**Faithful Regardless**

***Good Ideas or God Ideas***

Last chapter: Saul was feeling what it was like to be King. He knew that there was a lot of pressure on him, and He also knew what God required of him.

His faithfulness and obedience were put to the test. He saw how serious God is about keeping His commands and acting obediently.

When Saul was first anointed and commissioned by Samuel, he was given a specific prophesy about Gilgal;

**1st Samuel 10:8**“Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days *until I come to you* and tell you what you are to do.”

Saul waited 7 days, but did not wait for Samuel…

**1st Sam 13:13-14“13**“You have done a foolish thing,” Samuel said. “You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time

But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the Lord’s command.”

It seems like a rather severe consequence. Saul waited the seven days but fell short of waiting for Samuel. For this act of disobedience, the kingdom was stripped from him.

The question we asked was “Are the promises of God unconditional, and not predicated on our obedience and disobedience?”

The answer to that is YES, and NO.

Our salvation, in as much as we are saved by grace through faith, not by works, is based on “Unmerited Favor” or an “Undeserved Gift”, HOWEVER, our place and participation in His Plan and His Will, can change based upon our obedience.

THIS CHAPTER:

Saul continues serving as King, but his decisions and actions are not led by God and become increasingly mislead and unwise. His son Jonathan on the other hand has been seeking God and is being led by God into victory over the Philistines and also winning the favor of the people. Saul’s decline since being stripped of the Kingship is evident in these next chapters, in his decisions and his dealings with both Jonathan and David.

**1st Samuel 14 1 “**One day Jonathan son of Saul said to his young armor-bearer, “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 Mikmash, 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 men. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. *Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.*”

<pause>

**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 on, then; we will cross over toward them 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*.”

<pause>

**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*.

 <pause>

**16**Saul’s lookouts at Gibeah in Benjamin saw the army melting away in all directions. **17**Then Saul said to the men who were with him, “Muster the forces and see who has left us.” When they did, it was Jonathan and his armor-bearer who were not there.

**18**Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the ark of God.” (At that time it was with the Israelites.) **19**While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hand.”

**20**Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords. **21**Those Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. **22**When all the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit. **23**So on that day *the Lord saved Israel*, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven.

<pause>

**24**Now the Israelites were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, “Cursed be anyone who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!” So none of the troops tasted food.

**25**The entire army entered the woods, and there was honey on the ground. **26**When they went into the woods, they saw the honey oozing out; yet no one put his hand to his mouth, because they feared the oath. **27**But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened. **28**Then one of the soldiers told him, “Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, ‘Cursed be anyone who eats food today!’ That is why the men are faint.”

**29**Jonathan said, “*My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey.****30****How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?”*

**31**That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines from Mikmash to Aijalon, they were exhausted. **32**They pounced on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the blood. **33**Then someone said to Saul, “Look, the men are sinning against the Lord by eating meat that has blood in it.”

“You have broken faith,” he said. “Roll a large stone over here at once.” **34**Then he said, “Go out among the men and tell them, ‘Each of you bring me your cattle and sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against the Lord by eating meat with blood still in it.’”

So everyone brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there. **35**Then Saul built an altar to the Lord; it was the first time he had done this.

**36**Saul said, “Let us go down and pursue the Philistines by night and plunder them till dawn, and let us not leave one of them alive.”

“Do whatever seems best to you,” they replied.

But the priest said, “Let us inquire of God here.”

**37**So Saul asked God, “Shall I go down and pursue the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel’s hand?” *But God did not answer him that day.*

The demise of Saul is apparent and sad. His bad decisions are becoming increasingly more consequential to his country.

At one point Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit and operating within the Will of God and in the Power of God.

**1st Sam 10:10** “when he and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him”.

But after he became King, he became more and more self-reliant, he began leaning upon his own understanding more and more, and God’s wisdom less and less.

*(This is not unlike some of our current political leaders, which is why we pray that they will submit to God’s will and wisdom, not their own ideas and agendas).*

How about us?

Do we ever start out well by moving and acting in the Spirit, but get derailed or sidetracked by our own ideas, and start operating by means of the flesh rather than being led by the Spirit of God?

This is why we study the *“Soul and the Spirit”.*

The soul is our Mind & Emotions. Sometimes they could be “good ideas, but not always God ideas”.

The Spirit is the part of us that empowers us with wisdom to know and do God’s will.

It’s easy to get deceived or sidetracked from one to the other.

Like the “Foolish Galatians”

**Galatians 3:1-3** “You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. **2**I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? **3**Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?”

If Saul had stayed the course, being empowered by the Holy Spirit rather than “means of the flesh”, things would have been very different.

His Kingdom would have been for all time:

**1st Sam 13:13** “You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time.”

Now his kingdom is coming apart. His ridiculous rule about not eating honey almost cost his son Jonathan his life – instead it cost Saul whatever remaining confidence his people had in him.

He trusted in Himself instead of the Lord, and his whole life became unraveled because of it.

This is a mistake that is made by many of us, not just leaders, when we rely on ourselves rather on God.

Saul’s successor's successor, Solomon put into words the wisdom that would have great benefitted Saul, had he applied it;

**Prov. 3:5-6** “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

Trust is Faith, Heart is the part of our Soul that is yielded to the Spirit.

When we navigate through life this way, God will direct our steps.

When we let God direct us, he shows us the way we should go, and we find freedom, victory, success and “Fullness of Joy”

**Psalm 16:11** “You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy.”

When we don’t allow him to lead us, we find ourselves going down the wrong path, and often times, that path leads to death and destruction.

**Prov 14:12** “There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end, it leads to death.”

*[ Our experience: The road back from Hana!*

*The road to Hana on Maui is one of the most unique tourist destinations in Hawaii.*

*It is 64 miles, but takes 3 hours, because there are 600 hair-pin turns.*

*It is beautiful, but frustrating, dizzying and downright nauseating.*

*When you get there, you want to do anything to find a different way back.*

*As you look at the map, you see a shorter route around Haleakala on the south side of the island, that is much shorter and much straighter.*

*The only problem is, much of it is severely unpaved and there are a few 200 ft. cliffs that cars fall off of from time to time.*

*On a map, it looks like the better way to go, but if you do the research, you’ll soon realize that it’s better to go back the way you came, (64 miles. 3 hours, 600 hairpin turns).]*

The Holy Spirit is the voice of wisdom in our life. Not our own good ideas, or the practical advice of others. It is He who directs us into God’s will and gives us the power and wisdom to do it.

He fills our minds with God ideas, not just good ideas.

He transforms and renews our mind, so that our actions and decisions are the best that they can ever be.

**Romans 12:2** “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

God wants us to walk in victory, success and as David says, “Fullness of Joy”

He also wants us to experience life and peace.

To do that we need to trust him, and allow His spirt to control our mind and not our own flesh.

**Rom 8:6** “The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.”

Closing:

**How do we experience fullness of joy?**

* **Be transformed by the renewing of your mind**
* **Allow your mind to be governed by the spirit and not the flesh**
* **Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.**

**If you do this you will avoid the path that leads to destruction and experience the fullness of joy that comes from walking in God’s good, pleasing and perfect will.**