

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 9TH-10TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

A STEP BETWEEN (1 SAMUEL 20:1-4)

King Saul has been pursuing David in an attempt to kill him.

- After God delivered David from Saul in Naioth in a very dramatic fashion, David made his escape and came directly to Jonathan (vs. 1).
- David is confused and deeply hurt over his father-in-law's treatment of him. He asks Jonathan, "What have I done? How have I sinned against your father...?"

When people accuse or mistreat us, our natural inclination is often to become defensive and disrespectful and to retaliate.

- We demonstrate integrity, humility, and a healthy self-awareness when we respond like David and honestly ask the question of others who know us—"Did I do anything wrong? How have I sinned?"
- We must then be willing to honestly listen.

We might actually have unintentionally contributed to the misunderstanding or conflict that's causing us to be attacked—but unless we're willing to ask and listen with humility, we'll continue setting ourselves up for the same kinds of conflicts to repeat themselves.

- Sometimes, we're falsely accused and unjustly attacked due to the brokenness and sin in the heart of the other party.

Jonathan essentially says to David, "You've done nothing deserving of death, and my father hasn't made me aware of any real intentions he has to kill you, so this must all be a giant misunderstanding!" (vs. 2).

- David responds by saying, "Your father knows that you and I are close, intimate friends, so he wouldn't tell you if he truly intended to kill me".

"...THERE IS BUT A STEP BETWEEN ME AND DEATH."

Since David has narrowly escaped death at the hands of Saul multiple times, he's not exaggerating or speaking figuratively.

- David is deeply discouraged and confused and certain his death could happen at any moment.
- God had given him a promise that he'd someday be king, but right then, that promise probably felt like a distant fantasy.

Jonathan's response is beautiful—he simply encourages David by offering him unconditional support and help ("Whatever you say, I'll do for you." vs. 4).

- Friends don't need lectures when they're hurting.
- When those we love are discouraged, hurting, and confused, the best thing we can do for them is to give them our presence, support, and encouragement.

COVENANTAL FRIENDSHIP (1 SAMUEL 20:5-23)

David puts together a plan to confirm once and for all Saul's intentions towards him (vs. 5-7).

- It was customary for Jewish families to hold a family meal at the new moon (Num. 10:10) and Saul would expect David to attend.
- Saul's response to David's absence from the feast will reveal Saul's genuine attitude and intentions towards David.

David then basically says to Jonathan, "Remember the covenant we've made and deal kindly with me, but if I've done anything wrong, then kill me yourself" (vs. 8)!

- He's essentially wanting to know if Jonathan is still supporting him and has his back.
- Jonathan encourages and reassures David that he'll tell him about his father's intentions and remain loyal to the covenant (vs. 9).

Jonathan will discover the state of his father's heart towards David and relay the message to David (vs. 11-13).

- In response, Jonathan asks David to reaffirm their covenant with one another (vs. 14-17).
- By faith, Jonathan knew that even though things were dark and seemingly hopeless in David's life, he would be king someday.

Jonathan asked David to promise that David and his descendants would not kill or mistreat the descendants of the house of Jonathan once David was king (vs. 14-15).

- In ancient monarchies, when a royal family was replaced by another, it was common for the new royal house to kill any potential rulers or threats from the old royal house.
- Jonathan and David promised each other they'd stay loyal as friends, no matter what.

The seasons, circumstances, and situations of life can often tempt us to not honor our commitments and stay loyal to them.

- Life can sometimes get in the way of us staying committed to our promise of exclusively loving, prioritizing, and caring for our spouse above all others.
- Our commitments to the Lord can often waver when busyness creeps into our lives.

It is difficult to stay committed to the things God has called us to now, but it will become increasingly more difficult the closer we get to the return of Christ!

- "...in the last days there will come times of difficulty" (2 Tim. 3:1, ESV), and "...the love of many will grow cold" (Matt. 24:12, ESV).
- We must be people who keep our word, honor our commitments, and remain faithful.

To communicate Saul's intentions, David and Jonathan come up with a plan involving shooting three arrows out in the field near where David was hiding (vs. 18-23).

- Jonathan would call to the boy who was helping him and, in this way, signal David and tell him what to do next.
- Even if some of Saul's spies were present, they wouldn't uncover Jonathan's support of David.

THE SPITEFUL KING (1 SAMUEL 20:24-42)

THE DINNER DOESN'T GO WELL...

On the first night of the feast, Saul notices David's place is empty and just assumes he was ceremonially unclean (Lev. 7:20-21) that night and would be there the next (vs. 24-26).

- But when David doesn't show up on the second day, Saul asks Jonathan where he is (vs. 27).
- Interestingly, Saul won't refer to David by his name, instead calling him the "son of Jesse".

Following their prearranged plan, Jonathan answers that David asked permission to return to Bethlehem to his family for a special sacrifice (vs. 28-29).

- At this point, Saul becomes absolutely unhinged, and his true intentions towards David are loud and clear.

- Instead of attacking David, Saul insults and berates his own son (vs. 30).

Saul curses at and calls Jonathan an illegitimate son who is refusing to carry on the family legacy and crown.

- But *the Lord* had already taken the kingdom from Saul and made it very clear that none of Saul's sons would ever be on the throne!
- Saul was fighting against the will of God and angry at his son Jonathan for not doing the same (vs. 31).

When Jonathan tries defending David's cause to Saul, he's met by a spear flung his way via his father (vs. 32-33).

- Jonathan is angry and heartbroken, but at least he knows that Saul's intentions toward David are crystal clear—Saul decisively wants David dead, and David is not safe anywhere near King Saul or the palace (vs. 34).
- This was heartbreaking news.

In the morning, Jonathan reports the news to David through the signal of the arrows (vs. 35-39).

- When the boy helping Jonathan came back with the arrows, Jonathan gave him the bow and sent him back to the city, and then he ran out to meet David (vs. 40).
- This was a profoundly emotional and heartbreaking farewell.

David and Jonathan were best friends, family (by marriage), and spiritual brothers.

- This was goodbye, and it seemed like it was permanent.
- In the Near East, it's not uncommon for men (even today) to publicly display their emotions and show physical affection—Jonathan and David wept and embraced and kissed each other (vs. 41).

Jonathan says goodbye to David as the men reaffirm their covenant once more, knowing that the Lord would honor the commitment they made to each other.

- The two of them would see each other only one more time before Jonathan's death (2 Sam. 1:17-27).
- David would grieve deeply over the death of his friend, but as he promised, he kept the covenant with Jonathan's descendants (2 Sam. 9).

LOYALTY TO THE COVENANT.

- Jonathan is an example to us of a friend who was committed, faithful, and loyal to God's anointed one (*Mashiach*) no matter what it cost him.
- There are times when it would personally benefit Jonathan to sell David out and walk away from the relationship—but he doesn't because he has entered into a covenant with David.
- There's a bigger picture within this story...

A GOD OF COVENANT.

- A covenant is a relationship between two partners who make binding promises to each other and work together to reach a common goal.
- Marriage is a covenant—a husband and wife enter an exclusive, formal relationship of lifelong faithfulness and devotion. They then work as partners to reach a common goal, like building a life or raising children together.
- Throughout the Bible, God interacts with humanity through covenants—with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and with David.
- Through Jesus, God establishes a new, everlasting covenant where He'll write His law on the hearts of His people, bring complete forgiveness of sins, and raise up a faithful, eternal King from the line of David (Jesus).
- It's the blood of Jesus that seals this new covenant between God and His people (Heb. 7-10).
- We have forgiveness of sins and access to God because of the sacrifice of Jesus the Messiah in our place!
- Our responsibility in this covenant is to receive what God has offered us in faith and to allow His Spirit inside us to transform us.

GOD'S COVENANT PEOPLE.

- By faith, we have entered into a covenant through God's anointed one, the son of David, Jesus.
- Because of Jesus' initiating work in this covenant of going to the cross, we can receive forgiveness of sins and have God's Spirit within us.
- We're now in partnership with Jesus to display His image by living righteously and carrying on His mission to renew the world.
- The covenant we make with Jesus in faith is for us to honor Him as the King and to be His friend.
- There are those who are like Saul, and irrationally despise God's anointed one, Jesus.
- They will hate us when we stand in allegiance with God's anointed one, Jesus.
- There will be things in our lives that will compete with our allegiance and loyalty to Jesus.

LOYALTY TO THE COVENANT.

- God is faithful, committed, and loyal to you with an unending, never stopping kind of love.
- What does loyalty to this covenant look like?
 - Jesus alone being Lord over our lives.
 - A willingness to stand for Jesus, no matter what it costs (Matt. 10:33).
 - Surrender to God's transforming work.
 - Enduring to the end (Matt. 24:13).

"WILL YOU MARRY ME?"

- "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Matthew 26:28, NIV