

**1 Samuel 11:1-15**  
**The Spirit of God**

**1 Samuel 11:1-15** [11:1] Then Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-gilead, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us, and we will serve you." [2] But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "On this condition I will make a treaty with you, that I gouge out all your right eyes, **and thus bring disgrace on all Israel.**" [3] The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days' respite that we may send messengers through all the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to save us, we will give ourselves up to you." [4] When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, they reported the matter in the ears of the people, and all the people wept aloud.

[5] Now, behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen. And Saul said, "What is wrong with the people, that they are weeping?" So they told him the news of the men of Jabesh. [6] **And the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul** when he heard these words, and **his anger was greatly kindled.** [7] He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hand of the messengers, saying, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and Samuel, **so shall it be done to his oxen!**" Then the dread of the LORD fell upon the people, and they came out as one man. [8] When he mustered them at Bezek, the people of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. [9] And they said to the messengers who had come, "Thus shall you say to the men of Jabesh-gilead: 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, **you shall have salvation.**'" When the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh, they were glad. [10] Therefore the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will give ourselves up to you, and you may do to us whatever seems good to you." [11] And the next day Saul put the people in three companies. And they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch and struck down the Ammonites until the heat of the day. And those who survived were scattered, so that **no two of them were left together.**

[12] Then the people said to Samuel, "Who is it that said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' **Bring the men, that we may put them to death.**" [13] But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today **the LORD has worked salvation in Israel.**" [14] Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and **there renew the kingdom.**" [15] So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before the LORD, and there **Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.**

**Make a treaty:** Cutting out the right eye was a way of demilitarizing a people. It was a way of domesticating their warriors so that they would not rise up against their new masters.

**In battle, the soldier would cover their left eye with their shield and use their right eye to view the field.** Without the right eye, they were useless in battle. No depth perception and they could not work as a unit creating a shield wall to protect their fellow soldiers.

**And Nahash wants to disgrace all of Israel.** It is one thing to conquer your enemy. It is another to have such contempt for them that you want to disgrace them. This is what angers God and also angers Saul.

**Nahash is cocky and arrogant.** He figures "what harm could it do to allow them to try and get help from afar". He's just toying with them like a cat plays with a mouse before devouring it.

**The Spirit of God rushed upon Saul:** This is powerful stuff.

Saul took offense to these men who wished to disgrace God's people. God was offended and Saul took up this offense. This was pleasing to God.

**Do we get offended over the things that offend our God?**

To be offended in this manner we must first know the things that offend God. Do you think God is offended or is He just a cool hang out kind of guy? A live and let live fellow? Do you know what is offensive to God?

**God has invested His son in us.** He has given His all for us. Why? To make us His friends. But if He had to do something so drastic as to sacrifice His only son to make us His friends, that must mean that we, at one time, were not His friends.

We rebelled against God. We sin by Nature and by Choice.

To know what offends God, we must be self aware of our sin. Do you know what sin is? Does sin bother you? Sin offends God. This is what keeps us from Him. Jesus came to save sinners. This is how we become His friends.

**Saul takes this offense.** God's Spirit rushes through him. He makes some bold statements and proclamations. Saul is angry with a righteous anger.

Have you ever had an experience like this? Like Saul, where God's spirit has been so powerful that you are overcome with obedience and righteousness?

Maybe you have had a different kind of experience. An experience that you could only attribute to God's power. Many of us have had circumstances in our lives where we know God was at work. We knew we were saved from death or destruction or an external evil.

But what about this kind of thing with Saul. Where God's spirit was so tangible, so palpable that we were overcome, overwhelmed with a sense of His Holiness and Power.

Some people believe that this kind of experience has passed away. That God does not reveal Himself to us in this manner anymore. Others look to have these kinds of experiences on a daily basis and are almost addicted to the emotional high that it brings.

I believe that it might be somewhere in between.

I've had external worship experiences. Like going to a church service or a Christian concert and getting a good feeling and an overwhelming sense of God's goodness and my awareness of His righteousness. This is fine but we need to remember that our feelings can lie to us.

*"The true way for a Christian to live is to live entirely upon Christ... Christians have experiences and they have feelings, but, if they are wise, they never feed upon these things, but upon Christ, Himself." Charles Spurgeon*

Have you ever had a situation where you believed a lie? Where you believed something that someone told you and you began to experience emotions about this so called "truth". But later you found out that the "truth" wasn't the truth after all? But what about all those emotions you had... ? they seemed very real didn't they?

Sometimes we do that with spiritual experiences. This is why we are always to test these so called "truths" and "experiences" against God's word. This is why we read our Bible. So that we know more about the God that has saved us and the things He cares about. This way we can know how to "feel".

Does that sound strange... learning how we should "feel". It's true.

Here's an example. I grew up with a depressed father and a bi-polar mother. Neither of them were diagnosed or treated until I was in High School. By that time I had learned what I thought "normal" behavior for a family looked like. Now add this to it.... I am bi-polar as well. Think about this for a minute. What a picture huh?

It took several catastrophic situations in my life to bring me to the awareness of all this. So much so that I have spent the last 20 years in classes and counseling to re-learn what normal really is. My emotions still lie to me, but I have learned to use God's word and some specific tools to help me know what God's normal is. What His will is and how to employ it in my life and the lives of those around me.

Now you might be saying... Why are you telling me this? I thought we were talking about God Spirit rushing through Saul. Well, I want to give you a modern day example of this.

First I want to say that there are a couple of schools of thought concerning the Holy Spirit.

1. Filled at conversion.

## 2. Second infilling. Tongues, Power... etc. Like at Pentacost for the disciples

There is enough evidence to suggest that both can be correct. For too long we have chastised one another over this issue. But I believe it is safe to say that no matter how you recognize God's spirit in your life, whether it is from conversion or a second experience, the Spirit in you is the same spirit.

Some say that these kinds of spiritual experiences no longer exist, this raining down of God's presence or His special infilling with power like in Saul.

Whether or not you believe in big or small displays of God's power in and through His people, we can agree that God works in our lives and the lives of others.

Here is my most recent example of the "rush" of God's spirit in my life.  
Rochelle Story.

Can you not agree that God's spirit was at work in me and in my daughter? Can you not agree that but by the forgiving, loving, nurturing power of God this kind of interaction would probably not have occurred?

I know my life. I know my lack of sensitivity and inability to be obedient. I know that unless God's spirit had made me aware of this issue, I never would have made a move to reconcile with my daughter.

Don't disparage the ordinary. Don't disregard the small or the seemingly insignificant move of God. Situations like Saul don't happen all that often, in scripture or in present day. Don't look to huge experiences like this as a measure of your obedience or devotion to Jesus.

Look at Saul. Last week we saw that He was hiding in the luggage. Hiding from his destiny. Hiding from God and God's will for him. This week, he's hacking up cows and sending the parcel post to the whole country to motivate God's people.

Don't "feel" Less than... just because you aren't hacking up sides of beef for the body of Christ.

God works in the ordinary. The simple. Even the boring. He works in the incompetent and the emotional and the messy. He works in those that are unlikely and unseemly and even sinful.

Saul was avoiding God one minute and leading God's people to victory the next. This is the stuff of the Christian life. Wouldn't you think that God would be so disgusted with Saul from his cowardice and hiding that He would never use him?

Saul was not disqualified. You are not disqualified. You're small experiences with God's spirit are real. And they are important. And you are important to God's work. You are important to Him.

*To plod on under apparent failure is one of the most acceptable of all works of faith, and he who can do it year after year is assuredly well pleasing to God.* Charles Spurgeon

Serving God is hard. It's tiring. It's a constant re-learning of what is "normal". God's normal is what we are after. His normal is beautiful and peaceful and full of joy. His normal is simple, His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

Don't beat yourself up because you are not Saul. Enjoy God for who He is and what He has done. His spirit will guide you. Stop trying so terribly hard to be righteous and perfect.

One of the biggest lies we can believe is that we are to be perfect. Are we called to Holiness, Yes. Are we called to obedience, Yes. But your works and obedience will not change a thing about your salvation. It will not change a thing about how God feels about you and wants to care for you and bless you.

You are not disqualified. You've never been qualified so you can't ever be disqualified.  
You are either His child or not.

And if you're not... don't you want to be? Don't you want to be part of this God who loves you so very much?