

THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Samuel 11

“A King in Action”

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Speaker: Pastor Drew Hunsley

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22:43

All right, wasn't that awesome? I love these weekends where we've got our 180. So yeah, let's be excited for them. So as someone who worked with young people for a long time, I used to often hear, you know, the children, the teenagers are the future of the church, and that's really important for us to invest in.

23:03

And I dare say this morning we're realizing that the teenagers are not the future of the church, they're just the church now, right? This is a good thing. I love the energy comes from our youth. Sometimes I feel that youth slipping away as my knees are starting to hurt and I get a little more tired.

23:22

But I know it's a beautiful thing for our church to come together young and old, all the groups in between, and love the Lord together. So I want to invite you to grab your Bible, make your way to 1 Samuel 11.

23:35

1 Samuel 11 this week. We're going to be looking at this chapter. If you didn't bring a Bible with you and you want to follow along, there should be a black Bible hiding underneath your chair. Maybe the one in front of you were on page 284 in those, 284 if you want to follow along or we're going to have it on the screens in just a minute as well.

23:52

But over the past couple of weeks, if you haven't been with us, maybe you missed a week or two, we have seen a man, Saul, anointed as the king of Israel. And we've seen him kind of selected by the casting of lots and God kind of made it clear to the nation that Saul was going to be Israel's next king.

24:11

And so this week, what we're going to look at, we're going to see kind of a third step in Saul's process of becoming the king as he takes leadership with kingly authority, as he leads the men of Israel into a military battle and achieves a military victory for Israel.

24:30

As we've been kind of working our way through this book of 1 Samuel, you might expect this military battle to be dealing with the Philistines, right? We've heard that name over and over again as they have conquered Israel, as they took the Ark of the Covenant, all these different things that we've seen kind of bouncing back and forth.

24:46

They're really the only enemies that we've heard of up to this point in the story, but it's actually the Ammonites that we're going to see coming against Israel this week. And they're tormenting a town in Israel called Jabesh-gilead.

24:59

And so as we see this threat kind of rise in the east of Israel, what we're going to see is newly appointed King Saul is empowered by God. He rises to the occasion to save Israel from Nahash, this Ammonite king, and from his nation.

25:14

And so this week what we're going to see, for those that are taking an outline, I just wanted to give it to you in advance, this week we're going to see our outline. The first four verses we see a threat revealed then we're going to see a threat resolved and finally we're going to see salvation has come.

25:29

So we're going to read our entire passage this morning, 1 Samuel chapter 11. We're going to read through the whole thing and then we'll go back and pick it apart and kind of make sense of what God's doing here in this chapter.

25:40

So let's read together first as we kind of get the lay of the land, 1 Samuel chapter 11 starting in verse 1. It tells us, then Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-gilead, that Israelite town, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, make a treaty with us and we will serve you.

25:59

But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, on this condition I will make a treaty with you, that I gouge out all your right eyes and thus bring disgrace on all of Israel. The elders of Jabesh said to him, give us seven days respite that we might send messengers throughout all the territory of Israel.

26:14

Then if there's no one to save us, we will give ourselves up to you. And when the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, they reported the matter in the ears of the people

and all the people wept aloud. And now behold Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen and Saul said, what's wrong with the people?

26:31

They are weeping. And so they told him the news of the men at Jabesh and the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul when he heard these words and his anger was greatly kindled. And he took a yoke of oxen, cut them in pieces and sent them throughout the territory of Israel by the hand of the messengers saying, whoever does not come out after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen.

26:52

Then the dread of the Lord fell upon the people and they came out as one man. When he mustered them at Bezek, the people of Israel were 300,000 and the men of Judah, 30,000. And they said to the messengers who had come, Thus shall you say to the men of Jabesh-gilead, tomorrow by the time the sun is hot, you shall have salvation.

27:12

And when the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh, they were glad. Therefore, the men of Jabesh said, Tomorrow we will give ourselves up to you, that you may do to us whatever seems good to you.

27:23

And the next day Saul put the people in three companies, And they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, And struck down the Ammonites until the heat of the day. Those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

27:36

Then the people said to Samuel, Who is it that said, Shall Saul reign over us? Bring the men, that we might put them to death. But Saul said, Not a man shall be put to death this day. For today the Lord has worked salvation in Israel.

27:49

And then Samuel said to the people, Come, let us go to Gilgal, and there renew the kingdom. And so all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before the Lord, And there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

28:06

These are the words of the Lord. Would you pray with me? God, we thank you for the opportunity to consider your word this morning. God, to hear from your perfect inspired word that you might speak to us this morning.

28:18

So God, as we consider this message of oppressors and oppressed Israelites, and King Saul coming to save the day. God, we pray that you would speak to us. God, that you would give us some understanding of what's going on here historically, but also how this might make some sort of an impact in our lives today, this week, this year, as we face things in our lives as well.

28:42

So God, we pray that you would use this time, that you would be glorified, and God, that you would speak, that your servants are listening. Father, we love you. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. All right.

28:53

Well, as we see here in the beginning of this chapter, we see this threat revealed, right? The Ammonites have posed a threat to the Israelites for years. This isn't the first time we've seen this group of people.

29:04

We see them pop up several times throughout the book of Judges that kind of led us to this study in 1 Samuel. But the Ammonites are a group of people. They descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew. And so you may remember that story back in Genesis 19.

29:20

If you don't, we're not going to go there. But there's some interesting stuff going on there in Genesis 19. But the Ammonites kind of descended from Lot and from this Israelite family as sort of weird, estranged cousins of the Israelites.

29:35

And so I stuck a map in here just to kind of give you a picture of where we're at and the lay of the land. So I know it's hard to see, but if you look to the right side of the picture, you'll see on the east side, you see Ammon kind of over there.

29:47

And then we've got most of Israel there in the middle in the green shaded area. And then you see all the way over on the other side of the country up against the Mediterranean Sea, you'll see Philistia, where the Philistines are from.

29:59

So we've got kind of enemies on both sides that are pressing in on Israel at this point. And so we've got this conflict now in the east side of Israel. And these conflicts with the Ammonites, they were actually, they were a regular thing for Israel as they regularly kind of fought back and forth as they were arguing over territory in this region to the land east of the Jordan River.

30:22

So there's this, the Ammonites would push back for a while, and then the Israelites would push back for a while. There's kind of this back and forth, back and forth. But at

this point in the story, the Ammonites were attacking the Israelites in this land east of the Jordan River.

30:37

And in fact, they've already kind of achieved considerable success at this point. This is actually mentioned in next week's passage in 1 Samuel 12. They're mentioned as part of the reason why Israel asked for a king.

30:48

We need a king to come and to save us as these Ammonites are coming and are pressing in on our territory. We need someone to stand up to them. And so we've got this conflict that's going here in the eastern side of the country.

31:03

And in verses 1 and 2 of our passage, it tells us that Nahash, the Ammonite king, that Nahash and the Ammonites went up and besieged Jabesh-gilead, this town of Israel. They're kind of on the eastern side of the country.

31:17

That all the men of Jabesh come up with this solution. They say to Nahash, make a treaty with us and we will serve you. Jabesh, the people of this Israelite town, they kind of resign themselves to the fact that we're not going to win this fight.

31:32

We need to come out of this fight alive. We're not going to win. And so we need to figure out what we can do to kind of make peace with Nahash and with these oppressors that were coming in. The solution that they came up with, that they determined they were going to surrender to the Ammonite people.

31:49

They were going to become tributaries of Ammon. They were going to pay tributes. They were going to just become subjects of this territory. Nahash, the leader of Ammon, he was willing to agree to those terms, but only after embarrassing Israel, only after making sure that there was no opportunity for them to rise up against him again in the future.

32:15

And so he determined that he was going to take the right eye of every fighting age Israelites. And a mutilation of defeated warriors, it was actually fairly common during that day. It wasn't uncommon for them to be incapacitated from further effective combat.

32:30

So taking the eye of a soldier, a soldier would often at that time in history, he would carry his shield in his left hand. And so we have this big shield that would be interlocked with everyone else's shields there on his left side.

32:42

And so you kind of can't see from that side, right? So the left eye didn't do a lot of good because it was blocked by the shield. And now these men have all lost their right eye if they follow through with this plan.

32:53

So essentially they were going to be unable to ever fight back against Ammon again. He wanted to embarrass the Israelites, but he also wanted to incapacitate them. So we continue in verses 3 and 4, as this is kind of the solution that they've come up with.

33:08

But the elders of Jabesh, it tells us that they come to the king of Ammon. And he says, they say, give us seven days. Give us a ceasefire so that we might send messengers throughout Israel so that we can see if someone else would come out and would save us.

33:24

And so then if there's no one to save us, then we'll give up. Then we'll surrender. When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, it tells us that they reported what was happening there on the eastern border.

33:36

The news made its way to the ears of the people and all the people were weeping aloud. There was this overwhelming emotion that our brothers and sisters have fallen. This town that we love has fallen.

33:49

And so the people there in Jabesh in this Israelite town, they ask for this ceasefire. And I think surprisingly enough, we know how difficult it is to agree on a ceasefire these days, but it seems that the Nahash agrees to this, right?

34:04

That they ask for this ceasefire, Nahash agrees. And it seems to me that he's so overly confident of his own superiority. Yeah, go ahead. Feel free to spread the word of what I've accomplished and what I've done over here on this boundary.

34:18

He's so confident of his own superiority and Israel's inability to muster any sort of a response. He says, yeah, go ahead and tell everyone, beg for help because no help is going to come that's ever going to threaten me and my powerful war machine.

34:32

These cries for help that the people of Jabesh send out into the rest of Israel, they're begging for someone to come and to save them. But as I was reading these cries for help, it seems to me that these are a common plea of God's people, aren't they?

34:46

We often come to God, we often look to God and we come with our requests asking God to help us in some way, to help us overcome our enemies. In fact, the Psalms, many of which are written by King David, we're going to meet him in a few chapters.

35:02

But we see in the Psalms, we see God's people often crying out to God for help. God, save us. God, help us. Psalm chapter 7, verse 1, we see just one example of this. Psalm 7:1, it says, Oh, Lord my God, in you do I take refuge, save me from all my pursuers and deliver me.

35:23

That's the cry of the Christian. That's the cry of every Christian. We need help. That's the reason why we are Christians, right? If you were self-sufficient and you didn't need anyone or anything to help you, why are you in a church that we kind of openly acknowledge our need for a Savior by the fact that we're here?

35:40

But we're not here because we're enough on our own. We're here because we need Jesus to come and to step in and to save us. That's why there's a bathtub up here behind me as we're getting ready to celebrate Jacob saying, Hey, I needed a Savior and Jesus stepped in and Jesus saved me.

35:55

To be a Christian is to realize your need for God's help. And so we see God's salvation in this story is going to be delivered by Saul, the newly appointed king of Israel. But as word of this Ammonite threat spreads throughout the nation of Israel, we're told that it quickly reaches Gibeah, the town where King Saul called home.

36:15

There's this news of this threat that has come against Israel and the exact reason that Israel had sought to come to Samuel and to say, we need a king. You remember back in 1 Samuel chapter 8, this is why they were saying we need help.

36:32

This is why we need a king like all the other nations. 1 Samuel 8:20 tells us that we need a king so that we might be like all the nations, that our king may judge us, may lead us, and may go out before us to fight our battles.

36:47

This is why we needed help. This is why we needed a king, right Samuel? So somebody go get the king. Saul, it's your time to shine. This threat has been revealed in the first few verses. Now we're gonna see this threat kind of resolved as Saul steps into action.

37:04

In verses 5 and 6, it tells us that Saul was coming in from the field with his oxen. And Saul says, what's wrong with the people? Why are all the people crying? Why are they weeping? So Saul was told the news of the men at Jabesh, and it tells us in verse 6 that the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled.

37:27

When Saul hears the news, it tells us that the Spirit of God rushed upon him. Do you wanna know how Saul had the strength to do what he's about to do in the rest of this story? It's because the power of God empowered Saul to do what he was going to do and was going to do.

37:42

You know, we are utterly incapable of accomplishing anything that God wants of us. We are utterly incapable of doing that on our own. Anybody ever tried to muster up, to strengthen up and to face all the things that this life has that come against us?

37:56

Have you ever tried to do it on your own? How'd it work out, right? Maybe it worked for a little bit. I see those chuckles. It tells me that at least a few of you have tried. You know, I'm strong enough.

38:08

We puff our chest out, we pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, and you know what happens? Life just has a way of going, right? I feel like one of those moles in the little whack-a-mole game sometimes when life, you kinda pop your head up and it's just like life just goes thump on your head and knocks you back down.

38:24

Life is hard sometimes, isn't it? When God calls us to do something, God empowers us to do that thing. The Spirit of God is the one who empowers people to do his work in the world, because we are utterly incapable of doing it on our own.

38:42

We might be able to put some interesting things together. We might be able to do some good things that kinda outwardly to the world, they might look like some form of success, but to try to accomplish God's work, apart from God's supernatural assistance in our lives, and its utter foolishness, right?

39:00

We might be able to draw a crowd as a church. We might be able to stir someone's emotions, to convince them to do something temporarily that might be a good thing. But

the process of God working in a person's life, that's not just inviting them to do some good things.

39:17

The process of God coming to work in someone's life, that's breathing life into a dead soul. Anybody in the room have the ability to breathe spiritual life into a dead soul? To convince someone that once you were dead, but now you are alive, as we're going to talk about and celebrate this morning through baptism, that's something that's entirely out of our purview, right?

39:39

We're incapable of accomplishing what God is going to accomplish. So even though we might be able to kinda muscle up and do some things, ultimately as a church, as Christians, as individuals, we're limited in what we are able to accomplish on our own.

39:57

When we face the things of life on our own and our own strength, you jump, you come up a little short. You jump and you come up a little short. It's only through the power of God's Spirit that we see right here in verse 6, it tells us that the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul, that God empowered Saul to be able to accomplish what God had for him to accomplish.

40:20

And it tells us, excuse me, that as the Spirit of God rushes upon Saul, it's interesting to me, it tells us that Saul's anger was greatly kindled. That this anger is aroused by Nahash's supposed treatment of the people there in Jabesh.

40:36

It seems to fly in the face of what many of us, I think would describe as a good Christian attitude, right? There's this idea of Christian pacifism, as I was thinking through this, that some would describe themselves as pacifists, right?

40:51

That God tells us to just be loving and to be gentle and to turn the other cheek, as Jesus said in Matthew 5, right? In Romans 12, it tells us to live peaceably with all, that we should never take a firm stand on things.

41:04

I think there's some that would make that argument, right? We'll just sit and kind of fold our hands and sit and wait for whatever it is that's gonna happen in life. We'll just wait for life to give us our lots.

41:18

But God's word doesn't call us to passively stand by when there are people who are being oppressed that we can see around us. The Spirit of God came upon Saul and the result was this holy anger that we see rise up in Saul.

41:30

It caused him to defend his fellow oppressed Israelites. This righteous anger, Richard Phillips commented on this. He said this righteous anger reflects God's own wrath against evil. What we see here is that God is not just a pushover, that God steps in, that God saves those who can't save themselves.

41:50

I'm reminded of that old line at the end of A Few Good Men. Anybody remember that movie? I love that movie, but that movie, right at the very end of it, they're told they're innocent, they're innocent, not guilty, not guilty, not guilty, but then they're convicted of one crime at the end.

42:05

Why were we guilty? Why are we guilty of this? And the two men that were there on trial, they look at each other and one asks the other, why are we guilty? We did what we were told to do, the command was ordered by a commanding officer.

42:19

Why are we guilty? And the one looks at the other and says, we were supposed to do what was right. We were supposed to stand up for our brother. We were supposed to defend those who couldn't defend themselves.

42:28

We were supposed to fight for Willie, something along those lines, right? God allows us, gives us opportunities to step in and to fight for those who can't fight for themselves at times. When we see opposition rising up against the oppressed, people who come and who suppress the freedoms of others, when we see people who are being wrongly mistreated, the righteous anger of God, it's appropriate sometimes.

42:55

It's right for us to stand up and to stand in the face of evil when we see it in our world because we live in a world where it seems like evil tends to rule the day more than right living, more than God's righteousness.

43:09

We see evil popping up all around us, where right is wrong and wrong is right. We live in a world where we are invited, we're commanded to be counter-cultural. It's not okay for us to just kinda sit quietly and wait for the world to sort things out around us.

43:24

I was reminded of this quote as I was studying this week. I tried to find who it was. People argue about who said it, so I'm just gonna call it an anonymous quote, but I think

you'll recognize it. It says, the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

43:42

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. What we see here in Saul is Saul hears the news of what's going on there in this border town. The Spirit of God rushes upon Saul and Saul steps into action.

43:56

It's not enough to just stand back and watch someone else be the one to step in. No, God invites us to step up and to stand against the evil that we see around us. We continue in verses 7 through 9.

44:09

We see this little interaction here. It tells us in verse 7 that Saul hears the news of this oppression that's happening there in Jabesh, but it tells us that Saul takes two of his own oxen, that he dismembers them, then he sends the pieces out throughout all the territory.

44:24

Hey, messengers, take this chunk of dead ox with you and tell people if they don't come, we're coming for their oxen next. Now, I don't think that Saul was being overly harsh by threatening death of the people, right?

44:38

We actually see that later in the passage as people try to propose that anyone who stood in opposition or questioned Saul that they need to be put to death, but we don't see that here from Saul. Saul is only imposing civil punishment, saying, no, this is gonna cost you a little bit.

44:54

You need to stand up and you need to support the king or the same thing is gonna happen to your oxen. There was a call to obedience that was sent out by Saul and it carried consequences, but it wasn't overly punitive.

45:05

I think Saul was being very fair and finding good balance as a fair and balanced king here already. Saul was stepping into his position that he had as he was calling people to respond. So it tells us in these verses that Saul gathers a fairly large response relatively quickly.

45:21

Within the course of a few days, it tells us that we've got over 300,000 men that gather at this camp, Bezek, on the west side of the Jordan River. So they're gathered in that town. It's about a day's journey to Jabesh, to the front lines of the battle.

45:39

But as we continue through this passage in verses 10 and 11, it tells us that the men of Jabesh, knowing that help has arrived, now they send out a clever message to their attacking forces that are besieging them around them.

45:52

Verse 10, they say, translated in our version, as we will give ourselves up to you. That can be literally translated as we will come out to you. Now, if we translate it as we will come out to you, is there any different way that we could read that?

46:08

What will come out, we're gonna come out and surrender in just a day. We're coming. Could be what was being stated. In fact, that's what the Ammonites heard when they heard this message. We're coming, we'll come out and we'll surrender, but it could also be, we're going to come out to battle.

46:23

We're getting ready to come out and fight. But as the Ammonites hear this, it seems to me that they hear that and they let their guard down. They got lazy. It wasn't dishonest of the Israelites to say, we're coming out, we're going to come out to you in just a minute.

46:40

But they were coming with a sword in their hands. Once darkness falls in this story, it tells us that Saul deploys his forces. There's these three units that are sent out who make it to Jabesh-gilead undetected, but then they attack the Ammonites and they enter into the camp during the morning watch, which is the third watch of the night.

46:59

That means from like 2 am until sunrise, the Israelites creep into this town, into this encampment, and so it tells us that they struck down the Ammonites until the heat of the day. In the span of, you know, what, six hours that that morning, this victory is complete.

47:17

The Ammonites are scattered. It tells us that no two Ammonites are left together to be able to mount any sort of a counter-attack. God has given Saul a resounding victory in the course of a few hours.

47:29

You know, we see this exciting story of military victory, but in the grand scheme of what's going on in this chapter of all the words that we have here in our passage, you know, it seems to me that the military victory is actually a fairly small portion of the story.

47:44

It's not simply about Saul's military prowess that we see this story kind of focusing on. Verse 6 tells us how this victory came about. We see the events happen a little bit later down, but verse 6 tells us what this story is ultimately about.

48:00

It tells us in verse 6 that the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul, that the Spirit of God empowered Saul to do what Saul was about to do. Every victory ultimately comes from God's hand. We step in when we win.

48:13

It's because God allowed us to win. When we lose, it's because God allowed us to lose. So Saul's victory here over the Ammonites, it comes because the Spirit of God came upon Saul, that the Spirit of God empowered Saul to do this work.

48:27

And you know what, as we're sitting here together this morning, when you face things in your life, you know how you're going to have victory? The exact same way, right? The exact same way. So every Christian's victory and the many struggles that we face, we don't accomplish things in our own strength either.

48:44

If we do, they're not really meaningful things. Anything that God has for us ultimately to have victory in in our life, it's because the Spirit of God is at work in our lives and empowers us to do those things in the same way that we see here with Saul.

48:58

Let me read for you Zechariah 4:6. You can write this down in the margins somewhere. But Zechariah 4:6, it says that this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

49:13

We don't do things because we're strong. We don't do them because we're powerful. We do them and succeed because the Spirit of God allows us to. We see this threat quickly resolved here in the middle of our passage, and now we see kind of a summary at the end that salvation has come, that the people of Jabesh have been saved by King Saul and his men.

49:32

Verses 12 and 13, it tells us that the people said to Samuel, they addressed Samuel, notice that, who is it that says, shall Saul reign over us? Bring those men that we might put them to death. They're ready to get rid of anyone who would oppose King Saul, as King Saul has had victory here today.

49:51

They asked Samuel to send out the opponents, but then in verse 13 it says not that Samuel responded, but it says that Saul responded and said, not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the Lord has worked salvation in Israel.

50:07

The people who approach Samuel with their request hear their response come from Saul. Saul is the one who answers the people, as their king, as their leader. Saul stepped up to lead. You remember the guy, I think it was just last week in the passage that we were talking about, Saul was hiding in the baggage, that Saul was chosen as king of Israel and he was hiding from his responsibility.

50:32

But now we see Saul, he's stepping up to lead. He leads the people into battle, but then he also has this kind of internal conflict that happens among the people of Israel. We need to get rid of the enemies in the camp, right?

50:45

Anybody who would oppose Saul, they need to go. But Saul shows restraint. He shows mercy to these opponents, and the people that wanted to hunt down Saul's enemies and put them to death, Saul turns away that anger.

50:58

Saul says, no, no, no, that's not the focus today. He directs the people's attention back towards God. He directs the people towards the victory that God provided. He said, no, no, not a man shall we put to death this day, for today the Lord has worked salvation in Israel.

51:15

This was one of Saul's finer moments that he was going to have as the king of Israel. Verses 14 and 15, it gives us kind of this little summary of what's described more extensively next week in chapter 12.

51:28

Tells us that Samuel said to the people, come, let us go to Gilgal, and there we will renew the kingdom. So all the people went to Gilgal. There they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before the Lord, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

51:46

But we've got this little two-verse summary here. We're gonna get the much longer version next week that we're gonna look at, but what we see here is that they're gonna acknowledge and endorse Saul's status as the king by this, what they're calling renewing the kingdom at Gilgal, this important religious center during that day.

52:05

At Gilgal, it tells us they made Saul king before the Lord. We see this clear transition, this handing of the baton moment as Samuel, who was the leader of Israel for several years, is now passing off the mantle of leadership to King Saul.

52:21

Saul is stepping in to this role as Israel's leader. But it tells us that they're also renewing their covenant before God, they're renewing the kingdom, they're renewing their commitment to the Lord there as well.

52:33

This isn't just a transaction of taking one man who was in power and handing the baton to another. We see that God is ultimately at the core of this. Every time, it seems like, if you pay attention, I want you to watch for this, because we've seen this several times throughout 1 Samuel already.

52:50

We're gonna see it continue to happen all the way through 2 Samuel as we continue this series. When we see moments where the people of God follow God, when they're obedient to what God has to say, when they do what God says, when the leaders are following God's commands and instructions, you know how it goes?

53:08

Usually works out pretty well, right? It's usually pretty straightforward. God steps in and says, no, you've been obedient to what I called you to do. Here we go. And God steps in and God gives victory as we see here in this passage.

53:22

But then there's a lot of times where the people of Israel, Saul specifically, is gonna be one of them, where they say, no, we've got this figured out. We'll go take care of it

ourselves. Anybody remember what happened when they've done that a few times up to this point?

53:37

It ends poorly, right? There's a spanking or two that happens throughout this book. This chapter records what may have been Saul's finest hour. Not great words for us to be able to utter about a guy who's just being installed as king, right?

53:55

Saul's success here though, it arises from the fact that the Spirit of God comes upon him, that the Spirit of God empowers him to accomplish God's work. Saul was simply obedient to do what God told him to do.

54:09

God empowered him to do as he achieved this success. Probably unexpected success. Certainly the Ammonites didn't think that Israel was going to be able to mount some sort of a comeback like this. But Saul and the power of God's Spirit was able to accomplish God's plan in these moments.

54:28

But as we look at this story, as we see God providing victory to his people who were obedient to his instructions, I think this whole conversation that we've had this morning, it seems reminiscent of our own situation that we find ourselves in sometimes, right?

54:45

Anybody in here ever found themselves in what they would describe as a battle on just a normal work day? Maybe you go to school and you find yourself in a situation where it's like, man, it feels like I'm just facing everything that life has to throw at me.

55:03

Why daresay that the reason why you're feeling that is because we're in a battle every day. The Bible tells us that we're in a battle every day. In fact, 1 Peter chapter 5, let me read a couple of verses for you.

55:14

Talking about how we are, we find ourselves in this regular conflict. But we're not just fighting against stuff. We're not just fighting against flat tires and bad bosses and whatever else may come up.

55:26

First Peter 5 verse 8 tells us to be sober minded and be watchful. Because we have an adversary, the devil, who's prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. So how do we deal with that?

55:38

Verse 9, resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will restore, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

55:59

I think the problem that we find ourselves, why we lose the battle so often every day is the fact that many Christians don't consider themselves to be in a battle every day. But the reality is that spiritual warfare is a very real and a very present part of our lives.

56:17

So for those who are not conscious of the battle, if you're not preparing yourself for the battle because you don't realize that you're in a battle, I've got bad news, you're probably prone to losing, right?

56:27

You're prone to getting distracted, you're prone to being lazy and just ignoring the tools that God's given you to find victory in. You're prone to being unprepared or easily overcome. You're not going to have victory if you don't know that you have to fight for a victory.

56:43

Apart from the power of God's Holy Spirit, we are utterly powerless against the forces of evil, the temptations that we face on a regular basis. The things that come against us day after day after day, we are utterly powerless against them in our own strength.

56:59

But in the power of God's Spirit, we are empowered to obedience and we're able to accomplish God's work in our lives. 2 Corinthians chapter 10. I'm gonna read verses 3 through 5. It tells us for though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.

57:20

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments in every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

57:35

The reason why we don't win is because we allow the enemy into our thoughts, into our lives, and we don't fight. Tells us that our weapons that we have, they have power to destroy anything that comes against us, but we have to take every thought captive.

57:51

We have to stand up and we have to fight. We have to be ready to deal with things when they come against us because those little thoughts of doubt that we think, well, I can't do anything with that. The Bible tells us that we can, that we have to deal with those thoughts of doubt.

58:08

We have to deal with those anxieties. We have to deal with those things because when those come into our lives, if we keep them with us, we hold on to them, we let them grow roots. We let a little weed turn into a medium-sized weed, turn into a really big weed.

58:23

Anybody ever had little weeds turn into big weeds and all of a sudden they're really hard to get out, right? If we pluck them out when they're small and we take them to God, we say, God, I'm dealing with this today, would you help me?

58:38

God is more than capable. It's more than willing to provide everything that we need to give us victory. We have the power, the divine power to destroy strongholds. But when we don't take our thoughts captive, when we don't win in the little areas, when we don't win the margins, when we just allow ourselves to kind of drift through life, all of a sudden we're gonna look up and if you just allow the current of life to take you wherever it wants to take you, you know what?

59:04

You're gonna look up one day and you're not gonna like where you find yourself. All of a sudden it's, whoa, whoa, whoa, that little problem, that little weed is now a big weed, right, it's got teeth and seeds and all kinds, like this thing's not going anywhere without a fight.

59:22

The way that we win is by taking every thought captive. When we live in the love of Christ and the power that God provides, Romans chapter 8 describes us as more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

59:37

But we have to be vigilant. We have to remain dependent on the Holy Spirit. We have to know that we're not gonna just accidentally wander into victory in these things. We have to remain dependent on the Holy Spirit.

59:52

We see here in this passage that the Holy Spirit, that God's Spirit empowered Saul to have this incredible victory. In circumstances that otherwise, there was no victory to be had. The Israelites weren't gonna be able to overcome this enemy.

01:00:07

It's the reason why the enemy said, yeah, go for it. Feel free to ask as many people as you want to come save you. They're not going to be able to. What the king didn't realize, though, is that Israel didn't just have a whole bunch of normal people.

01:00:20

They had God on their side. And when they sought God's help, you know what? God is able to come in and God gave Israel the victory. We must be vigilant. We must remain dependent on the Holy Spirit, but we must be prepared to stand firm in the midst of a culture that is growing just openly opposed to the truth, is openly finding themselves opposed to what God has revealed to us in His Word.

01:00:45

Every morning when we wake up, we need to prepare ourselves for battle, because every day when you go out into the world, it's going to be a battle. We need to be ready to fight. Ephesians chapter 6 tells us about the weapons of war that we have made

available to us, that we see this description of a soldier suiting up with their armor, preparing themselves for war.

01:01:06

Paul uses this analogy to tell us, no, we don't just accidentally wander into success. Someone wanders out into a battlefield with no armor, with no weapon, completely unprepared. It's probably not going to go well, right?

01:01:22

But if we prepare ourselves to fight, if we train ourselves to stand strong, the Bible describes people when we live the way that God tells us to, when we live in the strength that God's Spirit provides, it describes us as standing steadfast.

01:01:41

That's not someone who's just kind of flopping around easily to be tipped over. It's a picture of somebody who's got their base set. We're ready to fight. And when we come out and we're not just standing around ready to be tipped over by anybody that comes up against us, but when we're ready, there's a different response that's going to come in our lives.

01:02:02

We're going to see victory in a different way when we know that things are coming against us and we're prepared to fight. So my encouragement for you today is to take advantage of the tools that God has placed in your hands.

01:02:17

War is coming. It's already here. Every day, it tells us in scriptures that we fight a battle, not against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of wickedness that are in the heavenly places.

01:02:30

We have a very real adversary, as 1 Peter says, but we're not helpless. God has given us the weapons that we need, the tools that we need to be able to stand firm and to fight, to have victory in those things, but we have to take advantage of them.

01:02:46

We have to pick up the tools. Anybody got a tool in their garage that I don't know why, but the pictures don't just hang themselves? The sink doesn't just magically get fixed on its own. The tools are there.

01:02:57

Right now, we have to pick up the tools and we have to use the tools in order to accomplish what the tools are supposed to accomplish. God has given us tools at our disposal. He's given us His word for us to read and to study and to be empowered to know what the God of the universe has to say about anything and everything that we might need.

01:03:16

God has given us everything that we need for life and for godliness. His word is sufficient for everything that we need to know in life. We need to read and study His word. We need to pray. We need to live in fellowship and accountability with other believers.

01:03:32

We're instructed. We're given to one another, the Bible tells us, that we're not able to just go be lone ranger Christians. We can't just go do it on our own. We need each other. The Bible makes that very clear and life has a way of doing that too.

01:03:48

We need each other. We need to serve in a local body. We need to be a part of a church. There's no such thing as a Christian who's in a healthy place in their relationship with the Lord that's not connected to a church in some way.

01:04:01

Those are assumed realities. This isn't something, the individualism of America, we think, no, I can just go do it myself. I'll just go find some good Bible teaching online and I'll just figure it out for myself.

01:04:15

No, the Bible is...there's an assumed reality that if you are a Christian, you are a part of God's family. You are a part of His church. You need to be a part of a body of believers that's going to encourage you when you need to be encouraged.

01:04:30

It's going to rebuke you when you need to be rebuked. It's going to straighten you out. It's going to help you see things a little differently. Anybody ever had limited perspective of something and then you talk to somebody else, you go, oh, I didn't see it that way.

01:04:42

We need one another. It's the reason why God's given us His word. He's given us prayer. He's given us these relationships that we can live in with one another. We need one another. It's the reason why one another shows up over and over and over and over again in the New Testament.

01:04:59

Love one another. Serve one another. Encourage one another. Exhort one another. It's all over the place. There's about 40 others that I didn't have on the list. Take advantage of the tools that God's given you.

01:05:15

You can have victory in your life, in the same way that Israel did. Saul steps in and the power of God, the Spirit of God, enables him to have victory. But that same Spirit of God

that was available to Saul is the same Spirit that indwells all of those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

01:05:33

Jesus said he would send a helper. If you place your faith in Christ, you have him. That same Spirit of God is available to you. So let's not sit around wondering how to have victory. No, no, God's given it to us.

01:05:48

All we have to do is pick it up and take it. Our prayer team is gonna be down here after the service is over. They'd love to pray with you about whatever it is you've got going on in life. If you've got things that they need prayer, we just talked about the way that you're gonna have victory.

01:06:00

One of those things is by praying for those things and bringing them to God, asking God to work and intercede in your life. You know what? Join our prayer team down here. They would love to pray for you.

01:06:10

Alvin's gonna be down here just ready to roll, right? Join them after the service is over. If you don't have time or don't want to join them down here in the front, we've got our prayer wall out the back doors and off to the right as well.

01:06:22

We will still pray for you, even if you don't come down front and hang out with the prayer team, but you can just write those prayer requests down and drop them in the wall or in the box as well. So I wanna invite you, we're gonna pray and then we're gonna close out, but I do wanna encourage you before we pray, don't forget, I know you've been standing here looking at it all morning, but we've got baptism in just a few minutes, so we gotta, there's some costume changes that need to happen.

01:06:46

You'll go grab the kids out of the nursery, whatever it is that you need to do, but we're gonna be back in here in about 20 minutes or so. We're gonna celebrate what God has done in the life of a young man who has given it all to Jesus and said, Jesus, you're my king, right?

01:07:01

Let's pray together. God, we thank you for your word. We thank you as we are able to look back in history and God, we see historical accounts, things like battles that were won at Jabesh and God, King Saul stepping into this role that you placed him in as the king of Israel.

01:07:20

But God, as we look at history, we know that we're not there, the circumstances are different, but at the same time, God, we know that you are the same God that was there, that is here with us today.

01:07:32

God, that the same power that was available to give King Saul and the Israelites the victory on that day is the same power that is available to us through your Holy Spirit. And so God, this morning, I pray that we wouldn't go out of here as defeated, conquered, useless, limp, wimpy Christians.

01:07:50

God, help us to stand up. God, help us to fight, empower us through the power of your Holy Spirit to stand and to do what you call us to do. God, you invite us into your work, you enable us to go and to overcome strongholds.

01:08:08

Not in our own strength, but in yours. God, enable us, empower us to do your work. God, accomplish through us what we are completely incapable of accomplishing on our own. Father, we love you. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.