

The One Thing You Can't Win Without Steven Furtick

When we talk about underdog stories in the Bible, I think the one that gets mentioned the most is David and Goliath. Would you agree? There's another one that I love even more, and it's the story of the guy who was supposed to be king, and David actually was not in line to be the king. There was a young man named Jonathan who was Saul's son.

We don't have time to get into a lot of the history, but I want you to know that sometimes God skips right over the person who other people expected to be picked and chooses the person that people weren't even looking at. That's really the story of David who he was out in the field taking care of the sheep and when Samuel came to town with a horn of oil, and they didn't even bother to call David in, but when God has His eye on you and when you're faithful in your assignment, God knows where to find you.

You don't have to prove yourself. You don't have to make noise about it. You don't really even have to — if you want to be honest about it — manipulate the situation to get attention. God will find you where you are.

One of the crazy things about the day that we live in is that the barriers to entry have changed. When I say that word barriers to entry, I'm thinking about like how in the 80's if you wanted to make an album, you had to spend millions of dollars in a studio. You had to get a major label to back you. You had to have a serious budget because the recording equipment was huge. Like the sound board was the size of a cathedral that it took to record music, but now honestly, that has changed because the barriers to entry, well, in many ways they completely shifted dimensions.

Now, you've got 13-year-old kids who have Pro Tool or logic on their computer, and they're recording stuff. I mean, you've got kids shooting stuff on their iPhone that looks better than what some people do with expensive cameras. The barriers to entry have changed. And one of the things that I think God is about in our lives and one of the things I'm passionate about in this "Unqualified" teaching series is helping you break through some of the barriers that you've erected in your mind as to why you can't change and to why you can't complete the work that God has given you to do.

To help you rethink some of the things that you think are standing in your way, some of the limitations that you may have prematurely embraced without knowing that sometimes what seems like a limitation is something that God actually wants to leverage to show His strength through your life. And so often, He'll put you in predicaments that seem impossible, and they are with men, but they're not impossible with God.

So, I wanted to pull one of my favorite passages today, and I'm excited to share from this passage with you because it's been like one of my key passages since I was 16 years old. I don't know why I latched on to this passage about Jonathan, but I latched on to it early, and it was one of the first sermons that I ever preached.

It's funny, but I've been coming back to it over and over again over the last two decades of preaching and sharing God's word, and the story maybe appeals to me a little bit because in the story, I see a guy who should have, according to the situation he was in, given up; who should have, according to the deficiencies, been at a disadvantage, but Jonathan's faith overcomes all odds, and I want to read a little bit of this to you today because I believe that it's possible for you to be staring at a barrier that God has already broken and refusing to go into places that God has already promised, and I want to give you three thoughts today from the life of Jonathan for those of you who are stuck in a losing season of your life, for those of you who feel maybe under-resourced or out-manned or unqualified for what God has given you to do because here's a story about a young man who was the son of the

king.

And the Bible says in 1 Samuel 13:22, "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, and a detachment of Philistines had gone out to the pass at Mikmash. One day, Jonathan, son of Saul said to the young armor-bearer that was with him, 'Come on, let's go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side.' But he didn't tell his father."

I like this guy because this guy has initiative. You know, the Israelites are locked into what seems to be the losing side of a battle with diminishing weaponry and resources, and Jonathan one day... the Bible just says one day. It could have just been another day that they sat at a deadlock. It could have just been another day that they sat in defeat. It could have just been another day that they sat despondent and depressed about what they didn't have, but Jonathan took **initiative**, and Jonathan had a clear **intention**, and Jonathan was willing to

Those are the "three I's" that you may want to write down if you're taking notes is that he took initiative. He didn't pray that God would do something about his situation. He didn't wish that God would have done something about the situation before he showed up. He took initiative. You've got to be an initiator if you want to get a wife. A lot of men don't get married because they have no initiative. A lot of churches don't grow because they don't take initiative. A lot of the changes that we want to see in our lives never happen because we don't take initiative.

Everybody say **initiative**. It's a good word, but it's more than just an idea. To take initiative, you've got to have intention. The Bible says that Jonathan intended to cross over. The power of intention. Not just to wish something, but to have an intention to go beyond the realm of just thinking wouldn't it be nice, but actually have an intention focused on it, to set your eyes on something, to set your heart on something, to align your life with a goal and to make it happen by the power of God and then there's innovation, and maybe that's my favorite thing about this passage because Jonathan takes a situation that is marked by struggle and turns it into a great success.

In fact, after he gets done with his little attack on the Philistine outpost, the entire nation experiences victory. Could it be possible that somebody else's victory is locked up in your initiative, and could it be possible that there's something God wants to release in your life that is only going to be released when you take a step?

Now, you've got to innovate 'cause if you wait for perfect conditions in your life and if you wait until you have it together to offer yourself to be used by God, you'll never take the step. If you wait for everything to make sense before you step out, you'll always stay in the boat. But if you have a spirit of faith like Jonathan and you believe that God has called me to be a conqueror.

I don't know if you believe that or not, but when the Bible calls you more than a conqueror, that doesn't mean just that you're going to when in situations that are easy. That means that you are going to win in situations that even seem like defeat and that's the great truth of this story is that God brought victory out of seeming defeat. Can I talk about this a little bit?

I believe that you can win from the perspective of faith in any situation that you're in in your life. The thing about winning in the sense that I mean it, though, is that you might have to win in some situations where you don't have everything that you wanted to win.

God's timing is very different than our timing. Sometimes we want God to give us the victory before we even fight the battle. Sometimes, we want God to give us the outward victory when He's more concerned with doing the inner-work inside of us. One way that I've said this to our church is that often God is more concerned about the battle that He wants to win in us than

the battle that we want Him to win for us.

We think in terms of situations. God thinks in terms of spirit. God wants to develop a spirit within me that knows how to triumph over anything that life brings to me, and it's important to bring it up, and it's important to illustrate it from the life of Jonathan that you can win with what you've got. You can win with what you've got.

David proves it with the slingshot, and that's pretty impressive. He stands before the Philistine champion from Gath named Goliath with the slingshot, takes him down with a rock. He didn't even need all five. Just a single stone was enough to bring the battle to a culmination. Kills him with a sword, and he didn't even have a sword when he went into battle. He stole Goliath's sword from him and cut off his head.

Well, Jonathan did even better than that, I believe, because the Bible says that in the day that Jonathan defeated the Philistines at the outpost, there was not a weapon left in Israel. Only Jonathan had a weapon. There was one weapon left, but that was enough.

You know, sometimes in our lives I think we have an imaginary arsenal that we think we need to be victorious. An imaginary arsenal. Oh, if I just had this. If I just had that. If I was just better at that. If I could have just had been able. Somebody would have showed me how. If

That's nice, but you've got to sometimes take the slingshot and the stone that you've been handed and win with what you've got. Could I be honest with you, and I don't know if I should admit this? I'm not very good at very much in life. No, that's a true statement. Now, I consider myself a good communicator. That's what I've given my life to do, and I communicate in different ways. Sometimes it's in books, in sermons, in songs, but you get me outside of my communication gift. Give me a car to fix. You're going to be walking.

If you need me to help your transportation issue, I'm unqualified. I'm unqualified. If you need me to cook you dinner, you're going to be fasting. I hope you've got some prayers to pray because you're not eating tonight. I can make you eggs. Do you like eggs? That's all I can make you. I can make you eggs. I can't do it in the kitchen. I can't do it in the garage. But when you get me in the place where I'm called, when you get me in the sweet spot or the zone of what God has given me to give to others and I use what I have, that's one of the reasons I was so scared to start a church.

I thought, well, I don't know how to do this, and I don't know how to administrate, and I don't know how to work with children, and I don't even like children. I mean, I like my own, but didn't have any at the time, and so I was thinking that because I didn't have all of these gifts and passions and skills and abilities and knowledge and experience.

But guess what? When I did what God gave me to do, He surrounded me with all of the people that I needed that could do what I couldn't do, and He gave me everything I needed to fight the battle for the season that I was in, and He'll do the same for you. You can win with what you've got. Jonathan proves it. He goes up against the Philistine army that had far more artillery, but Jonathan had the **intention**, the **initiative**, and the willingness to **innovate**.