

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 25TH-26TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

DAVID AND JONATHAN (1 SAMUEL 18:1-4)

After David's victory over Goliath, his fame in Israel began to grow.

- After this heroic deed, King Saul regarded David as more than just a young musician in his court and recognized his bravery, leadership, and strength and brings him to live in the palace full time (vs. 2).
- It was Saul's son, Jonathan, who befriended and became close with David (vs. 1).

"THE SOUL OF JONATHAN WAS KNIT TO THE SOUL OF DAVID..."

Jonathan, the son of Saul, is described in chapters 13-14 as being a man of valor, action and bravery with a heart that trusted deeply in the Lord.

- Jonathan and David shared a set of personal and spiritual values and character qualities that bonded them together as close friends.
- Real friendship is based on these things!

Jonathan was the first-born of King Saul, so it would've been the natural expectation of everyone that he'd be the next king of Israel.

- David's growing success might've been seen to those around him as a threat to Jonathan's future as king, but Jonathan apparently didn't see it that way.
- Out of deep love for his friend, Jonathan made a covenant with David (vs. 3).

We're not sure the exact stipulations of this covenant, but it seems like it involved them promising to be loyal to each other as brothers and friends in the tumultuous years ahead.

- Many believe that Jonathan knew about David's anointing, and the covenant involved Jonathan's undying loyalty to David as the future king (20:16-17) and David's promise of protection to Jonathan and his family once he became king.

When Jonathan gave David his robe, military tunic, sword, bow, and belt, this seems to be Jonathan's acknowledgment that one day David would take his place and become king (vs. 4).

- Jonathan was surrendered to God and could clearly see God's hand of anointing on David.
- Jonathan could see David's destiny and was willing to set aside his personal ambition and honor the man who would be the Lord's choice as king.

The best kind of friendships are the ones built on shared spiritual values.

- When we have the Holy Spirit inside of us and a heart that beats in sync with God's heart, the bond we create with other likeminded believers is deep and intimate.
- Are we the kind of friends who celebrate the success that God brings to those we love? Or do we envy them and feel jealous?

DAVID'S SUCCESS (1 SAMUEL 18:5-9)

As a result of David's courageous act of killing Goliath, Saul put him in command of fighting men and he enjoyed great success in everything that he did (vs. 5).

- David is very much submitted to King Saul and simply seeking to serve him as the king in every way.
- As David experiences success, his popularity among the people grows (vs. 6-7).

"THE CRUCIBLE FOR SILVER AND THE FURNACE FOR GOLD, BUT MAN IS TESTED BY THE PRAISE HE RECEIVES" (PROV. 27:21)

Success and praise test and reveal our true character, and show if we're ready to on take new responsibilities.

- Success and praise can either reveal that we're arrogant, entitled, or self-centered, or they can reveal that we're humble, dependent on God and willing to regard and care for others.

David's popularity grows with the people, and as he returns from battle with Saul the troops are greeted by the women from all the cities of Israel dancing, singing, and celebrating their victory (vs. 6).

- In their song of victory, the women exalted David and Saul by using figurative, poetic lyrics to celebrate their victory over the Philistines...but the lyrics really bothered Saul (vs. 7-8).

"SAUL HAS KILLED THOUSANDS, BUT DAVID HIS TENS OF THOUSANDS..."

Saul is furious and resents the song because in one line David is getting more airtime than him (vs. 8).

- Saul knew that his past sin had disqualified him from the throne, and that his days were numbered—perhaps now he could recognize that Samuel's prophecy about a better man being king was playing out in front of him.

Saul's own insecurity, born of out of his own guilty conscience, caused him to overreact to the praise and popularity of David and watch him suspiciously with scorn and jealousy (vs. 8-9).

- Our own insecurity and guilt can often make us assume the worst of others.
- When we're not right with God and aren't at peace with ourselves, we can often resent others who are and are being blessed as a result.

A TOUGH DAY AT WORK (1 SAMUEL 18:10-19)

As we read earlier (1 Sam. 16:14), when the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul God permitted an evil spirit to come and torment him.

- The next day after Saul's jealous outburst, he is tormented by the evil spirit.
- Saul is so tormented that he begins to "naba" (נבא)—under the influence of this spirit, he makes utterances and raves like a madman inside the palace (vs. 10).

To soothe King Saul, David takes his lyre and begins to play (vs. 10).

- Saul sees David—the young, handsome, successful, warrior with a pure heart before God and popularity with the people—and in his heart it absolutely enrages him.
- Jealousy is a dark, all-consuming cancer of the soul that can make us say, believe, and desire horrible things.

When we see successful people sometimes we feel vulnerable and scary things like worthlessness or inadequacy, and we often don't know what to do with those emotions.

- Anger and hatred towards them is a distorted way of somehow feeling like we're in control and aren't going to let them triumph over us.
- Saul, in his crazed, spiritually darkened state of jealousy throws his spear at David (vs. 11).

David escapes, but interestingly the text tells us that the only one afraid in this scenario was Saul (vs. 12).

- David is just trying to serve his king, and Saul is unhinged and terrified that this young man is going to replace him—so he sends him away to battle (most likely in an attempt to have him killed in action, vs. 13).
- The Lord was with David in all that he did (vs. 14).

David is successful in military leadership which leads to his growing popularity, and this causes Saul to dread him even more (vs. 15-16).

- Saul comes up with a new strategy to get rid of David—he offers David his daughter Merab in marriage if David goes to war directly against the Philistines (never mind that David had already earned this right by killing Goliath).

Saul just wanted David dead and gone, so he capitalized on David's loyalty and patriotism to manipulate David into going to war.

- "Who am I?" David's heart was humble and pure, so he couldn't recognize the dark, manipulative scheme of Saul against him (vs. 18).
- In his humility, David didn't see himself as worthy for this honor (even though he had earned it through killing Goliath).

To try and make David jealous, angry, and just as miserable as he was, Saul suddenly and inexplicably gave David's promised bride Merab to another man (vs. 19).

- Jealousy, hatred, and misery will drive us to do and say some absolutely horrible things to the people around us.
- Jealousy is a cancer of the soul that can only be cured by the gospel.

A STRANGE BRIDE PRICE (1 SAMUEL 18:20-30)

None of Saul's manipulative scheming worked—the Lord blessed and made David successful in spite of the traps Saul set for him.

- Even when Saul gave away his daughter Merab to another man, Saul's other daughter Michal fell in love with David (vs. 20).
- Saul saw this as an opportunity to trap David once more by setting a very interesting (and quite dangerous) bride price (vs. 21-25).

A bride price was a sum of money, property, or wealth paid by a groom or his family to the bride's family in exchange for her hand in marriage.

- David was a commoner from a poor family (vs. 23), so Saul knew he couldn't pay a bride price for a princess.
- Saul hatched a scheme for David to pay a bride price that was impossible and would surely lead to David's death (vs. 25).

WELL THIS IS AWKWARD...

In the ancient Near East, heads or hands were cut off from the slain victims of opposing armies and counted to prove that the enemies were slain.

- Circumcision was required of all of male Jews as a sign of the covenant God made with Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14).
- The fact that the Philistines were "uncircumcised" was a sign that they weren't God's people.
- Obviously, to harvest such a bride price would require for David and his men to kill 100 Philistines.
- Then it required the very humiliating, sadistic, and demeaning task of acquiring this very strange bounty for the very unwell Saul.
- Amazingly, David didn't complain, protest, or fuss about it.

David and his men went out and killed 200 Philistines and brought the bounty to Saul in full (vs. 27).

- Imagine the look of shock and amazement in Saul's face when David returned! Saul had to recognize that the Lord was with David (vs. 28).
- Saul had to pay up and give his daughter Michal to David in marriage (vs. 29).

Saul became even more afraid of David and regarded him as his enemy (vs. 29).

- Because the Lord was with him, everything David did was successful and his name became well known throughout Israel (vs. 30).
- Everything Saul did completely backfired and made him all the more miserable, jealous, and paranoid as he watched the Lord prosper the young man that his heart despised.

TRUE FRIENDSHIP.

- You know you have a true friend where there is mutual, unconditional love that isn't envious, proud, boastful, or self-seeking (1 Cor. 13:4-5).
- The best kind of friendships are the ones we make with those who share our spiritual values and want Jesus to be center of everything in our lives.
- To make a friend, you have to learn to be a friend.

SUCCESS, POPULARITY, AND PRAISE.

- Adversity builds our inner character; praise and popularity reveal it.
- It can become very easy to believe all the praise that comes our way, but if we live for the praise of others, we'll die by their criticism (Eccl. 7:21).
- Every success we experience is simply a result of the gifts, talents, and blessings that God has given us—do we acknowledge Him?

JEALOUSY—THE CANCER OF THE SOUL.

- When we're not right with God and aren't at peace with ourselves, we can resent others who are and are being blessed.
- Jealousy can make us say, believe, and desire horrible things.
- God has a plan for you, your neighbor, and anyone else you're envious of—jealousy is choosing to not trust God's plan for your life.

THE GOSPEL IS THE ONLY SOLUTION FOR JEALOUSY.

- Bring your feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy before the Lord—you are significant because God has set His love on you in Christ.
- If you're envious and jealous of someone else, be honest with yourself and the Lord—confess and repent of it and believe the gospel.
- Trust in God's plan for your life, and celebrate what God is doing in the lives of others around you.