

# Two Approaches To Mission

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[ 0 : 00 ] Would you pray with me? Oh Lord, nothing can restrain you from saving.

! May it be that you will work for us today.! Amen. Well, the need is clear.

The orders have been given. And the mission is before us all. But what is the church to do? And how is the church to do it? I looked online and there are 44 million books written about the mission of the church. The message of most of these books is, If it's big, then you're doing something right.

Recently, someone actually was trying to tell me that. And the implication is that if you're able to take out a big mortgage, buy land, build, then you earn the right to write books about how to do that.

[ 1 : 20 ] The implication then on the other side is that if you're small, you're doing something wrong. By God's grace, I, well, I'll say in my weakness, I did let the first piece of advice get to me in my flesh.

I confess this to Jonathan and others. It stirred it up in me. And then by God's grace, he ministered to me through another pastor. And I want to tell you about his testimony of 22 years in the ministry at the end of the sermon.

Who's right? Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus. I see in this passage, this first half of 1 Samuel 14, two different approaches to mission.

Two very different approaches to accomplishing what God has called us to do. On one side, it's a philosophy that depends on what man can see.

That's Saul. That's Saul's quote philosophy of ministry or mission. But on the other hand, praise the Lord. We have a theology that rests on God's power.

[ 2 : 33 ] That's Jonathan. Amen. Two very different approaches to mission. Where we left off in the last chapter, Marsha pointed this out beautifully in Sunday school.

Jonathan had received a victory from the Lord. Saul stepped in front of him and took the credit. Let everyone hear that Saul has done this. The two are one and behind the other. And as Marsha put it, now there's daylight between the two.

There's a separation between these two men. Would you look at verse one with me? Now it happened one day. Oh, that little phrase, it should remind you. We've seen this in this book already. Remember? It just so happened. He goes wondering for the donkeys. It just so happened. Samuel comes down. We've seen this in other parts of the Bible. Do you remember in Ruth? That's the way the Lord's providence is described.

So when we hear this chapter starting that way, now it happened one day. We should already know. Pay attention to the details because God's providence is going to be highlighted in every little thing that comes up next.

[ 3 : 34 ] Even these Hebrew names of rocks. It happened one day that Jonathan. Now remember earlier he was just called Jonathan, but now he's called Jonathan, the son of Saul.

Saul said to the young man who bore his armor. Some have gotten themselves a really good, apparently, job as a golf caddy. And that's similar to being a weapons caddy.

What do you do as a caddy? You follow them around. You carry their gear. You assist. You support. You criticize when they're not listening. A weapons caddy would do the same thing. You're carrying their weapons around.

And he said to him, come, let us go over to the Philistines garrison that is on the other side. So on the side that the Hebrews are on, where Jonathan and his armor bearer are having this dialogue, that is called Geba.

Geba means hill. So they're up on a hill. The other side where the Philistines are, do you remember from the previous chapter, that place is called Michmash. Michmash means hidden.

[ 4 : 39 ] So they've taken a position of being under stealth. They've invaded Israel's land and they're in Michmash. And in between that side of the Philistines, this side of the Israelites is a Wadi.

A Wadi is a geographic feature that we know as well. It's a ravine in California, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado. They call it an arroyo using the Spanish name.

It's basically a mini canyon or a dry creek. And on those monsoon months where there's a couple months of massive rain and snow melt all coming down together, it'll flood up in a hurry.

But the rest of the time, it's a dry creek. So picture this scene. Here's Jonathan on the hill. And he says, let's cross down through this dry creek and go up the other side.

Jonathan is a prince. Remember his dad saw most likely time has passed and everyone knows he is the prince of Israel. But he's on a mission. He leaves the comfort of royal life behind.

[ 5 : 43 ] He and Saul are the only two with weapons that could be used to save. Remember, even the farm equipment, you couldn't even get it sharpened. It's going to cost you way too much. It's prohibitive.

The Philistines have a monopoly on iron. And no one is going to be able to compete with them.

They have crippled the Israelites. But Jonathan does have what it takes to fight and to save.

He has the weapons. Now, this little detail is given on this first verse about Jonathan. What does the next word say in yours? But he did not tell his father.

The silhouettes are clearly formed. Why not? Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the author is setting up a contrast here. He implies that Saul would disagree with Jonathan's plan.

He wouldn't get it. He would think it's a reckless suicide mission. Saul didn't share Jonathan's theology of mission. According to Saul's philosophy, this was a plan doomed to die.

[ 6 : 55 ] You could probably ask any Reformed Baptist pastor, and someone has told them that, right? If you don't share that same theology of mission.

Now, notice the contrast how in verse 2, Saul is described. Saul was sitting. Jonathan is going, marching on the attack, invading enemy land, which is actually their land, to be taken.

And Saul is sitting. In the outskirts, or cave, of Gibeah, under a pomegranate tree. It's the picture of comfort and luxury.

In the shade, with cool water, most likely his feet are propped off, propped up with the sandals off.

That's what I would do, at least. Well, it says it's near Migron.

And that means precipice, or land slip. You see the beauty of the details. He's sitting in comfort, right next to a landslide, a precipice, asking to fall.

[ 7 : 59 ] And the people who were with him were about 600 men. So this man, who has 600, sits in safety, in comfort, eating fruit, like Adam.

And he's on the edge of a landslide. The ground beneath him is not solid ground. It's a cliff. By contrast, Jonathan leaves the comfort and goes on the offensive.

You see the contrast set up in verses 1 and 2? All right, let's move on to the next movement. Next, the religion of each man is revealed. We shouldn't think that Jonathan is religious and Saul is not, or vice versa.

Both have a religion that's going to be revealed in what happens next. The one man has an appearance-based religion. Appearance-based religion.

See, that's the contrast. It relies on man's sight. Look at verse 3. Ahijah is going to say something about Ahijah, but first he puts in this whole genealogy. Remember, it just so happened this is all providential.

[ 9 : 11 ] We should pay attention to these details. So Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother. Wait, where have I heard the name Ichabod? Do you remember what Ichabod means?

It means the glory of God has departed. This is the line of priests Saul's going to dress up. Ichabod's brother, son of Phinehas.

Wait, we know Phinehas. Hophni and Phinehas, those two priests under Eli's authority who had turned the holy hill of God into a pagan temple of debauchery, carnality, flesh-loving, lust.

It's as worse or as bad as any pagan temple in Egypt or in the Canaanite land or of the early churches later on. And look what this man is doing.

He was wearing an ephod. The ephod was the priest's ornamental breastplate. It's significant for what Saul is going to call this man to come and do later which is basically to roll the dice and determine the will of God.

[ 10 : 23 ] But that was kept in this breastplate of the priest. See how the author here couldn't even call this man Ahijah a priest. He just says to say that he was wearing the ephod.

He wasn't a priest. He couldn't be a priest because the Lord had already removed that line. Eli's line was prohibited. They were rejected. They had no priestly authority to act on.

And yet that's who Saul dresses up and brings along with him as a token to decide what to do in battle. This man only wanted God's will through external manipulations.

You see Saul's religion? Clothing, title, pedigree and really all of that in front of the army of 600 so that whatever he decides we're going to do he has their backing.

It's all a big public show. a religion based on external displays. A philosophy of mission that relies on man's manipulation.

[ 11 : 37 ] 1 Timothy 3 5 warns us about this. Have nothing to do with such men. Some of you have spiraled and spent months or years away from church because of such men.

But by God's grace you know the shepherd's voice and he takes care of his people. Here's the warning from 1 Timothy 3 5. Such men have a form of godliness.

Saul did but denying its power. They resist the truth and their folly will be manifest to all. That's exactly how this Old Testament chapter ends.

Saul's folly exposed to all and preserved in the scripture for all generations to come as a warning to the true army of God. So that was Saul.

His religion exposed. Well what about Jonathan? Jonathan had a faith enlivened obedience. Saul had an appearance based religion but Jonathan we'll see has a faith enlivened obedience.

[ 12 : 44 ] obedience. We continue reading in our passage verse 3 the people didn't even know that Jonathan had gone. See while his dad wants a public show Jonathan obeys without anyone even noticing.

Verse 4 between the passes by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison there was a sharp rock like a cliff on one side and a sharp rock a cliff on the other side.

The name of one was Bozes that means slippery and the name of the other Sene that means thorny.

The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash do you get the picture? Michmash the Philistines are to the north so the one that's facing northward would you guess that that one is slippery or thorny?

The north face of a cliff we know in Colorado that's going to be the slippery one and the other one faced southward facing Gibeah facing the Israelites that one was thorny the Philistines were tucked under behind that one and his theology of ministry is beautifully painted for us come armor bearer let's go let's climb down the slippery face on this side let's army crawl up the thorns on the other side now listen to verse six theology revealed Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor come let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised he's not just trying to dish out insults this is covenantal language it's an outpost of the invading enemy who opposes God's kingdom and who considers

[ 14 : 41 ] God's covenant people the bride of God a stench smelly they've crippled and are humiliating the bride of Christ let's go over there and attack and here he says what he believes it may be that the Lord will work for us does that sound like maybe he doesn't have a strong faith it's weak and he's trying to hedge himself a little bit I think he's learning the same theology that God will teach later to the Hebrews when they're carried off to Babylon in exile the God in whom we trust is able to deliver us but even if he does not we will serve him if we get thrown into the fiery furnace and our bodies are reduced to ash God would have been able to deliver us from that that picture of hell on earth and even if he does not will serve him of course he's able it's not a weak!

faith that Jonathan shows it's a strong faith it's a our orders are clear but it's God's job to get his word to the heart only he can do that let us go and get the word to the ear maybe it'll be that God will work through what we're doing he's free to do it and we know God's power and we trust his good pleasure here's the grounds for such confidence in mission

Jonathan says it nothing restrains the Lord from saving nothing restrains the Lord from saving if there's to be any salvation today it will come from the Lord the Philistines can't restrain God they can restrain men they can cripple the economy of the nation or of the Christians in any kingdom but nothing can restrain the Lord from saving by many or by few God doesn't need!

He doesn't need 3,000 He doesn't need 30,000 Here's one man faith enlivened obedience and his armor bearer I love how the armor bearer doesn't get a name but he does get words in the dialogue he doesn't even need to be named we know God's power we trust his good pleasure so the armor bearer says to him in verse 7 do all that is in your heart go then here I am with you according to your heart well who put this desire in Jonathan's heart it's not a natural desire this desire came from the Lord it's the ministry of the Holy Spirit to Jonathan to act in obedience by faith alone in God's power alone and that faith and that theology that Jonathan just got done preaching to the armor bearer the

Holy Spirit causes the armor bearer to receive it and resonate with that he's most likely going to lose his life all the odds are against them he doesn't need to do this Jonathan is giving him an invitation and he expresses the heart of the matter do what is in your heart Jonathan this faith this I am with you according to your heart it's because of what you said that I want to go with you to praise the Lord for such partners in mission amen come let's go over and obey what Christ has called us to do we ought to be saying that to one another come let's go over to our neighbors let's have our friends over and hear about their life and this hard thing they're going through it may be that the Lord will work through us come let's go set up chairs at the park and preach the gospel and maybe that the

[ 19 : 22 ] Lord will work nothing restrains him from saving we can bring the word to the ear and maybe the Lord will bring it to the heart come let's do those simple things of gathering two or three in the name of Jesus and praying and it may be that as we join our prayers to his his spirit will apply that powerfully in the heart and life of someone who needs it most let's give out the gospel let's evangelize it may be that the Lord will work for us well let's see if the Lord does faith enlivened obedience proven now would you look at verse eight so Jonathan hears the response from the armor bearer and says very well it's on let us cross over to these men and we will show ourselves to them now Saul was relying on that external you know manipulation of wearing the ephod and bringing a priest from a banished line

Jonathan wants to hear directly from the Lord Lord you tell us you tell us if we're to be if we're being foolish if you say we're being foolish we can turn around right now you show us how you want to act but the Lord stir this I believe in my heart to obey if the Lord turns me away from it that's okay I'll accept his will if they say come up then we'll know the Lord is with us if they say we'll come down to you we won't!

come up to us then we will go up now pay attention for the Lord has delivered them into our hands do you remember the name of Jonathan Yahweh Nathan Yahweh is God the Lord Jehovah the covenant keeping God and Nathan means received or has delivered or given he's using his own name in his theology of mission if they say come up that means Jonathan it means the Lord has already delivered them into our hands and this will be a sign from God to us his theology relies on God's power now look at verse 11 that's exactly what happens he gets mocked they get their bluff called and he says the exact same thing come on up after me armor bear for

Jonathan into the hands of Israel the Lord Yahweh is keeping his covenant to his people and has already delivered them it's in the past tense to his people his faith rests in God's freedom it's a religion that receives freely from God's strong hand trusting completely in God's good pleasure faith enlivened obedience proven by the almighty God who delivers it well the next movement I would like us to see is the wartime behavior of both men described Saul and Jonathan wartime!

Jonathan continues trusting in God's power by faith he's a trusting warrior we read in verse 13 that Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees see first he had to descend down into the ravine on the slippery slope but now he's climbing back up on his hands and knees or hands and feet what it looks like is an army crawl it's slow it's inch by inch one after the other deliberate trusting it's also a posture of worship this would have been a great time to describe in detail the fencing maneuvers of Jonathan and his armored bear but you notice how he's described as he climbed up army crawl posture of worship with his armor bearer after him and what's the outcome he receives the help from the

[ 23 : 49 ] Lord his trust in God is not disappointed listen to how simply it's put and think of this who wrote this maybe Samuel and who did Samuel hear from either the Lord inspiring and just telling him or Jonathan giving a report from the battle so what happened we climbed!

No glory for Jonathan he wasn't described as a great fighter he army crawled and the Lord made him fall before him the ratio is interesting you remember how in chapter 13 there were 30,000

Philistines and 3,000 Israelites and maybe it's 30 regiments but the ratio is you reduce it down the 3 become ones it's a 10 to 1 ratio from chapter 13 the odds are all against them now the ratio is look at verse 14 that first slaughter so there's more to come like that Jonathan and his armor bearer there were about 20 men so here's two Israelites to 20 same ratio reduce it down 1 to 10 the Lord can do it the Lord can use the small numbers the Lord can use impossible ratios to bring himself all the glory I love the detail as well not only the ratio of the men but also the space in which this little attack took place it's described as about half a furrow of land the

Hebrew reads half a yoke of land a yoke of land is the area that a pair of oxen could plow or furrow in one day in about half a day's work and these two warriors are described as oxen pulling a plow together remember in Philippians how Paul described his partner in ministry his yoke fellow his armor bearer so to speak these yoke fellows it's just half a day's work they're not even worn out they're tired they're I'm sure carrying nicks and bleeding here and there and maybe rolled an ankle but they're not even worn out halfway we could keep going verse 15 there was trembling in the camp in the field and among all the people in the garrison of the raiders also trembled in the earthquake so that it was a very strong trembling the Lord takes this faith empowered obedience and chooses to work mightily the

Philistines now who had every reason according to worldly powers to be confident and to win are now shaking in their sandals there's most likely also an earthquake just a reminder just like God can send a flash lightning storm and rain he can send an earthquake in this part of the world and cause mass confusion to fall upon these massive troops Jonathan and the armor bearer placed their lives in the hands of God and they prayed may it be that the Lord will work for us and the Lord worked mightily by few Martin Luther said I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all but whatever I have placed in God's hands that I still possess place your life in God's hands and he will work mightily for his glory rest your life in God's power by faith that's the wartime behavior of those who trust in

God well let's look at the other hand now Saul the worldly ruler who relied on man's sight we're going to see in verse 16 Saul first had to see the tide of war turning before he was willing to join the fight we read in verse 16 now the watchman of Saul and Gibeah of Benjamin reminding us remember Benjamin Saul is still from there and there was a multitude melting away that multitude of Philistines like sand on the seashore now melting away just like you would melt down their iron weapons and when they saw God working in power they went here and there so I wrestled for a while who is this referring to who is it that went here and there I think the Hebrew doesn't answer that clearly we can't say for certain we know that the Philistines were in chaos they were trembling and scattered and melting away but it seems the wording to me maybe even more likely that this is also describing the massive trips the 600 with

[ 28 : 37 ] Saul going here and there there's chaos in the camp everyone doing as he sees best whatever pleases him in verse 17 then Saul said to the people who were with him now call the roll and see who has gone from us see he can't keep track of his people it's a chaos in his camp and when they had called roles surprisingly Jonathan and his armor bearer were not there well we had wondered if losing his donkeys was foreshadowing him not being able to take care of those entrusted to his leadership Saul had to have all the troops lined up before he realized his own son wasn't there you see how the silhouettes of these two men drift farther and farther apart they have the same name they're from the same tribe but they're not close they represent the same banner!

in the war but are they really fighting for the same kingdom are they really on the same mission and Saul says to Ahijah while Jonathan's dialogue is with his armor bearer who receives!

Saul is now consulting with this rejected priest from whom the glory of God has departed bring the ark here for at that time the ark of God was with the children of Israel and Kirash Jerom remember the ark had been carried away to Philistia but now it was back in the land of Israel and Ahijah is now wearing the unum and the thunum which were kind of like dice we don't know a whole lot about them from scripture but they were used to determine option a or option b in seeking the Lord's will so Saul even after watching the Lord give a massive victory through his own son is still uncertain of what to do now listen even as the priest is going to reach in there and grab these to help determine the will of God we read that there was noise in the camp of the Philistines and it continued to increase so Saul is more tuned in in his ear to the Philistines and their behavior and so Saul said to the priest withdraw your hand Saul couldn't even entrust this to the Lord his ears were so obsessed with what the world was doing he couldn't listen to God this worldly!

ruler relies entirely on man's senses what you can see and what you can hear what a contrast to Jonathan the trusting warrior resting in God's power by faith well as we look at the conclusion of this passage I want to highlight for us some of the rich theology as I'm sure you've already been observing specifically what does this reveal about the Lord and his gospel and number two how does this foreshadow the work of Jesus Christ the true king and the true trusting warrior first of all it reminds us that the Lord loves to save his people against all odds it just so happened that day that the Lord proved Jonathan's conviction true nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few the

[ 32 : 06 ] Lord is pleased to do this time and time again in every generation of church history scholars estimate that the church in Ephesus the audience of the letter to the Ephesians that we love and we pour over and study most likely that congregation was 40 to 60 people the church in Philippi 40 to 60 people we can fast forward to the 1600s to the great nation of Scotland John and Carrie just got back from there that's why I'm smiling at them a wonderful preacher named Samuel Rutherford in his congregation the building itself would only fit about 150 people that's if every little corner was packed every single time the Lord is able to save by many or by few John Owen another Puritan preached at times to 40 people and then the Lord can take like with Spurgeon here's 20 children in a Sunday school class and the

Lord can bring in as many as he wants but he's the one who is saving he's the one who is working mightily not by what we can see as men not by sight but by faith in whatever way will bring him the most glory we read we read in verse 20 of our passage that Saul and all the other people who were with him assembled and they went to battle yes the Lord can work by many as well just as he worked by few indeed every man's sword was against his neighbor and there is very great confusion verse 21 moreover the Hebrews who were with the Philistines before that time who went up with them into the camp from the surrounding country they also joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan likewise all the men of Israel who had hidden in the mountains of Ephraim when they heard that the Philistines fled they also followed hard after them in battle the concluding phrase is the very beginning only of verse 23 so the

Lord saved Israel that day this is an allusion to Exodus 14 30 which says so the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians and the theme for the people of God under the word of God is the same the Lord is your faithful deliverer don't put your hopes on men don't put your hopes on idols the Lord is the one who delivered his people out of slavery and bondage it's the Lord who delivered the victory today the people of God are in the promised land Yahweh Nathan the Lord is delivering to them now the rest and the freedom that he has promised Romans 6 23 reminds us that the wages of sin is death but the free gift of

God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord how can that be it's because the Lord freely delivers to his people salvation through Jesus Christ from the wages of sin and death from bondage to our own sin and our own flesh Jesus preached in Matthew 19 26 what is impossible with man is possible with God how can that be so Hebrews 7 25 because he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to him who is it that draws near to him it's those for whom he is interceding and he's interceding because he lives he's the great deliverer the great king and he loves to save his people against all odds there's not a sin you or I could commit so vile so evil that the righteousness of Christ couldn't cover it his righteousness is so much greater and now the foreshadowing of Jesus our Lord Jesus Christ he's magnified by this contrast between Saul and Jonathan Saul magnifies the glory of God in Jesus by opposites and Jonathan magnifies it by pointing ahead to a greater deliverer like Saul and Jonathan there are two leaders two federal heads over all mankind it's Adam and Christ that's what Paul argues in Romans 5 it's Adam and Christ those are the only two with the weapons so to speak the ones who are able to secure for a people salvation Adam was able to sin but he squandered the freedom of his will and he bound the entire human race to slavery and to sin our wills are then bound with Adam's dead and like Jonathan our Lord Jesus Christ he's heaven's prince who's on a mission as we just sang in our songs today he left his glorious throne above and came into our suffering he left the comforts of courtly life in heaven behind and he was tempted on the slippery cliff with every temptation known to man yet he never slipped the enemy then taunts and mocks

[ 37 : 42 ] Jesus if you're able to save yourself then do it and save us too and those of us who are sinners in our flesh mock Jesus as he hangs on the cross shedding his blood wearing the crown of thorns only to ascend victorious our Lord Jesus Christ he trusted his father to the very end he's the

trusting warrior he ascends on the other side of that chasm of death beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus my dear brothers and sisters soldiers in the battle as Jonathan called the armor bearer come up after me for the Lord has given victory in my hands Jesus says to you come after me I've already ascended the hill see what's in my heart follow after me and we respond just like that armor bearer to King Jesus do all that is in your heart you go in front here I am with you Lord army crawl one inch after the other and this is the encouragement I got from that pastor one of our dear families moved to Jacksonville Florida recently six months ago or so and I've been in touch with their their pastor there reformed Baptist pastor and I shared with them some! the challenges of you know to him in that moment he said I don't know what else to do Lord I don't know what the future of this church will be I trust you you're the Jonathan you're the warrior you do the work and what the Lord is calling him to do that day was to love his wife love his kids shepherd those precious few souls the Lord had put in his care and the Lord helped him to be faithful that day the Lord helped him to be faithful the next day and the next week and he's been there for 22 years the Lord is doing the work praise the Lord for his example and his testimony nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few so church let's be faithful with what God has given us today today we would you go to the Lord and pray that with me as well