**July 4, 2021 1 Samuel 14:1-23**

***In A BlowOut***

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 14:1-23 NRSV

*(1)One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." But he did not tell his father. (2)…Now the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. (4)In the pass, by which Jonathan tried to go over to the Philistine garrison, there was a rocky crag on one side and a rocky crag on the other; the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. (5)One crag rose on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba. (6)Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will act for us; for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few." (7)His armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that your mind inclines to. I am with you; as your mind is, so is mine." (8)Then Jonathan said, "Now we will cross over to those men and will show ourselves to them. (9)If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go up to them. (10)But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up; for the LORD has given them into our hand. That will be the sign for us." (11)So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines; and the Philistines said, "Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves." (12)The men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor-bearer, saying, "Come up to us, and we will show you something." Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Come up after me; for the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel." (13)Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer following after him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer, coming after him, killed them. (14)In that first slaughter Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed about twenty men within an area about half a furrow long in an acre of land. (15)There was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison and even the raiders trembled; the earth quaked; and it became a very great panic. (16)Saul's lookouts in Gibeah of Benjamin were watching as the multitude was surging back and forth. (17)Then Saul said to the troops that were with him, "Call the roll and see who has gone from us." When they had called the roll, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there. (18)Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For at that time the ark of God went with the Israelites. (19)While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the camp of the Philistines increased more and more; and Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." (20)Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle; and every sword was against the other, so that there was very great confusion. (21)Now the Hebrews who previously had been with the Philistines and had gone up with them into the camp turned and joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. (22)Likewise, when all the Israelites who had gone into hiding in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed closely after them in the battle. (23)So the LORD gave Israel the victory that day. The battle passed beyond BethAven, and the troops with Saul numbered altogether about ten thousand men. The battle spread out over the hill country of Ephraim.*

**Notes:**

1. Saul has had a ***blowout***.
   1. Saul has taken a U-Turn to avoid a ***bumpy*** road.
   2. When you encounter a ***blowout*** your options are to ignore the situation, or take action.
   3. Saul chose to ***ignore*** the situation.
2. Jonathan had ***faith*** in God
   1. Jonathan decided to take ***action***.
   2. Jonathan’s action was an act of ***faith*** and an act of ***unselfishness***.
   3. The armor-bearer took action as well; an act of ***obedience*** and an act of ***encouragement***.
   4. It is amazing what one or two people can do if they just ***trust*** the Lord.
3. Saul chose to watch the battle as a ***spectator***.
   1. A spectator ***speculates***.
   2. A spectator ***procrastinates***.
   3. A spectator ***hesitates***.
4. ***Jonathan*** was making things happen
   1. What is your ***motive*** for moving forward?
   2. One who glorifies self, leads others to ***sin***.
   3. One who glorifies ***God*** does everything with ***God’s*** reputation in mind.
5. Have you ever had a ***blowout***?
   1. The blowouts of life have an affect on your ***spiritual*** ***walk***.
   2. God is never ***intimidated*** by the size of the enemy or the complexity of a problem.
   3. Bravely ***commit*** your resources to God,
   4. When you have a ***blowout***; stop, fix it, and move forward; do this for the ***glory*** of God.

**Script:**

So whether you have realized it or not we have been in a series of messages. These messages have been focused on 1 Samuel around the topic of potholes. The first week I asked the question Who is Driving; in week 2 we discussed following our GPS, God’s positioning system; in week 3 we looked at taking a crash course; and last week, week 4 we talked about not taking a U-Turn.

So as you travel down life’s road, even though you are doing your best to follow God’s Positioning system, you will encounter bumpy roads. And once in a while you are bound to hit a pothole. What do you do when you hit a pothole and encounter a blowout? Whether you like it or not, and not that anybody likes a blowout, when it happens, what do you do?

Today we are continuing our journey with Saul. In 1 Samuel 14:1-23 we find Saull still standing with his army waiting for the Philistines. As we saw last week, the road is getting bumpy, and one could say they have hit a major pothole and with that pothole a blowout. The Philistines have *“…thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude*.” Chariots and horsemen numbering more than 66, 000 trained fighters. Saul has 600 remaining faithful fighters; they are outmanned by more than 110 Philistine to each of Saul’s men. Stand with me as we hear what happens and how Saul deals with his blowout.

*(1)One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." But he did not tell his father. (2)Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree that is at Migron; the troops that were with him were about six hundred men, (3)along with Ahijah son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, son of Phinehas son of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh, carrying an ephod. Now the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. (4)In the pass, by which Jonathan tried to go over to the Philistine garrison, there was a rocky crag on one side and a rocky crag on the other; the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. (5)One crag rose on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba. (6)Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will act for us; for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few." (7)His armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that your mind inclines to. I am with you; as your mind is, so is mine." (8)Then Jonathan said, "Now we will cross over to those men and will show ourselves to them. (9)If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go up to them. (10)But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up; for the LORD has given them into our hand. That will be the sign for us." (11)So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines; and the Philistines said, "Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves." (12)The men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor-bearer, saying, "Come up to us, and we will show you something." Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Come up after me; for the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel." (13)Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer following after him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer, coming after him, killed them. (14)In that first slaughter Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed about twenty men within an area about half a furrow long in an acre of land. (15)There was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison and even the raiders trembled; the earth quaked; and it became a very great panic. (16)Saul's lookouts in Gibeah of Benjamin were watching as the multitude was surging back and forth. (17)Then Saul said to the troops that were with him, "Call the roll and see who has gone from us." When they had called the roll, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there. (18)Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For at that time the ark of God went with the Israelites. (19)While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the camp of the Philistines increased more and more; and Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." (20)Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle; and every sword was against the other, so that there was very great confusion. (21)Now the Hebrews who previously had been with the Philistines and had gone up with them into the camp turned and joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. (22)Likewise, when all the Israelites who had gone into hiding in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed closely after them in the battle. (23)So the LORD gave Israel the victory that day. The battle passed beyond BethAven, and the troops with Saul numbered altogether about ten thousand men. The battle spread out over the hill country of Ephraim. 1 Samuel 14:1-23 NRSV*

As we look at Saul’s situation one could say he has had a blowout. He started out so well, he beat the Ammonites, established his kingdom, established his army, and now that this is done he is sitting back and letting things cruise along. He is thinking for himself. He has placed himself in the driver seat, after all, he is the King. He is allowing his relationship with Samuel and God to grow cold. He has turned off the GPS and just cruising. He is living in a way that is reactive to the situations that he encounters and not being proactive to prevent events from occurring. He has taken and passed the crash course, but he is not remembering the lessons of that course. He is facing an opponent that outnumbers him by more than 100 to one, and he has taken a U-Turn trying to avoid that bumpy road; only to end up hitting a pothole and with that pothole a blowout. When you encounter a blowout your options are to either, ignore the situation, or take action.

At the end of Chapter 13 Saul chose to ignore the situation. While Jonathan was sneaking away with his armor-bearer to fight the enemy, Saul and his 600 men did nothing. They were “hanging out” just hoping something would happen. When you hit a pothole, you can ignore it and just keep going on with your life like nothing happened; but it will eventually get you. What happens when you continue to drive on a flat tire? You will destroy the rim. Not fixing the flat will make it more difficult for you more difficult to remove the tire when you do decide to fix it and more difficult to do anything with that particular side of your vehicle in the future.

Jonathan was not like his father, he had faith in God, and he knew that sitting there waiting for the Philistines to attack was a no-win situation. So Jonathan decided to take action. Jonathan says to the young man who carried his armor, *”Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will act for us; for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few.”* His armor-bearer said to him, “*Do all that your mind inclines to. I am with you; as your mind is, so is mine."*

Jonathan does not share this information with his father, he probably knew that his father would not approve, logic says don’t poke a sleeping bear (or in this case a Philistine army). Jonathan identifies the location to cross and the conditions of their actions. As they arrive the Philistine’s invite Jonathan and his armor bearer up to join them. This is what Jonathan needed to hear in order to know, that the Lord was delivering the Philistines into their hands. As he climbed up on his hands and knees, the Philistines fall and his armor bearer kills them. The first twenty they encounter were eliminated. This created a panic in the Philistine camp. The entire Philistine army was trembling and the earth began to quake as well.

This got the attention of Saul’s army, they watched as the confusion ran rampant across the field. The surge would go one way and then another, finally Saul and all those who were with him rallied and began to enter the battle. This so inspired the Israelites who had defected to the Philistine side, that they turned their backs on the Philistines and fought against them. Those who went into hiding heard the news and returned to the battlefield, to fight with their countrymen. The Lord gave Israel the victory on this day, and the Philistine’s retreated. Saul and his army advanced and took the field victorious, and when the battle was over and the army was counted, 10000 men were standing on the field of victory.

While Saul decided to do nothing, Jonathan decided to take action. Jonathan’s action was an act of faith. He wasn’t going to just sit around; he wasn’t going to let the enemy get a better position on them and destroy them. Jonathan knew that God would win the battle and that numbers meant nothing to God. He stepped out on faith. Jonathan’s action was an act of unselfishness. Jonathan couldn’t inherit the kingdom. God made it very clear to Saul, when he ran ahead of God that no one in his family would inherit the crown and yet Jonathan still fought Israel’s battle even though he’d never be king and knew it.

Jonathan’s armor-bearer decided to take action as well. His action was an act of obedience. The armor-bearer’s job was to carry his master’s heavy armor and be there to give him whatever weapons he needed. This armor-bearer followed exactly where he was told to go. The armor-bearer’s action was an act of encouragement. Not only did the armor-bearer agree to follow, but he let Jonathan know he would be right there; he would be with Jonathan wherever he went. It is encouraging to know that there is someone that will go with us, even when what we need to do is uncomfortable.

It is amazing what one or two people can do if they just trust the Lord. Are you a Saul, a Jonathan, or an armor-bearer? God is not limited by numbers. When someone is doing the work you can… watch them or you can work with them. Saul chose to watch the battle. Saul was a spectator. A spectator speculates. Saul was told that the Philistines were scattering and so he took a head count to see who was gone. Once he realized who was gone, he wasn’t sure what to do. Was Jonathan actually able to pull this off? Probably not.

A spectator procrastinates. Since Saul wasn’t sure what was going to happen, he needed to stall for a little bit. He used God as his tactic to stall. How often have we used prayer as an excuse? Instead of getting involved as God has said; we say, “Let’s pray about it”. Prayer is absolutely necessary; but its purpose is to communicate with God, not to try to change His mind.

A spectator hesitates. One minute Saul was watching the battle, then he was inquiring of the Lord, and then he was deciding to fight. Why would Saul inquire of the Lord when a victory was in progress? Why would he pause to see what God wanted him to do when he could see the enemy retreating; his own soldiers, who had been defeated, revolting against the Philistines and the soldiers who fled, returning? In the midst of all this, what was Saul doing? He was hesitating.

Someone has said that there are three kinds of people in church today: Those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who don’t know that anything is happening. Jonathan and his armor-bearer were making things happen because they had faith in God. What they needed was for some others to get involved. Are you helping or watching?

Once the problem is solved, what is your motive for moving forward? To glorify yourself or to glorify God. Saul was about making himself look good. A person that glorifies themselves is motivated by vengeance and pride. A person that glorifies themselves makes foolish decisions. Saul was motivated by vengeance and pride, He was also making a lot of foolish decisions. Saul will go on to make a vow to his army, *"Cursed be anyone who eats food before it is evening and I have been avenged on my enemies."* I lean towards the idea that Saul made this vow of them not eating in order to look spiritual. How smart is it to starve your soldiers, especially after they had fought all day? Do soldiers fight well when they are worn out and hungry? In order to look like a good leader, Saul was going to have Jonathan killed for eating honey. A person that glorifies themselves leads others to sin. These were so hungry that they started eating meat with blood in it which was considered sinful.

A person who glorifies God simply does everything with God’s reputation in mind, not their own. Did Saul destroy the enemy? No. Could he have wiped them out? He probably could have been finished off the Philistines, but instead he stopped pursuing them. Because of that, we are told in verse 52 that Saul was at bitter war with the Philistines his entire life.

Have you ever had a blow out? How did you handle it? Did you try to sweep it under the rug or did you pretend it never happened? As long as we try to limp along on a blowout; our focus is not on what we are to be doing, our focus is on the problem not the mission, and when our focus is not where it needs to be we cannot move at the speed we need to either. When you have a blowout, stop what you are doing and make repairing the blowout a priority. The blowouts of this life will have an affect your spiritual walk. They take your eyes off of what God is calling you to. And while your eyes are off what you are called to you became engulfed in the issues of the blowout; maybe even turning down the wrong path, maybe heading for greater troubles. Have you ever felt surrounded by the "enemy" or faced overwhelming odds? God is never intimidated by the size of the enemy or the complexity of a problem. With him, there are always enough resources to resist the pressures and win the battle. If God has called you to action, then bravely commit what resources you have to God, and rely upon him to lead you to victory.

When facing a difficult situation that is beyond your control, ask yourself, what steps can I take now to work toward a solution? A few small steps may be just what is needed to begin the chain of events leading to eventual victory. When you have a blow out; you need to stop, you need to take steps to fix it, and then you need to move forward. Do this not for ourselves but for the glory of God.