

David and Jonathan

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[0:00] He would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David and his armor and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him. So that Saul set over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. All right. So that's sort of our theme text. We're going to look at some others. But remember, Jonathan was the king's son. He was the next heir to the throne.

He had won great victories and a long career from serving in the Lord's army. But today, the victory did not belong to Jonathan. It belonged to David. And so what do we see here?

Do we see envy, insecurity, jealousy, fear? We don't. We see Jonathan rejoicing that God had given them the victory through David.

[1:14] And he recognized immediately that the Lord was with the shepherd boy and that they had a deep, kindred spirit. Their souls were knit together, woven, bound together.

That Jonathan loved David as his own soul. There's nothing inappropriate about this, as we are aware. But what I've experienced and many of you have experienced, I'm just going to speak for the men.

I know there's a similar version of this for women, but I'm not going to try to get into that one. But men have a special, unique ability to go deep with each other, to have friendships that affect you and change you in very unique and special ways.

It's different than marriage. Marriage is special, and God uses that in his own way. But brothers that sharpen each other and live to support and build up and encourage one another.

Often a kindred spirit that soldiers have on the battlefield together. Any kind of story you read in military history always ends with the soldier saying, hey, we fought for each other.

[2:30] We fought to get each other through. We didn't think about the government. We didn't think about the flag. We thought about fighting for the man on our left and the man on our right. And those deep friendships are formed.

And very similar, right, we see this wonderful relationship. He's given, this is a true picture of a deep, covenantal, brotherly love.

A kindred spirit that God gives true friendships. Something that is special about this is rooted in mutual love and the knitting together of souls in verse 1.

You get a glance at this in Deuteronomy 13.6 where it says, your friend who is your own soul. A picture of that. Deuteronomy 13.6. To say that someone is a true friend means a companionship. That you share innermost thoughts and desires and like-mindedness. More of a spiritual connection bringing about loyalty and devotion.

[3:35] All right. So here's friendship principle number one. It's still underneath the bigger principle of the basis of friendship. But friendship principle number one. You see this in verses 1 and 2.

True friends are given to us by God as an act of his grace, care, and love for us.

So notice God brings Jonathan to David in this time. Notice that on the surface, these two men have nothing in common.

Like zero. Family background, wealth, prestige. David had neither one of those. What brings them together initially is their mutual love for the nation.

But also their mutual love for the living God. But naturally speaking, they would be rivals. Right? David threatened Jonathan's position as the future king.

[4:34] And this speaks to like Jonathan's selflessness. His humility. He only wanted what God wanted. He wanted what was best. And he knew that God had abandoned his father.

And he knew also, more and more apparent as we continue to look, that God had chosen David.

And he was committing himself to what God's purpose was.

Even at the expense of knowing that he probably would not be king. Think about how selfless that is. So when Jonathan relinquished his, see in our text, he relinquished his garments, his clothes, his armor.

All of that was an act that symbolized his faith in God. And that he knew that David was the apparent heir to the throne. He is not filled with fear and envy.

But instead he trusts humbly in God's plan. He gladly rejoices at what God is doing. He doesn't fight against it. But God knew that David was going to need an intimate friend for all the hard days that were going to lay ahead.

[5:40] And Jonathan was going to be that friend. So understand what I mean. Like God has given me certain friends in certain seasons of my life that I needed, particularly at that time.

And he does the same for all his people. And so he gladly embraces it. As Jonathan names means, Jehovah has given. So he was given to David as a friend to face the tough road that lay ahead.

So friendship principle number two underneath this section is that true friends are willing to deny themselves and willingly sacrifice on behalf of others.

That's what you see in our text. That brings us to our second point, broader point. The test of friendship. All right. So their friendship, their brotherly love for one another was put there on extreme test.

So tragically, as we looked at a few weeks ago, Saul has rebelled against God and God has given him over to his sin. He said that you will no longer be king. And it says in verse 14 that David had great success.

[6:57] He prospered in all his undertakings for the Lord was with him. It actually says four times in this chapter, 18, that the Lord was with him and that he prospered.

So as David continues to have success and prosper, so Saul is increasingly getting jealous, filled with hatred and envy. That increases the more David succeeds.

So Saul's malice and jealousy towards David was like becoming more and more obvious with each passing day. And so this is a horrible situation, but it is a test of Jonathan's friendship with David.

We see here from the scripture, Proverbs 17, 17, A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 17, 7. So David and Jonathan is not a fair weather friend. He's not, I'm just in this for this reason. True friends, if they love towards one another at all times, favorable times, troubling times, thick and thin, no matter what.

[8:10] They will love you when you are unlovable. They will pursue you and speak God's word to you. The wisdom writer wrote in Proverbs 18, 24, a man of many companions may come to ruin.

But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. So it doesn't matter how cool and popular you think you are. It really doesn't matter at all. Listen, if you walk away from this world, if you die one day and you've had maybe one to three really good friends, like, awesome.

It doesn't matter how many. It's the quality, not the quantity. That brings us to friendship principle number three. Right out of the scripture. True friends love at all times.

Always faithful, no matter what the circumstance. True friends love at all times. Always faithful, no matter the circumstance. All right, so this is a sad story of Saul's demise marked by this vexing, distressful spirit that he has.

It sends him into mad ravings. You might have thought I had some mad ravings last week, but I was running a temperature while I was up here. I didn't know it. So maybe a different kind of mad raving than Saul. But as Saul became increasingly violent, it says that David evaded him and tried to kind of stand out of his way.

[9:31] And we read the story of how Saul became so mad at him, he hurled a javelin at him in the room and tried to kill him. And he escaped. And so this is just increasing.

So Jonathan's in the middle. My father and my friend, who I know is going to be the future king of Israel. Just imagine being in that position and how hard that is.

He goes as far to, in chapter 19, the beginning of chapter 19, Saul goes as far to tell Jonathan, and his attendants to kill David. You kill him.

Which he obviously refuses to do. But also, in addition to that, not only does he disobey his father, he says, I can't do that. Jonathan loyally comes to his friend's defense, speaking the truth to his father.

Jump over to chapter 19. And let's look at verse 4 and 5 in chapter 19. It says, Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul, his father, and said to him, Let not the king sin against his servant, David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have brought good to you.

[10:44] For he took his life in his hand and struck down the Philistine, and the Lord worked a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?

So he's defending his friend. He's defending the fact that he knows God is at work within his friend to his father. And what's significant, right, is Saul is not only the king and Jonathan's father, but at this point, you know, Saul has set himself against David as an enemy, but he boldly declares the truth to him and sticks up for his friend.

Hard for him to do this. Like, man, this is very hard to do. Just try to put yourself in that position. But he knew that God was with David and this was the right thing to do. He said, no, father, sorry.

And this leads to friendship principle number four. True friends speak truth and loyally come to the defense of others.

True friends speak truth and loyally come to the defense of others. True friends speak truth and loyally come to the defense of others. If someone's badmouthing your friend in a sinful way, you should say, that's enough.

[12:05] That's not true about them. All right, this moves on. We get into another section. It's still under the test of friendship, but jump to chapter 20 really quickly.

Just we're moving forward a little bit. We see that Jonathan warns David. And as this hatred increases for David, Jonathan feels more and more obligated to help protect his friend David.

But David is not hopeful that Saul is going to come around. He's like, I think he means to kill me. He's not going to take me back. Things are not going to go back to the way they were.

And so it says that chapter 20, verse 1. We're going to read just some sections together. So just hang with me. I'll do my best to walk through this without losing anybody.

Chapter 20, verse 1. It says, David fled from Nayuth in Ramah and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? What is my guilt and what sin before your father that he seeks my life?

[13:12] And he said to him, Far from it. You shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing, either great or small, without disclosing it to me. In other words, like, he's not trying to kill you.

Because if he was, like, he would tell me that he was. We don't keep anything from each other. He goes, And why should my father hide this from me? It is not so.

But David vowed again, saying, Your father knows well that I have found favor in your eyes. And he thinks, Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.

But truly, as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death. So he thinks that one mistake and I'm dead.

Then Jonathan said to David, Whatever you say, I'll do for you. So he gives him the benefit of the doubt. Like, Okay, like, Okay, I hear you. And then David goes on with Jonathan to engage in this plan, if you would, to figure out, to gauge whether or not it's safe for David to return to Saul's court.

[14:22] And so phase one of this plan would be that David continues to hide and he doesn't show up to the king's table. And if Saul comes out there and he expresses remorse, like, Oh, where's David?

I miss David. Like, I long for him to be in our presence again. Then they'll know that it's, like, safe for David to return. But on the flip side, if Saul is, like, really angry, he's, like, furious that David's not there, then it's like, Ooh, like, maybe it's not safe for you to come back.

So that's phase one of the plan. So let's look at chapter 20, starting in verse 10. Just skipping ahead to save time, but chapter 20, verse 10.

Then David said to Jonathan, Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly? And Jonathan said to David, Come and let us go out into the field. So, like, Hey, just walk with me.

Let's walk and talk kind of thing. So they both went out into the field. And Jonathan said to David, The Lord, the God of Israel, be witness. When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow or the third day, behold, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you?

[15:48] Like, I'll let you know. But should it please my father to do you harm, the Lord, do so to Jonathan and more also, if I disclose it to you and send you away that you may go in safety.

All right? So, then it says, May the Lord be with you as he has been with my father. Verse 14. If I am still alive, show me steadfast love of the Lord that I may not die.

And do not cut off your steadfast love for my house forever. And when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth. So, in other words, like, look, if I survive this, if I don't survive this, please be good to my family.

Please be good to my descendants. Because I know that God is going to cut off your enemies. Because you are going to be the future king. So, show this is the beginning of this covenant that David and Jonathan make together as brothers.

And so, it's verse 16. And Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, May the Lord take revenge on David's enemies.

[17:01] And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him. For he loved him as he loved his own soul. So, back then, when people made covenants of some sort, it probably was something like this.

But they would take an animal. They would cut the animal in two. And they would lay the animal on the ground. It could be a dove or some other kind of animal. And then the two men making the covenant would kind of walk a figure eight pattern around that animal.

And it was symbolic of saying, like, if I break my word to you, may this happen to me too. Like, may I be cut in two if I break this covenant before the Lord.

So, this beautiful picture of friendship with Jonathan. He promises to be faithful to the covenant that he made. And he humbly asked David to remember it as well. Hey, when you're king one day, like, don't forget this covenant.

So, remember, typically, kings would kill off any apparent rival at all. Just read the history of the Roman Empire. Oh, my gosh. Like, tons of people being killed out of being rivals for the throne.

[18:14] But he implores David to demonstrate covenant love to him and his children by allowing them to live. Like, don't cut us off when you're king.

And this is a promise that David remembers and that he keeps faithfully. So, this phase one, like, see what happens at dinner time. Phase two is, like, how he's going to let them know about the outcome.

So, he's going to go out into a field with a servant. And Jonathan's going to shoot his bow three times. Then he'll send the servant to retrieve it. This verse is chapter 20, 21 through 23.

Check it out. Here's the plan. If I say to the boy, look, the arrows are on the side of you. Take them. Then you are to come for as the Lord lives.

It is safe for you and there is no longer danger. But if I say to the youth, look, the arrows are beyond you. Then go, for the Lord has sent you away.

[19:15] And as for the matter of which you have spoken, I have spoken. Behold, the Lord is between you and me forever. So, meaning, like, I'm going to warn you.

One of those warnings will be, like, hey, it's okay to come back. And the other one, like, no, run. Like, your life's in danger. But then he reminds them, like, that's the covenant that we just made. Between me, the Lord is between us.

Like, we will keep this covenant forever. And the plan works, but not as they had hoped. Right? Saul is furious that David is not at dinner.

He's furious that he's not at the table. He missed for two days. And Jonathan tries to, like, soothe his father's rage and say, Hey, Dad, like, chill, man.

Like, come on. And he is not having it. So he then turns his rage on his own son, Jonathan. And who now becomes the object of his murderous rage.

[20:12] So look at chapter 20. Go down to verse 30. This is what happens. It says, Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan. And he said to him, You son of a perverse, rebellious woman.

So he's trashing him. Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?

For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die.

Then Jonathan answers Saul, his father, why should he be put to death? What has he done? But Saul hurled a spear at him to strike him.

So, wow, now he's, like, hurling javelins at his own son in his fury. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month.

[21:19] For he was grieved for David because his father had disgraced him. Loyal to him. It now turns into Saul lashing out against his own son. It's been loyal to him.

Sin is an ugly, nasty, damning thing. We see it in the scripture. And we see it in our world and in our own lives. So, the next day, Jonathan went out to the field and he shot the arrows.

And he gave David the warning. He sent the boy to retrieve him. This is verse 37 through 42. Again, the idea of covenant is brought up here. All right?

So just imagine David waiting in suspense. Jonathan called after the boy and said, Is not the arrow beyond you? And Jonathan called after the boy, Hurry, be quick, do not stay.

So Jonathan's boy gathered up the arrows and came to his master. But the boy knew nothing of the plan. Only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

[22:19] And Jonathan gave his weapons to his boy and said to him, Go and carry them to the city. Verse 41. As soon as the boy had gone, David rose from behind the stone heap and fell on the face to the ground and bowed three times.

And they kissed one another and wept with one another, David weeping the most. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace because we have sworn, both of us, in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord shall be between me and you and between my offspring and your offspring forever. And he rose and departed. And Jonathan went into the city. So the plan worked, but not how they had hoped. But notice that as David is weeping and he's hurting, Jonathan maintains himself to encourage his friend.

Do you see that? They're not both just like, Oh! Like they're both, Jonathan is trying to strengthen him and say, Yes, this is hard. I know. But clearly, this is what God wants you to do.

And so this is the tragic story of all of this. But he sends off the servant. You see David bowing down to him three times. It's a sign of great respect and honor.

[23:38] And he's saying, Look, you know, my father wants to kill you. You were right the whole time. But God is not with him anymore. He is with you. He's empowering you. And they reaffirm their brotherhood and their covenant love for one another.

And love for their families to come. So from this point on, David lives in an outcast. He's a fugitive from the house of Saul. Because we read some about that in the previous week.

And in the time that came, David had two opportunities to kill Saul and didn't. Out of his love and respect for Saul. This is a huge one coming up.

But a little later in our story, David is still being pursued by Saul. While he's hiding in the wilderness, we see a reappearance, a resurfacing of Jonathan.

David's trusting God, but he's struggling. He's like, he's struggling. He's in a low place. And this is in chapter 23. We're closing up with 1 Samuel here.

[24:39] But jump over to chapter 23 to read this. This is a huge one. But this text, again, highlights Jonathan's humility, his godly character, and his trust in God's providential plan, no matter what, even if he doesn't know what's happening.

We see Jonathan pay attention to the needs of David. He knows that his friend is not doing well. And so he comes to him in this place of need. He knew that his friend needed to be strengthened. All right, 1 Samuel 23. Let's read verse 14. David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziba.

And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand. David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life.

David was in the wilderness of Ziba and Horesh. And Jonathan's son Saul rose and went to David at Horesh. And I underlined this in your Bible.

[25:44] And strengthened his hand in God. Strengthened his hand in God. And he said to him, Do not fear, for the hand of Saul, my father, shall not find you.

You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul, my father, also knows this. And the two of them made a covenant before the Lord, probably reassuring each other of that covenant. David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home. So David's in this place of weakness. He's not doing well. Jonathan hears about it, and he goes and he finds him to strengthen his hand in God.

Paraphrasing, he's like, Look, David, I know it's hard, but put your trust in the Lord. Remember the Lord's promise that you will one day soon be the king of our nation.

And God willing, if I'm there, I'll be there to support you. But stop doubting God's word. Just in case you're struggling, let me share something with you. My dad knows that this is going to happen.

[26:49] He's aware that you will be the king. So don't be afraid. Trust in the Lord. So, best friends are those who turn our hearts to rest upon the Lord.

Proverbs 18, 24. Example of this. A friend who sticks closer than a brother. A real friend is one who seeks to strengthen and build us up.

As iron sharpens iron, one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27, 8, 17. Friends come face to face with this and they come together to build up and strengthen one another in the Lord.

Proverbs 27, 9. Oil and perfume make the heart glad and the sweetness of a friend comes from earnest counsel. And this leads us to our fifth principle of friendship.

True friends are those who encourage others and strengthen their hand in God. True friends are those who encourage others and strengthen their hand in God.

[27:57] I've had so many brothers do this for me at different times in my life when I was not doing well. And they heard of it. And as busy as they were, they dropped what they were doing and came to build me up.

One of my many hospital trips. Several years ago, I had to go to the emergency room at Northeast Georgia. Pretty sure Erica was there making fun of me. And being like, I know you're here just for the drugs, okay?

So what do you want? And one of those times, I don't remember even what happened, but it was bad and I was not doing good. And I'm kind of just sitting there in the recovery room, not doing well. And Cody shows up. Dropped what he was doing. Dropped his job. Dropped everything he was doing and came to build me up. To strengthen my hand in God.

Prayed with me. Handed me the with your shield or on it patch. And said, you're going to get through this, dude. Real friends are there for you when you're not doing well.

[29:06] Sorry. So, sorry. More recently, also, the past few weeks of sickness and surgery and also have kind of left me in a low place.

And out of the blue, like, I might talk to this guy like once every two months maybe. But my friend Will Hollis, who's still active duty, called me. And he's like, man, I just wanted to call you to just encourage you today.

That's all. Like, don't ask how I'm doing. I'm doing good. How about you? I just want you to know that all those years we spent together, really, the Lord used those to impact my life.

And I want you to know that the Lord is going to continue to work through you and encourage you and help you, brother. It was like just out of the blue.

Just a random phone call. But true friends are those who encourage others and strengthen their hand in God, reminding them. So David needed this.

[30:06] And Jonathan came there and reminded him of God's purpose for him. He's like, look, the Lord is with you, brother. They strengthen each other's hands in God by reminding them about the promises of God, especially suited for that particular need.

I could give you a lot of other examples, but for the sake of time, let's move on to the last point. The enduring friendship. The enduring friendship. So at the end of 1 Samuel, Saul and Jonathan go out to do battle with the Philistines.

And it's a fierce fight. A lot of bloodshed. But the Philistines overtook them. And Jonathan, along with the other sons of Saul, are killed. Our beloved Jonathan hits the ground.

And the battle was really tough. And Saul was eventually hit by some arrows. He knew the end was near. He asked his armor bearer, like, hey, kill me. Just kill me.

Because I don't want to fall into the hands of these uncircumcised pagans who wish to mistreat me. And the armor bearer couldn't do it. So Saul fell on his own sword and killed himself.

[31:14] Tragically, after the battle, it says the Philistines cut off his head, stripped his armor off, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to carry the good news to the house of their idols and to their people.

So it looks like evil won, right? Well, remember, David kind of cleans house after all this. But a tragic, tragic thing.

Saul could have ruled for a long time and his descendants after him. But sin destroyed that. So David's response. So David's waiting. And he hears the news that Saul and Jonathan are dead. Remember, Saul was one of his heroes. I mean, lowercase h. But he looked up and he hears about this. This is the end of the... This is in 2 Samuel. 2 Samuel. So we're getting into 2 Samuel now. Just a couple verses. But this is how David responds to hearing about their deaths. Verse 23. Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely, in life and in death, they were not divided.

[32:20] They were swifter than eagles. They were stronger than lions. You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothe you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

Here's that famous phrase. How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle. Jonathan lies slain on the high places. I am distressed for you, my brother, Jonathan.

Very pleasant have you been to me. Your love to me was extraordinarily surpassing the love of women. How the mighty have fallen and the weapons of war perished.

So he wept greatly over them. He said they fought hard together. They were never separated. And I'll never forget the impact he had on me. And that's the last principle. Friendship principle number six.

True friends are those who impact our lives forever, even when they are taken away to be with the Lord. True friends are those who impact our lives forever, even when they are taken away to be with the Lord.

[33:24] And then wrapping this up. We all know who this is looking to and prefiguring. As our Lord Jesus gathered his disciples on his final night before his death and prepared them for what was ahead.

You want to flip over and this is our last thing we're looking at. We're done. But John 15. John 15 verse 12. Jesus said his disciples, this is my commandment. That you love one another as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends. For all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

So this is Jonathan as amazing as he was with just a prefigure of our Lord Jesus. He pointed forward the security of this left, the palace, the comfort, the safety, and went into a world of hardship and danger.

[34:38] And like Jonathan he left the glories and riches of that and he came into poverty and homelessness in our world. Not only did Jesus strengthen our hand in God, but he brought us into a saving relationship with God through the shedding of his blood.

He laid down his life for his friends who are also his people. And Jesus is always faithful. Our friend loves at all times.

He says in Hebrews 13, I will never leave you or forsake you. Matthew 28, he's with us always, even to the end of the age. So we therefore serve Jesus well when we stand by our friends in the faith.

And speak words that will strengthen their faith in Christ's name. Share their troubles and their sorrows. And then by a quote with Jonathan Edwards. Edwards said, let it be our first love to enter into an everlasting friendship with Christ that shall never be broken.

Let's pray together.