

How the Lord Can Work For You

1 Samuel 14:6

I. Introduction: 1, 2

1. 3 The Lord is ready and willing to work for you! In the Bible He worked for many Bible characters.
 - A. We can learn how to have the Lord work for us by looking at the example of Jonathan in the OT.
 - B. It was Jonathan who said, “*it may be that the LORD will work for us.*” (1 Sam. 14:6)
2. Saul was anointed king by Samuel and proclaimed by the people as worthy.
 - A. Saul was able to lead the Israelites against the Ammonites and win a great victory. But after two years an even fiercer enemy, the Philistines, threatened the Israelites.
 - B. The Philistines had a massive war machine of 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen and a host of infantrymen.
 - C. In abject fear the Israelites scattered and hid in caves, thickets, holes and pits, plus many fled to the east side of the Jordan River.
 - D. The Philistines not only had a numerical advantage, they also had a great advantage in terms of weaponry as the Israelites had little with which to defend themselves.
3. Under these severe conditions, Saul the king and Jonathan his son gathered a small army of only 600 men camped at Gibeah across from the Philistine garrison at Michmash.
 - A. There the small band waited while Saul hesitated, waiting for something to happen.
 - B. Then Jonathan bravely stepped forward and decided it was time to stop waiting and engage the enemy (1 Sam. 14:1-23).
 - C. Especially notice v. 23: “*So the LORD saved Israel that day*”; if we can find out how the Lord worked for Jonathan against the Philistines to win a great battle and victory, we can learn how the Lord will work for us today in our battles. The Lord will work for us today if...

II. Discussion:

1. 4 Get Off Our Backside: 1 Sam. 14:1-2: “*Now it happened one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who bore his armor, ‘Come, let us go over to the Philistines’ garrison that is on the other side.’ But he did not tell his father. 2 And Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men.*”
 - A. Israel is in “crisis mode,” the enemy is nearby, but what is Saul the king and commander-in-chief doing? He’s waiting, resting, hesitating under the shade of a pomegranate tree!
 - B. Contrast that with Saul’s son Jonathan: He’s busy actively looking for the enemy and to engage them in battle. He was tired of sitting, tired of waiting, tired of hesitation and indecision. He made a beeline for the Philistine garrison at the top of a rocky hill.
 - (1) What a contrast between Saul and his son Jonathan!
 - (2) The Lord worked for Jonathan because Jonathan first worked for the Lord; Jonathan put the Lord to work by first putting himself to work!
 - (3) The Lord used the faith and courage of Jonathan to deliver Israel from her enemies; the proverb is true: “The Lord helps those who help themselves.”
 - (4) Jesus and the two blind men: **Matt. 9:28-30**: “*And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you believe that I am able to do this?’ They said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord.’ 29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, ‘According to your faith let it be to you.’ 30 And their eyes were opened.*”

C. Too often we hear and see Christians sitting, hesitating and complaining:

- (1) “The church isn’t growing like it used to.”
- (2) “We just don’t seem to be accomplishing much.”
- (3) “I’m just not able to overcome _____.”

D. Jonathan was part of the solution, not part of the problem:

- (1) Stop sitting around talking, complaining and hesitating and get up and get out and get to work for the Lord (don’t need an “organized plan”!).
- (2) Stop waiting for everyone else, someone else to lead the way; take the “*bull by the horns*” as we say (**Isa. 6:8**: “*Here am I! Send me.*”; **I Sam 3:9**: “*Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.*”).
- (3) We can make many plans, but for the Lord to work for us, for this congregation to grow and put the enemy on the run, individually we all need to get up, get out and join the battle.
- (4) We can’t sit around spending all our time in the camp making plans, which was Saul’s mistake. Plans have their place, but the even the best laid plans are only as good as their execution.

E. Jonathan knew where the enemy was and what needed to be done. He stopped sitting under the shade tree and got up on the mountains and fought the enemy.

F. There’s plenty of work that needs to be done:

- (1) Physical work around the building; don’t necessarily need a special day; if you see something that needs to be done, pitch in and do it.
- (2) Spiritual work of teaching and visiting needs to be done. You don’t have to wait until someone to tell you or ask you. We have a good tract you can use as a teaching tool. Just grab a bundle or two and pass them out to your relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers; invite them to study the Bible; invite them to services.

2. **5** The Lord Gives Victory Regardless of Numbers: **I Sam. 14:6**: “*Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, ‘Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.’*”

A. The Philistines had 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and an army as numerous as the sand on the seashore; yet only two Israelites, Jonathan and his armor bearer, headed out to take on the Philistine garrison!

- (1) Jonathan said, “That can’t stop the Lord, so it’s not going to stop me.”
- (2) He knew they were not alone; The Lord of hosts, God Almighty was with them! One faithful person plus God is a majority in any and every situation! **Rom. 8:31-32**: “*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*”; **Eph. 3:20**: “*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,*”

B. It doesn’t matter we are a small congregation.

- (1) I’m sure many of the large denominational churches in town, even the large liberal congregations of our brethren; would look at us and snicker, “What a pitiful and insignificant group!” The same for the people of the world (also, the contempt of the liberal faculty at IU!).
- (2) But in the eyes of the Lord it doesn’t matter how few or how many we are!
- (3) Some Christians may get discouraged and think this congregation is far too small to reach and teach the gospel to the entire community. If our numbers, or lack thereof, doesn’t concern the Lord, why should it concern us?

- (4) There are no restraints on the Lord, He can save by many or few; Jonathan knew the Lord could deliver Israel from the mighty Philistine army with only 600 men or even only two men.

C. Our focus then should not be on numbers, but on quality.

- (1) Don't be discouraged about our numbers, we are not here for numbering; we are here to worship and work for the Lord.
- (2) There can be thriving and growth, if we recognize the Lord first wants quality, not quantity.
- (3) Have you ever bought something at the cheapest price possible only to have it fall apart almost the moment you took it out of the box? You learned that quality and not the lowest price is important; the Lord wants his people to be quality people, people of the character of Jonathan.
- (4) Can you imagine what would have happened if Jonathan had the character of the majority? He would have told his armor bearer "It's just you and me and there's just no way, let's give up and go home."
- (5) Let us recognize the Lord will work for us here at Westside, if we'll work for Him!

3. **6 Always Be Ready to Fight:** (spiritually speaking!) **I Sam. 14:8-10:** *"Then Jonathan said, 'Very well, let us cross over to these men, and we will show ourselves to them. 9 If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. 10 But if they say thus, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up. For the LORD has delivered them into our hand, and this will be a sign to us.'"*

- A. Jonathan had two battle plans, Plan A and Plan B: 1) Plan A: We will fight them here; 2) Plan B: We will fight them there.
- B. Jonathan was ready to fight the Philistines down in the valley or up on the mountain. He was ready to fight the enemy wherever they might be.
- C. If some Christians were there they would have reminded Jonathan of Plan C: "Running as fast as we can back to camp for the shade of those pomegranate trees!"
- D. Jonathan had no Plan C, the thought of running or quitting never entered his mind.
- E. Christians need to be ready to fight the enemy here or there and everywhere and anywhere. We need to eliminate Plan C from our thoughts; eliminate any plan that calls for retreat or surrender.
- F. Jesus said, *"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"* (John 4:35)
- (1) The fields remain "white for harvest"; there are souls to be saved and we cannot wait for them to wander into the building; we must take the gospel where they are.
- (2) I learned many valuable lessons concerning "evangelism" in nearly 20 years of work in Michigan:
- ☛ The spiritual soil in America is quite "rocky" (materialism, modernism, apathy, etc., etc.).
 - ☛ It is difficult to interest people in the things of God (People are quite squeamish today when the name "Jesus" enters the conversation.).
 - ☛ Seed in the barn does no good, we must go out and sow it!
 - ☛ Success is not measured in numbers of people converted, it is measured in terms of seed sown (**I Cor. 3:5-9**).
 - ☛ Don't get discouraged, even though there are few people with good and honest hearts; there are some! There are folks searching for truth, searching for salvation!
 - ☛ The Lord is not going to work for us **IF** we are not willing to fight for Him whenever and wherever we can!

4. **7 Ignore Mockery: I Sam. 14:11-12:** *“So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, ‘Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden.’ 12 Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, ‘Come up to us, and we will show you something.’”*
- A. The Philistines were mocking and belittling Jonathan and his armor bearer; there were plenty of things to laugh at and make light of as far as the Philistines were concerned:
 - (1) The Israelites were in hiding and quaking with fear.
 - (2) Now, here come two lonely souls against a garrison of 20 men...laughable? Yes!
 - B. One of Satan’s most effective tools against us is mockery; nobody wants to be seen as foolish.
 - ☛ “You can’t do it, it can’t be done.”
 - ☛ “You’re too small to do the Lord’s work effectively.”
 - ☛ “You don’t have enough money and resources to do the Lord’s work.”
 - ☛ “After all, you’ve never accomplished much in the past, so you’ll not accomplish much now or in the future.”
 - ☛ “If you come crawling out of your holes and come out to fight me; I’ll show you a thing or two.”
 - C. Some people mock the gospel:
 - ☛ “The Bible is full of myths and contradictions; you don’t really believe it? Do you? Sophisticated and educated people know better!” (flat-earther, fairy tales)
 - ☛ “You can’t possibly believe you must be baptized in order to be saved, do you? How narrow-minded! How “pharisaical”!
 - ☛ “You don’t believe in music?”
 - ☛ “Oh, you ‘church of Christers’ are the ones that believe they’re the only ones going to heaven.”
 - D. Sports analogy:
 - (1) What do two prize fighters do to one another before the big fight? They mock one another.
 - (2) What do two Super Bowl teams do to one another before the big game? Trash talk (mock)
 - (3) Why do they do this? To destroy the opponents morale, confidence, to weaken him.
 - E. Faithful children of God will always face laughter, mockery, sneers, insults and severe criticism. We must do what Jonathan did; ignore it, keep climbing the hill and consider it as a sign from God of a great victory to come (**Acts 26:24-26:** *“Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, ‘Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!’ 25 But he said, ‘I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason.’”*).
5. **8 Work Hard to Reach the Enemy: I Sam. 14:13:** *“And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him;”*
- A. Jonathan had to work hard to get to the top of the hill to fight the enemy.
 - B. He not only had to climb a mountain, but he climbed it on his hands and knees! Have you ever walked up a steep incline? **9** Great Wall of China! I can’t imagine climbing it on my hands and knees!
 - C. And I don’t suppose the Philistines let Jonathan stop and take a breather: “Wait fellas, time out, I need a breather.” No way!
 - D. Jonathan was not only willing to go out and find the enemy and engage him in a fight, he was also willing to exert himself in going after the enemy.

E. 10 Do we have Jonathan's dedication and energy? **

- (1) Are you determined to get up and find the enemy?
- (2) Are you ready to climb, on your hands and knees so to speak, to reach the enemy and do battle?
- (3) If we want to convert people we need to go where they are; we need to interact with them; you have to work hard to reach and teach the lost (Matt. 16:26).
- (4) We need to hold up the hands of those willing to do the work (Ex. 17:8-13; Phil. 4:14-17).
- (5) If we want our children to grow up, obey the gospel, and remain faithful; we have to get down on our hands and knees while they're young and teach them.
- (6) We can't climb hard and then give up and sit down. When Jonathan got to the top of the mountain, he didn't quit he went right to work and in short order had slain 20 trained soldiers.

6. 11 Inspire Our Fellow Soldiers:

- A. While Jonathan and his armor bearer were fighting the Philistine's in their own garrison on top of the mountain, the Lord sent an earthquake that shook the Philistine camp.
 - (1) Meanwhile, back in the Israelite camp the watchmen could see a commotion going on in the garrison and the Philistines "melting away." They were clearing out, retreating.
 - (2) Saul heard the report and quickly said, "Let's have a count to see who is missing." And, lo and behold, Jonathan and his armor bearer are missing. "What's Jonathan doing over there in the camp of the Philistines?" "Well it looks like he's winning the victory."
- B. One of the greatest things Jonathan did was inspire his fellow soldiers.
 - (1) There were only 600 soldiers with Saul, but they quickly joined Jonathan in battle.
 - (2) Not only the 600 went into battle beside Jonathan, but all the Israelite turncoats in the Philistine camp, turned against the Philistines.
 - (3) Also, all the Israelites who had hidden crawled out of the caves, thickets, and pits to fight!
 - (4) What started with the courage and faith of two men, snowballed and grew to 600, and then to the entire nation.
 - (5) A great army came out inspired by Jonathan and chased the Philistines all the way back to Philistia.
- C. The conclusion was "the Lord saved Israel that day" (v. 23); but "How did the Lord save Israel?"
 - (1) He saved Israel through one man's (Jonathan) faith and courage to do battle with the enemy.
 - (2) The remainder of Israel were faithless cowards until they looked to the mountaintop and saw Jonathan fighting and routing the enemy and each one said to himself, "See where Jonathan stands. I'm going to take my place by his side and fight with him."
- D. Lesson: Don't stand back and wait!
 - (1) "I'm not good at it, so I'll let someone else do personal work." (You have the most influence on more people than you realize! You are always the most effective teacher within your circle of influence.).
 - (2) "I'll wait for someone to tell me what to do."
 - (3) "I'll let someone else teach that class."
- E. When work needs to be done, get up, go out and do it. Don't wait for someone else to do it or tell you or ask you to do it. Be an inspiration to others like Jonathan!

III. Conclusion: 12

1. The Lord can and will work for you! IF you will but put yourself into the work of the Lord.
2. If you are not a Christian, the very first step is to enlist in the Lord's army; by faith, repentance, confession and baptism.
3. If you are a soldier of the Lord who has surrendered, retreated, or is AWOL; it's time to get back into action (repentance, confession and prayer).
4. Get up, get out and get working for the Lord! The Lord will fight for you!

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