

XLVIII. JONATHAN AND DAVID—CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP

101: 1 Samuel 18:1-5

INTRODUCTION. Having solid Christian friends can be a matter of life and death! It certainly was for David. If he did not have Jonathan, he would have been dead. God's blessing of solid Christian friends should not be overlooked or go unthanked.

BOYS AND GIRLS (repeat)

CON(TEXT). David has been brought before King Saul just after slaying Goliath.

EXPLAIN TEXT. 1 Samuel 18:1-5.

1 Samuel 18:1 "As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

- **This is God blessing David with a true friend in the Kings house and in the King's service.**
 - **JOHN TRAPP:** "A sweet mercy of God to David to have such a fast friend in court, to advertise him, and advise him on all occasions." — *John Trapp, John Trapp's Complete Bible Commentary (p. 2833). Kindle Edition.*
 - **In addition, this shows the genuine character of Jonathan**—once he sees David's faithful valor in slaying the giant Goliath for the Lord's glory, his soul is knit to David's and he loved him as his own soul.

Those who love the Lord and His glory will especially love others who love the Lord and His glory!

- **THOMAS BROOKS (1608-1680):** "The souls of true friends are knit together in the bond of Christ's love, and such a knot is not easily untied."

BOYS AND GIRLS

USE FOR EXAMINATION.

- **Q.** Do you see others who are passionate about the Lord and His glory and automatically love them or is your response more like *annoyance* or even *disdain*?
 - *Jonathan saw David's passion for the Lord's glory, even seemingly surpassing his own, and it did not make him envious nor annoyed nor disdainful—it made him love David!*

1 Samuel 18:2 "And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his

father's house."

- David thus far in Saul's service had been going back and forth from his father's house in Bethlehem to Saul (1 Sam. 17:15), but no longer.

Actually, what Samuel the Prophet had promised Israel came true yet again: "*These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons. . .*" (**1 Sam. 8:11**).

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

- **JOHN GILL:** "[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; and in consequence of this David had a friend at court, when Saul fell out with him, and who pleaded his cause, and discovered his father's plots, and was the means of preserving David's life." — **Gill, John. Gill's Bible Commentary. OSNOVA. Kindle Edition.**

1 Samuel 18:4 "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."

- David was likely to have been meagerly dressed in former times, wearing the tattered clothes of a shepherd, and not having his own sword nor bow nor belt.

So Jonathan gives David his own robe, armor, and even his weapons to make sure his brother is well equipped to fulfill his duties in the King's service.

1 Samuel 18:5a "And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war."

- David put Jonathan's gifts to use and the Lord gave Him success in all the battles to which King Saul sent him. So much so that he made him a Captain in his army.

1 Samuel 18:5b "And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants."

- First Jonathan approved of David, even though he was the most likely to be jealous of him and hate him, seeing that Jonathan was the prince and therefore David's chief rival for the throne. Then all the people approved, even including King Saul's servants.

What is truly noteworthy in this passage is the friendship of Jonathan

toward David.

DOCTRINE. Christians need friends, and need to be friends, like Jonathan.

BOYS AND GIRLS (repeat doctrine)

OUTLINE.

- I. Jonathan is a shining example of Christian Friendship.
- II. You need friends like Jonathan.
- III. You need to be a friend like Jonathan.

I. JONATHAN IS A SHINING EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP (1 Sam. 18:1-5).

I) Jonathan Protected David from Saul's Jealousy in 1 Samuel 19:1-7.

- Saul grows jealous of David's popularity and success, and then plots to kill him.
 - Jonathan warned David of Saul's intent and interceded on his behalf. He spoke to Saul, reminding him of David's loyalty and service, saying, "Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you" (1 Samuel 19:4). Saul temporarily relented.

II) Jonathan saved David's life by warning him of his father's intent to kill him in 1 Samuel 20.

- Saul's hostility toward David intensified, so David suspected Saul would kill him.
 - David and Jonathan devised a plan to test Saul's intentions. During the New Moon feast, Jonathan observed Saul's reaction to David's absence. When Saul's anger erupted and he hurled a spear at Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:33), Jonathan realizes David's life is in danger. He signals David by shooting arrows and sending a boy with a coded message: "Go quickly!" (1 Samuel 20:35-40).

III) Jonathan Continued to be Loyal to David even in the Midst of War in 1 Samuel 23:15-18.

- While David was a fugitive hiding from Saul in the wilderness, Jonathan sought him out.

- In the Wilderness of Ziph at Horesh, Jonathan encouraged David, saying, "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" (1 Samuel 23:17). They made another covenant before parting.

IV) David's Lamented greatly when Jonathan died in 2 Samuel 1.

- Jonathan's story ended tragically, but his friendship with David echoes beyond his life.
 - Jonathan died alongside Saul in battle against the Philistines on Mount Gilboa (1 Samuel 31:2). A messenger reported their deaths to David, who was then a leader in his own right. David mourned deeply, even writing a lament/song (2 Samuel 1:17-27).

V) David even Honored Jonathan's Legacy in 2 Samuel 9.

- Years later, as king, David sought to fulfill his covenant with Jonathan by showing kindness to his descendants.
 - David asked, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (2 Samuel 9:1). They find Mephibosheth, Jonathan's crippled son, and restore Saul's land to him, even allowing him to eat at the king's table perpetually (2 Samuel 9:7-13).
 - **BOYS AND GIRLS** this is a picture of the gospel. You and I are like Mephibosheth and David is like Christ Jesus.

QUESTION. Why was Jonathan such a faithful friend to David?

Three answers.

ANSWER I. Jonathan threw in his lot with David and loved him as himself (1 Sam. 18:1).

- 1 Samuel 18:1 "As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."
- Consider:

Philippians 2:3 "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."

ANSWER II. Jonathan was a covenant friend to David, not a fair-weather friend (1 Sam. 18:3).

- 1 Samuel 18:3 "Then Jonathan made (*lit. "cut"*) a covenant with David,

because he loved him as his own soul."

– **Consider:**

Proverbs 17:17 "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

A fair-weather friend is only around when things are going well or when you can benefit them or when you are well-liked by others.

– *A fair-weather friend says I will be your friend so long as it does not tear at my flesh too much.*

A covenant friend is around even when things are going badly or even when you drain them or even when the world hates you.

– *A covenant friend says I will be your friend even when it brutally tears at my flesh.*

– **WILLIAM GURNALL (1616–1679):** "Beware of friends who love the world more than God, for they will betray you when the battle grows fierce."

ANSWER III. Jonathan did what he could to equip David to fulfill his duties in service to the King (1 Sam. 18:4).

– **1 Samuel 18:4** "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."

– **THOMAS BROOKS (1608-1680):** "Choose such friends as will draw you nearer to God, for the company you keep will either lift you up to heaven or drag you down to hell."

II. YOU NEED FRIENDS LIKE JONATHAN (1 Sam. 18:1-5).

I) You need friends who will throw in their lot with you and love you as themselves (1 Sam. 18:1).

– **1 Samuel 18:1** "As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

– **Consider:**

Philippians 2:3 "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."

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II) You need covenant friends, not a fair-weather friends (1 Sam. 18:3).

- **1 Samuel 18:3** “Then Jonathan made (*lit. “cut”*) a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul.”
 - **Consider:**
 - Proverbs 17:17** “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”
 - **WILLIAM GURNALL (1616–1679):** “Beware of friends who love the world more than God, for they will betray you when the battle grows fierce.”

III) You need friends who will do what they can to equip you to fulfill your duties in service to the King (1 Sam. 18:4).

- **1 Samuel 18:4** “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.”
 - **THOMAS BROOKS (1608–1680):** “Choose such friends as will draw you nearer to God, for the company you keep will either lift you up to heaven or drag you down to hell.”

III. YOU NEED TO BE A FRIEND LIKE JONATHAN (1 Sam. 18:1–5).

I) You need to be friend who will throw in your lot with others and love them as yourself (1 Sam. 18:1).

- **1 Samuel 18:1** “As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.”
 - **Consider:**
 - Philippians 2:3** “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

BOYS AND GIRLS...

II) You need to be a covenant friend, not a fair-weather friend (1 Sam. 18:3).

- **1 Samuel 18:3** “Then Jonathan made (*lit. “cut”*) a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul.”
 - **Consider:**
 - Proverbs 17:17** “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”
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the world more than God, for they will betray you when the battle grows fierce."

BOYS AND GIRLS...

III) You need to be a friend who will do what you can to equip others to fulfill their duties in service to the King (1 Sam. 18:4).

- **1 Samuel 18:4** "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."
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BOYS AND GIRLS...

LET ME GIVE YOU A WORD OF WARNING.

You need to avoid friends like Haman's, and make sure you avoid being one yourself!

- **Esther 5:14** "Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, 'Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it. Then go joyfully with the king to the feast.'"

Friends like Haman's (Esther 5:14) will encourage you in your sin, and even may help you devise new plans to sin, yet you will end up like Haman—hung on your own gallows.

BOYS AND GIRLS...

NOW LET ME GIVE YOU A WORD OF EXHORTATION.

You need friends like Hopeful in a Pilgrim's Progress, and you need to be a friend like this yourself!

- In the darkness of Doubting Castle when Christian and Hopeful are held captive by Giant Despair, Hopeful encourages Christian to remember the promises of God. This prompts Christian to use the key of Promise to unlock the cage they are trapped in and enables them to escape the clutches of Giant Despair.

BOYS AND GIRLS...

WORD OF INSTRUCTION.

LET ME POINT YOU TO A FEW MORE SCRIPTURES ON FRIENDSHIP BEFORE WE CLOSE THIS SERMON:

- **Proverbs 12:26** "One who is righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray."

- **Proverbs 17:17** "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."
- **Proverbs 18:24** "A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."
 - **JEREMIAH BURROUGHS (1599–1646):** "Choose thy friends as thou choosest thy books—few, but good, and such as lead thee to contentment in Christ."
- **Proverbs 27:6** "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy."
 - **WILLIAM PERKINS (1558–1602):** "Seek friends who will wound thee with truth rather than flatter thee with lies, for such is the way of salvation."
 - **RICHARD SIBBES (1577–1635):** "A friend who speaks truth in love is better than a multitude of flatterers, for he seeks your soul's good."
 - **THOMAS WATSON (1620–1686):** "A friend who reproves your sin is a physician to your soul, though the medicine be bitter."
- **Proverbs 27:9** "Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel."
 - **JOHN OWEN (1616–1683):** "Let your friends be such as fear God, for they alone can be trusted to counsel you in the way of righteousness."
- **Proverbs 27:17** "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another."
 - **JOHN COTTON (1585–1652):** "A faithful friend is a gift of God, sent to sharpen thee as iron sharpeneth iron, unto His glory."
- **Ecclesiastes 4:9–10** "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!"
 - **THOMAS BROOKS (1608–1680):** "He that would have friends must show himself friendly, but let those friends be such as draw thee nearer to God, not further from Him."

IN CONCLUSION, LET ME GIVE YOU A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

CONCLUSION. David is a type of Christ, yet here Jonathan is the one who foreshadows our Redeemer.

- At the outset of this sermon I told you "Having solid Christian friends can be a matter of life and death." But now I say to you Having Christ as your friend is absolutely a matter of life and death!
 - **John 15:13–15** "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 the 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."

- **HENRY**: "Our Lord Jesus has thus shown his love to us, that he stripped himself to clothe us, emptied himself to enrich us; nay, he did more than Jonathan, he clothed himself with our rags, whereas Jonathan did not put on David's." — **Henry, Matthew. Unabridged Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible (best navigation) . OSNOVA. Kindle Edition.**

PURITAN QUOTES ON FRIENDSHIP

- **ISAAC AMBROSE (1604–1664)**: "The best friends are they who point thee to Christ, not to the vanities of this passing world."
- **RICHARD BAXTER (1615–1691)**: "A faithful friend is a strong defense; he that hath found such a one hath found a treasure, for he will tell thee of thy faults and help thee to heaven."
- **WILLIAM BRIDGE (1600–1671)**: "A godly companion is a helpmeet for the soul, one who stirs thee up to holiness and not to folly."
- **THOMAS BROOKS (1608–1680)**: "A true friend is a rare bird; he that finds a faithful friend finds a treasure."
- **THOMAS BROOKS (1608–1680)**: "Choose such friends as will draw you nearer to God, for the company you keep will either lift you up to heaven or drag you down to hell."
- **THOMAS BROOKS (1608–1680)**: "The souls of true friends are knit together in the bond of Christ's love, and such a knot is not easily untied."
- **THOMAS BROOKS (1608–1680)**: "He that would have friends must show himself friendly, but let those friends be such as draw thee nearer to God, not further from Him."
- **JOHN BUNYAN (1628–1688)**: "Christian friendship is a pilgrimage shared, where one helps another to keep the narrow way."
- **JEREMIAH BURROUGHS (1599–1646)**: "A godly friend is a staff to lean upon in the storms of life, provided by the hand of divine providence."
- **JEREMIAH BURROUGHS (1599–1646)**: "True friendship is not in words alone, but in the quiet contentment of walking together toward eternity."
- **JEREMIAH BURROUGHS (1599–1646)**: "Choose thy friends as thou choosest thy books—few, but good, and such as lead thee to contentment in Christ."
- **JOHN COTTON (1585–1652)**: "A faithful friend is a gift of God, sent to sharpen thee as iron sharpeneth iron, unto His glory."

- **JOHN FLAVEL (1627–1691):** "A true friend is a mirror to the soul, showing thee thy blemishes not to shame thee, but to amend thee."
- **THOMAS GOODWIN (1600–1680):** "A friend in Christ is a fellow soldier, fighting the good fight beside thee, and lifting thee when thou fallest."
- **WILLIAM GURNALL (1616–1679):** "A friend who prays for you in your weakness is worth more than gold, for he brings you before the throne of grace."
- **WILLIAM GURNALL (1616–1679):** "Beware of friends who love the world more than God, for they will betray you when the battle grows fierce."
- **WILLIAM GURNALL (1616–1679):** "A true friend stands by thee in the battle of faith, not fleeing when the enemy of sin assaults."
- **MATTHEW HENRY (1662–1714):** "A friend loveth at all times, but a godly friend loveth thy soul best when he rebukes thy sin."
- **PHILIP HENRY (1631–1696):** "A friend who prays with thee and for thee is a brother born for adversity, a blessing from the Lord."
- **THOMAS MANTON (1620–1677):** "Friendship among the saints is a sweet cord of love, strengthened by mutual exhortation and prayer."
- **JOHN OWEN (1616–1683):** "The communion of saints is nowhere more sweetly tasted than in the converse of faithful friends."
- **JOHN OWEN (1616–1683):** "Let your friends be such as fear God, for they alone can be trusted to counsel you in the way of righteousness."
- **JOHN OWEN (1616–1683):** "True friendship in the Spirit is a bond of souls knit together in the love of Christ, bearing one another's burdens with patience and prayer." (See 1 Samuel 15:1-5)
- **WILLIAM PERKINS (1558–1602):** "Seek friends who will wound thee with truth rather than flatter thee with lies, for such is the way of salvation."
- **EDWARD REYNOLDS (1599–1676):** "True friendship is a holy alliance, where two souls strive together for the prize of eternal life."
- **SAMUEL RUTHERFORD (1600–1661):** "A friend who loves thy soul more than thy favor is worth more than gold, for he seeks thy eternal good."
- **RICHARD SIBBES (1577–1635):** "There is no sweeter fellowship on earth than that between godly friends, for they sharpen one another as iron sharpens iron."
- **RICHARD SIBBES (1577–1635):** "A friend who speaks truth in love is better than a multitude of flatterers, for he seeks your soul's good."
- **RICHARD SIBBES (1577–1635):** "The sweetest friendships are those seasoned with grace, where two walk together in the fear of the Lord."
- **THOMAS WATSON (1620–1686):** "A friend who reproves your sin is a physician to your soul, though the medicine be bitter."

- **THOMAS WATSON (1620–1686):** "The best friends are those who stir us up to love and good works, not to idleness or vanity." (See Hebrews 10:24)

HELPS

- Joseph Hall - **18-19, 1 Samuel** - Joseph Hall - Jonathan's Love, and Saul's Envy - *Contemplations on the Historical Passages of the Old and New Testament by the Late Right Rev. Joseph Hall (Lord Bishop of Norwich) (3 vols.)*, printed by Gilbert and Rivington at St John's Square in London, 1833; reprinted by Soli Deo Gloria, 1995. - vol. 1. pg. 484