

David and Jonathan's Sad Farewell

I Samuel 20:1-42

Intro: This lengthy chapter details a wonderful bond of love and devotion!

- I. David's meeting with Jonathan- v. 1-10
 - a. (1Sa 20:1-4) David asks Jonathan about Saul's intentions towards him; Jonathan promises his help to David
 - b. So Jonathan said to him, "God forbid!" This assured David that Jonathan was still his loyal friend, Jonathan also assured David of his protection by warning David of Saul's intentions.
 - c. Why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so! Apparently, David wondered why Jonathan didn't tell him about the attempted arrest at Naioth. Jonathan expressed astonishment that his father did not tell him, but assures David of his heart towards him.
 - d. There is but a step between me and death: This reveals David's discouragement. He knew that Saul attempted to kill him many times, and it seemed Saul would not quit until David was gone. David felt that his death was inevitable and that he walked on a slippery plank over a great canyon.
 - e. (1Sa 20:5-11) David proposes to test Saul's attitude.
 - f. If your father misses me: David asked Jonathan to observe Saul's reaction to David's absence at an important feast held monthly for the high officials of state. David wondered if Saul would take the opportunity to reconcile or take the opportunity to kill him.
 - g. David's desperation: v. 8-9
 - h. Who will tell me? David now poses a practical problem. If Saul has determined evil against David and Jonathan intends to warn him, how will Jonathan get the message to David?
 - i. Jonathan then discusses a plan with David
- II. Jonathan's covenant with David- v. 11-23
 - a. Why would David turn to Saul's son while under Saul's attack? Only because of Jonathan's covenant before God- see 18:1-5

- b. Covenant faithfulness is all over this chapter
 - c. The Hebrew “hesed” v. 8
 - i. “Servant”- It is not only that God made promises the marvel of Divine grace is, that God should condescend to stand on man's platform, and join with man in putting himself under solemn pledge.
 - ii. God was always and is always faithful to His pledges in His covenants!
 - iii. This is not a contract between equals!
 - iv. There is security in covenant!
 - d. (1Sa 20:12-13) Jonathan will discover the state of his father’s heart towards David.
 - e. (1Sa 20:14-17) In response, Jonathan asks David to commit himself in a covenant.
 - f. You shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever: Jonathan was aware of the political dynamic between the family of David and the family of Jonathan. In those days when one royal house replaced another it was common for the new royal house to kill all the potential rulers from the old royal house. Jonathan knew that one day David and his descendants would rule over Israel and he wanted a promise that David and his descendants will not kill or mistreat the descendants of Jonathan.
 - g. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David: Jonathan and David agreed to care for one another. Jonathan agreed to care for David in the face of Saul’s threat and David agreed to care for Jonathan and his family in the future. David fulfilled this promise to Jonathan (2 Samuel 9:1-8 and 2Sa 21:7).
 - h. The signal: Three arrows: These would bring one of two messages. Either Saul’s heart has changed towards David and there is safety for you, or Saul was still determined to kill David and the Lord has sent you away.
- III. A sad farewell- v. 24-42
- a. (1Sa 20:24-34) Saul is enraged when he learns of David’s absence.
 - b. Jonathan covered for David- just like Michal did. By the way the Bible is not suggesting this, it is simply reporting this as a fact of what happened. This may have been a lie, and it is a sin to tell one
 - c. He shall surely die- see 19:6
 - d. Saul’s anger was aroused... “You son of a perverse, rebellious woman!” Jonathan knew from this response that Saul’s heart was settled on evil against David. If Saul’s heart was different towards David he might have been disappointed but not furious.

- e. He even wanted to kill Jonathan!
- f. “But there is something still nobler – when one dares in any company to avow his loyalty to the Lord Jesus. Like David, he is now in obscurity and disrepute; his name is not popular; his gospel is misrepresented; his followers are subjected to rebuke and scorn. These are days when to stand up for anything more than mere conventional religion must cost something; and for this reason let us never flinch.” (Meyer)
- g. (1Sa 20:35-40) Jonathan reports to David through the signal of the arrows.
- h. There is a Divine purpose determining our course. To the had there was but royal caprice in the flight of the arrow. “What are you going, my little fellow?” “I am picking up the prince’s arrows; we generally go for game, but he is playing at it today.” That was all he knew; how little did he divine the purpose of his Master, and still less realise that each flitting arrow was, so to speak, taken from God’s quiver and directed by His hand. There is no chance in a good man’s life. Let us recognise the providence of the trifle. He is sending us away.
- i. Is not the arrow beyond you? It took courage for Jonathan to communicate with David, even secretly – because he knew that if his father became aware of it, he would focus his murderous rage against Jonathan again. Jonathan had a noble commitment to David as a friend.
- j. Jonathan and David knew of the matter: A small thing – the signal of a single arrow – told David his whole life was changed. He would no longer be welcome at the palace. He was officially a fugitive
- k. They wept together
- l. Was David in God’s will? How can anyone set out on such a bleak road and be in the will of God? Because God often has His people spend at least some time on a bleak road, and He appoints some of His favorites to spend a lot of time on that road – think of Job, Joseph, Paul, and even Jesus.
- m. This bleak road was important in David’s life because if God would put David in a place where people must depend on him, God would teach David to depend upon God alone. Not himself, not Saul, not Jonathan, not anyone except God

Conclusion:

- Sanctified friendships are God's hands of guidance. Such lead us always to Himself and never from Him.
- Friendships formed for social or temporal gain not real friendships True friends lead us to God.
- True friendships are stable. Human alliances are fragile
- There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother!
- True friendship:
 - Sacrificial
 - Based on righteousness
 - Love- being popular is different than being loved!