

A Call to Young People

Young People

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Bible Text: 1 Samuel 14:1-23

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Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, ‘Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.’”¹

Please come with me to our reading 1 Samuel chapter 14.

Now in Israel things are bad. How bad? Well, the land is occupied by the Philistines who dominate at will and Saul, King of Israel, is weak and ineffective. He is conducting a guerilla war in the face of the overwhelming might of the Philistines. Most of the men of Israel are in hiding. And even if they chose to stand and fight we are told—chapter 13 verse 22—they haven’t got any weapons.

So things really are bad. In fact, they are worse because as if this wasn’t enough, in the hour of crisis we read in chapter 13 Saul refuses to obey the Lord.

So when we come to chapter 14 things really are bad: a rejected king ruling over a crumbling kingdom.

Well, against the gloomiest of backdrops we now witness the brightness of the Lord’s deliverance. “For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.”²

So we have three points this morning. Point number one is to remind ourselves what happens. What does happen?

Verse one. “Now it happened one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who bore his armor, ‘Come, let us go over to the Philistines’ garrison that is on the other side.” But he did not tell his father”³

Why didn’t he tell his father? Because he knew what his father Saul would say which is, “No. Don’t go.”

¹ 1 Samuel 14:6

² Ibid.

³ 1 Samuel 14:1

But anyway, where is his father? In verse two. “And Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree.”⁴ So as Jonathan says, “Come let’s go,” Saul is sitting down.

But now it is making a point, isn’t it. While faith goes, unbelief sits. “After all,” says unbelief, “what can you do,” verse two, with only six hundred men?”

And who is with Saul? Verse three. “Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod’s brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD’S priest in Shiloh.”⁵

If we turn back a few pages in 1 Samuel we discover that Eli’s family had been rejected by the Lord from the priesthood. So do you see sitting under this pomegranate tree here is the leadership of Israel: a rejected king, a rejected priest and 600 men doing nothing.

But Jonathan is secretly on the move. In verse four and five he draws near to the Philistine garrison.

Now do you see the picture? In the deep valley with steep sides, on top of the cliffs on the north side is the Philistine garrison and approaching from the south side is Jonathan and his armor bearer. And between Jonathan and his armor bearer coming from the south and the Philistines in the north, between them is this deep ravine. And the names of the rock faces tell us everything.

Verse four. “And the name of one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.”⁶

So as Jonathan approaches from the south facing him is the rock face Bozez meaning slippery. And on his side the rock face is called Seneh meaning thorny. So do you see, if Jonathan is to attack the Philistines, if he is to negotiate that ravine it is going to be the thorny way down and the slippery way up? Would you try it in your state?

In other words, this ravine is impossible. No one is going to attack from that side. That is why the Philistines are very relaxed. They feel their position, at least from that area, is impregnable. And it certainly looks that way.

But that is not the way that faith looks at it, is it?

Verse six. “Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, “Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.”⁷

⁴ 1 Samuel 14:2

⁵ 1 Samuel 14:3

⁶ 1 Samuel 14:4

⁷ 1 Samuel 14:6

Now why is Jonathan so keen to attack? Well, whose land is this? It is the land that God has given to his people. But who is sitting in it? It is the uncircumcised Philistines. They are uncircumcised. These are people who do not have a covenant with God. They have no right to be there. This land belongs to the covenant people of God. “This is our land,” Jonathan is saying, “God says so.”

Yes, but, Jonathan, there are just two of you.

But what did Joshua say all those years ago in the conquest of the Promised Land? “One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you.”⁸

So, Jonathan says, “Did you hear that? ‘One man of you shall chase a thousand...’⁹ Those are the Lord’s odds if he fights with you and for you. And there are two of us. So come on. Let’s go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the Lord will work for us for nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few.”¹⁰

Do you see? Here is a young man impressed with the reality of God who takes God at his word.

Verse seven. “So his armorbearer said to him, ‘Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart.’”¹¹

And so in verse eight the two of them step forward in faith. Whatever their senses tell them was the overwhelming power of the Philistines, the overwhelming odds, the impossibility of the terrain, they have a sixth sense that makes them aware of the unseen. It is called faith. God is more real to them than all else. And so they set forward in faith.

Now then aren’t they being a bit presumptuous? No. It may be an audacious move, but it is not a presumptuous one. Why? Because Jonathan leaves a door open for God to say, “No.”

He says in verse six, “It may be that the LORD will work for us.”¹² The implication: it may be the Lord won’t work for us. But Jonathan has no doubt about the power of the Lord, but he confesses that the Lord is free to say, “No.”

So how would Jonathan know if the Lord is saying, “Yes,” or, “No.” Well, he sets down the conditions, doesn’t he, in verse eight.

Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to these men, and we will show ourselves to them. If they say thus to us, ‘Wait until we come to

⁸ Joshua 23:10

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ See 1 Samuel 14:6

¹¹ 1 Samuel 14:7

¹² 1 Samuel 14:6

you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. But if they say thus, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up. For the LORD has delivered them into our hand, and this will be a sign to us."¹³

Well, verse 11, Jonathan and his armor bearer come into view. And, surprise, surprise the Philistines have a go, don't they?

Verse 11. "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden."¹⁴ "Look at what has come crawling out."

But look what they say next, verse 12. "Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, 'Come up to us, and we will show you something.'"¹⁵ "Yes come here [?] and we will teach you a lesson."

Yes. If they say, "Come up to us..." That is exactly what they have said. It is the green light. It is the Lord's yes. And Jonathan knows it. "Jonathan said to his armorbearer, 'Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel.'"¹⁶

The Philistines' invitation to come up is the Lord's invitation to attack the Philistine. And so, verse 13, they shin up the slippery rock face and having scaled the heights then they launch themselves at the Philistines. It is a two man blitzkrieg. Jonathan, as it were, he is the iron fist and he fells them. And as the armor bearer comes up behind him, he finishes them off. The ground in front of Jonathan becomes a killing zone.

Verse 14. "That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land."¹⁷

Now the Philistines apparently hold all the aces. What would you expect to come from this two man suicide raid? Well, you see, it is just going to say, "Just send a half a dozen of the big fellows over. That will sort it out."

But they went out of nothing. Jonathan assaults them with such ferocity and there are already 20 Philistine dead lying, perhaps the best of their troops. A degree of panic sets in. But the panic now multiplies because it is at this moment, verse 15, that God himself intervenes. How? With an earthquake.

"And there was trembling in the camp," verse 15, "in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders also trembled; and the earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling."¹⁸ Now those last words can equally be translated, "And the earth quaked resulting in a trembling sent by God."

¹³ 1 Samuel 14:8-10

¹⁴ 1 Samuel 14:11

¹⁵ 1 Samuel 14:12

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ 1 Samuel 14:14

¹⁸ 1 Samuel 14:15

So do you see Jonathan makes a first blow, but as the shockwaves ripple out amongst the Philistines, so then magnified by an earthquake, a terror sent by God and the result, panic, confusion.

And now, verse 16, word gets back to Saul. “Something is obviously going on. Something is obviously happening in the camp of the Philistines. It looks like it is being attacked. I can’t quite see from this distance, but something is going on. Attacked, but by who? Who attacked the Philistine garrison? Well who is not here? Let’s call the roll.”

Verse 17. “And when they had called the roll, surprisingly, Jonathan and his armorbearer were not there.”¹⁹

“Would you believe it? It is my own son and his armor bearer.”

The secret is out.

Now what will Saul do? Will he rush to Jonathan’s aid?

Verse 18. “And Saul said to Ahijah, ‘Bring the ark of God here’”²⁰ In other words, “Let’s not be too hasty about this. Let’s inquire of the Lord.”

Now, isn’t that bizarre? Here is the man who has been sitting doing nothing. This is the man who doesn’t want to know what God’s will is, otherwise he would be doing it. And now in the hour of crisis when God is saving Israel, the best Saul can say is, “Well, let’s have a prayer meeting. Let’s not be too hasty about this.” It is just a superficial cloak to hide his unbelief.

But this idea, at least Saul is consistent in his inconsistency because having said, “Let’s find out what the Lord thinks of this,” he now changes his mind.

He says, “Oh, we haven’t got time for all this.”

Verse 19, he says, “Withdraw your hand,”²¹ to the priest. “Go on...”

Verse 20. “Then Saul and all the people who were with him assembled, and they went to the battle.”²²

And though the men of Israel are few, the Lord has sown such panic and confusion among the Philistines that we read “Every man’s sword was against his neighbor.”²³ The Philistines are turning on each other. They are fighting with each other.

¹⁹ 1 Samuel 14:17

²⁰ 1 Samuel 14:18

²¹ 1 Samuel 14:19

²² 1 Samuel 14:20

²³ Ibid.

Well, every one loves a winner and so before long others are joining in the victory bandwagon. We read verse 21, Hebrews who switched sides to collaborate with the Philistines, they have seen which way the wind is blowing and now they now switch back and join in with Jonathan and Saul. And, verse 21, from out of the woodwork crawl all the men of Israel who had hidden away and the Philistines are drive back.

Verse 23, “So the LORD saved Israel that day.”²⁴

And the spark which ignites all of this? Jonathan, a young man impressed with the reality of God who takes God at his Word.

Point number one, what happens.

Point number two, why did it happen? One word, faith.

Why does Saul sit and Jonathan go? And it is stressed, isn't it, in verses one and verse six. Jonathan goes. Calmly he says, “Let us go.”²⁵ He says it twice.

Why does Saul sit and Jonathan go? Just one reason. Faith.

Saul lives by sight. What do his eyes tell him? That the problems are insurmountable. There is nothing to be done, so go sit down.

Jonathan, too, has eyes. But he doesn't live by them. He lives by faith. The God he cannot see is more real to him than then difficulties he can see which is why he says, “Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.”²⁶ In the front of his mind is not the Philistine garrison, but the Lord. And everything is revolving around that. That is the act upon which his world turns, the Lord, not his circumstances.

Now do we know faith like that? How would you describe Jonathan's faith? Audacious? Daring? Some people are born optimists. They always look on the bright side. Is that what Jonathan is doing? He is just optimistic about the situation. What does he say? “For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.”²⁷

“There might only be two of us, but with God nothing is impossible. If God is going to save, nothing can stop him. He can do it by many. He can do it by few, even just two. Let's go.”

²⁴ 1 Samuel 14:23

²⁵ 1 Samuel 14:1, 6

²⁶ 1 Samuel 14:6

²⁷ Ibid.

How else would you describe his faith? [?] Who would dream of attacking the Philistines? Who would have dreamed of attacking the Philistines in that particular way?

“It may be that the LORD will work for us.”²⁸ He is using his imagination, isn’t he?

Christian friends, a sanctified imagination will venture far on that word “maybe.” So let’s go.

Any other words come to mind? Well, his faith is submissive, isn’t it? Jonathan doesn’t say, “Well, God must save.” His faith is not assertive, dogmatic. He doesn’t sort of name and claim. No. “It may be that the LORD will work for us.”²⁹ “I don’t doubt the Lord’s power,” says Jonathan. “But it may please our sovereign king to say ‘No.’ But who knows until we get hard bottoms so let’s go.”

And his faith is self forgetting.

“Jon, it is far too dangerous. You can’t go up that slippery cliff face. Besides, you need a hard hat on, don’t you? You need to a, you know, a risk assessment. Maybe put some scaffolding there first to help you on your way up. And, anyway, Jonathan, what if you fail? Why do you have to be so confrontational with these Philistines? They might kill you.”

But, you see, his faith gives him a holy recklessness.

“Those who worry about those things, those who worry about the cost, you go and sit down. As for me, let’s go.”

And his faith is not bothered by this world’s mocking laughter.

Verse 11. “Look, the Hebrews...”³⁰ Hebrews... the word “Hebrews” is a term of abuse, the ones who were slaves in Egypt. “Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden.”³¹ “Here come the losers.”

In fact, their disdain is Jonathan’s cue for action, isn’t it? “Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, ‘Come up to us, and we will show you something.’”³² “We are going to show you a lesson you will never forget.”

They are having a go. They are laughing, they are mocking, aren’t they? But it is his cue for action.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ 1 Samuel 14:11

³¹ Ibid.

³² 1 Samuel 14:12

“Jonathan said to his armorbearer, ‘Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel.’”³³ “Come on, let’s go.”

I have one more thing to say about Jonathan’s faith which is: It is a faith which is jealous for the honor and glory of God, isn’t it? Jonathan is not after personal glory. He is saying, “Look, these are the uncircumcised Philistines. Who are we? We are the covenant people of God. Which we serve the true God. They serve Dagon. Is Dagon greater than our God? Will the Philistines dominate at will while the Lord’s cause lies in the dust? Will men mock the true God, the God of Israel while we go run and hide?”

He sees through the flesh and blood to the underlying spiritual realities. “Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel.”³⁴ And walking by faith the results are spectacular, miraculous, wonderful.

And the writer to the Hebrews, he speaks of Jonathan, doesn’t he? He says:

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.³⁵

When the unbelieving sit and do nothing as it says in Daniel, “The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. The people who know their God, the people who know their God shall be strong and carry out great exploits.”³⁶

Christian friends, faith.

“Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.”³⁷

Now, Christian friends, [?] this country, the temptation is to find a pomegranate tree and sit down. Things are dark, aren’t they? Things are very dark and the shadow is growing.

Now we must be careful with our parallels. Twenty-first century Britain is not Israel. We are not a theocracy. But you should understand when I say the Philistines dominate at will. And the kingdom of God in this country is, to all appearances, in retreat. And many of the people of God have neither the weapons nor the will to fight for its advance.

So what should we do? Find a pomegranate tree? Sit down with Saul?

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Hebrews 11:32-34

³⁶ Daniel 11:32

³⁷ 1 Samuel 14:6

Christian friends, do you ever think there has been an easy time to serve the Lord? People sort of talk about a sort of a mythical age, don't they? It is always not my time. It is always a previous time when somehow it was easier to serve the Lord. It has never been easy to serve the Lord. There has never been an age where we can, as it were, puff out our chests and stride down streets and say, "Hey, it is easy to be a Christian today."

And if these are difficult days and particularly difficult days, well, so what? These are the days I have been given. Is my faith to be so unheroic that at the slightest sign of difficulty I am no longer out and out for Jesus, waiting for an easier time before I can serve him?

Are the strongholds of Satan, are they many? We few? 1 Samuel chapter 14 tells me that those are the odds the Lord likes. He is looking for those who will venture all on his Word who refuse to go and sit down with Saul, but who go with Jonathan.

"Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised."³⁸

Oh, Christian friends, the faith like Jonathan... Jonathan dared. Do we? Do we dare to do the unthinkable?

"For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few."³⁹

Jonathan was imaginative. He kept captures everyone off guard. I love what his armor bearer says, verse seven. It says, "So his armorbearer said to him, 'Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart.'"⁴⁰

He said, "Aw." He says, "I like what you tell me. Go take on the Philistines? I am with you. That is a great idea. Come on, let's go."

Oh, Christian friends, for a sanctified imagination that ventures all, that is prepared to risk it for the glory of God.

"It may be that the LORD will work for us."⁴¹

How far are you willing to venture on that word "maybe"?

And Jonathan was submissive, wasn't he? And we must be.

Yes, the Lord may say, "No." But they don't sit there waiting, don't they, because he will probably say, "No." They go and it is only when they go that they discover, actually, the Lord has opened the door for them. They don't find out before and until they go.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ 1 Samuel 14:7

⁴¹ 1 Samuel 14:6

Only then when they have actually got there, shown themselves, does Jonathan say, “[Ah,] Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel.”⁴²

So, Christian friends, we will be submissive. We must be submissive. But let not the fear of failure, let not the fear of “no,” let not the fear of, “well, maybe it is unlikely that God will be with us in such a situation to do such a thing,” let not that stop us from going forward in faith.

And, Christian friends, like Jonathan, there will be danger. If you go in faith, you will get hurt. But, oh for a holy recklessness, that doesn’t mind the thorny way down and the slippery way up and hand to hand combat that sees the opportunities of the day, not just the difficulties and the dangers.

My Christian friends, are we going to mind their mockery? Are we? When they say, “Oh, come to up to us and we’ll show... we’ll teach you a lesson. We’ll show you some thing.”

Think of Richard Dawkins’ scorn. What has he written in *The God Delusion*? “The whole point of religious faith,” he says, “Its strength and chief glory is that it does not depend upon rational justification.” Richard Dawkins is having his little chuckle. But we don’t mind their laughter, do we? We don’t mind their derision, their scorn. We will simply take it as our cue for action. Now is the time when we stand up and go forth for the Lord.

And Jonathan was jealous for the honor of the Lord. Does the honor of the Lord keep you awake at night? Does it keep you awake? We must do something. We must stir ourselves. God’s glory is at stake. I can’t rest.

As Paul goes to Athens, doesn’t he, he sees the place that is given over to a forest of idols and he is oppressed by it. His spirit is restless. “I can’t leave it like this. I must go to where the people are and I must debate with them and I must tell them about the true and the living God. I can’t leave it like this.

Does it keep you awake at night? God’s honor, God’s glory? Does that constrain you to risk everything for the kingdom of God?

So, Christian friends, let’s not sit with disobedient Saul. Come, let us go with Jonathan.

Our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but as we wield the sword of the Spirit it may please God to take those first few blows and so magnify them that strongholds of Satan are thrown into panic and confusion and sinners are saved and the kingdom of darkness is thrown into retreat and the churches of Jesus Christ are revived to the glory of God.

“So the LORD saved Israel that day.”⁴³

⁴² 1 Samuel 14:12

⁴³ 1 Samuel 14:23

There is a point number three. What happens? Why does it happen? Who makes it happen?

Verse six. “Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor...”⁴⁴ One young man speaks to another young man and, under God, two young men make it happen.

So, under 35s, younger people, have you been wondering what I was going to say? Well, I am saying it now.

Did you know about 40 of our church members are 30 or under? And I have baptized only 30 of you. I thrills my soul to see you. Sometimes pastors tell me that they have met some of you at conferences. They have spoken to you.

I am so happy to say, “Yes, that’s our young people. They are from Amyand Park Chapel. They are ours.” Do you love to feel proud? I am proud sometimes and thrilled about it. There are times when I have fretted over some of you. There are some of you I still fret over, that you would go on in the Christian life.

Well, like Paul, I can say, “I thank God for every remembrance of you.”⁴⁵ And I do.

That sounds like the thing you say just before you put the boot in, doesn’t it? But it is not. Because I want to exhort you this morning to be like Jonathan. Do you see? Jonathan was a young man. And like a young person what did he have? He had energy, strength, daring, earnestness, zeal. And under God he had a holy recklessness. There was nothing that he wasn’t prepared to do whatever the risk for the kingdom of God.

An older man wouldn’t have done it. An older man couldn’t have done it. He never would have even got up that rock face, would he? This great act of faith, this wonderful holy recklessness was accomplished by a young person.

Now, young people, it is great to be young. You feel at times you can take on the world. And that is a gift from God to youth. But see how Jonathan uses it.

Now never again will you know such energy and yet time and daring and a willingness to rise to a challenge. It is a gift that God gives to youth. He takes it away as you get older. You will have it. You don’t know you have got it until you start to lose it. But energy, time, daring, a willingness to arise to a challenge, they are gifts from God to youth. And what challenges the kingdom of God sets before you.

So what are you doing with your youth? You haven’t got it forever. Now, you can sit down with Saul or you can go with Jonathan. So why are you sitting down? Why are you sitting comfortably?

⁴⁴ 1 Samuel 14:6

⁴⁵ See Philippians 1:3

The young people of this world are infected with a disease, with a malaise. It is called, "What's in it for me?" The young people of this world say, "Youth is my time. This is for me to indulge myself. These are my years to be spent on me, to enjoy myself. It is a responsibility free zone. I am free. I am young."

That is what the people of the world say. Don't go and sit down with them. Don't say, "Well, I will serve God when I am older."

Jesus Christ was a young man. After Jesus there was no older, was there. And for the Christian young person there can be no older, only now, only today.

When I graduated I almost stumbled into a Ph.D., not because I was interested, but because I wanted to stay a student. I didn't want to grow up. I liked that world where nothing was expected of me. I didn't have to be anywhere at any particular time. I suppose the lectures and so on, but it was a great world to be in, nothing is expected, no responsibility. I am free. No one checking up on me. I liked that world.

So I have come to the end of it. Three more years doing a Ph.D. [?] said to me, "What, another three years?"

There is nothing wrong with Ph.D's, incidentally. But for me it would have been three years of killing time, three years of avoiding my responsibility, three years somehow later to go make up.

So don't sit down musing over what you might one day do for Jesus. That's not what Jonathan does, is it?

"Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us."⁴⁶

He is talking about today. He is talking about now, what I am doing for the Lord today.

You will never have these years again. The decisions you make for Christ now will change the rest of your life. If you are not out and out for Jesus now why do you expect to be serving him in 10 years time? So live for Jesus now. Give all to Jesus now. Give your reckless years to being reckless for Jesus Christ. Let the kingdom of God shape everything from the friends that you choose, the ambitions that you nurse, to the way you spend your Saturday night.

Don't kill time. Don't say, "This is my time." This is a gift pressed into your hands by the Lord. Youth. He says, "Use it for me. Come, let us go."

Now in churches everywhere and there are loads of conferences and books being written and there was a little mini conference this week and there was a big discussion about it. People are asking: Where are the leaders? Where are the disciple makers of tomorrow?

⁴⁶ 1 Samuel 14:6

Every one is asking it because there are churches with no young people. Where are the leaders going to come from? Where are these examples and disciple makers?

Well, young people, if it is not you, it is no one.

When I came to Amyand Park Chapel I was 31 years old. Mandy was 26. And 15 years have gone like that. Your turn to lead, to be examples, to be disciple makers will come much sooner than you think. So are you ready now? Are you serving the Lord in this local church today? Who knows what God might do through you if your life is surrendered to him?

Maybe some of you are thinking, "I am not a Jonathan."

Well, how do you know?

Actually there was this little conference I was at earlier this week. It was in South Wales. There were about 30 of us there. And one of the youngest was a pastor of a church in the valley. He was just 27... He was 27 years old. He was 27 years old. He said he left school with no qualifications at all, hadn't got a single GCED, he had got nothing, no qualifications, no prospects until what? Until God put him in his school. And there he is now pasturing a flock, preaching the gospel, seeing people saved.

You may feel, "I have got nothing." Wait until God puts you in his school. If you have got a heart for God, if you have got a heart and a love for people, who knows what God will do with you and where you will end up? Anyway, even if you are not a Jonathan, didn't Jonathan need an armor bearer? He is more than just a caddy, isn't he, wandering behind him with sort of a few swords and shields.

Look at what he says, verse seven. He says, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart."⁴⁷ "Ah," he says, "I am with you. Your heart and my heart, they beat together. They beat as one. I can't do what you can do, Jonathan, but I will be right behind you every step of the way."

So who knows? You may well be a Jonathan, grace and faith and daring in obedience. But if you are not a Jonathan, God can make you an armor bearer. And you can take your place alongside those who are taking the attacks of the enemy.

Now, young people, especially I want to say to the young men, the young men... Young men, did you know that people talk about you? I am on the phone, emails, conversations, people come and talk to me about the young men and Amyand Park Chapel. Pastors elsewhere who have met you talk to me about the young men, about how many young men we have. Apparently they say, "What you could do with those young men."

So it is time we did something with you, isn't it? Soon we will be announcing a meeting to which all interested young men are invited. I expect to see you all there. And we will

⁴⁷ 1 Samuel 14:7

set before you a program of opportunities, opportunities to learn, to serve, to grow, to lead.

Are you the potter? You are they clay. So be ready to be shaped and molded by God into Jonathans and armor bearers. Who knows what God might do with you? So please don't sit down.

“George Whitefield, how old are you?”

“Twenty-two.”

“Preach the gospel in the open air? Sit down.”

“Martin Luther, do you really think you can stand up to the most powerful institution in the world, the holy Catholic Church and you are not yet 30? Sit down.”

“William Carey, you say to me, ‘Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.’ What, at your age? You need to listen to that rebuke that older brother gave you. Do you remember what he said to you? He said, ‘Young man, sit down, sit down. You are an enthusiast. When God pleases to convert the heathen he will do it without your aid or mine.’”

“Now, Mr. Adoniram Judson. How old are you? You are just 23. Are you going to sail across the other side of the world to a rejoin that no one knows anything about and you are going to go and preach the gospel to those people? Are you? And you must take your wife with you? Think of the danger. Sit down, settle down.”

“Jim Elliot. With your gifts you can do anything. But don't throw it all away on the Auca Indians.”

Young people, please don't sit down.

“Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.”⁴⁸

⁴⁸ 1 Samuel 14:6