

Westwood Baptist Church *Grounded. Growing. Going.*



Worship Guide for May 28, 2023

Sermon Notes

Success and Failure Side-By-Side

1 Samuel 14

The Scottish reformer John Knox is credited with saying, “One man with God is always in the majority.” In other words, walking with God in faith results in success (as God defines it) regardless of the circumstances. On the other hand, walking contrary to God, following our own wisdom and self-guided pursuits will inevitably bring failure. In today’s passage, we see both realities unfolding simultaneously. The faith, the character, and the leadership qualities of Saul and Jonathan are brought into sharp contrast. John Woodhouse says, “It is not that [Saul] is utterly evil, but that he is persistently foolish/While his intentions are often good, his motivation is frequently shallow and self-centered.”

In last week’s message, Pastor Jason reminded us that faith is not just believing *in* God; it is *believing* God, trusting him, and walking in obedience to him in spite of circumstances. That lesson is repeated in 1 Samuel 14 as we see success and failure side-by-side.

History and the Heart (1 Samuel 14:47-52)

1 Samuel 14 ends with a historical summary of Saul’s reign as king. This is the human perspective of his time on the throne. There is also a spiritual summary of Saul’s life which is the perspective of God as he looks into the heart of Saul. As we have seen in 1 Samuel, and what will lead to his ultimate downfall, is Saul’s heart. His disobedience and disregard for God’s word reveals a rebellious heart (1 Sam 15:23). Because Saul rejects God, God will reject Saul.

Faith and Wisdom (1 Samuel 14:1-23)

Throughout this section of 1 Samuel, the stage is set for comparison and conflict involving Jonathan and Saul. The differences are significant. Jonathan shows great faith, which fuels his willingness to take courageous initiative. He is wise and discerning. Those who follow Jonathan see in him characteristics which earn him their trust and loyalty. Jonathan is successful, and in the end, esteemed by the people more than his father, Saul.

Infidelity and Foolishness (1 Samuel 14:24-26)

Saul’s calling and responsibility was to lead the people in God’s ways and save them from their enemies, especially the Philistines (1 Sam 9:10). Militarily Saul has some success. But his pattern of disobedience, infidelity, and foolishness stand in stark contrast to his son, Jonathan. The Scriptures give us a window into Saul’s heart, and show him to be unfaithful, unwise, self-serving, and when confronted with these realities, he is unrepentant.

Applications:

Life Group Preparation Guide

"Let the *Word* of Christ *dwell* in you(all) *richly*
teaching and *admonishing* one another in all *wisdom*..."

- *Colossians 3:16a*

Focus #1: GOD

1. What does this passage reveal about the character or nature of God?
2. What does this passage reveal about God's eternal plans and purposes?
3. What does this passage reveal about how God interacts with his creation?

Focus #2: ME

4. How does this passage reveal sin in my own mind, heart, or life?
5. In what ways does this passage help us to see how we need to be aligned with God's will?
6. What is one tangible and measurable way that the Spirit is leading me to respond to his Word?

Focus #3: OTHERS

7. What is one truth that I can share meaningfully with someone, and with whom?
8. How can I specifically encourage someone or everyone in my Life Group from this passage?

Three contributions (reflections, questions, observations, etc.) I plan to include in our next Life Group discussion:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Westwood Staff

Gerald Hodges: Lead Pastor
Jonathan Taylor: Associate Pastor
Jason Engle: Pastor of Students
& Discipleship
Deborah Rudd: Children's Ministry
Coordinator
Yvonne Hager: Executive Assistant

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MAY

29 Memorial Day - Church Office Closed
31 ICE CREAM FELLOWSHIP @ 6:30 P.M.

JUNE

2-9 Utah Mission Trip
4-7 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
6-July 6 Peru Mission Trip
9 MEMBERSHIP CLASS @ 6:00 P.M.
10 Westwood Women @ 5:00 p.m.
13-14 SBC Annual Meeting - NOLA
14 MEMBER'S MEETING @ 6:30 P.M.
17-27 Hungary Mission Trip
18 FAMILY DEDICATION/COMMISSIONING