

# Forward March: Courage

## Part 2 – 1 Samuel 14:1 – 12

### I. Intro

- A. **Illustration:** A young writer with a very uncertain income went into a quiet park to contemplate a serious problem. For four years he had been engaged but felt he did not have enough money to get married. He wanted to live and write in Paris, Rome, Vienna, London -- everywhere. However, without the security of money his plan seemed hopeless. As he thought about his situation he looked up and at that moment saw a squirrel jump from one high tree to another. He appeared to be aiming for a limb so far out of reach that the leap looked like suicide. He missed that limb -- but landed, safe and unconcerned, on a branch several feet lower. Then he climbed to his goal, and all was well. An old man sitting on the bench next to young writer and said, "Funny, I've seen hundreds of them jump like that, especially when there are dogs around and they can't come down to the ground. A lot of them miss the branch, but I've never seen any miss the tree or get hurt in trying." Then he chuckled. "I guess they've got to risk it if they don't want to spend their whole lives in one tree." Suddenly the writer thought, a squirrel takes a chance -- have I less nerve than a squirrel? He married two weeks later and scraped up enough money to go to Europe. He and his new bride took off, not sure what branch they would land on. He began to write twice as fast and twice as hard as ever before and soon they were living very comfortably.
- B. Last week began looking at moving forward, looked at being more of a risk-taking church willing to step out on faith following the Lord's leadership
- C. Talked about faith involves risk, now talk about when it does, having courage to take step of faith regardless of risk involved – as it relates to us personally and us as church
- D. **READ 1 Samuel 14:1 – 12**
- E. **Background:**
- i. Philistines had either captured or killed all blacksmiths in Israel; no weapons could be made, what weapons there were couldn't be sharpened – even a farm tool couldn't be sharpened; gave Philistines great advantage over God's people
  - ii. Two swords left in Israel – 1 held by Saul, other held by his son, Jonathan
  - iii. Notice how each used his sword: **READ v. 2** (Saul – hiding in fear) and **v. 6** (Jonathan – seek out the enemy and attack if that's what the Lord wanted)
  - iv. Jonathan an example of a courageous follower of God; Look at

question, what are the marks of a courageous Christian?

## II. People of Courage Lead – Go First

- A. **Question:** What does that mean for us – how could we as individual believers be courageous and “go first”?
- B. **Question:** What about us as a body of believers – the church?
- C. Someone said - every baseball team could use a man who plays every position perfectly, never strikes out and never makes an error. The trouble is, there’s no way to make him lay down his hot dog and come down out of the stands.
- D. Same with many in the church -so often we yell from the sidelines what the church and God should be doing but never lift a finger to do anything ourselves.
- E. People of courage lead the charge – they don't wait around to see what everyone else is doing
- F. **v. 6 – Question:** What came first here, the Lord’s direction or Jonathan’s action? There will be times when the Lord will call His people to move, not giving specific direction, and His people have to just simply trust in faith
- G. Believers of courage are always seeking out opportunities to spread the Gospel, to be used by God to reach people, and by faith will take the risk involved

## III. People of Courage Walk By Faith

- A. **Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup> Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.
- B. **Illustration:** When John Paton was translating the Bible for a South Seas island tribe, he discovered that they had no word for trust or faith. One day a native who had been running hard came into the missionary’s house, flopped himself in a large chair and said, "It’s good to rest my whole weight on this chair." "That’s it," said Paton. "I’ll translate faith as ‘resting one’s whole weight on God.’"
- C. Jonathan shows his faith in word – **v. 6:** ... *Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few*
- D. Jonathan shows his faith by action – **READ v. 8 – 11a**
- E. It’s not so difficult for believers to show their faith in word, but it’s much more difficult to show our faith by action
- F. **REFER JAMES 2:14, 18**
- G. Pastor quote: *People of courage climb out onto the limb in faith because they understand that's where the best fruit is*
- H. What keeps people, churches from acting with courage is we allow

ourselves to be consumed by past failures – don't want to risk failing again so we become stuck – stuck by fear; that's what happens to Saul in passage (**REFER v. 2** – Saul, along with 600 men, and hiding under a tree, Saul probably very comfortable)

- i. **v. 3**: Notice who one of the 600 were? Ahijah – priest, their religious leader
- I. Acting in courage by faith is taking God-given opportunities and moving forward even in the face of disappointment, doubt, fear, and being comfortable
- J. In Habakkuk, prophet questions God as to why it seems evil always prevails over good, and when will God do something about it; God responds that He will send the Babylonians (evil people) to punish Israelites (God's chosen people) for their sin and rebellion against God; God tells Habakkuk how he is to warn the Israelites of this coming judgment; **READ Habakkuk 2:2 – 4**
- K. Paul's words to Romans: **READ Romans 1:16, 17**
- L. If we are truly people of courage, then we will not be afraid to proclaim God's will and judgment upon the unbelieving and His provision for deliverance and salvation through Jesus Christ
- M. If we are truly people of courage, then we will not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ and *the righteous* (you and me as believers in Christ) *will walk by faith*

#### IV. People of Courage Inspire Others

- A. When Jonathan went to camp of Philistines, his armor-bearer went with him – **REFER v. 7**; people of courage also have the respect, trust, devotion of their followers
- B. Everyday, people all around us are watching us looking at our lives, looking at this church, to see if we're actually living out the truth we profess; if we are truly walking by faith
- C. Studies show current generation of adults are looking for body of believers that not only talks about doing, but actively does what they're talking about; specifically know of people who are leaving churches because their exact words are ... *my church doesn't do anything*

#### V. Close

- A. **ASK**: Anybody here have sense, feel the Lord leading us, to accomplish something specific within this church this year?
- B. **Question**: Do you have a sense of something God wants to accomplish in your life this year?
- C. People of courage lead – go first

- D. **People of courage walk by faith**
- E. **People of courage inspire others**
- F. **French foreign legion motto: *If I falter, push me on – If I stumble, pick me up – If I retreat, shoot me***