

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE	Against the Odds
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SERIES	
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DATE	10/30/2022
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KEY SCRIPTURE	1 Samuel 14:1-15
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SYNOPSIS	Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.
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HIGHLIGHTS	
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☞ Against the Odds

We've been talking about how God can break every chain that binds us and he can bring breakthrough in the face of overwhelming odds. He is the Chain Breaker and the God of the Breakthrough. He can even make dry bones live again. Today we will see how there is nothing that can hinder the Lord.

1 Samuel 14:1-15

14 One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing his armor, "Come, let's go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side." But he did not tell his father. 2 Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree in Migron. With him were about six hundred men, 3 among whom was Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod. He was a son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh. No one was aware that Jonathan had left. 4 On each side of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine outpost was a cliff; one was called Bozez, and the other Seneh. 5 One cliff stood to the north toward Micmash, the other to the south toward Geba. 6 Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. **Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.**" 7 "Do all that you have in mind," his armor-bearer said. "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul." 8 Jonathan said, "Come, then; we will cross over toward the men and let them see us. 9 If they say to us, 'Wait there until we come to you,' we will stay where we are and not go up to them. 10 But if they say, 'Come up to us,' we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the Lord has given them into our hands." 11 So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost. "Look!" said the Philistines. "The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in." 12 The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, "Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson." So Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Climb up after me; the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel." 13 Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and killed behind him. 14 In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre. 15 Then panic struck the whole army — those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties — and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.

Backstory: Saul had gone out to fight the Philistines, but was greatly outnumbered and his troops were afraid. He waited a while for Samuel to come and inquire of the Lord, but grew impatient and took matters into his own hands. That was a mistake. He was already outnumbered and outgunned, but now his 3,000 soldiers had dwindled down to only 600. The ☞ last few weeks, we've talked about the importance of **waiting on God. He gives the strategy for the victory.**

The warriors had become worriers – not unlike a lot of Christians in today's world. We used to be bold and confident for the Lord, but after seeing and experiencing a series of setbacks, we've become timid and unsure. I've been a warrior, and I've been a worrier. God, help me, I want to be a warrior.



There have been attacks on the Church worldwide. In the last few years, many Christians have been killed, the media has mocked and the skeptics have scorned. And many believers have ☞ changed from warriors to worriers. But here's the truth, **when things seem the worst, that's when God will be at his best.** Remember this, Jesus said, "...on this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matthew 16:18. Troubles may pile up, but Jesus prevails. Isaiah 59:19 says, "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him." NKJV That "standard" means that God rises up and the enemy scatters and runs away.

In today's story there were only 2 swords and shields in all of Israel; one set with Saul and one with his son, Jonathan. The Philistines had taken control of all the resources for making weapons. Things had gone from bad to worse when Jonathan decided to take a step of action. Jonathan decided it wasn't time to sit back, but time to take back.

Saul was staying on the outskirts of his home town of Gibeah, which means the hill, and he was resting under a tree in Migron, which means precipice. In other words, while the enemy was attacking, and inciting fear in his troops, Saul was staying out on the fringes of the situation, avoiding the enemy. Jonathan had other plans.

Just two men went out to where the enemy was stationed. Jonathan has faith in God, but also shows a side of uncertainty: "**Maybe** God will help us." That's hopeful, but not full of assurance. I can relate to that mindset. How about you?

☞ However, he knew what God *could* do: "**Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.**" In other words, if God is with us, we can't lose. Romans 8:3 says, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

And, I think the Lord is looking for people with that kind of faith. You're facing a situation and you're not sure how to handle it. You're hoping God will come through for you, but you're not ☞ 100% sure he will. However, you have absolute confidence in what God **can** do. I think **God is watching to see what you will do next.** Will you avoid the situation from a distance like Saul? Or will you step out and trust the Lord to help you like Jonathan?

David Guzik... God may choose not to act until we partner with Him in trust.

☞ God is looking for a step of faith. **Sometimes you have to step out on a "maybe."** This may represent coming to the altar for prayer. You're not sure whether God will intervene on your behalf, but you know he can. So, when the time comes, step out and see what God will do.

I love the attitude of the armor-bearer in this story. "Do all that you have in mind; Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul." We all need someone like that in our life. Someone who is with us no matter what; heart and soul. The armor-bearer was the servant who carried additional weapons for his commander. As well, he was responsible to follow and kill the enemies defeated by his master. We all need someone who will stand with us against the devil.



Someone who will give us the advice or strategy we need. Someone who will back us up and help us finish the job. Who is your armor-bearer?

As well, we all need to be that armor-bearer in someone's life. Who is the person you will stand with wholeheartedly? Who are you backing up and supporting as they fight their spiritual battles?

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: 10 If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! 11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? 12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

☞ This is one of the things Church is good for. **We can be armor-bearers for each other.** It's not good to be out there on your own. You need the support of like-minded believers. And, we each need your support as well. It may seem like there's only 2 of you, or that you stand alone for the Lord in your family or workplace. But the Lord is not hindered to save my many or by few! Jonathan decided it was time to step out and give God a chance to do something.

David Guzik... Jonathan did not demand to know the whole battle plan from God in advance. He was willing to take it one step at a time, and let God plan it out. Faith is willing to let God know the whole plan, and to know our part one step at a time.

Now, in Jonathan's case, to even get to the enemy outpost he had to go between a rock and a hard place. There was a cliff on each side of the pass. One was called Bozez, which means mud or bog. The other was called Seneh, which means thorny. Here's the truth: **when we choose to face the enemy, there will be resistance.** Our own sinful nature will try to bog us down. Our own shortcomings will seem like thorns in the flesh. Paul talks about that in 2

☞ Corinthians 12, but he learned to **rely on the power of the Lord** in spite of his own weaknesses, hardships and difficulties.

We stay in the natural too much. We don't give God a chance. Jonathan had the same spirit as Peter, "If it's you, Lord, bid me come to you on the water." We need to put ourselves in the driver's seat of a miracle and see if God will start the car! Jonathan said, "If they tell us to come up to them, we will know that God is calling us to fight." Of course, they'll say that! They want to keep the higher ground. That was equivalent to saying, "When I drop this book, if it falls, then God is calling us to fight." Jonathan was planning on God to move in a miracle.

Jonathan was expectant. He was listening and looking for God's cue, just like David did last week hearing the sound in the trees. Are you listening and looking for God at work in your situation? Is he giving you cues, but you're not paying attention? There are testimonies of God at work all around you in this congregation. These are indicators of God's breakthrough and miracle-working power. If he can do it for someone else, why not you?



“Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.” The Message says it this way: “There's no rule that says God can only deliver by using a big army.” You don't have to have big prayers; you don't have to be a big shot to get a miracle; you don't have to be in a big church in order to win a victory. Remember: One can put a 1,000 to flight; 2 can put 10,000 to flight... with God, all things are possible.

Jonathan and his servant struck down 20 Philistines in an area of ½ an acre... Small beginnings. Zechariah 4:10. But this began a panic among the Philistines. Why? Because God had a reputation. The Israelis were the people of God, and if God went into battle with them, they were invincible: Egypt had fallen. Moab & Ammon had fallen. All the nations of Canaan had fallen before their God! Even a small, but decisive victory now was evidence that the God of Israel was back and that no one could stand against the Israelis.

This all happened because Jonathan decided to take a step of faith. He was willing to go between the rock and hard place in order to face the enemy. He was willing to put himself in a ☞ position to rely entirely on God. And, he was **listening and looking for God's cue**. God's cue came in the form of the enemy taunting them. "Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson."
☞ **When the enemy mocks, God is about to move.**

When Jonathan heard from the Lord, he began to climb. He scaled the cliff to secure the conquest. When Peter heard from the Lord and kept his eyes on Jesus he walked on water. He stood firm in the midst of the storm. When David heard the sound in the trees he went out to the fight and overcame the foe. In each case, these men were acting on a word from the Lord which they had actively pursued.

☞ Are you **pursuing a word from the Lord?** **(music starts)**

Are you listening? Are you looking for the signs of God at work? The past few weeks as we have ministered at the altar, there have been a few prophetic words come forth. Perhaps that will happen for you today. Let's step out and see what God will do. The altar is open.

Has the enemy been mocking? God is about to move.

In a valley between a rock and a hard place? God is raising you higher to prevail.

☞ **You are not alone, and even if we be few, that does not limit what our God can do.**

Come on now. Take a step of faith. Let's see what God will do.