

• *Victory secured by two men acting with boldness and faith*

After Saul's sin, he continues with the battle. He numbers the people^{□1}. The two armies are near each other at Geba and Michmash^{□2} and the Philistines divide into three companies ready to attack the Israelites^{□3}. It is one of the low points of Israel's history. Yet in this story we come to a great victory. The people are released from defeat and slavery. At the beginning of the picture the people are in an awful position. They are gripped with fear and timidity. But Jonathan is a hero of faith and totally swings the position around. In the previous chapter Saul had been worried by his diminishing numbers. Now victory is secured by two men acting with boldness and faith.

□1 13:15b
□2 13:16
□3 13:17-18

• *Jonathan strikes a blow for freedom*

So often God's people fall into bondage. There is a bondage that arises from timidity and fear of the world. Jonathan cannot bear the thought of the people of God being in continual defeat. He strikes a blow for freedom.

1. The turning of the situation comes at the darkest hour

• *Just one single event*

1. **The turning of the situation comes at the darkest hour.** The Israelites are under domination by the Philistines, who have sophisticated weapons. Apart from Saul and Jonathan the Israelites have nothing but farming equipment^{□1}. So the scene is ominous as the Philistines move towards engagement with the Israelites^{□2}. God can release us from bondage in one step. It often happens that way. God will step in and bring deliverance from the thing that holds us in subjection. It may be a damaging habit, a ruinous friendship. God can set you free in one step! Israel was utterly humiliated but deliverance was not far away. In one single event, Jonathan breaks the bondage of the people.

□1 13:19-22
□2 13:23

2. He used one man

• *God likes to use bold, daring, individuals*

2. **He used one man.** One day Jonathan makes a suggestion to his armour-bearer. It was unusual and daring. The army of Israel were too scared to put their noses outside the camp in case the Philistines were there. God likes to use bold, daring, individuals. You - as an individual - can be so free, so liberated. Most Christians have no idea of how free and liberated we are meant to be in God's world. We are meant to be free from sin, free from the world, free from the devil. If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

3. Jonathan's faith took the form of instinct

• *He moves tentatively*

3. **Jonathan's faith took the form of instinct.** Sometimes we have a feeling that we ought to do something although we have no special guidance. Jonathan had no special instructions. God had not said to him 'Go to the camp...' It was just a feeling that something ought to be done. He moves tentatively, not even telling his father. He suggests that they go and inspect what is happening at the Philistine camp^{□1}. Saul and the remains of the decadent priesthood of Eli were not far away^{□2}. We remember the ghastly predictions concerning Eli's family in 1 Samuel 2:33-36. The recently rebuked king is in the company of the rebuked priesthood of Eli. What hope is there of victory coming from such a quarter? Jonathan's faith will achieve more than the discussions of Saul and his officials.

□1 14:1
□2 14:2-3

• He has a total faith in the Lord's ability to deliver Israel regardless of the circumstances

The two men find a path between two cliffs that brings them to a point overlooking the enemy camp¹. Jonathan is a man of faith, but his faith takes the form of instinct. He simply believes that the Lord will give them victory, and that numbers are not important. Unlike his father² Jonathan was not disturbed by the thought of a small number getting victory. He has a total faith in the LORD's ability to deliver Israel regardless of the seeming desperate plight of the Israelites. He says 'Perhaps...'. He does not know precisely what will happen. Sometimes faith will take the form of a desire, an instinct, a feeling. We think God is calling us to do something but we are not absolutely sure. Often the desires of our heart are the whispers of the Spirit. We must take notice when we have a desire in our heart to do something for God. Very often it is the very thing that God wants us to do. You do not need a visit from an angel. If it is a good thing, and you have a feeling that you should do it, go forward, tentatively, enquiringly.

1 14:4-5

2 13:11

• Strong faith - he is willing to work apart from the expectations of others

Jonathan's instinctive faith is strong faith. He believes God will show the way. He is willing to work apart from the expectations of others. The officials of the land are giving up in despair, meeting under a pomegranate tree. Jonathan believes in the power of God. The Philistines are only 'these uncircumcised people'¹. This is the thing that makes Jonathan the man he is. The Philistines are helpless because they do not have the blessing of God upon them, and Jonathan knows it. He sees God as God. Nothing can stop God! There is really only one issue. The only question is whether God will act with us and for us. God can do anything. 'Maybe God will use just me and you,' says Jonathan. This is all that needs to happen for you to make a break for liberty.

1 14:6

4. God gave encouragements

• His armour bearer

• Philistine words

• Philistine flee in sheer panic

4. **God gave encouragements.** Jonathan finds support from his armour-bearer¹. He proposes something which will function as a sign to them². God honours them and the Philistines say something which is God's instruction that they should indeed approach the Philistines³. Jonathan knows with an assurance of faith that victory is theirs⁴. It was perhaps the narrowness of the path that made it easy for Jonathan to kill twenty Philistines with the scarce sword that he had⁵. God sent an earth tremor and the Philistines were soon fleeing in sheer panic⁶.

1 14:7

2 14:8-10

3 14:11-12a

4 14:12b

5 13:22;

14:13-14

6 14:15

• A hero of faith who 'put foreign armies to flight'

Jonathan could well have had a place in the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 who by faith 'put foreign armies to flight'¹. We too will be able to bring deliverance to ourselves and to the church of Jesus Christ if we follow the instincts of faith.

1 Hebrews 11:34



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