

The Faith of Jonathan

"And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few" - 1 Samuel 14:6

Saul and Jonathan and about 600 lightly armed Israelite soldiers were about to be attacked by a Philistine army composed of 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen and an innumerable host of heavily armed soldiers. Much of the Israelite population had fled the country seeking refuge in Gad and Gilead on the other side of the Jordan River, while others hid "*themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits*" (1 Sam 13:6). Those that remained trembled at the great odds that they faced.

Saul was waiting for the prophet Samuel to sacrifice unto the Lord. However, when seven days had come and gone and Samuel did not show up as he had promised, Saul became anxious. Though he was not a priest, Saul made the sacrificial offerings that Samuel would have made had he been there. God was testing Saul to determine if he would trust Him or rely on his own strength. There are times in every Christian's life where faith is tested. In your Old Testament reading you will recall of Abraham's great test when God asked him to sacrifice Isaac. Obediently, Abraham prepared to carry out this request when God suddenly stopped him from plunging the knife into Isaac and said, "... now I know that thou fearest God" (Genesis 22:12). In the case at hand, Samuel brought the bad news to Saul that he had failed the test, usurping a priest's authority by conducting the sacrifice, "*And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee*" (1 Samuel 13:13).

Jonathan, on the other hand, was willing to trust his life to the Lord, as our text shows. Although Jonathan faced seemingly insurmountable odds, he let God determine the final outcome. Jonathan's plan was to walk right up to a Philistine outpost and let them decide what they were going to do with him and his armor bearer. If they come out to us, then we will stand still,

May 2016

however, if they ask us to come to them then we will know that God is with us, was Jonathan's thinking. As it turned out the Philistines somewhat bemusedly invited them into their midst. Jonathan and his companion quickly killed twenty soldiers which caused such a panic that in the ensuing confusion the whole Philistine army started to kill one another, "*And Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture*" (1 Samuel 14:20). Even those Israelites which earlier had joined the Philistines to avoid any persecution recognized the hand of God in all this and changed their allegiance back to Saul. With very few people, "*the LORD saved Israel that day*" (1 Samuel 14:23), as Jonathan had prayed.

We learn three important lessons from all this that can be applied to present times. First, there are always those who will quickly disregard the principles of God and join the majority in spiritual conflicts—compromise is their guiding light. Those who joined the Philistines, later to realign with Saul, are an example of this type of person. Second, there are those who will run away or who will shrink into the background when conflict comes, leaving others to contend with the adversary. They, too, show little esteem for God when they will not take a stand. Those who left the country or hid themselves highlights this kind of person. Finally, those that remain seem to have two choices: either take spiritual matters into their own hands, as did Saul, or do as Jonathan and seek God's guidance in moving forward, despite the odds. Prayerfully, one can always find God's guidance in the Bible.

Perhaps you are being tested this very moment. You may feel that there is no hope, the odds are too great, and your strength is too small. Rather than give in or hide or run away or trust in yourself, it is always best to turn to the Lord and let Him decide the outcome. Our faith must equal that of Jonathan's. Jesus said, "... *Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me*" (Mark 8:34). This gives us no viable alternative other than to trust in Him. Because He has already paid for your sins, Jesus freely

offers forgiveness through His believers on earth. May God grant you the grace to believe the proclamation that your sins are forgiven in the name and shed blood of Jesus.

God's Peace,

Charles Korhonen

Online Broadcasts

From our webpage: <http://www.tapiolachurch.org/> you will see the mixlr live audio – we will be 'on the air' during our church services.

Winter Schedule

Sunday Service 11:00am. Sunday School/Adult Bible

Study 9:45am

Wednesday night Bible Study 7pm

Special Dates

Spring Cleaning – Saturday, May 21st at the church

Semi-annual meeting – May 25, 7pm at the church

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| May 1 | Ken Storm | Holy Communion |
| May 8 | Chad Kuivanen | |
| May 15 | Ken Storm | |
| May 22 | Charles Korhonen | |
| May 29 | Herb Jarvi | |

Looking Ahead

Our Summer schedule will begin the first Sunday after Memorial Day – June 5th. Church will be at 10:00am, Bible Study at 7pm on Wednesday. No Sunday School or Adult Bible Study.

TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH

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