

SLIDE MARCH MADNESS BRACKET fathomchurch.org/march

INTRODUCE

BLANK SLIDE Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to 1 Samuel chapter 14. 1 Samuel 14. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to 1 Samuel 14. That's on page **235** in those Bibles under the chairs.

INTRODUCTION

Well church, this is THE ONE.

- This passage is THE passage.
- Our passage today is THE REASON
 - why I wanted to preach 1 Samuel.

Today's passage is my favorite story in this entire book.

- I like this more than Samuel's call,
 - *"Speak, Lord, for your servant hears."*
- I like this more than the lost donkey story.
- I even like this more than David and Goliath.

You see, I didn't grow up in church. I got saved when I was 16-years-old.

- Now, I had known some bible stories,
 - just the popular ones.

But when I was 18, I felt a call into ministry.

- And I went to my very first church conference.
- And I heard a pastor by the name of Erwin McManus preach.

And Erwin started with, *“open up your Bibles to 1 Samuel 14.”*

- And I didn’t even know where 1 Samuel was in my Bible...
 - much less what 1 Samuel 14 was about.
- So, I used the table of contents!
 - I felt like an idiot...
 - at a pastor’s conference...
 - using the Bible table of contents.

And that’s why,

- if you need to use the table of contents
 - to find a book in the Bible here at Fathom,
 - you’re fine!
- If someone gives you a dirty look,
- you let me know,
- and we’ll help them find a new church!

But I turned to 1 Samuel 14, and Erwin went on to preach a message on our passage for today that literally changed my life.

- You ever notice that there are certain sermons that are just,
 - ‘meh,’ type sermons?
 - Kinda in one ear out the other.
- And then there are other sermons that are steady,
 - and they help you along in your walk with God.

- And then there are some sermons that you listen to...
 - that just break you up...
 - they literally break something in you
 - and they change you.

I won't ask what my sermons are for you in that continuum.

But Erwin's sermon broke something in me,

- and changed the course of my ministry.
- And I still remember it today.
 - He actually expanded it into a book,
 - that I used in prep for today.

TRANSITION

So, I'm excited for today, but let me set it up with what we skipped over at the end of chapter 13.

CONTEXT

Saul, the first king of Israel, raises an army of 3000 men.

And after his son, Jonathan,

- defeats a garrison of the Philistines.
- The Philistines get riled up,
- and pull out their big guns.
 - 30,000 chariots.
 - 6000 horsemen.
 - Troops like the sand on the seashore.
- And they muster at Michmash against Israel.

Now, Saul, and the rest of Israel freak out, and in fear, they hide away.

But let me point you to a couple of verses at the end of chapter 13 that set us up for our story today. Verse 19:

SLIDE 1 SAMUEL 13:19 & 22

[19] Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, “Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears.”

[22] So on the day of the battle there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people with Saul and Jonathan, but Saul and Jonathan his son had them.

BLANK SLIDE

EXPLAIN: BLACKSMITH

So, this is brilliant!

- The Philistines had rid Israel of blacksmiths!

This is brilliant!

- Kill all the weapon makers of your enemies,
- and they won't stand a chance.

So now, they are left with only 2 swords.

- There are only 2 swords in all of Israel.
- Saul this king has one.
- And Jonathan the prince has one.
 - Nepotism at its finest!

TRANSITION

This is an **SLIDE IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION**

- Saul and his army...
 - with two swords...
- up against the grand army of the Philistines!

It's impossible. And here's where we pick up in chapter 14 verse 1.

1 SAMUEL 14:1-5

[1] One day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." But he did not tell his father. [2] Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah in the pomegranate cave at Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men, [3] including Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. [4] Within the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side and a rocky crag on the other side. The name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. [5] The one crag rose on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

EXPLAIN: CAVE

So, this is the setting for our story today. Jonathan makes a plan with the young man who carries his armor for him, to go over to the Philistines.

Now, note right off the bat that he did not tell his father, Saul.

- We don't know exactly why the Bible includes
 - this little bit of information,
- but it's likely that Jonathan thought Saul would forbid this move.
 - Boldness was not Saul's forte as king.

And you ever make a move where you think:

- it'd be better to ask forgiveness,
- than to ask permission?
 - That's pretty much been my entire life!

And the text says that Saul is in the pomegranate cave with the 600 men...

- this is all who remain from his original 3000
 - after losing some in battle,
 - and others fleeing.
- So, 600 men...or actually 598,
 - because of Jonathan and his buddy.

Finally, the text tells us that there were rocky crags on both sides of the pass, and that the Philistine garrison is at the top at Michmash.

- The names of the crags are Bozez and Seneh
- which roughly translate to *Slippery* and *Thorny*.

This is an ominous set up. The writer is setting up an impossible situation.

POINT 1

And the first point I want to make this morning about what followers of God need to do in light of an IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION is this:

SLIDE LET'S GO

Jonathan says: *Come, let us go.*

- “Well, what should we go and do?”
 - JUST DO SOMETHING!

Gosh, this goes back to what I said a couple weeks ago about fear.

- Fear paralyzes.
- Fear will cause you to seize up and do nothing.

And that’s what’s happened with Saul and the 600.

- They aren’t doing ANYTHING!

And now, they’ve gotten comfortable in the caves.

- Drinking pomegranate smoothies...
- with little umbrellas floating in them.

APPLICATION

How many of us are there in our faith?

We were passionate about following Jesus! We had fervor!

But, over time fear drove us into a proverbial cave.

- We were afraid of being rejected for our faith.
- We were afraid of being judged for our faith.
- We were afraid of making people uncomfortable around us.

And so, we just caved up into comfort...

- sipping drinks in our safe little Christian bubble.

But listen, you’re at risk of losing your future because of your fear!

And isn’t it interesting that you can have two different people in the same situation with two completely different outcomes?

Here we've got Saul and Jonathan.

- One's the king.
- One's the prince.
- Both experiencing unbelievably skewed odds against them.
- Both only have a sword.

And you can either live a life of risk or you can live a life of regret.

- So, Saul stays in the cave...and he will lose his future.
- But Jonathan says, *Come, let us go.*

TRANSITION

And Jonathan is going to step into a battle that was his father's...
but his father didn't have the courage to step into.

Verse 6:

1 SAMUEL 14:6

[6] Jonathan said to the young man who carried 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 can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few."

EXPLAIN

Now, think about this speech from the perspective of the armor bearer.

Jonathan says, *Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised*...and you're thinking:

- *“Yeah! What confidence!*
- *This guy has a plan!*
- *This guy is a leader!*
- *This guy certainly knows something I don’t know!*
- *This is inspiring me!”*

And then Jonathan says, *It may be that the Lord will work for us...*

- *“Well, that’s not as inspiring!*
- *Maybe?!?*
- *You’re banking all this on a maybe?”*

POINT 2

And this is point two of how to face an IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION. You’ve gotta recognize the truth that **SLIDE** **MAYBE GOD WILL HELP**

- MAYBE God will help.
- And that conversely means that MAYBE he WON’T!

Hey, listen here:

- somewhere along the line
- we’ve come to believe
- that if you have faith in God,
- it eliminates all the uncertainty in life.

But the reality is that faith never eliminates the uncertainty in your life.

Faith actually accentuates the uncertainty in your life!

- If you live a life of faith
- you move away from certainty
- and into the uncertainty.

And I think if we're honest, we actually want God to make life...

- a little more predictable.
- A little safer.
- A little more comfortable.

But listen, you get that staying in the cave with Saul.

You don't get that by going with Jonathan!

- You see, I think we've taken the word faith
- and made it synonymous with the word safe...
- when in reality, faith...is more synonymous with danger...

And I love that Jonathan isn't boasting in some self-mustered confidence.

Right?

- There is no reason here for confidence!
- There is no reason here for certainty!
- This isn't Jonathan putting on a façade of assurance!

No! Jonathan isn't a man of certainty. He's a man of faith.

- And while there's no reason at all for certainty.
- They most definitely is reason for faith.

We see this in the final words of Jonathan's speech:

For nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few.

- You see, Jonathan's faith wasn't in his circumstances...
 - his faith wasn't in his situation...
 - his faith wasn't in his sword!
- NO! His faith was in his God!

And he knew there was no chance in this situation...but MAYBE with God!

Verse 7:

1 SAMUEL 14:7-10

[7] And his armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul." [8] Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them. [9] If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go up to them. [10] But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up, for the LORD has given them into our hand. And this shall be the sign to us."

EXPLAIN: STRATEGY

Now, this is the worst militaristic strategy in the history of the world!

Remember, there's a pass with two crags: slippery and thorny.

- And the Philistines are at the top.
- And Jonathan and his armor bearer have one sword...
- and there are thousands of Philistines!

And the only hope they have is the hope of surprise! Right?

- A covert operation!
 - Sneak up on those dudes,
 - in the dark of the night,
 - and start slitting throats!

But what does Jonathan say?

- **We will show ourselves to them.**
- He doesn't go COVERT!
- He makes this an OVERT operation!

And then he says,

- if they see us and say, “*We’re coming down to you!*”
 - essentially yielding the high ground,
 - then we’re dead!
- BUT if they say, “*come up to us,*”
 - keeping the high ground,
 - causing us to have to climb up to them...
 - on the slippery and thorny crags,
 - that’s the sign that God has given them into our hand!

THIS MAKES NO SENSE!

- Why would you do this?
- Why would you make the defining factor
 - on the sign from God
 - whether or not the Philistines
 - yielded the high ground?
- Why would you go overt instead of covert?
- Why would you let the Philistines see you?

POINT 3

And this is point 3.

- You wanna GO?
- You wanna see GOD HELP?

You’ve gotta **SLIDE** SHOW YOURSELF

APPLICATION

So many Christians have gone COVERT with their faith.

Gosh, many of us want to DO SOMETHING for God...

but we don't want to let the Philistines to see us.

- You keep things private!
- You don't want to bother the people around you.
- You haven't shown yourself as a follower of Christ!
 - You're just hanging out in the cave with Saul...
 - rather than being seen with Jonathan.

But part of faith is being seen.

- It's rejecting invisibility.
- It's showing yourself.

Some of you have been hiding in a cave...

- and you're wondering why God hasn't shown up in your life?

But if you wanna see God work in your life...you've gotta show yourself!

Verse 11:

1 SAMUEL 14:11-12

[11] So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves." [12] And the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing." And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel."

EXPLAIN

So, they show themselves.

- And the Philistines say, *“Come up to us,”*
- and that’s all that Jonathan needs to hear.
- He reads this situation as the sign that God is with them!

But it means now they will have to put themselves into considerable risk.

And that seems a bit contradictory.

- Like, normally when I think,
 - *“Man, God opened this door for me.”*
- I don’t equate that with this many risks.

But it would seem that Jonathan doesn’t see that. And I think it’s something to note here: **An open door doesn’t always mean smooth sailing.**

And this is where a lot of us can get into trouble,

- because we often determine
- whether we are in God’s will or not
- based on whether or not we feel good,
 - or are comfortable,
 - or have “a peace about it”
 - with NO perceivable roadblocks.

But that’s cave mentality.

That’s pomegranate-drink-in-hand thinking!

In my life, every big thing for the Lord that I’ve been a part of...

- hasn’t come easy...

But has come with sweat

- and tears
- and hard work
- and perseverance.

So, if you sense there's an open door...

- but there are hard things as well...
- DON'T GIVE UP!
- Don't run back to the caves!
- Stay!
- Persevere!
- LET'S GO!

Well, let's see what happens.

1 SAMUEL 14:13-15

[13] Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him. [14] And that first strike, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, killed about twenty men within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land. [15] And there was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and even the raiders trembled, the earth quaked, and it became a very great panic.

EXPLAIN

They climb up the slippery and thorny crag,

- and the text says, **with their hands and feet.**
 - Why is this detail there?
 - How else are they supposed to climb up?
 - With their lips?

But again, if their hands are occupied by climbing what aren't they holding?

- The sword, yeah.

Jonathan's trust is so complete in God

- that his sword is sheathed...
- his shield is slung over his armor-bearers back.

And the Philistines obviously did not see any threat.

- But they reach the top of the crag,
- and their first strike kills 20...

But then they're in trouble...right? Cause 30,000 aren't gonna just lay down

- But that's when God shows up!

A panic hits the camp! And in Hebrew, that can literally be translated:

- *"a trembling by God"*

This trembling panic was not caused by Jonathan's first attack...

- remember, they saw them coming and called them up.
- This was no surprise attack!
- This was the hand of God causing great panic,
 - and trembling,
 - and the very earth shaking beneath them!

You see, this IS an IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION. But not to God!

And you'll never see God's possible until you step into the impossible!

TRANSITION

Now, in verses 16-19 Saul and the rest of the 600...

- hear the commotion in the camp of the Philistines,
- realize that Jonathan and his armor-bearer...
 - are the only ones missing,
- and jump into action.

Verse 20:

1 SAMUEL 14:20-23

[20] Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle. And behold, every Philistine's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion. [21] Now the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before that time and who had gone up with them into the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. [22] Likewise, when all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed hard after them in the battle. [23] So the LORD saved Israel that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.

POINT 4

And here, let me make my final point. **SLIDE IT'S CONTAGIOUS**

- When you GO...
- trusting that MAYBE GOD WILL HELP...
- and you SHOW YOURSELF...
- it becomes CONTAGIOUS.

You see, Saul THOUGHT they were limited by their lack of weapons.

- But God had all the swords he needed...
 - they were just in the hands of the Philistines.

But Jonathan's faith is CONTAGIOUS, and they join the battle.

And not only that, but they THOUGHT they were limited to 600 soldiers!

- But you see, there were Hebrews who had joined Philistines.
 - They had betrayed their own people!
- AND there were Hebrews hiding in the hills of Ephraim.
 - They are even more cowardly than Saul and the 600!

But when they hear of what Jonathan was doing...

they come running to join the fight!

- Who would have ever imagined
- that God had actually placed
- the army that Saul needed
- behind enemy lines,
- by allowing them to step into their own fears,
- only to turn them at the last minute?!?

IT'S CONTAGIOUS!

APPLICATION

You see,

- there are people right now who are apathetic...
- and afraid to live life.
 - They're just drowning in mediocrity.
- But when you begin to live your life by faith,
- they will be inspired to do the same!

And there are even people who have walked away from their faith...

- *I don't trust God...*
- *I don't trust Christians...*
- *I don't trust the church...*

But the moment they see you:

- LET'S GO...
- LET'S SHOW OURSELVES...
- **that is going to be the contagion that draws them back to God!**

They only need to be shown that the IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION is possible!

- They only needed to believe...
- that with man it was truly impossible...
- but with God all things are possible.

IT'S CONTAGIOUS!

- Two dudes.
- One sword.
- And faith in God.
- **And the Lord saved Israel that day.**

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CONCLUSION

Now, Fathom, here's our IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION.

- Our church has just about doubled since March of 2020,
 - the start of COVID.
- We were creeping at around 150 two years ago,
 - and today we're about 300.

Now, we aren't a big church. Ok? Not even close!

We aren't much more than two guys with a sword.

And here's the stats:

- There are almost 50,000 people in Littleton...
- and there are 100,000 people in Highlands Ranch...
- and there are 110,000 people in Centennial.

And Fathom is located right in the middle of those three cities.

- And almost 70% of the quarter-million people around us
 - claim to have no religious affiliation!

This is partly why I had Silvino read the scripture over us in Spanish today!

Cause I want you to remember that God's Word isn't only for us!

- And lest we get too comfortable...
 - in our cave...
 - with our pomegranate smoothies...
- the Lord has given us a mission!

Here's what Jesus said in the great commission:

SLIDE MATTHEW 28:19–20

[19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- Guess what the Greek word for ALL literally means?
- It means ALL!

Go to all of them!

Even the ones who don't speak your language!

Listen y'all, this is an IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION!

- 250,000 people to our 300.
 - And I'm just talking South-West Denver!
 - That's just the closest ALL we're to go to!
- This is impossible!

But here's what I want to call every single one of us to...

- I want us to be Jonathan's...not Saul's.
- I want us to get out of the cave...
 - get out of the comfort...
 - get out of hiding...
 - and get into the fight!

SLIDE LET'S GO!

- You live where you live
- You work where you work
- You play where you play...ON PURPOSE!

So, DO SOMETHING!

There are 14 houses on my cul-de-sac.

- Of those 14, I think there are three who are Christians.
- And I'd wager the same is true for where you are.

God has strategically placed you where you are right now...

- and I dare you to take up the mantra:
- **Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side.**

And **SLIDE** **MAYBE GOD WILL HELP!**

There's no safety guaranteed here!

- You do realize Christianity isn't gaining popularity...
 - in the larger culture! Right?
 - Lest we try to make Jesus cool or something...
- **Faith doesn't promise safe...**
- **it promises to make us dangerous!**

And it may be that the Lord will work for us...

But you've gotta **SLIDE** **SHOW YOURSELF!**

- We've gotta mount up against these overwhelming odds.
- Even when things seem like they're against us,
 - we must persevere.
- Listen, we were made for this!
- The church of Jesus Christ was made for this moment!

We aren't going to slink in the shadows and plan some sort of covert strike!

- No, let's let the Philistines see us!
- Let's show ourselves to our friends
- and our families
- and our neighbors
- and our coworkers!

Your faith is personal...but it was never meant to be private!

And I just promise you: **SLIDE IT'S CONTAGIOUS!**

I want to encourage you, church.

- Invite people.
- Invite people into your lives.
- Invite people into your homes.
- Invite people to your church.

As our church continues to grow, we've started talking about moving into a permanent building as a home to do ministry out of in the coming years.

And I want you to come with us!

- I want us to witness God multiply the swords.
- I want us to witness God motivate others hiding in caves to join.
- I want to witness God making the very ground shake...
 - as the he moves in power.

So, who's with us in this? Back to verse 7.

- We need to be with each other,
- heart and soul,
- for this to work.

For nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few.

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Davis, Dale Ralph. Focus on the Bible: 1 Samuel.
- McManus, Erwin. Chasing Daylight.
- McManus, Erwin. *The Jonathan Factor*.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. NICOT: The First Book of Samuel.