

STOP PLAYING IT SAFE

1 SAMUEL 14:1-23

CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE - AUGUST 2, 2026

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Samuel 14:1-23 (ESV)

REACH ONE

REACH ONE - Getting to know people and helping people get to know Jesus.

One of the themes of this passage is taking the next step of faith even when the outcome isn't certain.

Take a few minutes to celebrate ways you've stepped out toward others this past week. Whether you introduced yourself to a neighbor, invited someone to church, intentionally encouraged a coworker, or shared your faith, every act of obedience matters.

ICE BREAKER QUESTION

Tell the group about a time when you decided not to play it safe, and it paid off. What risk did you take, and what happened?

SERMON RECAP

Israel is hopelessly outmatched. The Philistines have the superior army, weapons, and strategic position; Saul and his men are hiding in fear. Instead of leading God's people, Saul sits on the sidelines. Jonathan, however, sees something Saul misses: "Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few." Trusting in God's power rather than the odds, Jonathan courageously takes the next step of faith, and God uses his obedience to deliver the entire nation.

Pastor Mike highlighted three characteristics of biblical faith:

- **Faith sees** a God who is bigger than our circumstances.
- **Faith acts** by trusting God enough to take the next clear step, even without certainty.
 - Jonathan knew God's word for His people.
 - Jonathan had a clear opportunity to apply God's word.
 - Jonathan knew God had unlimited power.
 - Jonathan knew it would bring glory to God.
- **Faith experiences** the joy of watching God do what only God can do.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Observation: What does this passage say?

1. This is a longer passage. Ask one or two people in the group to briefly paraphrase the story in their own words.
2. What contrasts do you notice between Saul and Jonathan?
3. What stands out to you most about Jonathan's statement in verse 6: "Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few"? Why do you think it is the key to understanding this passage?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. Jonathan says, "It may be that the LORD will work for us." What does this teach us about biblical faith?
 - Why is Jonathan willing to act even without certainty?
 - How is biblical faith different from reckless presumption?
 - Pastor Mike said: "Faith trusts God enough to take the next clear step"
2. Jonathan refers to the Philistines as "these uncircumcised."
 - Why is that significant?



- What did circumcision represent?
 - How did God's covenant shape Jonathan's perspective?
3. Why does God often choose to put His children in situations in which they are "in over their head"?
 - What does that reveal about His character and His glory?
 4. Jonathan had God's promises, an opportunity to obey, and confidence in God's power—but he didn't know the outcome. What does this passage teach us about the "normal course" way God guides His people?
 - Why do you think God "normally" leads his people that way as opposed to writing clear messages in the sky for them (even though he can do that)?

Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?

1. How do you practically (in your day to day walk with God) avoid two opposite mistakes: (i) stepping out recklessly without seeking God's guidance, and (ii) never stepping out in faith at all because you're waiting for God to reveal 100% certainty of how every small detail will play out?
 - What practical things do you do to discern that you can encourage others in the group to do?
2. In what areas of your life today, are you demanding too much certainty from God about how it'll play out, before you're willing to obey Him with the next step of faith?
3. Complete this prayer: "God, give me the faith to _____. " Share your answer with the group, and spend time praying for one another to take the next step of faith that God is calling each of you to take.
4. Jesus has already won the ultimate victory over sin, Satan, and death. How should that certainty change the way we respond when God calls us to take the next step of faith? How does this reality empower us to stop playing it safe this week?
5. As you leave church group today, what is one practical commitment you can make that will push you to stop playing it safe in a specific area God is laying on your heart? (E.g., even a small commitment like openly and honestly discussing your faith struggles in that area with a trusted brother or sister in Christ)