

## A Man After God's Own Heart

### 1 Samuel 14:24-48

<sup>24</sup> Now the Israelites were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, "Cursed be anyone who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!" So none of the troops tasted food.

<sup>25</sup> The entire army entered the woods, and there was honey on the ground. <sup>26</sup> When they went into the woods, they saw the honey oozing out; yet no one put his hand to his mouth, because they feared the oath. <sup>27</sup> But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened. <sup>28</sup> Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, 'Cursed be anyone who eats food today!' That is why the men are faint."

<sup>29</sup> Jonathan said, "My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey. <sup>30</sup> How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?"

<sup>31</sup> That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines from Mikmash to Aijalon, they were exhausted. <sup>32</sup> They pounced on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the blood. <sup>33</sup> Then someone said to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the LORD by eating meat that has blood in it."

"You have broken faith," he said. "Roll a large stone over here at once." <sup>34</sup> Then he said, "Go out among the men and tell them, 'Each of you bring me your cattle and sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against the LORD by eating meat with blood still in it.'"

So everyone brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there. <sup>35</sup> Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first time he had done this.

<sup>36</sup> Saul said, "Let us go down and pursue the Philistines by night and plunder them till dawn, and let us not leave one of them alive."

"Do whatever seems best to you," they replied.

But the priest said, "Let us inquire of God here."

<sup>37</sup> So Saul asked God, "Shall I go down and pursue the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel's hand?" But God did not answer him that day.

<sup>38</sup> Saul therefore said, "Come here, all you who are leaders of the army, and let us find out what sin has been committed today. <sup>39</sup> As surely as the LORD who rescues Israel lives, even if the guilt lies with my son Jonathan, he must die." But not one of them said a word.

<sup>40</sup> Saul then said to all the Israelites, "You stand over there; I and Jonathan my son will stand over here."

"Do what seems best to you," they replied.

<sup>41</sup> Then Saul prayed to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Why have you not answered your servant today? If the fault is in me or my son Jonathan, respond with Urim, but if the men of Israel are at fault, respond with Thummim." Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared. <sup>42</sup> Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.

<sup>43</sup> Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done."

So Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the end of my staff. And now I must die!"

<sup>44</sup> Saul said, "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan."

<sup>45</sup> But the men said to Saul, "Should Jonathan die—he who has brought about this great

*deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God's help." So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.*

*<sup>46</sup> Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and they withdrew to their own land.*

*<sup>47</sup> After Saul had assumed rule over Israel, he fought against their enemies on every side: Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment on them. <sup>48</sup> He fought valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, delivering Israel from the hands of those who had plundered them.*

## **Introduction**

### **1 Samuel 13:13-14**

*<sup>13</sup> "You have done a foolish thing," 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. <sup>14</sup> 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."*

In chapter 13, Saul disobeyed God by taking things into His own hands. He offered sacrifices to God, a task that can only be done by the appointed priest. The Lord was not pleased with Saul's rashness and disrespect for His word. Saul would lose his throne to a man after God's own heart.

**What does it mean to be "a person after God's own heart"?**

## **Being God's Chosen King**

Israel asked for a king so that they would be like the other nations. God gives them a king to represent His rule. As we can see, there are two different agendas here:

1. Will Saul be a king like the kings of the other nations or a king that will represent God's rule over Israel?
2. Does Israel want to be ruled by a king like the kings of other nations or do they desire a king that will represent God?

From the narratives we have covered in the book of Samuel, we can see that the expectation of the people leans more towards having a king like the kings of other nations, rather than having a king that will represent God. (They have rejected God again and again.) Now Saul has been given the ministry to lead the people back to God by representing God to the people. Unfortunately, Saul would rather pander to the demands of the people. He makes decisions that is driven by self-interest. This made Saul a mixed bag of blessings. There were times he would rise to the occasion, but there were more occasions he would fail miserably. Eventually his desire to hold to power without God's favour would make him a very bitter and angry person.

The first thing we learn about being a person after God's own heart is, such a person desires to honour God above all things. God looks for a person that will look to Him and seek Him first. He does not expect perfection. In fact, David made many mistakes, yet he sought the Lord and learned to do what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

**Reflection:** Is it difficult to honour God? What happens when we honour God by representing Him well? How does the Holy spirit help us in this task?

## My Word or God's Word?

### 1 Samuel 14:24

*<sup>24</sup> Now the Israelites were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, "Cursed be anyone who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!" So none of the troops tasted food.*

1. Again, Saul is rash with his words. He carelessly binds the people under an oath, prohibiting them to eat anything until evening comes. The reason for this oath is in Saul's own word is "*avenged myself on my enemies*".
2. Reflect on this oath. Is it about God or Saul? Is this oath helpful in any way? What motive drives a person to make such an oath? Do you place such demands on others?

### 1 Samuel 14:28-30

*<sup>28</sup> Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, 'Cursed be anyone who eats food today!' That is why the men are faint."*

*<sup>29</sup> Jonathan said, "My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey. <sup>30</sup> How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?"*

3. It is clear that no one was happy about the oath Saul had made. This is what they had to say.
  - The Soldiers: "*That is why the men are faint.*"
  - Jonathan: "*My father has made trouble for the country.*"

Saul's rash decision was not helping anyone. In fact, it made things more difficult for others. What can we learn from this?

### 1 Samuel 14:31-35

*<sup>1</sup> That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines from Mikmash to Aijalon, they were exhausted. <sup>32</sup> They pounced on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the blood. <sup>33</sup> Then someone said to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the LORD by eating meat that has blood in it."*

*"You have broken faith," he said. "Roll a large stone over here at once." <sup>34</sup> Then he said, "Go out among the men and tell them, 'Each of you bring me your cattle and sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against the LORD by eating meat with blood still in it.'"*

*So everyone brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there. <sup>35</sup> Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first time he had done this.*

4. Saul's rash oath created more problems. The men, famished after the battle, ate meat that was ritually unclean (they ate the meat with the blood).

5. Saul builds an altar unto the Lord. The writer tells that this is the first time Saul does this. Building an altar was something done by the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) when they sought and worshipped God. Saul did not learn to seek the Lord the same way they did. In fact, he mostly sought the Lord for selfish reasons. What can we learn from this? Why is prayer important? What does it tell us about our attitude before God?

**1 Samuel 14:44-46**

<sup>44</sup> *Saul said, "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan."*

<sup>45</sup> *But the men said to Saul, "Should Jonathan die—he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God's help." So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.*

<sup>46</sup> *Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and they withdrew to their own land.*

6. Eventually Saul finds out that Jonathan has broken the oath Saul had placed him under. Saul, again rash and proud, wanted to put his own son to death. The men intervened and reminded Saul that the Lord had used Jonathan to deliver the people from the hands of the Philistines. Saul sat around while Jonathan took the fight to the Philistines. Saul prevented Israel from having a greater victory because of his rash oath and now Saul wants to kill Jonathan. And why all this? Simply because it was much more important to Saul that his oath be kept than for him to admit his mistakes.
7. On many occasions, Saul would disobey God's word. He was not really bothered about his disobedience and yet Saul was particular that no one should disobey his word, to a point that he would kill his own son. Was Saul more concerned about his honour or God's honour?
8. To be a person after God's own heart means taking God's word seriously. We honour God when we listen to Him and obey His word.

Read and reflect on the following passage:

**John 15:10-17**

*If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. <sup>17</sup> This is my command: Love each other.*

## Prayer

### **A Man After God's Own Heart**

- A heart that desires to honour God
- To be careful with our words and action: to represent God well in all our ways
- To read and meditate on God's word
- To grow in the knowledge of the work of the Holy Spirit in enabling us to be witnesses for Jesus Christ

### **Life Church**

- Wisdom and discernment to make decisions
- Delight in the presence and the word of God
- Transformation and breakthrough
- Those who are going through challenges
- Unity in diversity
- Represent Christ to the people around us (homes, schools, marketplace)
- Salvation
- Ministries: Life Explorer, Redeeming Roses, Destiny Kids & Teens, Sunday School, Lifeline, Worship, Life Seed, Cell
- A lighthouse to the community (Sungai Way)

### **Healing**

- Bro Harold (Connie & Mel's dad)
- Si Yun: chemotherapy; Jayden: physiotherapy

### **Covid-19 Pandemic**

- Healing & deliverance
- Protection
- Front-liners & resources
- Economy
- Sabah

### **Malaysia**

- Leaders
- Churches
- Unity