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January 1, 2017

1 SAMUEL 13:16-14:15

Three Men and a Battle – Part 1
1 Samuel Series

[PRAYER] Lord, I want to be blessed. I'm really grateful for my Christian friends who I get to walk with in this world that encourage me and inspire me to move forward. Lord, I do delight in your word and I'm thankful for the scriptures that you've given to us that we can enjoy and appreciate. They just melt our hearts and confront us. They give us this opportunity to just delight in them. Lord, in doing that I just know that allows us to plant ourselves by the river, that stream that is like the word so that we can flourish. Lord, I want to bear fruit and I want that fruit to be a demonstration of your grace in my life. I know that comes when I spend time in your word and I'm confronted with my own realities and things in my own heart. But it also comes when I learn new things about you and who you are. So Lord, I just want to plant myself by that river so that I can experience your grace, I can experience your power, and I can experience what you're doing in my life. Lord, I thank you that you are watching over me and that you are looking at my steps and guiding them. Whatever I do prospers...wow, Lord, I really like that statement and I pray that you'll prosper me in 2017. I pray that you'll prosper me with money. I'll use that money to serve you. I pray that you'll prosper me in friendships. I pray that you'll prosper me in my relationships with others. I pray that you will prosper me in my health, and I will serve you with that strength. Lord, I look forward to what you're going to do in this year as I dedicate this year to you. In my Bible reading, in my quiet time with you, and in my service to you, Lord, I pray that you'll help me to be blessed as you've outlined in this particular psalm. In Jesus' name, amen.

Open your Bible with me to 1 Samuel 13. Because in 1 Samuel 13 we're going to come to battle. In fact you don't ever hear me give titles to sermons because I'm not really into that, but I've given a title to this one. It's called "Three Men and a Battle." It's a story about these three guys that we learn from in the midst of a battle.

Now if you study Old Testament history, here's what you're going to find. You're going to find a lot of battles, a lot of wars, and you need to know how to think about those. What we want to do is we want to take what we see in God's word that's happening culturally and apply it to our lives. Sometimes people will say, "It's hard for me to understand God and the Bible because I don't understand all these battles and things that are going on." I'm going to take you into one today and show you what it looks like and how we can take Jesus home in the midst of this passage.

The Old Testament gives us a number of different analogies (and so does the New Testament) about how we can apply God's word to our lives and how we can be Christians. We've got this

analogy of the battle and we're going to amplify that one today. We've got the analogy of walking, like we just saw in Psalm 1, and how we walk in line and step with God. We have the analogy of standing, we have the analogy of the tree, we have the analogy of the runner in Hebrews 12. All of those illustrations are there in the scriptures for us to take and apply to our lives as Christians so that we can know how to live our daily life today.

So, our goal when we look at God's word is to take Jesus home. Maybe that means taking Him home to a family. If you live with a family, that's what it means. Take Jesus home to your family. But it's much bigger than that. It's taking Jesus home when you leave here, home to your empty apartment where you live by yourself. It's taking Jesus to your workplace. Taking Jesus into your finances or into your medicine cabinet or health. It's just taking Jesus everywhere. That's what we mean by taking Jesus home.

I have a commitment that I'm making to you in 2017 that I'm going to bring you God's word. I'm going to look at God's word and study it in the course of my week and it's going to become real to me first. That's what I have to do in my own personal study is I have to live with it. So I start my study right away. Sunday or Monday I'm studying for next week's message and I'm starting to understand what that passage says. I want it to be real for me first. So when I have to share, I have something to share that's coming from my heart, not just from my head. That's my commitment to you in 2017. I'm going to give you guidance to take Jesus home when you come here on Sunday mornings or when you listen to the podcast or the sermons online.

I want to make a promise to you. The promise is this (and it's not my promise, it's God's promise): If you read God's word, if you study God's word, it will change you and it will move you to the next step in your personal development. Now some people want to take a class to get to their next step in their personal development. Some people want to get a certificate or go back to school. Those things are fine, but if you want to get to the next level in your personal development, one of the things you want to do is study God's word because God changes us and it's very practical.

Now we're going to learn some things from this story of three men and a battle as we turn to 1 Samuel 13 starting in verse 16. It says this: *Saul and his son Jonathan* (those are our first two guys) *and the men with them were staying in Gibeah in Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Mikmash.*

Let's look at some geography here. This is the map of the battle of Mikmash. Now when I was working in my master's degree program, I did my thesis on the geography in Israel and how the geography affected the story. If you know the geography of what's going on, then it makes a little more sense. So I'm going to draw attention to some of that here.

I want you to see what's going on. Maybe you can see topographically here how it's very wavy in that side in particular because it's very mountainous. If they're going to fight a battle, they're all over the place, up and down hills, cliffs. It's a very mountainous area in that region. You see Jerusalem at the bottom. That's in the tribe of Judah. And then Benjamin is just north of that. That's where we see the battle lines being drawn up above. So you see Gibeah is where Saul was

parked. He's in the red, and then the Philistines are in the blue, and Mikdash is in the middle there. That's where the Philistines were camped. That's verse 16.

Let me read on here. *Raiding parties* (so we're starting in the blue at Mikdash and the raiding parties are going out in three directions) *went out from the Philistine camp in three detachments. One turned toward Ophrah in the vicinity of Shual, another toward Beth Horon, and the third toward the borderland overlooking the Valley of Zeboyim facing the wilderness.*

When I was working on my master's program, we actually went to Israel. We rented a car and drove around so I could actually study parts of the land and see how it's laid out as I was preparing to write how the geography and the topography contributed to the Bible stories that existed. So when we drive down to Jericho, you come to this body of water in the bottom here is the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea is the lowest place on earth. If you go there, you'll come to a sign that looks like this that says – "This is the lowest place on earth -- 394 meters below sea level."

Now coming from a mountainous area where Jerusalem is, all the way down there is a huge drop. So there are all kinds of geography going on there and topography that you want to consider. Now they're sending one of those detachments out toward the wilderness. That's what's happening in the one part of our story. That's some background you're going to need to know, just geography of what's happening.

Now we go to verse 19 for some more background before we get to the battle. The writer here wants us to understand before we get to the actual fighting part of the battle. Verse 19 – *Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, "Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!" So all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plow points, mattocks, axes and sickles sharpened.*

Now plow points are the piece of metal that would be attached to this kind of big thing that the guy would hold, then a harness would be attached to the ox, the ox would pull it, and that sharp plow point would dig up a furrow in the ground. That's the first one there is the plow points would have to be sharpened. They'd have to go down to the Philistine camp to get them sharpened. A mattocks is one of those pick axes, you know the ones that have the blade that's flat in the front. Not turned sideways, but flat so you're digging out. That's a mattocks. Then there's the axes – that's the one with the sharp side so you can cut down trees. Sickles are like a curved knife on the end of a pole that you would go around and slash the grain during harvest time. Now obviously those things need to be sharpened and they would have to go down to the Philistines camp.

We're told even the prices. I wish we could translate the prices and then we'd know how much it cost to do such things. Verse 21 – *The price was two-thirds of a shekel for sharpening plow points and mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening forks.*

Now forks would be used in the threshing – that is, they take the forks and throw the grain. During the wind time the wind would blow the chaff away and the grain because it's heavy would fall down. So the forks were used in the farming process *and axes and for repointing goads.*

A goad was a sharp pointed stick or metal tool that was used to keep the oxen going in the right direction. So if they started to go off the wrong direction, the goad would prick them and point them. So that's the illustration. That's why if you remember in the New Testament when Saul was confronted by Jesus on the road to Damascus, the words that came out that he heard was, "Why Saul, are you kicking against the goads?" In other words, why are you going the wrong direction? You're not going in the right direction. And so Saul was then converted in the midst of that dialogue.

So that's what we're talking about when we see those tools. The point is, they didn't have the resources they needed. They had to go down to the Philistines to get them sharpened.

So let's now look at this and look at the background of what's happening and set the stage before the battle lines are drawn and before we look at it. Before Saul became king, the Philistines managed the Israelites in military rule. They kept them under their thumb, so to speak, and controlled them using three primary tools. One is they didn't allow them to have any weapons. Secondly, they restricted their food supply. Thirdly, fear because they'd raid them often. So those three things compromised the Israelites' ability to get strong and overpower their enemy. That was their idea.

So eventually now Saul's going to become a king and we know inevitably we're going to have a confrontation between the Philistine army that's pressing them and the Israelites who want to be free. That's why they have a king. So Saul is going to have this conflict and that's what's taking place in our story.

Now look at verse 22 where it says – *So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them.*

The scriptures record this particular verse because they want us to know that the Israelites had inadequate resources to fight a battle and in the end they're going to have to trust in the Lord to do something amazing, and He does in the midst of that. We're going to watch how that develops and what takes place. But we have to recognize that they didn't have the resources that they needed.

We as Christians can take this idea of the battle and we can apply it to our own lives. In fact the scriptures do that itself. If we look at Ephesians 6, we see the armor of God. These resources and these tools become the tools that we use to fight our battles that we have.

I would suggest that many of these are in process. For example, salvation is one of those things we get saved, but then it grows on us. We get to understand. And so even Philippians says that we need to work out our salvation into the other areas of our lives, so there's a process happening here. So at any point when we're faced with a battle, we're going in that battle with inadequate resources. We have what we need in these, but we're always growing in these. We're growing in this truth. We're understanding more truth that becomes this belt. When we rely on that we grow and we understand some of the lies that we believe that get us into trouble. So that

truth grows in our lives. We're growing in this peace that our feet are shot with and that is something we're growing in.

But any time the battle is there, I would suggest that (at least for me) I don't have this all together in my life. I'm still working on faith. I'm still working on righteousness in my life. So I'm growing in these things. So there's a gap there where we really need to rely on the Lord to help us fight the battles.

What are the battles? If we go back to our picture of the battle line, we see that the Philistines are going after them and setting up camps in three different areas. That's what the passage says. *They went out from Mikmash and set up their post in three different areas.* Now I just want you to think about your life for a moment and I want you to think about the things that are your major stressors.

When I'm counseling with someone that I've never met before and they come into my office and they don't even know what to talk about, I say, "Why don't you just tell me this. What are three main stressors in your life right now?" I'll learn a whole bunch about that person.

Just think about your stressors. What are they? What are the things that are on your mind as you enter this year that are bothering you? You give a lot of your time to that. Maybe you give a lot of your energy to that or your money or whatever it is. Those things are on your mind. Maybe you're wrestling with something in the health area – you're trying to lose weight or exercise or get to the gym or maybe you're dealing with a physical ailment of some kind and that's consuming some of your energy. Maybe it's your word and you're trying to get a new career or develop your career. Or maybe there's something going on at work that's putting pressure on you and it bothers you in that particular area. Maybe it has something to do with your finances. Maybe it has to do with your lifestyle and what you want to change. Maybe it has to do with a relationship. I don't know. But we all have them.

If you think about it for a minute, take just the three top ones. We could probably have a lot more than that. Take the three top stressors in your life. What are they? Because those are the camps that are out here. They become the battlefields for us. We need to have tools to fight the battles. We need to know what those battles are and we need to be able to deal with them.

We have tools like fasting, and prayer, and commitment to God and faithfulness to Him, and faith, and we have the word of God. That's one of the tools that we use in order to fight the battles that we face. Every time there's a conflict in your life it is an opportunity for Satan or God to gain ground. Every time there's a conflict in your life there's an opportunity for Satan or God to gain ground. I would suggest that we need the tools; we need to sharpen those tools in order to be ready to fight the battles that are out there.

There are battles. Just take those three. Those are the battle lines for you. The camps are there and you've got to be prepared to deal with those. That's why the emphasis is so much here on reading the Bible. If we can read the Bible and understand it, then we can come through and take these practical truths, apply them to our lives, and we can get somewhere as we're fighting the battles so that we're not consumed by anxiety in our lives or tempted to fall into sin, but we have

God's word that's protecting us. It's that offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit, that's mentioned in the battle armor. It's the only one that's offensive. We have this offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit, that we can use. We have weapons. We're in a battle, just like Saul and Jonathan were in a battle.

Verse 23 says this: *Now a detachment of Philistines had gone out to the pass at Mikdash. A detachment, that means a group. Philistines (that's the enemy) had gone out to a pass. Now a pass is a place between some mountains or something. In other words they had gone out somewhere and that was an outpost for them. It would be, by the way, a place where if they could capture this outpost they would have some weapons. See, they don't have any weapons. So they want to go and win some battles so they can take those weapons and start using them themselves. So that's what's happening in this passage as we move forward.*

Look at verse 1 of the next chapter. *One day Jonathan son of Saul said to his young armor-bearer... That's guy number three. Remember I said three guys and a battle? Those are our three guys: Saul, Jonathan, and the armor-bearer. 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.*

So what he's saying is we're going to go over there to that outpost and we're going to try to get some weapons. We're going to try to bring them back. We're going to try to conquer the Philistines there and let's see what the Lord does. But he doesn't tell his dad about it.

Verse 2 – *Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah (do you see Gibeah down there) under a pomegranate tree in Migron. With him were about six hundred men, among whom was Ahijah. Now Ahijah was a priest. He's going to be a key player in this story as it develops. Ahijah is a priest and we're given his lineage here so we know who he is. Among whom was Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod (only priests wear an ephod). He was a son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh. So he's the priest. He's representing the spiritual presence of God in this whole story. No one was aware that Jonathan had left.*

Verse 4 – *On each side of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine outpost was a cliff. I'm going to show you an actual picture of Israel. I don't know if it was the exact place where Jonathan was doing what he's doing, but if you notice there's a pass between the cliffs on both sides. This is the kind of pass, if it wasn't the exact same pass, this is the kind of pass that we're talking about. So you can visualize how the geography is affecting the story.*

Verse 4 again – *One 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. One cliff stood to the north toward Mikdash, the other to the south toward Geba.*

I'm going to take apart verses 6, 7, and 8. I'm going to read it. I'll come back to it in a minute, but there's a lot of good stuff here about how do we approach the battle in our lives.

Verse 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.”*

The armor-bearer in verse 7 responds by saying – *“Do all that you have in mind,” his armor-bearer said. “Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul.”*

I really like these two guys. I think we need more Jonathans in this world. Jonathans are people who are bold, they’re courageous, they take initiative, and they’re not afraid of what’s going on around them. They’re willing to take initiative to step out and do something. Bold move. I don’t want to be like Saul. Now we’re going to look at Saul. Saul makes four mistakes. I don’t want to be like Saul. I want to be like Jonathan. Jonathan is a leader. He takes initiative. We need more Jonathans in the world.

I also think we need more armor-bearers. We don’t even know this guy’s name. Joe or Harry. His name isn’t even in there. He’s not looking for credit. We don’t know who he is. He’s a guy who says, though, *“I am with you heart and soul.”* He’s a supporter. He’s a person who’s faithful to this Jonathan who’s leading. We need both of those.

I am so grateful. I like to be the Jonathan. I like to lead. So I do that a lot. I am so grateful for the armor-bearers that God has placed into my life that support me in that leadership just with their heart and soul. It just ministers to my heart when someone is on board and they’re supporting what I’m doing as a leader, as I’m following the Lord and what He’s leading me in. But I’m also an armor-bearer.

Here’s what I believe about the church, as I understand it. God has given every person in the church a spiritual gift. That means you have one. The very nature of a spiritual gift is you have a way of looking at situations differently than someone else. If you’re a servant you look at that situation and look about serving in that particular way. So you’re going to take bold initiative to serve. If you have compassion, if that’s your spiritual gift, you’re going to come along and look at that situation differently and you’re going to offer compassion in that situation. If you’re a leader, you’re going to offer leadership in that particular way. We all have spiritual gifts. So when I see someone leading within the life of the church, I want to be the armor-bearer and I want to say, *“I am with you heart and soul. Let’s do this.”* I think that’s how the church works.

It’s not just about a pastor who leads and everybody else is armor-bearers. That’s not it. We are all armor-bearers and we are all Jonathans. I would suggest that as we are able to work together we are able to accomplish what God has designed for us here at Calvary Chapel Living Hope and in the ministry that God has provided for each one of us. So I really like the story of these guys. We need both Jonathans and armor-bearers. In fact I would suggest we are both of them.

Let me read verse 8. I’m coming back to this, but I want to keep going here for a minute, then we’ll backtrack. Verse 8 says – *Jonathan said, “Come on, then; we will cross over toward them and let them see us. If they say to us, ‘Wait there until we come to you,’ we will stay where we are and not go up to them. 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.”*

Okay. There's 600 men. Two of them have weapons, Saul and Jonathan. Jonathan brings his weapons with his armor-bearer. He doesn't just carry the armor as the armor-bearer, but he's also actively involved in the battle in the course of things that are going on. But I like Jonathan's approach.

Now let's go back and look at what he says. In verse 8 he's saying this will be our test before the Lord. Is this the right thing to do? If they say, "Don't worry about those guys," then we won't go up. But if they say, "Okay, come up," then we'll say that's our sign that God is saying let's take on these guys, let's go do it. That's what we're looking for.

So if you go back to verse 6, notice what he says. *Perhaps the Lord* will give them into our hands. In other words, we don't know for sure, but it seems like God is leading us, so let's go out there and test it and see. That's the bold initiative that he's taking. I would suggest we need to be sensitive to the Lord and we need to say perhaps the Lord will do something here. So I want to step out and do something.

Notice the other statement in verse 6 is that *nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few*. We sang the song *God is Able*. What he's saying is God is able to heal, He is able to take control, He is able to conquer this battle. I don't know if He will in this situation, but I think He's leading in that direction. So I'm going to put this out there, Lord, and I'm going to take initiative. I'm asking you if this is the right thing bless it, and we'll go forward. I really like that model that is being used by Jonathan in this passage.

He also says in verse 6, "*Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised men.*" He's drawing a distinction between them, those guys who are uncircumcised, and us, we are God's people. The Jewish people were circumcised. That's the covenant faithfulness of God demonstrated physically. So they were the covenant people of God.

What I'm gaining from this is we've got three things going on. One – he knew his identity. He knows this is who I am. I'm a believer. I'm one of God's people and that gives me the confidence to take initiative. Two – God is able to do anything. Three – I sense God is leading us in this direction, so I'm going to step out in faith boldly and see what God does in the midst of that situation. Perhaps He will allow us to conquer this enemy. Let's do this. If they call us up, we'll go. If they just dismiss us, then we'll consider this not something from the Lord. I just really like that because God is able to do all kinds of things. Our job is to step out.

I was meeting with a couple from Ecuador. They happened to be in Connecticut, so they drove down to meet me this week so we could talk about extending the ministry of the National Center for Biblical Parenting into Ecuador in some strategic ways. This woman is speaking broken Spanish. Her husband is fluent in English and Spanish. And so we're having this dialogue together. She's getting translation words from her husband as she's trying to speak to me, and she's saying, "I think it's so important – we must get the kids when they're babies in order to train them. Because when they get older it's too late."

I don't believe that, so I said to her, "Are you a Christian?" Well obviously she's a Christian. I'm saying that facetiously.

She says, "Of course."

I said, "Well I believe in a God who changes people at any change. He changes children when they're young, He changes teenagers, He changes adults, He changes adult children, He changes all people like us."

God is in the business of changing people. You see, God is able to do so many different things. The question is, are we willing to step out and offer Him our skills, talents, opportunities that He throws us.

When you take the invitation cards that you give out to people in the community, you do not know who is ready to receive them. So you do it boldly in faith. You give it to the cashier, you give it to the waitress, or you give it to someone you meet, and you say, "Hey, I'd like to invite you to my church." Some people are going to say, "I'm not interested." More than that people are going to say, "Oh really? What church do you go to?" offering you more opportunity for you to talk about your church and maybe even about Jesus Christ.

It's like what Jonathan does. If they say come on up, we're going to go further with it. If they dismiss us, we're just going to let it go. That's what we do in our lives. What is God calling you to do in this area of trusting Him boldly? What does He want you to take steps in? Because here's what happens. There are times when we speak, we take bold steps. God blesses that. Then when that happens ground is taken from the enemy and the kingdom of God advances because of our willingness to move forward and be faithful. I just love this passage.

Verse 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."* I think there's a lot of Christians who are hiding in holes. Because they're pointed out, oh there's one of those guys. There's one of those Christians. So we're hiding in holes. These guys are willing to get out of the hole. That's really important because there are people hurting today. Their hearts are hurting. They need help. They just need someone to come along and say I have some answers that I can share with you.

Let's continue to read how the battle develops here. *The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, "Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson."* Ah, this is what they're waiting for. This is the signal that it's time for them to go up. *So Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Climb up after me; the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel."* That's our cue. This is the Lord's battle. Let's do it.

Verse 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. In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre.*

You want to know how big half an acre is? It's approximately 100 feet by 200 feet. So I'm figuring this is about 100 feet this way, and probably a bit further back is 200 feet. It's basically

the size of this room. These guys went up in half an acre, took over, and killed these twenty men. That's not a lot when you're facing a huge army. But it's a skirmish, a little battle. And in that little battle, they won the battle with God's help. God enabled them to take over and win this battle in this small area.

But verse 15 is the key. This is what I pray for. This is what God does when we step out like Jonathans and armor-bearers and take initiative. Verse 15 – *Then panic struck the whole army.* You know what the whole army is, right? We're not talking about the twenty guys on half acre. We're talking about the people on three outposts. We're talking about the whole army of the Philistines. Notice he describes them. *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.*

Do you see that that's the last part of verse 15? Read that word there. *It was a panic sent by God.* Do you know what God's doing here? He's multiplying their efforts. It's like the loaves and fishes. "Bring me the five loaves, two fishes," Jesus says, "I'm going to pray and God's going to feed five thousand people." Jonathan says, "We're going to go up and just do our part and maybe God will bless us." Not only does He help them win the battle on the half acre, but it affects all the rest of the army and amazing things happen in this whole situation. It's an amazing picture of what's going on.

So I'm out of time. We've got three men and a battle and I want to draw some conclusions here. So we're going to do Part 2 next week and look at the other guys. We're talking Jonathan and the armor-bearer here. Next week we're going to look at Saul's four mistakes.

But let's just draw some application to us here because I don't know how God might be speaking to you about taking initiative and being bold. But I personally think about this when it comes to Calvary Chapel Living Hope as I try to pastor here and lead. Sometimes I feel like the Lord wants me to wait. *Wait on the Lord.* I like the idea of waiting on the Lord and trusting Him to do things and make it happen. And then there's times when I take initiative in certain areas and lead in some way. But I want to do that. Not just taking action and randomly doing things to be busy, but I want to ask the Lord. He is able to grow this church. The Lord is able to make this church a sustainable church that has a building, a staff, a ministry. Will He do that? I don't know. God is able to do that. Perhaps He will do it in this particular way, so I'm going to initiate in this way and let's see what God does in the midst of that.

So I wrestle with do we wait for God to solve the problem or do we take initiative and ask God will you bless us, and I think we have to do both. I think sometimes we need to just wait before the Lord and let God do it. And sometimes we say, "Lord, it looks like as we're waiting you're telling me to start initiating boldly in this area." So we start initiating boldly and say, "God, perhaps if this is the right thing, good things will come of this."

I would suggest that is how we each want to approach our lives. Whether it's our ministry here at Calvary Chapel Living Hope or your specific situation. You're trying to lead someone to the Lord, or praying to someone who isn't saved, or whatever it is that you're asking the Lord to guide you. Do I wait or do I speak? Do I confront? Do I just love them and be kind to them? Do I

say something? What do I do in this relationship? I would suggest that we need to be bold before the Lord and ask Him, "What's the best thing?" Even Jonathan before He goes up says, "I'm not quite sure this is the right thing. Let's test this out and see if it's right. So sometimes we start moving in a direction and it just opens up and we have a conversation we never would have had before because we took initiative and God blessed it. Other times we start having that conversation and we just shut down right away. Okay, we'll back off here. That's what Jonathan does and God turns that into something amazing and blesses the efforts.

I believe that what's going to happen at Calvary Chapel Living Hope is something like this. Somebody is going to come to church here and they're going to say, "Oh, I've got some friends." They're going to bring their friends, and their friends are going to have twenty more friends, and God is going to do something amazing. God is going to bring people to Cavalry Chapel Living Hope and increase our numbers.

In the meantime, here's my job. My job is to teach the word. My job is to love people. And my job is to lead as a pastor. I just know that. So I'm going to get up here on Sunday morning and I'm going to prepare a sermon in the course of the week for whoever comes because that's what God is doing in my heart in order to be a pastor here at Calvary Chapel Living Hope. I don't know what God is calling you to do in your initiative, but I encourage you to take a step like Jonathan does. Steps away from the army and he says, "I'm going to go forward. What does God want me to do in this particular situation?" As God speaks to you, He will guide you and lead you and then confirm that direction that He wants you to take in your life.

Would you stand with me? Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Lord, we know that the scriptures say it is your desire that all men come to salvation. And so, Lord, as we share your gospel with people we ask that you would give us wisdom to know when to speak and when to be quiet. Give us boldness to know how to handle specific situations in relationships, finances, health, and so on so that we can fight the battle in a way that is pleasing to you and honoring to you. Lord, give us direction. Give us courage. Give us a vision for what you can do. We trust in your power and your grace. We know that you are powerful and that power touches us in very, very intimate ways. Sometimes it's a power that we use to move outside and touch other people, but sometimes that power is just touching us inside. It's just a miracle what you do and we're grateful that you do it. We ask you to speak to each one of our hearts today and demonstrate that power to us. In Jesus' name, amen.