

1 Samuel 31:1-13 (4/27/2025)

SERMON DISCUSSION: How were you impacted by the sermon? What new thoughts or lessons did you discover? In what ways did you find yourself challenged and/or encouraged?

READ 1 Samuel 31:1-13

1. Imagine that the highest leadership of our country had been killed, and that our military had been defeated, and that there were now cities in the U.S. that were occupied by the military of our enemy... What kinds of thoughts and feelings might you be experiencing as you attempted to process these new realities?
2. When Saul had been wounded, and he gave an order to his armor-bearer to kill him... Talk about what Saul seemed to be concerned about, and what the armor-bearer seemed to be concerned about.
3. As you think about the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, compare and contrast your reactions to them—both from the standpoints of “fairness” and “cause and effect”... (feel free to also include your thoughts about David having been spared from this tragedy and conflict—being engaged with the Amalekites, liberating the families who had been carried-off)
4. What might have been some reasons that you could imagine it being “better” if Jonathan had been spared and remained alive following the death of his father, Saul?

5. What might be some reasons that it was actually “best” for Jonathan to have died with his father?

6. As you contemplate possible ways that Jonathan’s death is used by God to open the way for God’s other plans to be carried-out, can this perspective provide any help to us for seeing how God might also work in our difficulties or suffering?

If so, how? And why is this hard to consider... or perhaps helpful?

7. Consider the following paragraph, and discuss your thoughts about it together...

Do you believe that we are here as a result of the random assembly of molecules; products of the “survival of the fittest”; and plowing forward to create our own meaning out of life? Or do you believe that there is purpose to life; that we are part of a story that is unfolding throughout history?

How you answer this question will make a world of difference for how cynical you’ll be—and how you will handle life when it doesn’t go the way you had in mind. Because life is either (in the words of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*) “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”, or it is a *story directed by the Living God, full of passion and tragedy, pointing to redemption and renewal and everything we were made for.*

Consider praying, together, for the Lord’s help and perspective to trust Him, that He is working—even in our struggles and griefs—to bring about redemption, renewal, and ultimately, salvation.