

## 1 Samuel 20-21 God's School of Brokenness, pt. 2

Good morning and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn in your bibles to 1 Samuel 20?

We've now seen the next king of Israel, David, face some incredible challenges haven't we? David has killed a lion and a bear, and he has slayed the mighty philistine giant Goliath. But over the last couple of weeks we've seen David find himself facing a more bitter and brutal enemy, that of a rampaging King Saul. David has lost his wife, his job, his family.

Up to this point David's responses to his troubles have been full of faith. A model example for all of us. But as the trials continue to pile on, with no end in sight David begins to trust in his flesh.

One of my favorite things about the bible, and one of the reasons I believe its inspired by God, is that the Bible makes no attempt to cover the flaws of its characters. The Bible doesn't try to shave off the rough edges of its subjects and only paint them in a good light. No, the Bible shows us the good and the bad, and this morning we'll see some terrible decisions from David.

The title of this morning's message is God's School of Brokenness, pt. 2

Let's pray.

**1 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"** David is hurt, and confused. David is asking Jonathan, "Why does your father King Saul want to kill me when all I've done is be his faithful servant?"

Sometimes people oppose us simply because we want to do God's will. Their animosity toward us isn't the result of our sinfulness, but theirs.

2 So Jonathan said to him, “By no means! You shall not die! Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so!” Jonathan tells David if he returns to his father’s court, he can protect him because Jonathan will know all of Saul’s plans.

3 Then David took an oath again, and said, “Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, ‘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 So Jonathan said to David, “Whatever you yourself desire, I will do it for you.” David knows Saul is serious in his intent to murder him, so he concocts a plan to determine Saul’s intentions, and as a result his future.

5-7

5 And David said to Jonathan, “Indeed tomorrow is the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third day at evening. 6 If your father misses me at all, then say, ‘David earnestly asked permission of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.’ 7 If he says thus: ‘It is well,’ your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, be sure that evil is determined by him. David conjures up a plan based on a lie; he’s not going to Bethlehem, he’s going to hide in a field. David is combining deception along with his trust in God.

8 Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. Nevertheless, if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?”

David’s hurt and frustration are beginning to boil over. He blurts out ‘hey if I’m at fault, then Jonathan, you kill me now instead of

allowing Saul to do it.' David would rather die at the hand of his friend rather than at the hand of his enemy.

The stress and emotional toll of the situation has not only caused David to hatch a lie as part of his plan, but David had temporarily lost sight of God's promise that he would rule over Israel.

9 But Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?" Jonathan assures David he will help protect him.

Verses 10-24 gives us the plan to determine if Saul has had a change of heart...

10 Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me, or what if your father answers you roughly?"

11 And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So both of them went out into the field. 12 Then Jonathan said to David: "The LORD God of Israel is witness! When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, or the third day, and indeed there is good toward David, and I do not send to you and tell you, 13 may the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father to do you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And the LORD be with you as He has been with my father. 14 And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die; 15 but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "Let the LORD require it at the hand of David's enemies."

17 Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul. 18 Then Jonathan

said to David, “Tomorrow is the New Moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. 19 And when you have stayed three days, go down quickly and come to the place where you hid on the day of the deed; and remain by the stone Ezel. 20 Then I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target; 21 and there I will send a lad, saying, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I expressly say to the lad, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you; get them and come’—then, as the LORD lives, there is safety for you and no harm. 22 But if I say thus to the young man, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you’—go your way, for the LORD has sent you away. 23 And as for the matter which you and I have spoken of, indeed the LORD be between you and me forever.”

Here’s the signal... Arrows shot to your side... you’re safe. Arrows over your head... you need to run for your life. And in all this Jonathan requires that if David flees, David will remember Jonathan and his future descendants.

24 Then David hid in the field. And when the New Moon had come, the king sat down to eat the feast. 25 Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall. And Jonathan arose,<sup>[fn]</sup> and Abner sat by Saul’s side, but David’s place was empty. It seems strange that the king was off to himself, only with his military commander by his side rather than in the midst of the table. It’s probably another indication of Saul’s insecurities and paranoia.

26 Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, “Something has happened to him; he is unclean, surely he is unclean.” Notice the one who is unclean thinks the one who is clean is in the wrong.

27-29

27 And it happened the next day, the second day of the month, that David’s place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son,

“Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, either yesterday or today?”

28 So Jonathan answered Saul, “David earnestly asked permission of me to go to Bethlehem. 29 And he said, ‘Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me get away and see my brothers.’

Therefore he has not come to the king’s table.” So this was the test-Saul’s response will tell Jonathan and David if David’s life is still in danger...

And of course we know this test is predicated or based upon a lie...

30 Then Saul’s anger was aroused 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? I’m no expert in Hebrew, but I can tell you this is the equivalent of a cuss word-Saul is beyond enraged at his son’s actions.

31 For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, (won’t even call David by name) you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die.”” Saul’s hatred for David is very clear, but Saul tries to disguise his hatred as a concern for Jonathan's right to the throne.

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, “Why should he be killed? What has he done?” 33 Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David. Saul claims to care about Jonathan’s right to the throne - then tries to off his own son. Saul is what we would refer to in modern times as deranged.

34-41

34 So Jonathan arose 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 treated him shamefully.

35 And so it was, in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad was with him. 36 Then he said to his lad, "Now run, find the arrows which I shoot." As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37 When the lad had come to the place where the arrow was which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried out after the lad and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?" 38 And Jonathan cried out after the lad, "Make haste, hurry, do not delay!" So Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and came back to his master. 39 But the lad did not know anything. Only Jonathan and David knew of the matter. 40 Then Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad, and said to him, "Go, carry them to the city."

41 As soon as the lad had gone, David arose from a place toward the south, fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another; and they wept together, but David more so. Now we talked about it last week, but the friendship between Jonathan and David is not of a homosexual nature. In eastern oriental cultures, a kiss was customary. A kiss was a sign of friendship – the equivalent of a handshake – not some kind of romantic gesture. You see this today among Arab or Russian men.

Romans 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

and

1 Corinthians 16:20 All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

and

1 Thessalonians 5:26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

42 Then Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘May the LORD be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants, forever.’” So he arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city. Jonathan knows the next king of Israel will be David - not him. So he again makes David promise kindness towards his heirs because Jonathan doesn't know if he'll ever see David again.

## Chapter 21

So as Chapter 21 begins, David is running for his life. And he comes to Nob, a city of priests, in the southern part of Israel, about 3 miles north of Jerusalem.

1 Now David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech was afraid when he met David, and said to him, “Why are you alone, and no one is with you?” David was Saul's son-in-law, an official member of the king's court. So Ahimelech is wondering why David isn't traveling with a large entourage of men.

And notice how David responds.

2 So David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The king has ordered me on some business, and said to me, ‘Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you, or what I have commanded you.’ And I have directed my young men to such and such a place. David tells another lie, this time to the priest saying he was traveling undercover at the request of Saul.

In a lot of ways we can understand why David lied and even sympathize with him. Hey if we were in these circumstances we'd

probably do the same or even worse in an attempt to save our necks. But we'll see next week this series of lies will come back to haunt David in a way he never dreamed of.

3 Now therefore, what have you on hand? Give me five loaves of bread in my hand, or whatever can be found 4 And the priest answered David and said, "There is no common bread on hand; but there is holy bread, if the young men have at least kept themselves from women." The tabernacle of the LORD had a table that held twelve loaves of bread, symbolizing God's continual fellowship with Israel.

Leviticus 24: 5 "And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. 6 You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure gold table before the LORD. 7 And you shall put pure frankincense on each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 8 Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. 9 And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute."

The importance and meaning of the show bread is found in its name. Literally, showbread means "bread of faces." It was bread associated with, and to be eaten before God. To eat the showbread was to eat God's bread in God's house as a friend of the LORD.

All that to say, the showbread was a big deal.

5 Then David answered the priest, and said to him, "Truly, women have been kept from us about three days since I came out. And the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in effect



common, even though it was consecrated in the vessel this day.”  
6 So the priest gave him holy bread; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread in its place on the day when it was taken away. It’s interesting in Matthew 12, the legalistic Pharisees were criticizing and accusing Jesus of violating the Law by allowing his disciples to pluck and eat grain on the Sabbath Day. Jesus answers them in **Matthew 12:3-4** But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4 how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?”

In the same passage Jesus also quotes from **Hosea 6:6**, For I desire mercy and not sacrifice,

**And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.**

It was never God’s intention to put religious ritual above human need. More important than anything else is that we love people.

Now, watching all these events unfold with David and the showbread is someone lurking in the shadows...

**7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD. And his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chief of the herdsmen who belonged to Saul.**” The name Doeg literally means “Fearful,” implying he struck fear in the hearts of those around him.

The words ‘detained by the Lord’ are interesting. The original language for detained is ‘awtsar’, meaning to shut up, or restrain. Apparently, Doeg was restrained by the Lord, and we’ll see next week this is not a good dude.

8 And David said to Ahimelech, "Is there not here on hand a spear or a sword? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste."

After asking for bread, David asks Ahimelech for weapons. But shockingly, David again lies, saying that he couldn't bring his own weapons due to the urgency of his mission.

9 So the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, there it is, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take it. For there is no other except that one here."

And David said, "There is none like it; give it to me." " David is on a downward spiral. Surely he loves God and believes in God, but now he's relying on his own lies and now trusting in Goliath's sword.

Remember a few weeks ago when David was walking with the Lord, relying upon the Lord, he refused to take Saul's weapons, choosing instead to rely on the God who had given him victory over the bear and the lion. **1 Samuel 17:36 "Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God."**

But now instead of relying upon the Lord, David is trying to rely on material weapons.

How you and I must remember our weapons of warfare come from heaven! **2 Corinthians 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,**

And like David, here's the challenge for you and I. it's one thing to be stuck in a difficult trial for a few days, or weeks, even a month or 2. But when our hardship drags on day after day, we

can start to rely on our flesh instead of God's spirit. And if we start drifting in a carnal place, we start depending on carnal weapons.

And now David straps up his sandals and travels to a destination that shocks the senses!

10 Then David arose and fled that day from before Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. Does the city of Gath sound familiar? It was Goliath's hometown! 1 Samuel 17:4 And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

What is David thinking? David was now among the Philistines. He has sunk so low that he thinks he could find peaceful refuge among the enemies of Israel. And these- not just enemies of Israel, the enemies of God!

David was sustained by the sacred bread of God, and now he tries to find peace among God's enemies?

Maybe David thought the Philistines had forgotten him. Perhaps David figured that enemy territory was the only place Saul wouldn't be willing to chase him.

11 And the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of him to one another in dances, saying:

'Saul has slain his thousands,

And David his ten thousands'?"[fn] Surprise, surprise. The song and dance about David that went across the Hebrew airwaves was also popular among the Philistines

12 Now David took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. Wait a minute-where's his faith? The same man who once ran at Goliath in faith is now trembling in fear?

This is a theme we see repeatedly in the Bible, great steps of faith followed by fear.

Moses-asking God to take his life. Elijah at Jezibel, how bout Peter-walking on water, then begins to sink

See it's easy at first to walk by faith. But when the difficulty remains or even increases, we can lose our confidence in God.'

So what does David, this man after God's own heart, this man who penned nearly 1/2 of the Psalms do after his identity is revealed?

13 So he changed his behavior before them, pretended madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard. David comes up with a new plan. He acts like a madman. The saliva on the beard was especially convincing, because men in that culture would consider this something only a man out of his right mind would allow.

Picture the scene. David is clawing at the gates and drooling, foaming at the mouth, pretending to be insane.

David is in the school of brokenness, and he continues to fail the tests.

14 Then Achish said to his servants, "Look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me?"

15 Have I need of madmen, that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house? David is found out, and they take him and bring him to the king. And Achish takes one look at him and says-why do I want this guy in my kingdom-he's out of his mind!

David's scheme succeeds. But if you read ahead to chapter 22, you'll see how his mistakes catch up to him.

It's interesting, two psalms, 34 and 56 are written in the aftermath this shocking scene. And when David pens these psalms, looking back, he admires how God delivers His people in times of trouble.

Psalm 56 To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Silent Dove in Distant Lands." [fn] A Michtam of David when the Philistines captured him in Gath.

1 Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up;  
Fighting all day he oppresses me.

2 My enemies would hound me all day,  
For there are many who fight against me, O Most High.

3 Whenever I am afraid,  
I will trust in You.

4 In God (I will praise His word),  
In God I have put my trust;  
I will not fear.

What can flesh do to me?

5 All day they twist my words;  
All their thoughts are against me for evil.

6 They gather together,  
They hide, they mark my steps,  
When they lie in wait for my life.

7 Shall they escape by iniquity?

In anger cast down the peoples, O God!

8 You number my wanderings;

Put my tears into Your bottle;

Are they not in Your book?

9 When I cry out to You,

Then my enemies will turn back;

This I know, because God is for me.

10 In God (I will praise His word),

In the LORD (I will praise His word),

11 In God I have put my trust;

I will not be afraid.

What can man do to me?

12 Vows made to You are binding upon me, O God;

I will render praises to You,

13 For You have delivered my soul from death.

Have You not kept my feet from falling,

That I may walk before God

In the light of the living?

Finally we'll just look at a few verses of Psalm 34

Psalm 34:17 "The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears,  
And delivers them out of all their troubles.

18 The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart,  
And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,  
But the LORD delivers him out of them all.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from  
heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the  
trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we  
who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in  
the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always  
be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these  
words.