

## LII. THE BLESSINGS OF COVENANT FAITHFULNESS: 1 Samuel 20

### INTRODUCTION.

#### **QUESTION 1. What is a Covenant?**

**ANSWER.** A Covenant is a solemn agreement which establishes a binding relationship between at least two people, with rules to follow, blessings for faithfulness, and curses or consequences for unfaithfulness.

#### **EXAMPLES:**

- (i) There is the Covenant of Marriage between one man and one woman.
- (ii) There is the Covenant of Membership in a local church.
- (iii) There is the Covenant of Redemption between God the Father and the Son.
- (iv) There is the Adamic Covenant (*the Covenant of Works*) between God and Adam (as well as Adam's Posterity).
- (v) There is the New Covenant between God and Christ (as well as those united to Christ by faith).
- (vi) In the Scriptures we also have The Noahic Covenant made with Noah and his posterity.
- (vii) The Abrahamic Covenant made with Abraham and his posterity.
- (viii) The Mosaic Covenant made with Israel at Sinai.
- (ix) The Davidic Covenant made with David and His posterity.
- (x) In addition to these major Covenants revealed in Scripture, there is a Covenant of Friendship which Jonathan and David make with one another.

#### **QUESTION 2. What produces wonderful blessings and happiness in a people?**

**(one) ANSWER.** The blessings which flow from covenant faithfulness.

#### **EXAMPLES:**

**(i) When God's elect are faithful to the New Covenant established through Christ wonderful blessings and happiness are produced.**

When God's people are

*trusting Christ alone for salvation,*

*resting in the sovereign providence of God,*

*striving to walk in a pleasing manner to the Lord by the power of the Spirit,*

*worshipping God according to His Word,*

*evangelizing the lost,*

*and discipling the saved*

blessings and happiness abound.

**(ii) When husbands and wives are faithful to the marriage covenant wonderful blessings and happiness abound.** When husbands love their

wives as Christ loved the church, and wives submit to their husbands as the church submits to Christ, wonderful blessings and happiness flow.

**(iii) When pastors and church members are faithful to the membership covenant wonderful blessings and happiness abound.** When we labor alongside one another to love God, one another, and our neighbors, blessings and happiness abound.

*What produces wonderful blessings and happiness in a people? The blessings which flow from covenant faithfulness.*

**Yet the opposite is also true.**

*What produces horrible curses and sadness in a people? The curses and sadness which flow from covenant unfaithfulness.*

**(i)** When God's people are unfaithful to Him in word or in deed, not happiness but sadness flows.

**(ii)** When husbands and wives are unfaithful to one another, not blessings but curses sprout.

**(iii)** When pastors and members are unfaithful to one another, we will not see blessing and happiness but sadness and curses.

*It seems to me that much of the suffering and sadness in our current culture can be boiled down to this truth: Many today take very lightly their Covenants, undervaluing both the blessing of covenant faithfulness and the cursing of covenant unfaithfulness.*

*We need to recover by God's grace, as a society in general, a solid view of the blessings of covenant faithfulness.*

That actually brings us right to our text for today, in 1 Samuel 20.

**THEME.** The Blessings of Covenant Faithfulness.

**CON(TEXT).** King Saul's relentless pursuit of David, who is the Lord's anointed.

*Remember David and Jonathan had already entered into a covenant together at the beginning of chapter 18 of 1 Samuel, shortly after David killed Goliath.*

**1 Samuel 18:3-4** "3 Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 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."

- **JOHN GILL, commenting on 1 Samuel 18:3-4, says, "[This is a] covenant of friendship; [they] entered into a solemn agreement to keep up and maintain a cordial respect to each other, and to support each other's interest both in life and after death, whoever was the survivor." — Gill, John. Gill's Bible Commentary. OSNOVA. Kindle Edition.**

Consider the Covenant theme of 1 Samuel 20:

**I) The word *Covenant* (Heb. *Berit*) is in verse 8 and implied in 16.**

**1 Samuel 20:8a (David)** "Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant [*Berit*] of the LORD with you.. ."

**1 Samuel 20:16** "And Jonathan made a covenant ["cut (a covenant)"] with the house of David, saying, 'May the LORD take vengeance on David's enemies.'"

**II) The word *Hesed*, which is the *Covenant-Love/Mercy/Kindness* (Eng. *Lovingkindness/Kindly/Mercy/Steadfast love*) is in verses 8, 14, and 15.**

**1 Samuel 20:8a (David)** "Therefore deal kindly [*Hesed* - *lovingkindness / steadfast love*] with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you.. ."

**1 Samuel 20:14-15** "14 If I am still alive, show me the steadfast love [*Hesed*] of the LORD, that I may not die; 15 and do not cut off your steadfast love [*Hesed*] from my house forever, when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth."

**DOCTRINE.** There are no blessings so great as the blessings of Covenant Faithfulness.

**OUTLINE.** 8 particulars to note.

**Because of the Covenant between David and Jonathan,**

- I)** David had a hiding place (1 Sam. 20:1-2).
- II)** David could ask whatever he wanted from the one with whom he was in covenant (1 Sam. 20:3-7).
- III)** David could expect lovingkindness (1 Sam. 20:8-12).
- IV)** David could rely on faithfulness (1 Sam. 20:13).
- V)** Jonathan could rely on lovingkindness and faithfulness even after he died (v. 13).
- VI)** Jonathan was mistreated by the enemies of the one with whom he was in covenant (1 Sam. 20:24-30).
- VII)** Jonathan humbled himself in order to elevate the one with whom he was in covenant (1 Sam. 20:31-34).
- VIII)** David went forth in peace (1 Sam. 20:35-42).

Because of the Covenant,

**I) David had a hiding place (1 Sam. 20:1-2).**

**1 Samuel 20:1-2**

"1 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came and said before Jonathan, (hiding place) "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?" 2 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. And why should my father hide this from me? It is not so."

- [REPEAT] Because of the Covenant, David had a hiding place.

### ***I.2) Believers, because of the New Covenant you also have a hiding place.***

*If you are in Christ, the Lord is a hiding place for you, where you can get shelter from sins and suffering and sadness.*

- **Psalm 32:7a** "You are a hiding place for me;"
  - *God has an eternal hiding place for all nations, man and woman, boy and girl, great sinner and prideful hypocrite. God hides sinners in the person of His Son wherein they are safe from sin, the hard of suffering, and victory of sadness!*

*Do you need shelter from your sins? relief from your suffering? protection from sadness? There is a hiding place, and it is Christ.*

Because of the Covenant,

## **II) David could ask whatever he wanted (1 Sam. 20:3-7).**

### **1 Samuel 20:3-7**

"3 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." 4 Then Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you." (**petition**) 5 David said to Jonathan, "Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit at table with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field till the third day at evening. 6 If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the clan.' 7 If he says, 'Good!' it will be well with your servant, but if he is angry, then know that harm is determined by him."

- [REPEAT] Because of the Covenant, David could ask whatever he wanted.

### ***II.2) Believers, because of the New Covenant you can ask God whatever you want.***

*If you go to God the Father in prayer, in the name of Christ Jesus, Jesus says you can ask anything in His name!*

- **John 14:13-14** "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."
  - *God's ear is open to you, believer, His door is unlocked, His wallet full,*

*His eyes bright, His hands outstretched, His shoes on, and His heart full of love and compassion because of the Covenant!*

Because of the Covenant,

### **III) David could expect lovingkindness (1 Sam. 20:8-12).**

#### **1 Samuel 20:8-12**

8 Therefore deal kindly [Hesed - lovingkindness / steadfast love] with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant [Berit] of the LORD with you. But if there is guilt in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father? 9 And Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! If I knew that it was determined by my father that harm should come to you, would I not tell you?" "10 Then David said to Jonathan, 'Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly?' 11 And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So they both went out into the field.

12 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?"

- [REPEAT] Because of the Covenant, David could ask whatever he wanted.

### **III.2) Believers, because of the New Covenant you can expect lovingkindness all the days of your life.**

- **Psalm 23:6** "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."
  - *Christ—the hound of heaven—will not only track you down to save you in the first place, He will follow you all the days of your life with His steadfast love!*

**BOYS AND GIRLS**, do you think you could outrun Jesus? NO WAY. David says "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" and he is right. IF YOU TRUST CHRIST ALONE FOR SALVATION AS HE IS OFFERED TO YOU IN THE GOSPEL, You can be certain you will never outrun God's lovingkindness.

Because of the Covenant,

### **IV) David could rely on faithfulness (1 Sam. 20:13).**

#### **1 Samuel 20:13**

"But should it please my father to do you harm, the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also if I do not disclose it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety (covenant faithfulness). May the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father."

- [REPEAT] Because of the Covenant, David could rely on faithfulness.

#### **IV.2) Believers, because of the New Covenant you can rely on the faithfulness of God.**

- **2 Timothy 2:13** "If we are faithless, [God] remains faithful. . ."

##### **(i) God is faithful and called you believers into the fellowship of His Son.**

- **1 Corinthians 1:9** "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

##### **(ii) God is faithful and therefore will sanctify you Christians completely.**

- **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24** "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is *faithful*; he will surely do it."

**BOYS AND GIRLS,** God will continue transforming His people by the power of the Holy Spirit to be less like sinful Adam and more like righteous Christ all the days of their life. Many times sanctification is painful, but the result is always joyful.

##### **(iii) God is faithful and therefore will guard you saints against the evil one.**

- **2 Thessalonians 3:3** "But the Lord is *faithful*. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one."

*I have to hang my eternity not on my faithfulness to God, but on God's faithfulness to me in Christ because of the Covenant!*

Because of the Covenant,

#### **V) Jonathan could expect lovingkindness and rely on faithfulness even after his death (1 Sam. 20:14-17).**

**1 Samuel 20:14-17** "14 If I am still alive, show me the steadfast love [*Hesed*] of the LORD, that I may not die; 15 and do not cut off your steadfast love [*Hesed*] from my house forever, when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." 16 And Jonathan made a covenant [*Berit*] with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD take vengeance on David's enemies." 17 And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

18 Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. 19 On the third day go down quickly to the place where you hid yourself when the matter was in hand, and remain beside the stone heap. 20 And I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I shot at a mark. 21 And behold, I will send the boy, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I say to the boy, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you, take them,' then you are to come, for, as the LORD lives, it is safe for you and there is no danger. 22 But if I say to the youth, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you,' then go, for the LORD has sent you away. 23 And as for the matter of which you and I have spoken, behold, the LORD is between you and me forever."

- [REPEAT] Because of the Covenant, Jonathan could expect lovingkindness and rely on faithfulness even after his death.

***V.2) Believers, because of the New Covenant you can expect loving kindness and rely on faithfulness even after your death.***

- **1 Corinthians 15:19** "If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. . ."

Because of the Covenant,

**VI) Jonathan was mistreated by the enemies (1 Sam. 20:24-30).**

**1 Samuel 20:24-34**

"24 So David hid himself in the field. And when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. 25 The king sat on his seat, as at other times, on the seat by the wall. Jonathan sat opposite, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty.

26 Yet Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him. He is not clean; surely he is not clean." 27 But on the second day, the day after the new moon, David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has not the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?" 28 Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem. 29 He said, 'Let me go, for our clan holds a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. So now, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away and see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table."

30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, 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?"

- [REPEAT] Because of the Covenant, Jonathan was mistreated by the enemies.

***VI.2) Believers, because of the New Covenant you will also be mistreated by the enemies.***

- **John 15:18-19** "18 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.. . ."

Because of the Covenant,



## **VII) Jonathan humbled himself in order to elevate the one with whom he was in covenant (1 Sam. 20:31-34).**

### **1 Samuel 20:31-34**

"31 For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Therefore send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die.' 32 Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, 'Why should he be put to death? What has he done?' 33 But Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. 34 And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him."

- [REPEAT] Because of the Covenant, Jonathan humbled himself in order to elevate the one with whom he was in covenant.

### ***VII.2) Believers, has Christ not done this for you?***

- **Philippians 2:5-8** "5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

### ***EXHORTATION: Therefore you must do this for Christ and for others!***

- **Philippians 2:1-4** "1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Because of the Covenant,

## **VIII) David went forth in peace (1 Sam. 20:35-42).**

### **1 Samuel 20:35-42**

35 In the morning Jonathan went out into the field to the appointment with David, and with him a little boy. 36 And he said to his boy, "Run and find the arrows that I shoot." As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37 And when the boy came to the place of the arrow that Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the boy and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?" 38 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. 39 But the boy knew nothing. Only Jonathan and



David knew the matter. 40 And Jonathan gave his weapons to his boy and said to him, "Go and carry them to the city." 41 And as soon as the boy had gone, David rose from beside the stone heap and fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times. And they kissed one another and wept with one another, David weeping the most. 42 Then 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.'" (**Peace**) And he rose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city."

- [REPEAT] Because of the Covenant, David went forth in peace.

***VIII.2) Believers, because of the New Covenant, you and I have peace with God and can therefore have peace with one another.***

- **Romans 5:1** "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
  - **Romans 12:18** "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."

## **EXHORTATION.**

By God's grace, strive to be faithful to your covenants!

Covenant Unfaithfulness yields terrible curses and sadness. Yet Covenant Faithfulness, like God is for us in Christ, and like David and Jonathan exemplified in 1 Samuel 20, brings forth great blessings and happiness!

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## **STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

### **Understanding Covenants**

- **Defining Covenants:** Based on the sermon, what is a covenant, and what are its key components? How does this definition enhance your understanding of relationships in the Bible?
- **Examples of Covenants:** The sermon listed several covenants. Choose one and explain how it reflects the characteristics of a covenant as described in the notes.
- **Covenant of Friendship:** How does the covenant between David and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 18:3-4 and 20:8, 16 illustrate the concept of

covenant faithfulness? What can we learn from their relationship about loyalty and commitment?

### **Blessings and Curses of Covenant Faithfulness**

- **Blessings of Faithfulness:** According to the sermon, what specific blessings flow from covenant faithfulness in contexts like the New Covenant, marriage, and church membership? Provide examples from your own observations or experiences.
- **Consequences of Unfaithfulness:** The sermon states that covenant unfaithfulness leads to "horrible curses and sadness." How does this principle manifest in the examples given (e.g., unfaithful spouses, unfaithful church members)? Can you think of modern-day examples?
- **Cultural Reflection:** The sermon suggests that much of the suffering in our current culture stems from taking covenants lightly. Discuss specific societal trends or issues that might reflect this problem.

### **Exploring 1 Samuel 20**

- **Context of 1 Samuel 20:** Describe the situation between King Saul, David, and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20. How does Saul's pursuit of David set the stage for the covenant interactions between David and Jonathan?
- **Hesed in Action:** The Hebrew word *Hesed* (lovingkindness/steadfast love) appears in 1 Samuel 20:8, 14–15. How do David and Jonathan demonstrate *Hesed* toward each other in this chapter? What does this teach us about covenant relationships?
- **Covenant Language:** Identify the specific verses in 1 Samuel 20 that mention or imply a covenant. How does the use of covenant language emphasize the seriousness of David and Jonathan's commitment?

### **The Eight Particulars of Covenant Faithfulness**

- **Hiding Place (Point I):** How did the covenant provide David with a hiding place in 1 Samuel 20:1-2? How does the New Covenant provide believers with a "hiding place" in Christ (Psalm 32:7)? Share a personal example of finding refuge in God.
- **Asking Freely (Point II):** In 1 Samuel 20:3-7, David could ask Jonathan for anything because of their covenant. How does John 14:13-14 encourage believers to approach God in prayer? What limits, if any, should we consider when asking God for "whatever we want"?
- **Lovingkindness (Point III):** The sermon connects David's expectation of *Hesed* (1 Samuel 20:8-12) to the believer's assurance of God's goodness

and mercy (Psalm 23:6). How does knowing God's steadfast love impacts your daily life or decision-making?

- **Faithfulness (Point IV):** Jonathan's commitment to warn David of danger (1 Samuel 20:13) reflects covenant faithfulness. How do the verses cited (e.g., 2 Timothy 2:13, 1 Corinthians 1:9) assure believers of God's faithfulness? How can we mirror this faithfulness in our relationships?
- **Post-Death Promises (Point V):** Jonathan asked for *Hesed* to extend to his family after his death (1 Samuel 20:14-17). How does the New Covenant provide hope beyond this life (1 Corinthians 15:19)? Discuss how this affects your perspective on death and eternity.
- **Mistreatment (Point VI):** Jonathan faced mistreatment from Saul because of his loyalty to David (1 Samuel 20:24-30). How does John 15:18-19 prepare believers for similar opposition? Share a time when your faith led to misunderstanding or mistreatment.
- **Humility (Point VII):** Jonathan humbled himself to protect and elevate David (1 Samuel 20:31-34). How does Christ's humility in Philippians 2:5-8 serve as a model for believers? What practical steps can you take to prioritize others' interests over your own (Philippians 2:1-4)?
- **Peace (Point VIII):** David departed in peace because of the covenant (1 Samuel 20:35-42). How does the New Covenant provide peace with God (Romans 5:1) and encourage peace with others (Romans 12:18)? Discuss ways to pursue peace in your community or relationships.

### Application and Exhortation

- **Striving for Faithfulness:** The sermon exhorts believers to strive for covenant faithfulness by God's grace. What specific areas of your life (e.g., marriage, church membership, friendship, faith) need greater commitment to covenant faithfulness? How can you grow in this area?
- **Overcoming Unfaithfulness:** Reflect on a time when you struggled to be faithful to a commitment (to God, others, or yourself). How did it affect you or others? What steps can you take to recover and pursue faithfulness moving forward?
- **Encouraging Others:** How can you encourage those around you (e.g., family, church members, friends) to value and uphold their covenants? Share practical ideas for fostering a culture of covenant faithfulness in your community.

### Theological and Practical Reflection

- **New Covenant Focus:** The sermon frequently parallels the David-Jonathan covenant with the New Covenant in Christ. How does

understanding the New Covenant deepen your appreciation for the blessings described in 1 Samuel 20?

- **Balancing Blessings and Curses:** The sermon emphasizes both the blessings of covenant faithfulness and the curses of unfaithfulness. How can this balance motivate you to pursue obedience without falling into legalism or fear?
- **Covenant in Everyday Life:** Choose one covenant from your life (e.g., marriage, church membership, friendship). How can the principles from 1 Samuel 20 (e.g., *Hesed*, faithfulness, humility) guide your actions in that relationship this week?
- **For Younger Audiences:** The sermon addresses children, saying they cannot outrun Jesus' love (Psalm 23:6). How would you explain the concept of God's steadfast love to a child? What examples from David and Jonathan's story could you use to make it relatable?

### Group Discussion Prompts

- **Group Reflection:** As a group, discuss which of the eight blessings of the David-Jonathan covenant (hiding place, asking freely, lovingkindness, etc.) resonates most with your current spiritual journey. Why?
- **Testimony Sharing:** Share a personal story of how covenant faithfulness (to God or others) brought blessings or how unfaithfulness led to challenges. How did these experiences shape your understanding of covenants?
- **Cultural Application:** As a group, brainstorm ways your church or community can recover a "solid view of the blessings of covenant faithfulness" in today's culture. What practical steps can you take together?

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## Written form of Sermon

### Sermon LII: The Blessings of Covenant Faithfulness

Text: 1 Samuel 20

#### Introduction

Beloved, what is a covenant? A covenant constitutes a solemn agreement that establishes a binding relationship between at least two parties, governed by rules, enriched with blessings for faithfulness, and marked by consequences for unfaithfulness. Scripture reveals numerous covenants: the covenant of marriage uniting one man and one woman; the covenant of membership within a local

church; the covenant of redemption between God the Father and the Son; the Adamic covenant with Adam and his posterity; the Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants; and the New Covenant, forged between God and Christ, embracing all who are united to Christ by faith. Yet, Scripture also presents a unique covenant of friendship, exemplified by Jonathan and David.

What produces abundant blessings and profound happiness among a people? The answer resounds clearly: the blessings that flow from covenant faithfulness. When God's elect remain faithful to the New Covenant, trusting Christ alone for salvation, resting in God's sovereign providence, striving to please the Lord by the Spirit's power, worshipping according to His Word, evangelizing the lost, and discipling the saved, blessings and happiness abound. When husbands love their wives as Christ loves the church, and wives submit to their husbands as the church submits to Christ, the marriage covenant yields joy and flourishing. When pastors and church members labor together in love for God, one another, and their neighbors, the membership covenant fosters harmony and delight.

Yet, the converse holds true. Covenant unfaithfulness sows seeds of sorrow and reaps curses. When God's people stray in word or deed, sadness, not happiness, prevails. When spouses betray their marital vows, curses, not blessings, emerge. When pastors and members neglect their mutual commitments, division and grief replace unity and joy. Much of the suffering in our present culture stems from a casual disregard for covenants, undervaluing the blessings of faithfulness and ignoring the consequences of unfaithfulness. By God's grace, we must recover a robust understanding of the blessings that flow from covenant faithfulness.

This truth brings us to our text in 1 Samuel 20, where we behold a vivid portrait of covenant faithfulness between David and Jonathan. Our theme today is clear: **The Blessings of Covenant Faithfulness**. Let us explore this theme through the lens of our text.

### **Context**

The backdrop of 1 Samuel 20 is King Saul's relentless pursuit of David, the Lord's anointed. Amid this turmoil, David and Jonathan had already forged a covenant of friendship, as recorded in 1 Samuel 18:3-4: "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." As John Gill observes, this covenant of friendship bound them to maintain cordial respect and support each other's interests, both in life and beyond.

In 1 Samuel 20, the covenant theme shines brightly. The Hebrew word *berit*, meaning covenant, appears in verse 8, where David implores Jonathan, "Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the Lord with you." Verse 16 implies a covenant as Jonathan binds himself to David's house, saying, "May the Lord take vengeance on David's enemies." Moreover, the word *hesed*—denoting covenant love, mercy, or steadfast love—

appears in verses 8, 14, and 15, underscoring the depth of their mutual commitment.

### **Doctrine**

From this text, we derive a profound doctrine: **There are no blessings so great as the blessings of covenant faithfulness.**

### **Outline**

Let us consider eight particulars that illustrate the blessings of the covenant between David and Jonathan, each with implications for believers under the New Covenant.

#### **I. A Hiding Place (1 Samuel 20:1-2)**

Because of the covenant, David found a hiding place. Fleeing from Saul's wrath, David sought refuge with Jonathan, crying, "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?" Jonathan reassured him, "Far from it! You shall not die." The covenant provided David a sanctuary in his distress.

Believers, under the New Covenant, you too have a hiding place. Psalm 32:7 declares, "You are a hiding place for me." In Christ, God offers an eternal refuge for all—men and women, boys and girls, sinners and hypocrites. Christ shelters us from sin's guilt, suffering's sting, and sadness's triumph. Do you need refuge from your sins, relief from your suffering, or protection from your sorrow? Flee to Christ, your hiding place.

#### **II. Freedom to Ask (1 Samuel 20:3-7)**

Because of the covenant, David could ask whatever he desired. Recognizing his peril, David said to Jonathan, "There is but a step between me and death." Jonathan responded, "Whatever you say, I will do for you." David requested a plan to discern Saul's intentions, and Jonathan obliged, demonstrating covenant generosity.

Believers, the New Covenant grants you the privilege to ask anything of God. John 14:13-14 assures us, "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." God's ear is attentive, His heart compassionate, and His hands outstretched to those in covenant with Him through Christ. Approach Him boldly in prayer, trusting His covenant love.

#### **III. Expectation of Lovingkindness (1 Samuel 20:8-12)**

Because of the covenant, David could expect *hesed*—steadfast love. He pleaded, "Deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the Lord with you." Jonathan vowed to protect David, promising to inform him of Saul's intentions. This *hesed* was the heartbeat of their covenant.

Believers, the New Covenant assures you of God's *hesed* all your days. Psalm

23:6 proclaims, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Christ, the hound of heaven, pursues you with relentless love, ensuring you never outrun His mercy. Young ones, can you outrun Jesus? Never! Trust Him alone for salvation, and His steadfast love will follow you always.

#### **IV. Reliance on Faithfulness (1 Samuel 20:13)**

Because of the covenant, David could rely on Jonathan's faithfulness. Jonathan swore, "Should it please my father to do you harm, the Lord do so to Jonathan and more also if I do not disclose it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety." His commitment was unwavering.

Believers, the New Covenant anchors you in God's faithfulness. Second Timothy 2:13 assures us, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful." God faithfully calls you into fellowship with His Son (1 Corinthians 1:9), sanctifies you completely (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24), and guards you against the evil one (2 Thessalonians 3:3). Young ones, God transforms His people by the Spirit's power, making them more like Christ, though the process may be painful, the outcome is joyous. Our eternity rests not on our faithfulness but on God's covenant fidelity in Christ.

#### **V. Faithfulness Beyond Death (1 Samuel 20:14-17)**

Because of the covenant, Jonathan could expect *hesed* and faithfulness even after his death. He implored David, "If I am still alive, show me the steadfast love of the Lord, that I may not die; and do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever." Jonathan secured a covenant for his descendants, trusting David's fidelity.

Believers, the New Covenant extends *hesed* beyond the grave. First Corinthians 15:19 warns, "If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied." Yet, in Christ, our hope endures eternally, assuring us of God's love and faithfulness forever.

#### **VI. Mistreatment by Enemies (1 Samuel 20:24-30)**

Because of the covenant, Jonathan faced mistreatment from David's enemies. When David's absence at the king's table provoked Saul's suspicion, Jonathan defended him, only to face Saul's wrath: "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame?" Covenant loyalty brought persecution.

Believers, the New Covenant prepares you for opposition. John 15:18-19 declares, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ... Because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." Expect mistreatment for Christ's sake, yet stand firm in your covenant commitment.

#### **VII. Humility for Another's Glory (1 Samuel 20:31-34)**

Because of the covenant, Jonathan humbled himself to elevate David. When Saul



demanded David's death, Jonathan protested, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" Saul's violent response—hurling a spear—confirmed his intent, yet Jonathan's loyalty endured, grieving for David's disgrace.

Believers, Christ has humbled Himself for you. Philippians 2:5-8 recounts how Christ, though equal with God, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant and dying on a cross. Therefore, you must humble yourselves for Christ and others. Philippians 2:1-4 exhorts, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Live humbly, elevating others for Christ's glory.

### **VIII. Peace in Departure (1 Samuel 20:35-42)**

Because of the covenant, David went forth in peace. Jonathan devised a signal with arrows to warn David of danger. When the moment came, they parted with tears, yet Jonathan blessed David, saying, "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.'"

Believers, the New Covenant grants you peace with God and one another. Romans 5:1 proclaims, "Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 12:18 adds, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." In Christ, you possess peace that sustains you through every trial.

### **Exhortation**

Beloved, by God's grace, strive to be faithful to your covenants. Covenant unfaithfulness yields terrible curses and profound sadness, as our world so often demonstrates. Yet, covenant faithfulness, as God exemplifies in Christ and as David and Jonathan modeled in 1 Samuel 20, brings forth unparalleled blessings and enduring happiness. Whether in your marriage, your church, your friendships, or your walk with God, honor your covenants with steadfast love and fidelity. Trust in Christ, your hiding place, your faithful Savior, and the source of all covenant blessings. May you go forth in His peace, living for His glory. Amen.

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## **PURITAN QUOTES ON COVENANT OF GRACE / THE NEW COVENANT**

- **WILLIAM BRIDGE:** "So now, Lord, seeing that Jesus Christ has founded this covenant in his blood, and I am one of those for whom he made satisfaction: write your law in my inward parts, that I may do all your will. Amen." — William Bridge, *A Lifting Up Likely from A Seasonable Word with the Covenant of Grace*, 1646
- **JOHN OWEN:** "The covenant of grace is not a covenant of works to believers, but a covenant of free grace, wherein all the conditions of it are

performed by Jesus Christ, and the promises of it are made to Him, and fulfilled in Him, and for His sake to believers." — **John Owen, A Practical Exposition of Psalm 130, 1668**

- **THOMAS BOSTON:** "The covenant of grace is a covenant of promise, wherein God freely offers to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be partakers of His benefits." — **Thomas Boston, A View of the Covenant of Grace from the Sacred Scriptures, 1724**
- **SAMUEL RUTHERFORD:** "The covenant is not a bargain, but a gift; not a contract, but a testament; not a conditional promise, but an absolute donation, wherein Christ is all, and does all, and we are made complete in Him." — **Samuel Rutherford, The Covenant of Life Opened, 1655**
- **JOHN FLAVEL:** "It is the great support and solace of the saints in all the distresses that befall them here, that there is a wise Spirit sitting in all the wheels of motion, and governing the most eccentric creatures and their most pernicious designs to blessed and happy issues." — **John Flavel, The Mystery of Providence, 1678**
- **JONATHAN EDWARDS:** "The covenant of grace is that whereby God, out of His mere good pleasure, has chosen a certain number of mankind to eternal life, and has given them to Christ, to be redeemed by Him, and to be brought to glory through Him." — **Jonathan Edwards, A History of the Work of Redemption, 1739**
- **THOMAS MANTON:** "The covenant of grace is not a covenant of merit, but of mercy; not of doing, but of believing; not of our righteousness, but of Christ's righteousness imputed to us." — **Thomas Manton, Sermons on Genesis 3, 1681**
- **RICHARD SIBBES:** "God's covenant with His people is a covenant of love, and love will not be satisfied till it has brought them home to Himself, and made them partakers of His glory." — **Richard Sibbes, The Bruised Reed, 1630**
- **WILLIAM GUTHRIE:** "The covenant of grace is so ordered, that all the glory of our salvation is reserved to God, and nothing left to man but to receive and wonder at the freeness of the gift." — **William Guthrie, The Christian's Great Interest, 1658**
- **MATTHEW HENRY:** "The covenant of grace is a charter of pardon, a deed of gift, a bond of union, and a title to heaven; all sealed with the blood of Christ, and confirmed by the oath of God." — **Matthew Henry, Commentary on Genesis 17, 1710**
- **JOHN BUNYAN:** "The covenant of grace is the foundation of all our hopes, the fountain of all our comforts, and the security of all our joys; for it is established upon the faithfulness of God, and sealed with the blood of Christ." — **John Bunyan, The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded,**

**1708**

- **THOMAS WATSON:** "The covenant of grace is a covenant of promise, wherein God engages His truth, power, and love, to be our God, and to make us His people; and this covenant is unchangeable, because it is grounded upon the immutable will of God." — **Thomas Watson, A Body of Divinity, 1692**
- **JOHN OWEN:** "The covenant of grace, in its administration, is the rule and measure of all gracious intercourse between God and believers, wherein God undertakes to be their God, and they engage to be His people." — **John Owen, An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Vol. 5, 1674**
- **THOMAS WATSON:** "God's covenant is a bond of love, sealed with the blood of Christ, whereby He binds Himself to be our God, and we to be His people; and this covenant is eternal, because it is grounded on the unchangeable will of God." — **Thomas Watson, A Body of Divinity, 1692**
- **SAMUEL RUTHERFORD:** "Christ is the sum and substance of the covenant; it is made with Him, and through Him it is made with us; He is the head, and we are the members; He is the vine, and we are the branches." — **Samuel Rutherford, The Covenant of Life Opened, 1655**
- **WILLIAM BRIDGE:** "In the covenant of grace, God says not, Do this and live, but, Believe this and live; for the condition of the covenant is faith in Christ, who has fulfilled all righteousness for us." — **William Bridge, A Lifting Up for the Downcast, 1649**
- **THOMAS BOSTON:** "The covenant of grace is absolute in respect of us, because Christ has fulfilled the condition of it; and it is everlasting, because God's truth and faithfulness are engaged to make good the promise." — **Thomas Boston, A View of the Covenant of Grace, 1724**
- **RICHARD SIBBES:** "The covenant of grace is so called because it flows from the free mercy of God, and all the benefits of it are given freely to us in Christ, who is the mediator and surety of it." — **Richard Sibbes, The Faithful Covenantant, 1639**
- **THOMAS MANTON:** "The covenant of grace is not a covenant of our deserving, but of God's giving; not of our working, but of Christ's working; not of our righteousness, but of His righteousness freely imputed to us." — **Thomas Manton, Sermons on Psalm 119, 1681**
- **JOHN FLAVEL:** "The covenant of grace is the charter of all our hopes, the foundation of all our comforts, and the security of all our joys, because it rests upon the immutable promise of God and the perfect mediation of Christ." — **John Flavel, The Fountain of Life, 1671**
- **JONATHAN EDWARDS:** "The covenant of grace is God's gracious contrivance for the salvation of sinners, wherein He has appointed His Son to be the mediator, and has promised eternal life to all who believe in

- Him." — **Jonathan Edwards, A History of the Work of Redemption, 1739**
- **WILLIAM GUTHRIE:** "In the covenant of grace, God deals with us not as servants under the law, but as sons under grace; He requires faith, not to merit salvation, but to receive it as a free gift through Christ." — **William Guthrie, The Christian's Great Interest, 1658**
  - **MATTHEW HENRY:** "The covenant of grace is a covenant of promise, wherein God engages His own truth and faithfulness to pardon our sins, sanctify our natures, and bring us to glory, all through the merits of Christ." — **Matthew Henry, Commentary on Jeremiah 31, 1710**
  - **JOHN BUNYAN:** "The covenant of grace is the new testament, written in the blood of Christ, whereby God is reconciled to sinners, and sinners are made heirs of eternal life through faith in Him." — **John Bunyan, The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded, 1708**
  - **WILLIAM PERKINS:** "The covenant of grace is that whereby God, of His mere mercy, promises eternal life to all that believe in Christ, who is the mediator and surety of the covenant, fulfilling the law for us." — **William Perkins, A Golden Chain, 1591**
  - **THOMAS GOODWIN:** "The covenant of grace is God's free engagement to save sinners by Christ, wherein all the promises are made to Christ as our head, and in Him to us, upon condition of faith." — **Thomas Goodwin, The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation, 1670**
  - **RICHARD BAXTER:** "The covenant of grace is God's gracious compact with mankind, wherein He freely offers pardon and eternal life through Christ to all who will believe and receive Him as their Savior." — **Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor, 1656**
  - **EDWARD REYNOLDS:** "The covenant of grace is the foundation of all our communion with God; it is the channel through which all His mercies flow to us, and the ground of all our hopes for eternity." — **Edward Reynolds, Meditations on the Covenant of Grace, 1658**
  - **JOHN PRESTON:** "The covenant of grace is not a covenant of works, wherein we must do to live, but a covenant of faith, wherein we believe to live, resting on Christ who has done all for us." — **John Preston, The New Covenant, 1629**
  - **WILLIAM AMES:** "The covenant of grace is God's free promise to sinners, whereby He gives them Christ and all His benefits, requiring only that they receive Him by faith." — **William Ames, The Marrow of Theology, 1623**
  - **JEREMIAH BURROUGHS:** "The covenant of grace is God's everlasting promise to be our God, and to make us His people, sealed with the blood of Christ, and confirmed by His unchangeable oath." — **Jeremiah Burroughs, An Exposition of the Prophecy of Hosea, 1643**
  - **STEPHEN CHARNOCK:** "The covenant of grace is the fruit of God's

eternal love, wherein He engages to save sinners through the mediation of Christ, and to work in them all that is necessary for their salvation." —  
**Stephen Charnock, The Existence and Attributes of God, 1682**