



Uncertainty

1 Samuel 13:20 KJV But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock.

I. INTRODUCTION—UNCERTAINTY

-Uncertainty is one of the most challenging of all human problems to have to contend with. It is a place of being somewhere in the middle. You have traveled too far from the start but not far enough to get to the destination. It is that deadly middle of uncertainty.

- Have you ever been in a place of uncertainty?
- Have you ever been in a place where it just seemed like you couldn't get a firm foundation to stand on?
- Have you ever been in a place where you weren't certain how the next day was going to turn out?
- Have you ever been in a place where you didn't know where the next house payment was coming from?
- Have you ever been in a place where hope had been crushed and faith had fled?
- Have you ever been in a place where uncertainty had pushed you to a place of panic?

-Uncertainty has a way of unnerving us almost to the point of paralysis. You won't live very long until you come to understand that a lot of people live in places of uncertainty. But the reality is that most of us don't want the vulnerability that might blow our cover. So we cover our uncertainty with a pretense that says everything is well.

-All of us have been there at some point. We spend time talking about the weather, the economy, the price of gas, or some inane thing to cover the uncertainty that is in the soul. Overloaded with life but we manage to keep up the front that seemingly says that all is well.

-That is the way it is with uncertainty.

II. THE TEXT—1 SAMUEL 13:20

-The text that we read is an isolated passage in the midst of great uncertainty for Israel. They had been reduced to a place of great degradation and depression because of their sin. The Philistines had gained a great victory over Eli and his sons. They had possession of the Ark of the Covenant and Israel was in a state of great uncertainty.

-It is troubling to be in a place of great uncertainty when you have made bad choices. But it seems to be compounded when all of the supports of what is associated with God have been violated and taken from you.

-This is where Israel came to. Much uncertainty had brought them low. You can read previously in the chapter where that Saul had come along and gathered a measly 600 men to fight off the ravages of the Philistines.

-Consider the numbers of the hordes of Philistines (13:5):

- Thirty thousand chariots.
- Six thousand horsemen.
- People numbered like the sand on the seashore.

-This is quite an amazing number to have to fight against. The Bible goes on to say that the children of Israel were in a

“strait.” They became distressed and begin to hide in the caves and among the rocks for the fear of their lives. Some even fled the land and left the tiny army to fend for themselves.

-The NIV renders 1 Samuel 13:6 like this:

1 Samuel 13:6 NIV When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns.

-As the uncertainty mounts, Saul, who is in a state of great impatience and uncertainty, panics to the extent that he usurps his position and offers a sacrifice because he would not wait for Samuel to do it. Because of that single act, God rejected Saul. He would do it again in 1 Samuel 15:26.

-Impatience with God’s plan and uncertainty about the conditions will push people into actions of disobedience. That occurrence is not limited to Saul’s times but prevail in our days too!

-Yet despite the failings of Israel, God was going to step into the midst of their uncertainty and use their enemy to sharpen their weapons.

A. God Is Not Limited By the Failures of Man

-It is crucial for us to remember that God is never limited by the failures of man.

One of Denmark’s leading sculptors had a consuming ambition to sculpt the greatest stature of Jesus Christ ever made. He began by painstakingly shaping a clay model of a triumphant, majestic figure. This will be my masterpiece,” he stated on the day the model was completed.

However, during the night, a heavy fog rolled into the area and sea-spray seeped into the sculptor’s studio through a partially open window. In the morning, he was shocked to see his model. The droplets of moisture that had formed on the statue created the illusion of bleeding. The head had drooped. The facial expression had melted into compassion. The arms drooped and expressed welcome. The artist was horrified and was aghast at having to start all over again.

As he kept looking at his statue of the Savior, his thoughts began to take a different shape. He realized that this image of Christ was much closer to reality. He then wrote his caption and placed it under the figure: “Come unto me!”

In truth, as he had initially desired, though not in the manner he had envisioned it, this “divinely” altered piece of art was, in fact, his masterpiece.

-That has happened more than just with a sculpture. It has happened more often than we could count in Pentecostal experiences all over the world.

-What the devil meant for evil, God meant it for good.

B. God Will Take The Enemy and Use Them for His Purpose

-The Bible is full of examples of where the Lord took the enemy and used them for His purpose.

- Joseph being prepared in captivity to save.
- Moses hidden in an ark made of bulrushes.
- Israel incubating in Egypt.
- David fleeing with his life from Saul.
- Saul of Tarsus, persecuting the church, but being prepared for great service.

-That is what Paul summed up in Ephesians 2.

Ephesians 2:1-7 KJV And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; [2] Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: [3] Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. [4] But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, [5] Even when we were dead in sins, hath

quicken us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) [6] And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: [7] That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

-Jesus gave us a faint idea of that with His miracles:

- Water being turned into wine. . . emptiness.
- Bartimaeus having his blind eyes opened. . . blindness.
- Deaf ears being opened. . . deaf.
- The Characters of the Gospels.

-But then we come to the darkest time. . . Calvary. Now Jesus is dead. . . incredible uncertainty.

-Have you ever been there?

- The uncertainty of limited resources.
- The uncertainty of a disability.
- The uncertainty of a bad marriage.
- The uncertainty of a nagging illness.
- The uncertainty of a job loss.
- The uncertainty of financial pressures.
- The uncertainty of troubled children.
- The uncertainty of consequences from a bad choice.
- The uncertainty of providing care to someone you love.
- The uncertainty of a darkness that will not seem to lift.
- The uncertainty of questions that will not let you rest.
- The uncertainty of not having anyone you can lean on.
- The uncertainty of a seeing a dream to collapse before it ever walked.
- The uncertainty of a dilemma that you did not ask for.

-But He got up!

1 Corinthians 15:20-22 KJV [20] But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. [21] For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 KJV [42] So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: [43] It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: [44] It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:51-58 KJV [51] Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, [52] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. [54] So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. [55] O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? [56] The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. [57] But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. [58] Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

-Don't flinch in uncertainty!

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