**FAITHFUL REGARDLESS – 1ST SAMUEL 11, UNITE AND FIGHT**

R. Giglio 7/15/21

Samuel was about to make a Royal Proclamation to announce Saul as the first King of Israel, selected by God himself, he was nowhere to be found…

1st Samuel 10:21-22 “they looked for him, he was not to be found. **22**So they inquired further of the Lord, “Has the man come here yet? **”And the Lord said, “Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies.”**

*(… “he has hidden himself among the baggage.”)*

*( “he is hidden among the equipment.” )*

*What is the significance of the baggage?*

The supplies, baggage, equipment represent the most practical items in the entire village.

These were the supplies needed for cooking, cleaning, working, and practical everyday life.

Baggage could also imply the things you drag along through life that are keeping you from moving forward.

He was not hiding in the tabernacle, or the high places of worship, he was situated among the practical, trying to make himself unavailable for the spiritual.

“He was hiding among the practical, trying to make himself unavailable for the spiritual.”

*Do we ever do this?*

When God gives us opportunities to step out in ministry or service to him, do we first come up with practical reasons why we can’t?

Do we ever put off the spiritual pursuit of our calling, because the practical pursuit of our comfort has become our first priority?

All of them had to be willing to forego their practical comfort to pursue their spiritual calling, and God rewarded them for it.

Jesus asked those who wished to follow him the same thing.

* Are you willing to follow, even if it does not provide you the best accommodations?
* Are you willing to follow even if it interferes with your family plans and traditions?
* Are you willing to follow even if it means responding *now*, as opposed to some later date after you tie up all your loose ends?

When God calls you, do you step forward and say “Here I am, Send Me”

Or do you hide among the baggage?

**In chapter 10, Saul ix now in place as King.**

**His first mission was to rescue the people of Jabesh Gilead who were being threatened by the Ammonites.**

**1st Samuel 11:1-15 “**Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh Gilead. And all the men of Jabesh said to him, “Make a treaty with us, and we will be subject to you.”

**2**But Nahash the Ammonite replied, “I will make a treaty with you only on the condition that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so bring disgrace on all Israel.”

**3**The elders of Jabesh said to him, “Give us seven days so we can send messengers throughout Israel; if no one comes to rescue us, we will surrender to you.”

Jabesh-Gilead is a small village of people among the half-tribe of Manasseh. They had likely intermarried with Benjaminites after the Israel-Benjamin war at the end of Judges.

Nahash (whose name means snake), and the Ammonite army besieged the town of Jabesh-Gilead and bargained not to kill them under the condition that they each gouge out their right eye to bring disgrace on all of Israel.

The elders asked for a week to think about it, and sent a desperate message for help to all of Israel.

**4**When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and reported these terms to the people, they all wept aloud. **5**Just then Saul was returning from the fields, behind his oxen, and he asked, “What is wrong with everyone? Why are they weeping?” Then they repeated to him what the men of Jabesh had said.

**6**When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he burned with anger. **7**He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel, proclaiming, “This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel.” Then the terror of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out together as one. **8**When Saul mustered them at Bezek, the men of Israel numbered three hundred thousand and those of Judah thirty thousand.

Saul saw the people weeping at the news of what was happening in JG. He was moved to anger and the Spirit of God came upon him powerfully.

He sent very graphic invitations/threats throughout Israel to come help rescue the people of JG from the Ammonites.

This was Saul’s first act since being *selected* king (he had yet to be accepted as King by the people, but that would soon come).

The people of Israel responded, they amassed 330,000 men to fight the Ammorites.

**9**They told the messengers who had come, “Say to the men of Jabesh Gilead, ‘By the time the sun is hot tomorrow, you will be rescued.’” When the messengers went and reported this to the men of Jabesh, they were elated. **10**They said to the Ammonites, “Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do to us whatever you like.”

The men of Jabesh heard the news that help was on the way, they made a “false” promise to the Ammonites, that they would surrender.

**11**The next day Saul separated his men into three divisions; during the last watch of the night they broke into the camp of the Ammonites and slaughtered them until the heat of the day. Those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

Saul was victorious in battle. Not only did he save the people of JG, he also earned a reputation as a great leader, a wise warrior and a king who could unite the people of Israel.

The people of Israel were enthused and excited. They were also filled with vengeance toward those among their own who disagreed with Samuel’s decision to select Saul as King, and sought to kill them.

**1st Sam 10:27**  “some scoundrels said, “How can this fellow save us?” They despised him and brought him no gifts.

Samuel was wise, and discouraged their vengeance. He knew that this was a time for celebration not in-fighting, and that unity within Israel was of utmost importance.

**12**The people then said to Samuel, “Who was it that asked, ‘Shall Saul reign over us?’ Turn these men over to us so that we may put them to death.”

**13**But Saul said, “No one will be put to death today, for this day the Lord has rescued Israel.”

**14**Then Samuel said to the people, “Come, let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingship.” **15**So all the people went to Gilgal and made Saul king in the presence of the Lord. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings before the Lord, and Saul and all the Israelites held a great celebration.

Saul’s victory at Jabesh-Gilead had rescued the village and unified the people. Samuel’s wisdom of keeping the nation focused on unity and renewal was a high point in his life and the pinnacle moment in the life of Saul.

He was 30 year’s old, he had just officially been made King, The people were united, the enemy was defeated and “all the Israelites held a great celebration.”

The celebration was short-lived. Soon Samuel would warn them that if they turn away from God both they and their King would perish.

Soon Saul would turn to foolishness, jealousy and vengeance and lose his anointing, and his throne.

At the very end of Saul’s life, he was depressed and defeated. In a battle at Mount Gilboa, his three sons were killed, he was critically wounded from an arrow, He took his own life by falling on his sword, the Philistines found him, decapitated him and hung his body on the wall of their city to disgrace Israel and their king.

The only bright spot at the end of Saul’s story was that a certain small village of people risked their own lives to go and retrieve Saul’s body to give it a proper burial.

Guess who it was???

**1st Sam 31:11-13“**When the people of *Jabesh Gilead* heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, **12**all their valiant men marched through the night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth Shan and went to Jabesh, where they burned them. **13**Then they took their bones and buried them under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and they fasted seven days.

The men of Jabesh-Gilead risked their lives 42 years later, to honor Saul and his sons.

UNITE & FIGHT

This chapter speaks of unity and reminds us that there are times that we must unite and fight for our brothers and sisters who are under attack. Christians are the subject of much ridicule and targets for the enemy both spiritual and physical. We are often called upon to defend one another, encourage one another and pray for one another as each of us has an enemy that is intent on trying to destroy us.

 *[Lawyer at Pastors gathering. Churches are under attack by both private and government organization who wish to force them to make unbiblical decisions, prevent them from holding to religious beliefs and in some cases stop them from speaking the truth, even in their own congregations.*

*This lawyer gave us some examples of churches who are currently under investigation and some being sued or fined unjustly.*

*He said that his firm would defend any of our churches free of cost if anything like this happens to us!]*

Why?

Because we are a BODY and we need each other,

…not just to get along with one another, but in some cases defend, or even fight for one another.

*(Sometimes we are too busy fighting one another, not fighting FOR one another…)*

Paul tells us that there should be NO division among us.

**1st Cor. 12:25,26** “There should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. **26**If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

In Romans, he reminds us to share with one another, even *rejoice* and *mourn* with one another;

**Romans 12:5,10,13,15,16** “In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

**10**Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

 **13**Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

**15**Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. **16**Live in harmony with one another.

**1st Peter tells us to Live in peace and good will toward one another.**

**1st Peter 3:8-11** **8**Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. **9**Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult.”

One of the *primary messages of the whole New Testament,* that often gets overlooked, is the Lord’s command for us to “Love one another”, or put more directly “Love other Christians”.

Jesus said it in John 13:

**John 13:34-35** **34**So now I am giving you a *new commandment*: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. **35**Your love for **one another** will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

*[OVERHEARD OUTREACH QUOTE - “You guys really seem to love each other…”]*

But we are not to just say we love one another, we really have to mean it and do it.

**Romans 12:9-10** **“**Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. **10**Love each other with genuine affection,and take delight in honoring each other.”

Paul is speaking specifically to and about other Christians here, just as he is in

**Galatians 6:10** “Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

In other words: We are to do good things for as many people as we are able, but ESPECIALLY first and foremost we are to do good things *to* and *for* Other Christians!

The Pinnacle shining moment of Saul’s life was when he got three things right.

1. He was Empowered by the spirit of God
2. He United his people
3. He Showed sacrificial love by defending his brothers.

Let’s learn from this as we live in a world where our own brothers and sisters are so often under attack, and we as a body are too often divided.

**“…whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone**

**especially to those in the family of faith!”**