



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor  
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# 1 SAMUEL 13:1-14

1 Samuel Series

[PRAYER] Father, we're coming before you now because we know that the Bible is significant. It's not just significant to sit on our coffee tables or that we have one because it marks who we are as Christians, but it also is your word. As your word is opened then we're able to understand more about who you are and more about who we are and about our purpose here in life. So I ask, Father, that you would give us a sensitivity to the power of your word as a mirror to reflect our own weakness. As the encourager and strengthener of our hearts, as the lamp unto our feet and the light unto our path, set your word in a powerful way in each one of our lives. Guide us, Father, as we work it through into our hearts over the next year. Speak to us, each one of us. We know that you will do that great work because of your grace and because of your design and your plan. Now Father, we're going to open our Bibles to this passage in 1 Samuel. So I ask that you would speak to us, and that you would lead us during this time, and teach us what it means to be your children and to follow you. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

You can open your Bibles to 1 Samuel 13. In first 1 Samuel 13 we're going to read about a story. Whenever we look and come to the Bible, it touches us. But it touches us in different ways. There's sometimes when it touches us we get convicted of something – "I'm really doing the wrong thing here" – and we need to change. Sometimes the Bible touches us in a way where we're encouraged and we're inspired. Oh I just needed that today, that touch. Sometimes the Bible tells us something to do. When you finish reading the Bible – "I need to go and do this thing with this person."

Now today we're going to open the Bible to 1 Samuel 13, and that's what the Bible is going to do for us. It's going to touch us. Here's what I think it's going to do. At least this is what it did for me this week as I was preparing this message. It provides for us a warning sign, a caution sign that we need to pay attention to.

Here's the caution. I'll tell you what it is in advance and then I'm going to read the passage and show it to you and tell you the story that's in 1 Samuel 13. The message it seems to me from 1 Samuel 13 is that time pressure can cause us to compromise doing what's right. So we have to be careful. It's a caution. That time pressure put together with deterioration or something going on that's negative can cause us to do something that's wrong. So we need to be on guard. We need to be careful to not allow that to happen in our lives. I'm stepping ahead and telling you what I think the message is for today and theme we're going to see in the passage.

Now let me step back and tell you the story. In the story of 1 Samuel 13, the Philistines are the enemy of the Israelites. They're actually ruling the world right now. The Philistines are in

control. They're dominating the land. Now the Israelites can live on their own, but there are certain pressures that the Israelites lived under. At any moment the Philistines could come in and raid their towns. At any moment the Philistines could come in and harm them. So they lived under this constant oppression of the Philistines.

Furthermore, the Philistines made a rule. No Israelite could become a blacksmith. So there were no blacksmiths among the Israelite people. Why? Because the Philistines believed that if they were blacksmiths they might create weapons of war like shields or spears or swords. So there were no blacksmiths in all of Israel. In fact whenever they wanted to have their harvest tools or their axes sharpened they would have to go down to the Philistine camp, Philistine cities, and they would have to pay them to sharpen their instruments because there was no blacksmiths in that area. So we have this oppression of the Philistines.

But at the same time now, as we've talked about over the last couple of weeks, we see that there's a king that has risen up. His name is Saul. One of the expectations of the king, maybe one of the campaign promises, as you would, is that he would provide security and safety for the people. Of course the Philistines are that enemy. So now Saul has become that king and he's in this very important and strategic place. That's where we enter the story that's going to take place in 1 Samuel 13. Open there with me to 1 Samuel 13:1.

It says this: *Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years. Saul chose three thousand men from Israel; two thousand were with him at Mikmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. The rest of the men he sent back to their homes.*

Now in modern warfare a battalion has about 500-800 guys in it. A brigade is made of three to five battalions. Is that true in the air force as well? Do they have the same kind of brigades and battalions? Do they call them that? Squadrons. This would be like 2,000 one and 1,000 another. What would you call that group of 2,000 usually? Yeah, a brigade. So we've got brigades here. We've got a brigade of 2,000 with Saul and we've got a smaller brigade of 1,000 with Jonathan. So he's got some men. These are the elite guys. But it says *the rest of the men he sent home*. So the rest of the men, those are the fighting men, they're in the reserves. They've all been sent to their homes in case they're needed and they call up the reserves. So that's what we're talking about here.

Notice verse 3. *Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it.*

Let me just show you the map here. You can see that this is the battle of Mikmash. Mikmash is in the center there. The red line represents Israel and the blue line is going to represent the Philistines. You're going to see here that Saul has these guys over here at Gilgal and he's moving over there. Jonathan is at Gibeah down here, but he attacks this Geba, according to the passage, this outpost of the Philistines. The outpost means it's in the forefront. It's out in the area of Israel. So he attacks that. And when he did it says that *the Philistines heard about it*. Now you can imagine what that's going to do. That's a declaration of war. So we have the battle lines drawn and things are going to happen here.

So we go to the next verse, part of verse 3. It says – *Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, “Let the Hebrews hear!” So all Israel heard the news: “Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become obnoxious to the Philistines.” And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.*

So they called up the reserves. So now you’ve got all this army that’s there. Because once the Philistines heard that there was this attack at Geba, they’re mustering their armies. So everybody’s getting their armies ready to go in order to fight what’s going to happen. Now the Israelites are pretty confident because they’ve got thousands of people that are going to come out and fight the Philistines.

So at first they’re pretty confident, until they see the enemy. When they see the enemy, then they don’t feel as confident in their determination. Verse 5 tells us that. *The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Mikmash, east of Beth Aven.*

So you can see Mikmash now is where the Philistines are and they’re going to send out their three different groups of people to make their attack and so on. But we’re not there yet.

They are camping at Mikmash, east of Beth Aven. Now sometimes the numbers are fine. When you’re in church and you’ve got a good group of people and you’re going, “I really like this. I’m with my friends and my pastor says let’s do something,” all is great. It’s when you get out in the battlefield of life and you start seeing the pressures that are there, then the challenges come. These guys see the awesome size of the Philistine army and they’re afraid.

Furthermore, notice they have six thousand charioteers, three thousand chariots. Just the number of soldiers is an exaggeration. Notice it says *as numerous as the sand on the seashore*. They couldn’t count them all. This is overwhelming is the idea. And notice they have modern military technology – chariots. It’s like drones and stuff. Technology. The Israelites are going, “We don’t even have swords! We don’t even have shields! We’re supposed to go out and fight these guys with chariots?”

In verse 6 notice their response because they’re scared. *When the Israelites saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns.* The army hasn’t even come after them yet and they’re hiding behind rocks. *Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.*

The big boys, the Philistines, look bigger now than they did before, than they had imaged. So the armies are deserting Saul. So he’s got a problem. They’re trying to hide in all these different places. Their army is hiding in all these different places that they can so they’re not discovered when the attack comes.

Now I’m going to apply this story to our lives in just a moment. But I want to pause right here for a moment because I am just impressed with the difficulty of the battlefield in our lives today. Just this week talking to a woman about her health issues – what a battle that she is facing in

that. Talking to a guy about pornography and a struggle faced in that area. Another person trying to get a job. Another person in conflict with his wife. Battlefields that are just so hard. I mean I just think life is hard. My heart goes out to the pain that people experience and the challenges that people who are in custody battles and job searches and all kinds of stuff that people face. It's really a hard place to be.

It's easy to come when the leader calls. It's hard when you have to go out on the battlefield and fight the battle. I think God calls us every morning to report to duty. So we report to duty and most of us show up. But what happens when we see the battlefield and see how tough it is? Are we then able to trust the Lord in the midst of that situation?

That's the challenge these guys are facing. It's not an easy one. It's a difficult place for them. I can't imagine staying there and being ready to fight with all of this technology that they're facing in the midst of the battle.

Well Saul is going to be the key figure here that we're going to focus on for our application. It says – *Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter.*

So everybody is leaving. This is where the application really hit me this week, the appropriate application from this passage. Because time is decreasing and the tension is there. When time is decreasing and the tension is there, we have a tendency or at least we're tempted to take matters into our own hands. That's what Saul is going to do. Saul is going to end up taking matters into his own hands. He's going to do what Samuel would have done when Samuel is going to come down and try to encourage the troops. But that's the problem. So I think the warning here for us is don't let time pressure you to do something that you're going to regret.

Watch what he does. Verse 9 – *So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." And Saul offered up the burnt offering.* Saul is not qualified to offer up the burnt offerings. That's not his job. He's the king. He's not a prophet and he's not a priest. The prophet can offer the sacrifice. The priest could offer the sacrifice. But Saul couldn't do that.

So day four is coming, day five, day six. Saul can't wait. He's got to do something about this. But Samuel's instructions are specific. Wait seven days and I'm going to come and tell you what you need to do. Saul doesn't wait because of the time pressure. "I've got to do it now. I've got to take matters into my own hands. Bring me the offerings. I've seen a lot of offerings in my life. I've grown up around it, I'm thirty years old." He grew up around them making sacrifices all the time. "I know how to kill the animal the right way. Bring him over. I'm going to kill him. I know what words the priest is supposed to say. I've heard the priest say it over and over again. Just bring it here. I'm going to do it myself. I'm not going to wait for this to happen." In so doing, he ends up disobeying God. Actually doing something good in disobedience.

Verse 10 – *Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.*

This idea of time is a challenging one. I'll just share in my own personal life, time is very important to me. I value time. So the temptation then is for me to value time more than people. That's why I think God took me to Africa, at least one of the reasons why God had me go to Africa where we lived for nine months. During that time I gave up my watch. I was forty years old when we went to Africa. During all of my life up to that point I'd worn a watch. But when I was in Africa I gave up my watch. Now since then I've gotten a watch, mainly because I like the technology that it gives me access to. But the whole concept of having a watch for time was something I needed to abandon as a part of my personal growth in Africa. Here's why. African people are so special. I just love the African people. One of the things that I like about them is that they value relationship over time.

Let me give you an example. I was a professor there teaching Kenyan students. I go into the office where the assistant to the professors is. She's like a secretary type person. I walked in the door and I said, "Hey, my class is in a few minutes. Could you please photocopy twenty of these for my class?" Her response to me was, "Dr. Turansky, you didn't greet me yet."

I was rebuked by her gentleness. And I said, "Oh I'm sorry. How are you?"

She said, "I'm fine. How are you?"

I said, "I'm fine."

She says, "Okay, I'll do the work for you." But what she was telling me is you've got to greet people.

In Kenya here's what happens. In America if you show up at my door I'm going to open the door and say, "Yes? What can I do for you?" That would be totally rude in Africa. Here's what you do. They had to teach me this. You open door and if it's somebody you know, you say, "Hi. How are you? Oh, come on in. Why don't you have a seat. Let me make some tea for you. Here, would you like some tea? How's your family?" And you wait for them to tell you why they're there. Which could be fifteen or twenty minutes before they tell you.

I'm the kind of person that says, "Yeah, what can I do for you? Oh, you have a problem. Let me solve it." That's my response because I'm efficient. I get things done. I'm a time-oriented person. I'm really grateful for the people that are closest to me in my life who are patient with me because sometimes I'm abrupt and I'm getting things done and moving forward. But I hope that as I work with you and as I talk with you and spend time with you, you don't feel rushed by me.

It used to be that one of the reasons I got rid of my watch is because I was finding myself talking to someone and look at my watch. Do you know that is a total insult to other people? To me I didn't realize that. I was just looking at my watch to find out what time it is. But it's an insult in America, not just anywhere else. So for me to get rid of my watch was pretty significant. Because it's important for me to be present with the person I'm interacting with. I know for some of you that's a no-brainer. You're there already. But for me time pressure is important. Getting things done is important. So it's not just for me this isn't just something that was about my watch. This has something to do with me inside because it just makes a statement about me.

Here's what happens. When the time pressure starts to come, that's when I start to feel anxious. Uh oh, we're running out of time. Or if someone isn't doing something as fast as I would like them to, that's when I'm tempted to feel angry because time pressure is causing this something going on inside of me.

Now I think that we're tempted to make poor choices like yell at someone or be sharp with someone or abrupt with someone because of that kind of dynamic. That's what happens here with Saul. Saul makes a bad choice because of the time pressure in his life.

Just think about the times when you're under pressure. If you've got children, as many of you do (obviously, with all these kids up here), you're trying to get kids out the door in the morning. And if they're not moving as fast as you'd like, the time pressure is on and you can sometimes snap or be sharp or short with a child or with people. Or you're trying to get dinner on the table by a certain time or you're trying to pay a bill before it's due or you're trying to finish this conversation because you've got to get out the door. So in the midst of that then you can enter into something that's not the best. That's when people get hurt. Sometimes we end up doing the wrong thing.

In this case Saul's going to do something that's evil. That's wrong to pretend to be the priest. Saul needed to wait and I'm convinced that our life is made up waiting periods. That's what life is all about. We have to wait for things all the time. A child has to wait for that new bite to come. A teenager has to wait to get the driver's license. A young woman wants to have this job, but she just isn't finding the right one and the right time. A husband is looking for a promotion and it's not coming as fast as you'd like. A young couple wanting to have a new home. A person wanting to get married, but the person isn't there yet for them to marry. Or the person who's married that's frustrated in the marriage. There's all kinds of challenges that we face in our lives.

The rub here is that I don't like to wait. I don't know about you, but I don't like to wait. So waiting is hard. It's a real test of my character in those moments because it's in those moments that challenges happen inside of my heart.

I'm sure, I'm confident that's why yesterday when my wife asked me to go on an errand for her to meet someone at eleven o'clock that the word came that the person wasn't going to be there till twelve. Well I was already there because of course I'm early because time is really important to me. So I'm there early waiting there for the person. Now I'm sitting there waiting and you know what my thoughts are? "I'm preaching this sermon tomorrow on waiting." Because God often takes me through some kind of experience of okay, this is it this week. I've got to sit here and wait for an hour.

What am I going to do for an hour? Now had I known I was going to wait for an hour, I would've brought my computer because I have plenty of work to do. I had nothing. I had my cell phone, that's all. So I'm sitting there waiting for an hour. An hour is a long time when it's freezing cold out. I'm sitting in my car for an hour.

Last night we were on the way to the prayer meeting and we stopped at the longest light in Lawrenceville and Carrie said something like, "This is a really long light." I said, "I know. It's

okay. It's part of the sermon tomorrow." Because we pulled up right as it's beginning its long period of time.

So just let me give you a warning. If you have to get your license renewed at the DMV, it takes two hours. Carrie had to get her license done this summer. So she says it takes two hours. I said, "That's probably just the time you went." So I decided to go in the morning. I went there, it's going to take two hours to get a license. I said forget it, I'm leaving. I prepared for my DMV visit by bringing my computer and everything so I don't care if it takes two hours, I just got my projects done. I just want to warn you, if you have to get your license done in person it's going to take two hours at the DMV. You're going to have to wait and you'll be able to practice these very things that we're talking about.

I don't know about you, but I can find myself in Saul's situation here where the army is deteriorating. What would you do? The army is going away and time pressure is sensitive. See, he chooses to offer sacrifices because he wants to encourage the troops. They'll see him doing this thing, we're calling upon the Lord, and so he thinks this is a good idea. But he's making a mistake under time pressure.

I think it's dangerous and I think that's why in Proverbs 3:5-6 the Bible uses this word trust. That in those moments we just need to back off and stop being in control so much and we need to learn what trust is. *Trust the Lord your God with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he'll make your paths straight.*

But I'm sure Saul said something like this: "Look, I've been trusting in the Lord for seven days. Six days and two hours, and the answer hasn't come yet." That's what we say to ourselves. Nothing has happened so far. I think when we're afraid of the time pressure, we're afraid of what might happen, we don't look around and see the good things that are going on.

Do you know that in Saul's situation there were men right there who were committed to die with him that hadn't left that he could be grateful for. Do you know that there's a Philistine army out there waiting to attack, but they hadn't moved yet. They hadn't started to attack. There are several things that are happening in the midst of the difficult tension-filled situation that Saul doesn't see because he's focused on the time and the deterioration of what's going on. Wow. I think my eyes need to be opened sometimes to what God wants to do in the waiting periods of my own life.

I'm sure that people looked at the cross and Jesus dying on the cross, saying, "Where's God here? Why isn't God doing something? Doesn't He care about this situation?" He could've stepped in and done something here, but He didn't. So Jesus Christ died on the cross. Of course we know now that as we look at the situation that God was very present in that situation. His heart was broken as He turned His eyes away from His only Son to allow Jesus Christ to die for the sins of the world. God was doing a lot while people thought that God was doing nothing.

The other interesting thing about this passage is that Saul did something that was almost right in the midst of this. He had to make a choice. Let me read the passage before I talk about it. Look at verse 11. "*What have you done?*" asked Samuel. Now look at Saul's defense of himself because

it contains excuses and rationalization. We might as well be talking to a seven year old the way he's responding. This is how seven year olds or teenagers sometimes respond.

Notice his response. *Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were scattering (in other words, he's rationalizing – look at all the bad things that are going on), and that you did not come at the set time (he's blaming him. It's your fault, Samuel. If you would have come at the set time – and notice time is the pressure here), and that the Philistines were assembling at Mikmash."* Now there are external pressures. There are things that are going on out there that are pressuring me, rationalization.

*I thought...* Now this is what happens. When the pressure comes on and the time is limited, our thinking starts going in the wrong direction. And so he says, *I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.* I just had to do it. There were no other options. I just had to do it. I had to go out and do this.

If you talk to a seven year old who just punched his sister, "Well she did this! She was going to do this, so I had to hit her or I had to hit him." It's just the same kind of thing. I just had to do it. I felt compelled to do it.

So Samuel says, "*You have done a foolish thing.*" Foolish is essentially not recognizing the consequences of your current actions. That's what foolishness is. Not recognizing the consequences of your current actions. Foolishness.

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.*" The blessings are lost.

I can't help but think how many blessings have I lost because I've been more concerned about time than people, or getting things done than caring for people. It's a continual reminder for me that people are the most important thing. Spending that little bit of time, that little extra time is so important.

We're going to read here in the coming chapters the story of David and Goliath. I know you're excited about that story. It's the most famous story in the book of 1 Samuel and I can hardly wait to get there myself. That's in chapter 17. We are now in chapter 13. We've got to finish this battle, we've got another battle, we've got another mistake that Saul's going to make before we get to David who's going to be this man that's prophesied here that the Lord has given a man after His own heart. Saul is going to lose the blessing.

On the flip side, when I think about not having the time pressure, but doing what God wants me to do, the godliness is represented I think in the fruit of the Spirit. These are superpowers. Not human powers, superpowers that come from the Spirit of God who lives in you if you've accepted Christ in your life. So they are superpowers and notice how many of them are tied into time.

Wow, we lose our joy sometimes because of the time pressure. Peace obviously is lost because of time pressure. Patience is a time word. Being able to be calm during times of waiting. Kindness takes time. Gentleness takes time. Self-control is all about time. It's about putting off present benefits for future rewards.

Now we sometimes think that impatience is this little quirk in our personality or some weakness of character, but it's more than that. It's this cauldron of anger, this cauldron of upset inside of us that boils over when we lack that quality of patience in our lives. It's entitlement and I think some dysfunctional thing in our relationship with God because we want control instead of trusting the Lord and what He's done. So that when we start taking matters into our own hands, we say something like this: "I need spiritual guidance here. I'm not getting it from God, so I'm going to read my horoscope." That is a terrible mistake. Or "I'm going to go visit a psychic reader or something." That's a terrible mistake. That anyone would go and do that would be a total violation of God and His word for you. Or another person would say, "I know what I can do. I can manipulate the circumstances. I can manipulate people to get where I need to be." It's a problem.

I'm a doctor. I write prescriptions. But I'm not a medical doctor. I'm a heart doctor. So when I meet with people I meet with them and I do have a prescription pad. This is my prescription pad that I use so that if I want to give someone an assignment I can write it on their prescription plan – this is what you need to be thinking about this week.

I was working with a lady two weeks ago and the lady was telling me about her problem and explaining to me the problem that she had. So I started to give her a solution that I thought would be helpful for her and she just loved it. She said, "That is just what I need. I need a book that will help me with that."

I said, "Well, I've got a book for you for that."

She says, "Good. Can you tell me the name of the book?"

I said, "I'll even write it down for you. I'll write down the name of the book so that you'll be able to find it and you can read it. This will help you with your problem. This is the exact book you need for your problem." This is what I wrote on there and I handed it to her.

She says, "Touché."

I said, "Yes. Read the Bible. That's the book you need. If you read the Bible you'll have the solutions you need."

I just think that's what God would have for us in our lives. That we are willing to trust Him and allow Him to work in our lives.

There are a couple verses that remind me about the time pressure that we have and what we need to do in place of that. One is this beautiful picture of the eagle and then the verse that goes along with it – *Those who wait...* and there's our word wait. Not waiting with the second hand and the minute hand going around, but there's this waiting on something that doesn't have to do with time, but has to do with relationship. It has to do with relationship with the Lord. *Those who wait on the Lord will find new strength; they will fly high on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.*

It's just another verse that reminds me about the time because I myself have taken up long distance running. So I've been running and it's after I get passed the first mile then I feel much better about the running, but it's the perseverance that has to do with time. To hang in there and keep going in the midst of the time is what perseverance is. Again, I know some of you face some really difficult challenges in your life. The solution is to wait upon the Lord because if you don't then the pressures of time will cause you maybe to do something that you don't want to do, that you'll regret afterwards.

God wants relationship in our lives. I just ask you to forgive me for times when maybe I've been abrupt with you or moved faster or didn't care for you. It's probably because of this weakness I have in my life. Feel free to point that out to me and I will take it to heart. I will be more conscious of the areas where I can practice caring and being present with people in my own life.

If you're here today and this resonates with you, maybe you're not even a Christian, maybe you haven't accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior; it's about relationship. That primary relationship helps put the balance in all these things. Obviously it doesn't instantly work it out as in my life it continues to grow and develop, but it's a continual process of allowing God to be the Lord of our lives.

That's what He wants to do. God heals people. He heals their bodies. He heals their finances. He heals marriage relationships. He heals parent-child relationships. God heals and a lot of times we want things instantly, but sometimes there's work that's involved and time that's involved in order for those things to take place.

Would you stand with me and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we thank you for creating time and then having created that time envelope, stepping into it and creating our world. Lord, I pray that you would give us a greater appreciation for waiting on you and trusting on you in our lives. Lord, do a deep work in each of our lives, me too. That we would be so compassionate and have such a heart like you have for people that we would be able to overlook the pressures that time often presents in our lives, and choose to do the right thing, and choose to serve you first. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.