

Heroes of Old #4 - Jonathan

A guy in Florida was asked how people react when they hear that a hurricane is coming and going to hit soon. He said there were two different reactions.

There were those who panic and run around in circles crying "*What are we going to do? What are we going to do?*" Then they make a run for gasoline and food. They bring all their stuff in the house, stock their own cupboards and didn't worry about anyone else.

Then, he said, there are some who think about how everyone is going through the same thing. They say, "*Hey, we're all going through the same thing, let's lock arms and do this thing together.*"

People can respond in radically different ways to the same storm, the same opposition, the same challenge they both are facing.

One of the biggest storms in the history of the nation of Israel can be found in the book of I Samuel. The Bible tells us that the **Philistines**, who hated the nation of Israel and hated their God were getting ready to attack.

The Bible says they had 3,000 chariots, 6,000 charioteers, and the Bible says that the enemy soldiers were as numerous as the sand on the seashore. **(Oriental Hyperbole.)** The Jewish nation had a couple of leaders that faced that challenge, but only one of them proved himself to be fearless and he is now counted among the Heroes of Old.

Lest we forget, the **key passage** for this series is 2 Timothy 1:7, "*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*"

How many of you are the type of person that when the fuel gage on your car says empty or the little warning light comes on that you are getting low, you feel like you can keep driving for a day or two? How about your spouse?

Okay, now how many of you when the gage hits a quarter tank you start looking for station to fill up? I remember when **our oldest daughter was 18**, she and two of her girlfriends went in together and rented an apartment.

And I would get these calls from her every once in a while, saying, "Dad, help, I ran out of gas." Drove me crazy - especially when it was at 11 at night. "*I would yell, 'stop doing that! It's not safe for a young girl to run out of gas in the middle of the night!'*" Drove me crazy.

And today I want to look at ***“The fear of running out, the fear of not measuring up, the fear of coming up short.”***

A war is going on between Israel and the Philistines and we are going to look at two guys, one was the king of Israel, **Saul**, the other is his son **Jonathan**.

These two guys responded to the same situation is vastly different. Now, why did one respond so differently than the other? Is it because Saul was a coward and Jonathan had courage? Maybe, but, there is more to it than that.

It appears that **Saul** lived his life the same way many of us live ours, **out of a mindset of scarcity**, the fear of running out, that there's never enough. But **Jonathan lived his life with a mindset of abundance**, that there was more than enough, and that he, in fact, was more than enough. The difference in results are staggering.

How does this play out in our world? Well, for instance you have a single guy or gal looking for a good mate, they do some dating but what is a common thing to hear them say? ***“All the good ones are taken.”***

Or you're a parent and your kid hears the ice cream truck and they are asking for money, or they have some event at school and they need \$5. Or they get to be teenagers and they need money for gas or to go on a date and what do you tell them? You tell them the same thing your parents told you. ***“Son, money doesn't grow on...trees.”*** Not enough.

Or, maybe it's **time**. You come home from a long day at work. You're totally fried. The dishes are piled up, you have to take the kids to a baseball game, come home and pay the bills, and you think to yourself, “There's just not enough hours in the day.” There's not enough. That is our world, isn't it?

A mindset of scarcity is rooted in the fear that there is never enough. **Never enough what?** Whatever. **Whatever is of value to you**, when we live in a world of scarcity, it is a limited supply and there is not enough to go around.

Look at how this plays out in Saul's life. The Lord spoke to Saul through the prophet Samuel and told him exactly what He wanted done. He was absolutely fed up with the Amalekites blaspheming him, and so He says to Saul, *“Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them...”* 1 Samuel 15:3

Now that is pretty clear. But what did Saul do? *"Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way... to the east of Egypt....But Saul and the army **spared** king Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs — everything that was good. **These they were unwilling to** destroy, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed."* 1 Samuel 15:7,9

Saul starts out good but then it turns bad. He not only spared the enemy king he spared everything he considered valuable. Why? Because, evidently, in Saul's world there's not enough.

When we have a mindset of scarcity and there is an opportunity to take something, **even if it's questionable**, we think, *"I don't know if this opportunity will present itself again, so even though I may be disobeying God, I'm going to go ahead and grab it."* **You ever been in that place?** All of us have. When there's the fear that the chance won't present itself again. **Con men** love to play on this fear.

If our mindset is that we live in a world where there's not enough then the next question we have to ask ourselves is: **"What is it for you that you can't risk letting go of?"**

Legend has it that in India the way they **catch a monkey** is to take a coconut and tie it to a tree. Then bore a hole in it just big enough for the monkey to squeeze his hand through.

Then they would fill it with rice. The monkey would smell the rice and they would squeeze their hand into the hole and grab the rice and he would have to turn loose of the rice to get his hand out.

This he is unwilling to do and he is caught. And we think, *"How stupid of the monkey."* *All he has to do is let go of the rice and pull his hand out.* But he is unwilling to let go of what he thinks he must have and he's caught.

There are things in our lives that we cannot let go of for fear that we will not get another chance to get it, and we are in bondage to it. You are in prison to that which you are holding on to, just like the monkey.

What is it that you can't risk losing? For me, I have trouble turning loose of stuff. I think I might could use it one day, so I put it in our shed. And after awhile the shed is overflowing. And I have to tell myself, **"If I haven't used it in 10 years maybe I don't need it."**

Truthfully, I have a **sweater vest** from high school days. A vest I have kept all these years. It is over 50 years old, older than most of the people in this room. I no longer keep it because I think I might can use it someday, I now keep it because I think it is sort of a cool deal.

But it can be a battle. Some of you may live in a world where affection and genuine love is so scarce that you put yourself in a relationship, and get a **counterfeit love**, and it is breaking the heart of God, and you know it.

And, you hold on as tightly as you can, and you will not let go. Why? Because you don't trust that God will give you something better. You are in prison, and I'm asking you, let it go. There's something way better.

That's your rice? Money? This is a hot one. Do you know that if we make over **\$25,000** a year of combined income, we are in the **top five percent** of the wealthiest people on the planet, top five percent. Isn't that crazy?

If you make a combined income of over \$42,000 a year, you are in the **top one percent** of the wealthiest people on the planet. That should make us feel pretty good. But instead, what do we think? **"There's not enough."**

The new Xbox just came out. Or The new hybrid just came out and I'm going to pay \$10,000 more to save \$200.00 on gas. *"I gotta have it."* You know what I'm talking about. There's not enough. There's always one more thing.

Saul was king; he could have had anything he wanted whenever he wanted. **The truth is, what you have is irrelevant to what you think you need when you live out of a mindset of scarcity.** What is it that you can't let go of?

I had an **uncle** that grew up during the **great depression** and it shaped his live. Even tho he became fairly well to do, with properties in the US and Mexico, he lived very frugally. This is how frugal he was, He would weigh the eggs before he bought a dozen to see which eggs weighted the most.

Sometimes, I find myself dealing with this in the **church world**. I think I don't have the time, I don't have the resources to do the outreach I want to do. I don't have the people, the skill sets I need. I don't have the auditorium, I don't have the class rooms, I don't have the storage. I don't have the systems I need. So instead of thinking about the fantastic ways we have been blessed, I think about what we don't have. **In truth, we are living out of abundance.**

There is, in fact, more than enough, because the moment that we invite Christ into our lives, we become His child, and the economies of everything changes. Less becomes more. The greatest are the servants. It is a whole new world.

Instead of living like Saul we need to live like Jonathan, living out of abundance instead of living out of scarcity. What does that look like? **Living out of abundance starts with three pretty simple things.**

1. It starts with **knowing God as our unlimited supply**, really knowing Him, not with your mind, but with your lifestyle.

2. It starts with **knowing who I am in Him.**

3. It starts with **knowing what He can do through me.** And this is exactly where we find Jonathan. He intimately knows God. He knows who He is and what God has created him for.

There are thousands of soldiers ready to attack Israel. Saul, is hiding under a pomegranate tree. Why? Because he has **too much to lose**. He can't risk going into battle for fear that he'll lose everything.

Jonathan, on the other hand, is tired of watching his dad, who is able bodied, who has an army, who has the priest, who has the political influence, he's tired of waiting for him to obey God and attack. He's sick of watching his dad do nothing.

He says, "I'm done. Let's go." In verse six of I Samuel 14, "*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.*"

He's saying, "*You know what? I'm sick of doing nothing, there is a war to be fought. Let's go pick a fight. Maybe God will help. Maybe He won't, but I'm not going to sit here and do nothing anymore. Let's go pick a fight and perhaps God will show up.*"

1. **When we begin to live lives out of abundance**, of recognizing who He is and what we really have as a child of God, a couple of things will happen. **One**, you are going to **pick risky fights**. Why? Because you have nothing to lose.

You have everything in Him. Every resource that God has at His disposal is yours as His child. What do you have to lose? You will pick risky fights, sometimes, even what seems to be un-winnable fights.

Look at what Jonathan does. He and his young armor bearer go and just the two of them take on a bunch of soldiers. In verse 14, in the first attack, they kill some twenty men in the area of about a half acre, and then **panic** struck the whole enemy army, those in the camp, those in the field, those in the outpost, and those in the raiding parties.

And then what happened? The ground shook and it was a panic sent by who? By God. *“Let’s pick a fight. Perhaps God will help,”* and He did.

Some of us need to pick fights today. You are facing a sea of debt. You’ve done it to yourself. And the weight of it is so heavy you can’t even breath, and you are going to pick a fight – and perhaps God will help.

How do you do that? You give. As crazy and backwards as that sounds, that is the way the economy of God works. **When we trust Him, He multiplies it back,** and that’s just the way it works.

Some marriages are falling apart, intimate relationships destroyed. Why? Because you’ve been picking a fight **with** yourselves. Today, you are going to pick a fight **for** your spouse, not **with** them, and perhaps God will help. How do you do that? You pray. You get on your knees and you pray that God will humble you and humble your spouse.

You pray for God’s best and blessing over someone that has **betrayed** you. You pick a fight. Perhaps, the ground will shake in that relationship and God will do what you cannot. He will restore what seems utterly broken.

Parents, maybe you have a **child** that you’ve been praying for day after day. And it feels like your prayers are almost futile and you want to give up hope. Don’t you dare. Instead, pick a fight against your spiritual enemy.

An enemy wants to keep your **child miserable** and in bondage, and you will pray today, and tomorrow, and the next day, and one day, the ground in their life will shake and it will be the power of God doing what you cannot. Why? Because you’re picking a fight. You are not going to put up with it anymore.

2. When we begin living our lives out of abundance, out of really knowing who God is and what we have in Him, we'll pick risky fights; and **two, we will live recklessly selfless lives.**

The most profound thing in the story was not what I read, but what I didn't read. **There was not a single instance where Jonathan did or said anything that benefited himself.**

He was the heir to be the second king of Israel. Instead God anointed a teenager named **David, to be king**, and Jonathan didn't say, "*Hey, this is my spot. This is my job. This is my land. That's my castle.*" No, he said, "David, I'm giving my life to your service." It wasn't about him.

His father is playing it safe under a tree. Jonathan risks his life and attacks. Why? "*Maybe God would be pleased with his desire to worship and obey Him.*" When you know who you are in Christ, you don't have to live your life to get something back, because **you already have everything** in Christ. There's nothing else to gain.

When we really begin to live out of the **abundance**, we are going to pick risky fights. God will get the glory when that victory happens and we will live selfless lives.

Jesus put it this way, "*For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?*" Mark 8:35-36

When I was in Bible College I got a job working in a bakery. We made everything by hand. Donuts, cookies, cakes, bread, everything, people knew when the **hot bread** was coming out of the ovens and the cars would start lining up.

The elderly couple who owed it went to church where Barbara and I went. The man passed away and his wife put me in charge of the bakery. I would go in, like 3 am in the morning and later I would close up. And when I closed up I would bring home a dozen cookies and a quart of milk.

Honestly, I don't remember for sure how it went but it went something like this: Barbara would ask, "*Can you bring home cookies? And I would say, **Sure, I made them and they are left over.***"

Someone asks can we afford to do outreach? Sure, **God makes the cookies.** Can we really build a new addition on the church? Sure, God makes the cookies. There is more than enough.

Money may not grow on trees, but my Father made the trees.

Maybe someone betrayed you, and somebody's asks, "*How can you forgive so freely?*" and your response is simple. "*My Father makes the cookies,*" and *there's more than enough forgiveness to go around.*"

When we begin to live lives, knowing who God is and who we are in Him, not only will we be changed, but the world around us will be changed, as well.

And so, I want to ask you, **do you really believe you are experiencing the life that Christ died to give you** – the abundance, the overwhelming abundance of what He has for you?

Or, are there areas where you are holding on to something so tight that you are kind of imprisoned by it, whether it is a relationship, or you just have to have that next thing, whether it's a burden or wanting to be in control.

What is it? What is hindering you from experiencing the rich abundance of living free, knowing who you are and what God created you to do? And if God is speaking to your heart, say, "*Yeah, there's an area where I'm having a hard time letting go.*"

And I hope you say, "*Lord, I hear You speaking to me, and I want to do something different.*"

Prayer: "*Father, You have the power to do what we can't. You have the power to set us free. I pray You would give us the courage to make choices today and tomorrow and the next day, to walk away and to literally release those areas, where we can't let go ... those relationships, those material things, and Lord we thank You in advance for what You are going to do.*"