. It is one story spanning two chapters. Last week was part one of the story. Today is part two. In two weeks, we will get to part three in the story which is the second half of 1 Samuel 14.

Since this is one story, let's remember where the story left off last week. In 1 Samuel 13, Jonathan, King Saul's son, did what Saul should have done. When Saul was privately anointed king by Samuel, he was told to attack the Philistine garrison at Gibeah which was deep inside Israelite territory. Even though the Holy Spirit came on him powerfully, Saul didn't do anything about that garrison of Philistine soldiers. He simply went back home. About a year later, after Saul was finally established as king, Saul still hadn't done anything about that outpost of Philistine soldiers in Israel's territory. Saul's son, Jonathan, did what his father should have done. He attacked and destroyed that Philistine outpost. The Philistines responded in the way we would expect. They declared war on Israel.

It didn't look like it would be a fair fight. Militarily the Philistines were far superior. The Philistines brought to the battle 30,000 chariots --- they were the ancient equivalent of tanks, 6,000 cavalry, and troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore.

To make matters worse, the Philistines didn't allow the Israelites to have blacksmiths in their country. The Philistines had iron swords, shields, and spears

but the weapons of war for the Israelites were only sticks and stones. The only two soldiers in the Israelite army with swords were Saul and his son, Jonathan.

In addition, the Israelite army was much smaller than the Philistines. While King Saul's army started with 3,000 troops plus the military reserves, by the end of 1 Samuel 13, Saul's army dwindled down to 600. That was pretty thin, especially when compared to the Philistine army which was as numerous as the sand on the seashore.

To make matters worse, in 1 Samuel 13, Saul messed up in a big way. Samuel told Saul that after destroying the garrison of Philistines, he was to go to Gilgal and wait seven days for Samuel to arrive. Samuel would offer the burnt offerings and the peace offerings for the battle, then he would give Saul further instructions on the battle.

Samuel was a little slow in coming. As Saul watched the growing size of the Philistine army and the diminishing size of his own army he lost patience as he waited for Samuel to arrive. He took matters into his own hands and offered the sacrifices himself. He disobeyed God.

As a result of his sin, there were consequences. God rejected his dynasty. His son Jonathan would never become king and reign in his place. Saul's sin had consequences for himself and his family.

When chapter 13 finished, it looked like the battle between the Israelites and the Philistines was about to begin. When we turn the page, and chapter 14 begins, there is a surprise. Instead of turning our attention to King Saul leading

his army into battle, our attention is turned to Jonathan, Saul's son. Why do we turn to Jonathan?

Last week Jonathan did what his father should have done. He attacked the Philistines at Gibeah. This week, we find Jonathan will be the man his father should have been.

While Saul was a man of fragile faith, Jonathan was a man with daring faith. Since this section is about Jonathan's daring faith and what we can learn from it, we will break our study up into three parts all talking about daring faith so we can see what we can learn about daring faith.

Daring faith must be willing to take risks.

One day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." 1 Samuel 14:1 (ESV)

We are beginning to get an impression of the kind of man Jonathan was. He liked adventure. He liked taking a risk. He didn't sit around and let grass grow under his feet. The kind of risks Jonathan took were not stupid teenage risks. They were conscious, intentional risks. Jonathan was willing to take bold risks based on his confidence that God would come through. Jonathan reasoned if God enabled him to successfully wipe out the Philistine garrison in Gibeah, why wouldn't God continue to be faithful and help him win against the Philistines at Michmash?

...But he did not tell his father. 1 Samuel 14:1 (ESV)

I don't think this should surprise us. If my son was planning on single-handedly attacking a well-equipped army, it wouldn't be a good idea if he told me about it before he did it.

There was more going on than a son protecting a father from worry. As we will see, Jonathan and Saul are cut from a different cloth. Saul consistently struggled to have faith in God and to obey God. Jonathan was the opposite. He had great confidence in God. He consistently showed faith in God. In the Bible, Jonathan is always portrayed as obedient to God's word, unlike his father.

Now we leave Jonathan as he is discussing his bold plan with his armor-bearer and we turn our eyes back to King Saul. While Jonathan was hatching a daring plan of attack, what was his father doing?

Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah in the pomegranate cave at Migron...
1 Samuel 14:2 (ESV)

While the Philistines were gathered at Michmash, Saul was not near the battlefield. He was a long way from the battlefield. He was at the outskirts of Gibeah. See where that is on the map. Saul was a long way from the action. It says Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah. The word "staying" in Hebrew could also be translated as sitting. Saul was sitting around. The ESV says he was at the pomegranate cave at Migron. The ESV footnote says that in some manuscripts this is called the pomegranate tree. Apparently, there was a famous tree in that area. It was next to a cave. It was a great place to get some shade from the heat of the sun in the summer. It was a great place to get some rest. The picture we are given of Saul is he was sitting in a chair under a tree in the shade, eating pomegranite fruit snacks, probably with an Arnold Palmer in his hand.



We need to see the contrast. Jonathan wasn't sitting around doing nothing. He took initiative. He developed a plan for dealing with the Philistine invaders. He took action. Saul was the opposite. He got as far away from the action as possible. While the Philistine raiders ravaged the land, he puts his heels up and relaxed under the pomegranate tree eating fruit snacks. Do you see any character problems with Saul's leadership style? Who would you rather have as your leader Jonathan or Saul?

Now the author of 1 Samuel widened the lens on his camera. He let us look at the crowd around Saul as he relaxed from the heat of the sun in the shade of this tree.

...The people who were with him were about six hundred men, including Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh, wearing an ephod.... 1 Samuel 14:2-3 (ESV)

He has his tiny army of 600 men with him. The author of 1 Samuel also said Saul now had a royal chaplain. His name was Ahijah. Wait a minute! Wasn't Samuel Saul's spiritual counsel? What happened to him? You may remember that in the last chapter, after Samuel pronounced judgment on Saul for his disobedience, Samuel left. Saul was left spiritually rudderless. He had no spiritual guidance and was heading into a battle with the Philistines. That is why Saul chose to attach himself to Ahijah, the priest.

Along with introducing Ahijah, the author of 1 Samuel gives us his genealogy. At first, our eyes want to glaze over when we read a list of names but don't check out. This genealogy is not purposeless. It is purposeful. Ahijah's father was Ahitub. Ahitub's brother was Ichabod. That name should ring a bell. We heard about his birth in 1 Samuel 4. Ichabod's name literally means, "God's

glory has departed” when he was born on the day of his father’s death. Ichabod’s father was Phinehas. How can we forget about the two wicked sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas from 1 Samuel 2? They were killed on the same day because they treated the offering of the Lord with contempt. They stole the fat portions of offerings that were meant for God only and ate them. They slept with the young women who worked in the place of worship, even though they were married men. God struck both of them dead on the same day and cut off their posterity from the priesthood. As Ichabod’s name means, God’s glory departed from that priestly line forever. What an interesting combination. King Saul, who had God’s glory departing from his family line because of his sin, now attached himself for guidance to a priestly line that also had God’s glory depart from it forever because of sin. In a strange and sad way, Saul and Ahijah the priest turned out to be a good combination for one another.

Last week, we learned that Saul and Jonathan were the only two men in Israel’s army that possessed a sword. Saul chose to keep his sword in its sheath, he chose to stay away from the action, and he chose to cool his heels under the shade of a tree while eating fruit snacks. He did nothing to stop the Philistine raiders ravaging the land. Jonathan was the opposite. He took his sword out of its sheath and headed into the action. While Saul sat, Jonathan acted. While Saul’s inactivity got him no help from God, Jonathan’s activity --- the fact he was at least trying to do something --- meant he was about to receive help from God.

...And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. 1 Samuel 14:2–3 (ESV)

When I read this, I see this as a statement on the level of disorganization in Saul’s army. It was not broken into smaller accountable units where a

commander knows and cares about his men. Instead, everyone was wandering around aimlessly like cows grazing a pasture. Nobody knew for a long time that Jonathan and his armor-bearer slipped away and headed for the front lines. Saul had not organized his men. He was too busy eating fruit snacks and relaxing under a shady tree.

Now we return to Jonathan and his trusty companion. They traveled from the outskirts of Gibeah to the south side of a deep valley that separated them from the Philistines at Michmash to the north. As we saw last week, this deep valley that stretched for miles to the east and the west provided a measure of protection between the Philistines and the Israelites. It was almost impossible for the Philistines to go south, just as it was almost impossible for the Israelites to go north.

Within the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side and a rocky crag on the other side. The name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The one crag rose on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba. 1 Samuel 14:4–5 (ESV)

These verses don't grab us as they should. We read through them and they slide through our mental fingers. Let me show you what we are missing. When we read about a rocky crag, the word crag doesn't mean anything to us because it is not part of our working vocabulary. Look up crag in the dictionary. It means a cliff. It is a sheer rock face. The rock cliff on the north side of this deep valley was named Bozez. In Hebrew, that means slippery. This cliff was hard to climb. There were no handholds. Seneh was the name of the cliff on the south side. In Hebrew Seneh means thorny. While the cliff on the north side of the

valley was a smooth rock face, the cliff on the south side had jagged, pointed rocks all over it. There were plenty of handholds and lots of rocks to hide behind.

We are about to see plenty of action but before we do, we turn again to Jonathan's words.

Jonathan said to the young man who carried 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 can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few." 1 Samuel 14:6 (ESV)

Did you hear this? This is good stuff. Saul was petrified by the growing size of the Philistine army and the diminishing size of his own army. Jonathan wasn't. Was Jonathan not worried? He knew that victory was not dependent on the size of the army but on the size of the God behind the army. We don't put our faith in the strength of man but in the strength of our God.

Let's spend a little time looking at some of the important lines in this verse.

1. **Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few.** Jonathan knew that the outcome of any battle between the Philistines and the Israelites did not rely on the size of the armies or on the military equipment possessed by the army. The outcome was dependent on the Lord. In the past, God saved his people many times when they were vastly outnumbered. This is what his father, King Saul, missed. Saul was trusting in the size of his army to win the battle. Jonathan was trusting in the size of God to win the battle. Jonathan just needed to look back on the period of the judges, a little more than 200 years before, to see how God saved his people from great enemies with a small force.

For example, In Judges 3, Ehud went alone into the stronghold of Eglon, king of Moab. He assassinated the king and brought freedom to the people. Also in Judges 3, we read about Shamgar. He was raised up by God and single-handedly killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad. This is another case of God using one man to save a nation.

Most famous of all from the period of the Judges was Gideon. In Judges 6 God called Gideon to rescue Israel. When Gideon first struck against a Midianite altar to Baal, 32,000 Israelites rallied around to help him. God said that was too many. Anyone who was afraid to fight was sent home. That reduced that number by 22,000. God said there were still too many. God took the men down to the stream to be tested. Everyone who scooped water into their hand and lapped it up like a dog drinking water from a bowl was to be retained. Everyone else who knelt down to drink directly from the stream was to be sent home. That reduced Gideon's army to 300 men. With those men, the Lord destroyed the 120,000 Midianites.

By looking at the history of how God worked in the past, Jonathan knew that nothing can stop the Lord from saving his people. God may use a large army. God may use a small army. Sometimes God uses the daring faith of one person to save his people.

Application — We can apply this to our lives. The way for us to have a daring faith that is willing to take risks for God is by knowing how God saved his people in the past. That will give us confidence in how God may work again and that he saves his people today. Just like Jonathan, we need to know how God

worked in the past if we are going to have the ability to trust God when life is difficult today.

For example, do you remember when Moses and the Israelites had their backs to the Red Sea with the army of Pharaoh bearing down on them? There was no way to escape. It was when there was no way out that God made an unexpected way out. He parted the Red Sea. God's people walked through on dry ground, but when the Egyptians tried to follow, the waves came crashing down on them. In a similar way, many times God provides unseen and unexpected ways of escape when we are facing certain tragedies. This doesn't mean that is always the way God will work but many times it is the way God chooses to work.

The Bible also tells the story of Sennacherib the Assyrian surrounding Jerusalem with his army. The situation looked hopeless for God's people. But King Hezekiah took the hopeless situation to God in prayer, desperately asking for God's help. In response to Hezekiah's prayer, the angel of the Lord struck 185,000 of the Assyrians dead by morning. This doesn't mean God will always respond to his people's prayers with dramatic rescue, but it does tell us that many times God responds to the prayers of his people in unexpected and dramatic ways. James wrote about this in the New Testament.

The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. James 5:16 (ESV)

In the book of Genesis, Joseph refused to dishonor God by sinning with his master's wife when she wanted to seduce him. For that, he was thrown in jail because of false accusations. Over the years God not only arranged Joseph's

release but used that dark trial to be the very means by which God would elevate Joseph to second in command over all of Egypt. In a similar way, God loves to use the suffering he allows in our lives to reveal his grace and power to us and to others.

Armed with the knowledge of his nation's history, Jonathan set out to change the demoralizing situation faced by God's people as the Philistine raiders destroyed the land.

Unlike his father, Jonathan didn't sit under a tree and do nothing. He took the initiative. At least he would try. It didn't matter if the odds didn't look good. Either way, if they had a large army or a small army, God needed to show up if they were to win.

Application — This is an important application for us today. Too many churches and Christians are like Saul. They are content to sit under the pomegranate tree. They are content to sit in the shade of life and do nothing. You have heard the excuses. We don't have enough resources, money, people, or staff. That is not the way God works. We are called to be like Jonathan. Do bold things for Christ and know going into it that unless God shows up you may not make it. The good news is God has always shown up for his people who are about the business of his work. If God has been that way in the past, we can expect him to be that way in the future.

At CrossWinds, we have intentionally tried to live out a faith like Jonathan. We boldly want to try new things. We take risks and know that unless God shows

up, they will fail. We don't want to be like Saul and sit in the shade of a tree hoping something will happen.

Some of you know how we became multisite. It was a bold dream, a risky dream to open another campus in the Spencer community. I remember the budget meeting before we opened the Spencer campus. If God did not show up and provide the finances, we were toast. We built a budget hundreds of thousands higher than the income we were receiving. In daring faith we trusted that God would bring in the people and the funds to launch the Spencer campus and make it a reality. That year, as the campus launched, our giving ramped up by hundreds of thousands to meet the new budget demands.

We are in one of those places right now. We are building out the Spencer campus. Between the purchase and the rebuild, that is a project of just less than \$1 million. In addition, we have a regular operating budget that is just less than \$1 million. In a 12-month period of time, we will need somewhere south of \$2 million! We have done our part to be frugal. We have trimmed our expenses. It is still a daring faith budget. Some are uncomfortable with those goals but we would rather be a church of daring faith that is willing to take risks like Jonathan than a church like Saul that sits in comfort and safety far from the action.

William Carey, said it this way, "Attempt great things for God, and expect great things from God."

2. Jonathan offered himself to be used by God. He didn't demand to be used by God. I love Jonathan's openhandedness. He simply said, "It may be that God will work through us." Jonathan didn't demand that God save Israel

through him. He simply knew he needed to try and leave the result in God's hand. Jonathan knew how God usually worked when he rescued his people but he didn't demand that God must work that way with him. Jonathan just knew that he was either going to die like Saul, rusting away as he sat under a tree, or he would die trying. He would rather die trying than die doing nothing.

This reminds me of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane before he went to the cross. While God usually rescues his people when they call to him in their distress, Jesus knew God the Father wasn't bound to rescue him in his distress. He submitted his will to God's will, even if that involved suffering and death instead of rescue.

And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." Mark 14:36 (ESV)

Isn't Jonathan's faith in God the kind we all want to have? Boldness to try something for God even if the odds are not in your favor but then submitting to God for the results knowing they may or may not work in our favor.

Let's get back to the story.

And his armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul." 1 Samuel 14:7 (ESV)

Jonathan's armor-bearer is with him. They will work together.

A faith that dares great things for God will often experience great things from God.

Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them. If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go up to them. But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up, for the LORD has given them into our hand. And this shall be the sign to us." 1 Samuel 14:8–10 (ESV)

Do you see the plan? They would climb down the rock cliff Senah. They would use the cover of the jagged rocks to get to the bottom of the cliffs. In the valley of the cliffs, they would reveal themselves to the Philistines and see what kind of reaction they got. If the Philistines told them to stay in place, they would. If the Philistines told them to come up to them, they would take that as a sign from God that God had given them into their hands. Let's see how it unfolds.

So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves." And the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing." And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel." 1 Samuel 14:11–12 (ESV)

Remember these two cliffs. They already climbed down Senah, the thorny cliffs. They were at the bottom of the valley. The Philistines asked them, challenged them, to climb up the other side, the cliff named Bozez, the slippery cliff. Remember this was a sheer rock face cliff with few handholds. It was a free-solo climb --- the kind that Alex Honnold and a few other people in the world would attempt. Yet, Jonathan and his armor-bearer carrying their weapons climbed up this cliff. How steep were these cliffs?



On the Internet, I found this is an area used for rock climbing in Israel. I also found a vacationer who used a drone to video these cliffs. Let me show them to you.

While Jonathan and his armor-bearer were free-solo climbing this slippery cliff, the Philistines went back to drinking beer and eating peanuts because they

didn't think anyone in their right mind would climb the cliffs to attack them. When Jonathan and his armor-bearer reached the top, surprise surprise! Before the Philistines knew what hit them, Jonathan started to slice and dice.

Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him. And that first strike, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, killed about twenty men within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land. And there was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and even the raiders trembled, the earth quaked, and it became a very great panic. 1 Samuel 14:13–15 (ESV)

Jonathan was slicing them, and his armor-bearer came after him and stabbed the men in the heart to finish them off. Twenty men were taken out in no time at all. That set off a panic in the camp and everyone who was tightly packed on this mountain started running. It created a stampede, and people were getting run over in the chaos.

Some people would be quick to say there was nothing special about this. It was Green Beret tactics. A small, well-trained military team carried out a surprise attack on an unprotected flank throwing the enemy into confusion. There was far more going on than seen in a cursory reading. Notice it says the earth quaked. God was involved. As Jonathan and his armor-bearer began the attack, God joined the attack by unleashing an earthquake in the area. I am sure that freaked out the Philistines and caused an even greater stampede.

In addition, God engaged in psychological warfare. The last verse ends by saying it became a very great panic. The ESV footnote will tell you the alternate reading is, "it was a panic from God." God put the Philistines into a complete psychological panic. God freaked them out so the confused crowd packed on top

of one another was in complete terror. Jonathan had the courage to start the attack. God stepped in to continue the attack with an earthquake and psychological warfare. Isn't this the way God often works? God is waiting for somebody to have enough faith to do something. When they do, God gets involved and helps out to get done what he wants to be done. It is when we attempt great things for God that we can begin to expect great things from God.

Daring faith rallies the faith of others.

Let's leave the trembling Philistines with Jonathan chasing them and return to Saul sitting in the shade of a tree with his army of disorganized men milling around him.

And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude was dispersing here and there. 1 Samuel 14:16 (ESV)

Saul's watchmen were keeping watch on the massive Philistine army on top of the hills at Michmash. They couldn't believe their eyes. They were dispersing. They were running. The Hebrew describes the scene better. It says they were melting off the mountain. Can you picture ice cream melting down the side of a cone on a hot summer day? That is a picture of the Philistine troops running down the mountain from a distance.

When Saul heard what was happening, I suspect he had an idea of what happened. He immediately called for a head count.

Then Saul said to the people who were with him, "Count and see who has gone from us." And when they had counted, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there. 1 Samuel 14:17 (ESV)

It was about time they took attendance. Jonathan and his armor-bearer were gone for a while. It was a long way to Michmash. Someone should have noticed their absence long ago.

So Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For the ark of God went at that time with the people of Israel. 1 Samuel 14:18 (ESV)

Saul remembered the trouble he got in when he didn't follow the proper procedures for dealing with God in the last chapter so he asked Ahijah the priest to seek God's blessing for the military conflict. Maybe Saul was learning his lesson. Not so fast. Look what he did next.

Now while Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the camp of the Philistines increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." 1 Samuel 14:19 (ESV)

The priest was offering the sacrifices but it was taking too long for Saul so he canceled the offering. That was not a good idea. I don't think he really wanted God's blessing. When God's blessing was taking too long Saul decided he didn't need it.

Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle... 1 Samuel 14:20a (ESV)

Saul and his army of 600 men were not near the Philistines at Michmash. They were a great distance from them in Gibeah. They began running to the battle.

Notice we have seen Jonathan's daring faith be assisted by God. Now we see that a man with daring faith for God often rallies others to live with daring faith for God.

...And behold, every Philistine's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion. 1 Samuel 14:20b (ESV)

God created so much panic and confusion in the Philistine camp that the Philistines end up killing one another. By the time Saul and his tiny army showed up, most of the work is done.

Reinforcements also came from other unexpected sources.

Now the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before that time and who had gone up with them into the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise, when all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed hard after them in the battle. 1 Samuel 14:21–22 (ESV)

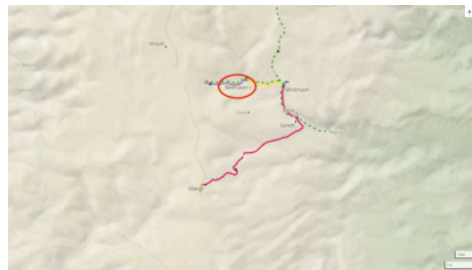
The traitors who left the Hebrews and joined the Philistines now turned on the Philistines. The rest of the army that abandoned Saul and hid in caves and holes came out of the ground. They also joined Saul and headed into the battle.

So the LORD saved Israel that day... 1 Samuel 14:23a (ESV)

It wasn't Jonathan who won the battle that day. Jonathan just decided to make himself available to the Lord. The results of the battle belonged to the Lord. God gets all the credit for saving his people that day.

...And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven. 1 Samuel 14:23b (ESV)

That is a point further west. The point is they chased the Philistines for a long time. But the events of that day had only begun. When we come back to this chapter in two weeks, there are some real surprises in store as God's victory over the Philistines will be severely diminished by an egotistical king's decision.



Application

What can we learn? The central theme of this chapter is Jonathan's daring faith and what we can learn about living with bold daring faith and trust in God.

1. God wants us to have a faith that dares great things for God.
2. The faith that dares great things for God often experiences great things from God.
3. The faith that dares great things for God rallies others to action.

While this chapter is about bold, daring faith, it is also a contrast between the faith of Saul and Jonathan. We need to ask ourselves, are we people like Saul? Are we far from the action, keeping our swords in their sheaths, sitting in the shade relaxing and eating fruit snacks? Are we people like Jonathan? Are we on the front lines? Are we willing to take risks for God that will only work if God shows up?

At CrossWinds, as we are reaching people with Jesus, we have been and want to continue to be a church of daring faith that takes big steps to reach more people with Jesus. Join us as we try things new and take risks to reach more people with Jesus.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

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