

“Coming Together To Fight The Enemy”

1 Samuel 11:1-11

04/13/10

Introduction: After the fatal attack of September 11, 2001, we experienced unprecedented unity within our country. People from various races, faiths, and political parties came together as one to fight the enemy. In our lesson tonight, we will read of a similar unity displayed by the children of Israel to fight their enemy. Likewise, this should encourage us to come together to fight our enemy (**1 Peter 5:8**).

Verses 1-4

The Humiliation

These verses show us the humiliation that the people of Jabeshgilead could experience at the hands of Nahash. Jabesh was a small town east of the Jordan River. Nahash (meaning “snake”) was the king of the Ammonites who were the descendants of Lot. Nahash was getting ready to attack Jabesh (“encamped against Jabesh...”). So, the Jews tried to make a **treaty** with him by agreeing to become his servants. But, the king is not satisfied with this proposition. Nahash responded in a haughty/proud manner. He wants to humiliate the Jews by putting out their “right eyes”. This barbarous mutilation was a common **punishment** in the ancient Near East, which would disable the warriors’ depth-perception and peripheral vision, rendering them useless in battle. Nahash wanted to distort the Jews’ vision so they would be unable to fight. What is it that has been causing us to have a spiritually distorted vision? Maybe it is the daily cares of life or our pursuit for something or someone other than God (**Matthew 6:33-34**). The Bible tells us to set our affections on the things above and to “lay aside” every weight that is hindering our race (**Hebrews 12:1-2**) (**Colossians 3:2**). In other words, let us learn to dump the **junk** that is cluttering our lives. The Israelites convinced Nahash to give them seven days to get help from their fellow brothers (vs. 3). We are told that their plea for help reaches Saul’s hometown Gibeah, which causes a great lament (“lifted up their voices and wept”). Do we respond with the same level of sadness when danger or any kind of negativity affects our Christian brothers and sisters? (**Galatians 6:2**) (**Romans 15:1**) If we are the body of Christ, then anything that hurts one member **should** hurt all of us (**Romans 12:5**). As the elders of Jabesh were not ashamed to seek help (from their brothers), let us not hesitate to share our burdens (**Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**). We cannot expect others to help, if they are not aware of our problems. **The Holy Spirit will tell us whether to share our burdens or suffer in silence.**

Verses 5-10

The Inspiration

When Saul hears about the threat, the Spirit of God inspires him. The text tells us the Spirit “came upon” him. Let us not confuse this filling of the Spirit with regeneration or being born-again. In the Old Testament this was a common expression signifying a unique act of God, which conferred power and wisdom for victory. This was true in the lives of Gideon, Samson, and David. We see that the internal filling, brought about external transformation. First, Saul’s anger was aroused. This was a righteous anger (**Ephesians 4:26**). Secondly, it came with physical power. It enabled him to kill a yoke of oxen (pair of oxen). He cuts them up and sends pieces throughout Israel to rouse the people to enter battle. In addition, the Spirit brought fear and confidence in everyone (vs. 7, 9). The fear enabled them to come together with one “consent” or as one man. Saul compelled people to enter the battle by killing and distributing oxen. What would it take in order for us to enter the battle? We may think there is no battle going on around us, however, there is a spiritual battle for the souls of others that we need to take part in. People need to be taken out of the clutches of sin and hell (**James 5:20**). This can be accomplished through prayer (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**) (**Ephesians 6:12, 18**). The Spirit empowers Saul to accomplish the will of God and the same Spirit indwells us (**John 14:17**). The Holy Spirit enables us to perform the purposes of God, but we have to be obedient. Sometimes we want the Holy Spirit to help us, but not to convict us. To perform under the inspiration of the Spirit, we must first be tuned into the Holy Spirit.

Verse 11

The Annihilation

The divine confidence they received enabled Saul and the people to annihilate the Ammonites. Saul did not have any war experience prior to this. Yet, when the Spirit empowered him, it made him an expert without experience. Godly wisdom gave Saul the insight to divide the people into “three companies”. This was a military strategy of dividing forces. It lessened the possibility of losing everyone to a sneak attack while also giving greater military options. Like Saul, when we find ourselves fighting the enemy, we can count on the same Godly wisdom to direct (us) and destroy the enemy (**Proverbs 2:6**). However, such wisdom, comes when we acknowledge and honor Him (**Psalms 111:10**). The “morning watch” indicates that this was a surprise attack before dawn (2:00 a.m. - 6:00 a.m.) when the Ammonites were unprepared. As the people of Jabesh were delivered, the Word of God consistently records evidence of His support for His people (**Deuteronomy 33:25b**) (**Hebrews 13:5b**). God’s promises are equivalent to His presence. Let us remember that since we have the same Spirit, victory is at our fingertips as well.