

'THIS IS WAR The Reality of Spiritual Warfare
(DON'T BE DISARMED_ THE BATTLE BELONG TO THE LORD)

I call your attention to a passage in 1st Samuel 13-14 that our men's class studied last fall. I'll begin in vs. 16.

¹⁶ Saul and his son Jonathan and the men with them were staying in Gibeah in Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Micmash. ¹⁷ Raiding parties went out from the Philistine camp in three detachments. One turned toward Ophrah in the vicinity of Shual, ¹⁸ another toward Beth Horon, and the third toward the borderland overlooking the Valley of Zeboim facing the desert. ¹⁹ Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, "Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!" ²⁰ So all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plowshares, mattocks, axes and sickles sharpened. ²¹ The price was 2/3 of a shekel for sharpening plowshares and mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening forks and axes and for re-pointing goads. ²² 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.

The Philistines had overcome God's people and to keep them subdued, took away their weapons. Regardless of where you stand on "gun control" _ our founding fathers recognized the only way to ensure our country would not be overthrown was to guarantee citizens the right to bear arms. Here we find that not only were God's people disarmed, they were hindered from fashioning new weapons. Somehow, **King Saul and his son managed to hold onto theirs** _ either hiding them or permitted to keep them (*which I highly doubt*). At any rate, Saul apparently was not motivated to use his. Maybe he was intimidated _ or saw them merely as status symbols. Jonathon, however, decided to put his to good use.

Picking up now in **verse 23**: **Now a detachment of Philistines had gone out to the pass at Micmash. ¹ One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing his armor, "Come, let's go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side". But he did not tell his father. ² Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree in Migron. With him were about 600 men, ³ among whom was Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod. He was a son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh. No one was aware that Jonathan had left. ⁴ 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 toward Micmash, the other to the south toward Geba. ⁶ Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few." ⁷ "Do all that you have in mind," his armor-bearer said. "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul." ⁸ Jonathan said, "Come, then; we will cross over toward 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." ¹² The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, "Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson." So Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Climb up after me; the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel." ¹³ Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and killed behind him. ¹⁴ In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre. ¹⁵ Then panic struck the whole army--those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties--and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.**

Jonathon discretely enlisted an armor bearer to carry his spear, shield, helmet, and breastplate.

Together they went to confront an enemy band that had camped on a hilltop. What motivated him? Maybe a better question would be “WHO” motivated him_ for he urged his companion saying, **“Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few.”** He knew he was outnumbered 10-1 and heavily “outgunned.” He didn’t think he was physically stronger or much better skilled than his enemy. But he did know “WHO” was on his side_ and he seemed to think being equipped for battle was a call to engage the enemy. So he decided to move forward trusting God would confirm his choice before long. He even looked for a sign that **“the LORD has given them into our hands.”** In case you somehow missed it, Jonathan believed **the battle belonged to the Lord.**

I love the armor bearer’s response. **“Do all that you have in mind_ I am with you heart and soul.”** Many years ago When I interpreted the call to go overseas_ and then 20 years later to come here to Calvary to be from God, I didn’t know what I’d find_ but I knew I had one person who pledged to support my efforts. My armor bearer was my wife, Nina. She had my back then and she does yet today. It means more to me than I can say.

Let’s read on...¹⁶ **Saul’s lookouts at Gibeah in Benjamin saw the army melting away in all directions.** ¹⁷ **Then Saul said to the men who were with him, “Muster the forces and see who has left us.” When they did, it was Jonathan and his armor-bearer who were not there.** ¹⁸ **Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the ark of God.” (At that time it was with the Israelites.)** ¹⁹ **While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hand.”** ²⁰ **Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords.** ²¹ **Those Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.** ²² **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.**

Notice that **the rest of God’s people joined in** when they saw that God was with Jonathon. This is amazing. Remember they didn’t have any weapons. What did they intend to fight with? Their bare hands? Sharp sticks? Did they hope to take some swords and spears from enemy soldiers who had fallen? I honestly don’t know_ but the crazy thing is they didn’t have to do any of that. **“God sent a panic”** into the hearts of the enemy troops and they literally destroyed themselves. **“The LORD rescued His people that day.”** Whether they knew it or not, **the battle belonged to the Lord.** So think this through:

You haven’t been left defenseless, so **BE A WARRIOR!** Satan wants you to think you’re powerless and empty handed, but consider what message God sent to Gideon in **Judges 6:12:** This man cowering in a winepress_ afraid that the enemy would rob him blind_ was told **“The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.”** God promises to be with us too and He has given us all the armor and weapons we need to defeat the enemy. Read **Ephesians 6:10^{ff}**. We’ll examine that text in depth next week_ but remember it is not “*what*” you have in your hand so much as “*Who*” you have in your heart.

BE AN ARMOR BEARER. Maybe you feel “*ill trained*” if not “*ill equipped.*” Then support faithful leaders who courageously live out their faith. **Hebrews 13:7** says: **“Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.”** Pray for your leaders. Volunteer to lighten their burdens. But make no mistake about it, at some point you’ll need to learn to personally use the weapons you carry. I think it’s significant that Jonathon told his armor bearer “*whom*” he was getting his cues from.

He even announced what sign he was personally looking for as confirmation God would grant them victory. I keep pointing to God's field manual to let you know where I'm getting my marching orders. But I also keep challenging you to step out in faith and see what God can and will do if we trust Him. I've never said it would be easy. It was an uphill battle for Jonathan and his servant_ and it will likely be for as well. But if we expect to be victorious we need to rise to the challenge.

Yet, I must caution you. **MAKE SURE YOU'RE ON THE WINNING SIDE.** If God is with us, we will eventually overcome_ whether we are many or few. But if you've been waiting for a sign, the waiting is over! It isn't King Saul's Son_ but God's one and only Son who leads the way into battle! And He was victorious_ forever destroying the power of sin and death. And 1st John 5:4-5 declares: **"This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."** God calls us to engage in this war_ but it's up to us to answer that call. *(Draft)*

Moses wrote in **Exodus 15:2-3:** **"The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will extol Him. The LORD is a warrior; The LORD is His name."** Maybe you don't believe you can say the same. Maybe you've never seen His deliverance_ or at least never recognized it. I can tell you this much_ those who sit idly on the sidelines will seldom experience the kind of victory that those who engage in battle will. **The battle belongs to the Lord.**