

A Man After God's Own Heart – 1 Samuel

1 Samuel 14:1-52

"The Folly of Trusting Self" – July 16, 2017



Introduction

"In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge" (Proverbs 14:26). We don't typically put fear and confidence together, but when we fear God, that's exactly what happens. The fear of God is not a servile fear, but a reverence, a taking God seriously that comes from seeing God for who He truly is. If we fear God, we can be confident in the face of countless circumstances. As David says in Psalm 23:4 "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me." In that sense, the fear of God is similar to *faith* in God. In chapter 13 we learned that a good leader must first be a good follower. Saul, Israel's newly crowned king, looked good on the *outside* (tall, handsome, wealthy), but lacked what it took to lead on the *inside*. Driven by fear, Saul's desperation led to disastrous decisions. Chapter 14 shows the results of fear by contrasting the results of Jonathan's faith with Saul's fear. It leaves us asking how we will respond.

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response.

Sermon Outline

- I. Jonathan: Faith (fear of God) finds confidence in God's power (14:1-15)
- II. Saul: Fear (fear of man) leads to disastrous decisions (14:16-52)

Read & Discuss

- 1) Read [1 Samuel 14:1-15](#)

Surrounded by an impossible enemy ([1 Sam. 13:5-7](#)), separated by an impossible valley, Saul and his 600 troops sit near a pomegranate tree when the people of God desperately need a savior. In contrast to Saul's apparent passivity, Jonathan's faith compels him into action. Though he does not know how God will act on his behalf (note in v6 "It may be that the Lord will work for us") he knows that *nothing* is impossible for God; he knows God is passionate for His glory. Faith does not mean the absence of risk, but Jonathan knows that taking the risk is worth it: he (and you) was made to live for God's glory and to love others by pointing them to the God who saves. Take a moment to read [James 4:13-16](#). What does James teach us about risk and the character of God?

What is it that you fear? What keeps you up at night? Once you've zeroed in on that, lay the truth of 1 Samuel 14:6 over that fear. What difference does the fact that *nothing* is impossible for God make in terms of that which tempts you to fear? If you believed (like Jonathan) this truth about God, what difference would that make in your life? How would that affect the decisions you're making in life?

Trusting God, is not easy. We can often feel discouraged by our past or intimidated by the task of trusting God in the future. That's one reason God gave us the church – we are not meant to fight for faith alone. We need the support, prayers, and encouragement of each other. Jonathan had the support of his armor bearer, who showed a similar faith (see v7). The one thing we're told about the armor bearer? He was a young man (v1). You don't have to be super smart or strong or famous to make a difference. God uses the faith of a young man and of Jonathan to lead a nation into victory. Whether you are young (remember [1 Timothy 4:12](#)), old, rich, poor, educated or not...God can use you if you are willing to trust Him and follow Him. What is it God is calling you to trust Him with today? How can you encourage another brother or sister in the church you know is struggling to trust Him? If you are struggling, who can you reach out to today for spiritual encouragement?

Additional reading: Genesis 18:14, Job 42:2, Psalm 135:6, Mark 10:27, Galatians 6:2

2) Read [1 Samuel 14:16-52](#)

If the fear of God leads to confidence (Prov. 14:26), the fear of man leads to insecurity and foolish decisions that harm us and those who follow. That's the sad picture of Saul we see in these verses. What are ways that Saul used religion not to know and trust God, but to manipulate Him? What are ways you may be tempted to pray, fast, read your Bible, go to church (all good things) not to know and trust God, but in hopes of twisting God's arm to act on your behalf? We need to remember, God is not reluctant to save such that He needs arm-twisting. He gives generously ([James 1:5](#)), has storehouses of goodness for those who fear Him ([Psalm 31:19](#)), and stands ready to support us ([2 Chronicles 16:9](#)).

Additional reading: Proverbs 18:1, Proverbs 29:25

In our final song ("All I have is Christ") we reflected on the challenge of v3:

Oh Father, use my ransomed life
In any way You choose
And let my song forever be
My only boast is You

Knowing God has ransomed your life, are you able to trust Him with everything? To say to Him, "God, use my life in any way You choose. I trust You!" If you're struggling to say that, prayerfully read [Romans 8:31-39](#) to help.

Prayer of Response

Spend time praying together in response to God's word for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <http://firstbaptistum.com/media.php?pageID=6>