

We Have Only Just Begun

1 Samuel 10:25-11:15

January 2, 2005

Main Ideas/Outline: Thoughts for a New Year - Obeying God When the Odds are Overwhelming

1. Conditions – New King, Powerful enemy, dreadful disgrace (v.11:2)
2. Come together – God's people must be '**as one man**' (v.11:7)
3. Conquer the enemies of God (v.11:11)

The year 2004 was full of blessings from God, and out of His great mercy and grace we're all here today, safe and sound. Surely much was left to be desired, and the year has not been without challenges and risks, even in our church's ministry. And certainly not around the world as we look at the conditions of the eight to ten Asian countries in the wake of Tsunami. But physically, that appears to be problem big enough; let me assure you we have just as big, if not greater problem to handle here in our homeland – Casinos are in operation, the 'Oklahoma lottery' is not longer a term for joking purpose only; homosexuality remains a top controversial issue in this nation, down turn of moral values...But thank God we have 2005! Here is a passage from which we can learn how we face the oppositions, risk and possibilities, and even difficulties of a New Year. Like the children of Israel, we stand on the threshold of a new beginning. Our hearts may tremble within us, but His message to us is reassuring: the Spirit of God came upon him in power (v. 6). How wonderful to know that even though we are in a fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, that we can trust in the POWER of our Lord!

Background: 1 Samuel 10:25-27 "25 Samuel explained to the people the regulations of the kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the LORD. Then Samuel dismissed the people, each to his own home. 26 Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched. 27 But some troublemakers said, "How can this fellow save us?" They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent. (*The newly selected king of Israel Saul was greeted with suspicion and hostility. Saul was a good choice though it was never popular. The abilities of Saul were not obvious, the support for him was not unanimous, and the start of his reign was not smooth. They questioned his legitimacy, qualifications, and upbringing. According to the Hebrew text, they despised him (1 Sam 10:27). However, Saul's weaknesses do not diminish a person's potential or disqualify him from leadership; they only serves to magnify God's presence, work and grace in one's life*)

CONDITIONS – New King, Powerful enemy, dreadful disgrace (v.11:2)

Saul Rescues the City of Jabesh

1 **Nahash the Ammonite** (Nahash their King, and Ammonites - enemy of God's people) went up and besieged Jabesh Gilead (Gilead means 'rugged' or 'raw', but it is a fertile land with agricultural productivity. Jabesh-gilead was a good city to pick on. It was isolated to the east of the Jordan, just west of Ammon. The men of Jabesh Gilead knew they were no match for the Ammonites but their surrender wasn't enough. The offer to serve Nahash was soundly ridiculed and rejected.). And all the men of Jabesh (God's people Israelites) said to him, "Make a treaty with us, and we will be subject to you."

2 But Nahash the Ammonite replied, "I will make a treaty with you (negotiate a terms of surrender) **only on the CONDITION that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so bring disgrace on all Israel.**" (*Whenever there is a change, conflict, or risk, you can be sure that God will use it to bring people to him.*)

3 The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days so we can send messengers throughout Israel; if no one comes to rescue us, we will surrender to you." (*Are God's people*

ever in distress or desperation? I have to admit to you that there were times when I had surrendered to the world and the flesh, to do what seemed right in my own eyes, to use the word of God only when it was convenient, and when it would justify my actions. I lost my joy, I lost the presence of the Lord, my conscience became dull and insensitive, I entertained lewd and lustful thoughts and imaginations, and I chose what pleased me, not what pleased God. I chose to do my will, not his will, The saddest part of all = I did it in his name. I repented and God forgave me, and restored me. Thank God. He came to give recovering of sight to the blind, thank God that he let me keep my RIGHT EYE)

4 When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and reported these terms to the people, they all wept aloud. 5 Just then Saul was returning from the fields, behind his oxen, and he asked, "What is wrong with the people? Why are they weeping?" Then they repeated to him what the men of Jabesh had said.

COME TOGETHER – God's people must be '**as one man**' (v.11:7) **I Cor. 1:10, Eph 4:2-3**
BE PASSIONATE ABOUT GOD They had a battle plan-They put their life and death plan into action with determination

6 When Saul heard their words, **the Spirit of God came upon him in power**, and he burned with anger. (*Anger can change the world and make it better or poison those outraged and make things worse. The Bible discourages anger but not forbids it. It says, "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. (Eph 4:26-27). Centuries ago Aristotle said, "Anyone can become angry - that is easy. But to be angry at the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not easy."* Saul cared for people more than they knew or thought, and he was enraged. The Hebrew text said he was not just angry, but very or intensely angry. Satan's kingdom will not suffer at all, until the church rises up in a Holy fire of anger against Satan and his works. In another passage John 2:12-16, we learned of another example of holy anger when **Jesus, God's own son, cleared His temple**. You see worship order is important to create reverence, awe, and solemn attitude due God. Children under 4 years of age – should be sent in to SHBC preschool department. No talking/chatting. No food/drinks. No frequent INs/OUTs throughout the service. Now, Saul is a shy person, a donkey keeper, one who people doubt 'how can this fellow save us?' Perhaps, his eyes were red, his blood was boiling, and his face was black. He was like a raging bull and a burning sun. He felt violated by the threat and the terror that blanketed and surrounded Jabesh Gilead. He was horrified and disgusted at the thought of a whole region of people - men, women, and children ?losing their right eye.)

7 He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel, proclaiming, "This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel." Then the terror of the LORD fell on the people, and they **turned out as one man**. (*Awake to Passionate Living Awake to Unity The "fear of the Lord" drives us to act for His best for us - God's influence fell on the group after its leader stirred to action. They needed to do more than talk or others would find their lives scarred forever. There have been numerous instances where Satan has used circumstances to create confusions and misunderstanding among God's people; thus leading the people of God to firstly disrespect me, then disconnect from the fellowship, and eventually disengage themselves from this ministry here at TIBC. We MUST turn out or come together as one!*) 8 When Saul mustered them at Bezek, the men of Israel numbered three hundred thousand and the men of Judah thirty thousand. (*Just as he awoke and took his place, we too must awake to God's hand on our lives. These difficult days in church, our nation and our world, will show whether we are ready to wake up and take action or keep on sleeping. Saul exercised his authority as king, rallied the Israelites, organized the army, lifted the siege, and conquered the enemy.*)

9 They told the messengers who had come, "Say to the men of Jabesh Gilead, 'By the time the sun is hot tomorrow, you will be delivered.'" (*"HURRY UP AND WAIT (1 SAM 11) It's been said that Rome was not built in a day. God's timing is perfect; He doesn't rush and He is never in a hurry to start or complete something.)*)

When the messengers went and reported this to the men of Jabesh, they were elated. 10 They said to the Ammonites, "Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do to us whatever seems good to you."

CONQUER the enemies of God (v.11:11)

They knew whom their enemies were-They knew when to stop-They had strength to forgive and move on

11 The next day Saul separated his men into three divisions; during the last watch of the night they broke into the camp of the Ammonites and slaughtered them until the heat of the day.

Those who survived were scattered, so that **no two of them were left together.**

Saul **CONFIRMED** as King

12 The people then said to Samuel, "Who was it that asked, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring these men to us and we will put them to death." *BE PREPARED TO FORGIVE It's been said, "In taking revenge, a man is equal to his enemy; in passing over it, he is superior? After success on the battlefield, Saul defended his enemies before their accusers and before Samuel. no discussion was necessary and it was never to be mentioned again. Saul excused the people that questioned his pedigree (genealogy), personality, and pride. Saul seeks and keeps peace, and the Scripture says in Philippians 4: 7And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.)*13 But Saul said, "No one shall be put to death today, for this day the LORD has rescued Israel."

14 Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and there reaffirm the kingship."

15 So all the people went to Gilgal and confirmed Saul as king in the presence of the LORD.

There they sacrificed fellowship offerings ^[a] before the LORD, and Saul and all the Israelites held a great celebration.

Saul understood what the word of God says in Matt 5:44 "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," he understood forgiveness. Not only did Saul forgive the people who damaged his reputation, he refused to take credit for what he did. Not only did he say that God, and not Saul, was the one that delivered Israel, he also insisted that the day was a day of salvation, not punishment or death.

Conclusion: Patience is a virtue. A servant of God cares more for **God's things** than **his own feelings**. Depending on the Lord, His power and His timing is paramount. Don't take yourself and criticism too personally or take things matter into your own hand. **You cannot be who you are not.** Act on what you believe. Say what you believe.

Welcome & News:

- On Thursday, December 30th at 7:30 PM, the Hickeys invite everyone to their home for a prayer meeting! The **prayer meeting** will include a time for **fellowship** - to kick off the New Year. It's for anyone who wish to come, including children. Pastor John – then Dec 31 New Year's Eve party – game, movie, balls, etc. at the end of each year, many people gather together in large crowds such as New York City's Time Square to watch the "ball drop." When we hear the countdown from the last minute of previous year, ...10, 9, 8,7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and when we get to zero, we all expected we burst out in joy looking forward to the next year.
- Ray Greene will be going to the VA Hosp at Houston for a second opinion on 12/28/04, Tuesday. His neighbor will be driving him back and forth. Please pray for the doctors and neurosurgeons. We will need to pray for the whole process of this visit, from the receptionist

to the nurses and the doctors and the radiologists and the neurosurgeons. Pray for the travel, good weather and safe driving. Most of all, we need to pray for Ray, he believes that God will heal him.

- Jimmy Qian: A strong leader in his church at Munich, Germany – “by the way, both my brother and his wife were baptized on Dec.26th.” That is a special day for baptism; next week would be special.