

Lesson 78

Jonathan Warns David

Jonathan warned his friend David that Saul wanted to kill him.

Overview

Lesson Focus

David and Jonathan (Saul's son) became close friends. God gave David success in everything he did, which made Saul jealous. Saul tried to kill David several times; but God protected him, and Jonathan warned him when he needed to flee.

Key Passages

1 Samuel 18:1–5, 18:10–14, 19:1–7, 20:31–33, 20:35–42

Objectives

Students will be able to:

Describe David and Jonathan's friendship.
Describe Saul's growing jealousy of David.

Memory Verse

1 John 1:8–9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

The account in 1 Samuel 18 picks up right after David's victory over the Philistine champion, Goliath. The Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, and King Saul inquired about David's background, likely because he had promised his daughter in marriage to the victor and wanted to know his lineage. David would enter Saul's service and no longer return home. He would also meet Jonathan and start a long-lasting friendship based on mutual love and trust in the Lord. Their covenant friendship demonstrated true, selfless love. Jonathan gave David his robe, armor, and weapons, which were symbols of his princely status. It is likely that Jonathan was recognizing David would be the next king in his place.

While David and Jonathan's friendship grew, so did Saul's jealousy of David. In whatever David did, God gave him success, and the people loved him. David was made commander of a thousand and married Saul's younger daughter, Michal. But Saul's jealousy turned to violence when David was playing the lyre in his presence and Saul tried to kill him with a spear (1 Samuel 18:10–11). Warning David to hide, Jonathan dared to speak to his father and convince him to spare David's life. Saul listened to his plea and

promised he would not kill David (1 Samuel 19:1–7). However, this promise didn't last long. After another spear-throwing attempt on David's life, Saul commanded his messengers to watch David's house to kill him in the morning (1 Samuel 19:9–11). But David's wife Michal helped him escape their house and stalled for time by claiming David was sick. Her deception using a teraphim in bed to deceive the messengers into thinking it was David is reminiscent of Rachel's theft of her father's teraphim and deception to cover it up (1 Samuel 19:12–17; Genesis 31:19, 31:34–35). Both women deceived their fathers out of loyalty to their husbands.

David fled to Samuel at Ramah, and they went together to Naioth, where a company of prophets, led by Samuel, were prophesying. The messengers Saul sent to capture David were unable to fulfill their mission because the Spirit of God came upon them and they prophesied (1 Samuel 19:18–21). After his third group of messengers failed to reach David, Saul went himself. But he, too, was overcome by the Spirit of God and prophesied, which enabled David to escape.

David met up with Jonathan and asked why Saul continued to seek his life, but Jonathan thought his father would tell him if that were so. David realized that Saul was keeping his plans from Jonathan because of their friendship. David came up with a plan to ascertain if Saul was still

determined to kill him. Jonathan would go to the new moon meal while David remained hidden. When Saul asked where David was, Jonathan would reply that David had gone to Bethlehem to attend a sacrifice with his family. If Saul was fine with David's absence, they would know David's life was safe; but if Saul was angry, they would know Saul still wanted him dead (1 Samuel 20:5–8). Jonathan would then report Saul's response to David. Before Jonathan returned to the city, he asked David to show kindness to his descendants when God made him king and cut off his enemies. David promised, and the friends parted.

At the new moon celebration, Saul did not ask about David's absence until the second night. When Jonathan told him David had gone to Bethlehem, Saul was furious. He insulted Jonathan and told him that he would never have the kingdom as long as David lived. Then he threw a spear at Jonathan and missed. After this, Jonathan knew that his father was determined to kill his friend David (1 Samuel 20:27–33).

Jonathan then had to warn his friend without drawing attention. He took his bow and arrows and a boy to the field in the morning to look like he was going to practice. As he shot the arrows and called to the boy that the arrows were beyond him, he was actually communicating with David, warning him to flee. Jonathan sent the unsuspecting boy back to the city, and then

David came out from hiding. The friends wept, renewed the promise of their friendship, and parted ways (1 Samuel 20:41–42). Like Michal, Jonathan chose to be loyal to David over his father, Saul, who was sinning by seeking to kill an innocent man out of jealousy.

Historical/Apologetics Background

In today's culture, marriage and gender are being redefined by those who reject God's Word. Homosexual and lesbian relationships are granted equal status as heterosexual ones, and the push for acceptance of alternative lifestyles has inundated television, movies, school textbooks, and the church. In an attempt to justify homosexual behavior, some even claim that the Bible condones it, and one of the passages twisted for this purpose is the friendship of David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1–4). However, the love described between David and Jonathan is a friendship, not a sexual kind of love. David clearly loved Bathsheba and his wives, but his covenant friendship with Jonathan was rooted in both men's love and service for the Lord.

By looking at the whole of Scripture, we see that homosexual behavior goes completely against God's design for human relationships. The basis for marriage is found in Genesis 1–2 when God created male and female and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply. This command can only be fulfilled through heterosexual marriage,

and the male and female roles in the family complement each other biologically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally. Jesus himself referred to Genesis when questioned about marriage (Matthew 19:1–12; Mark 10:1–12).

Old Testament commands clearly state that homosexual behavior is an abomination (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13), and God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as Israel's attack on the tribe of Benjamin, were initiated by the great wickedness, including sodomy, in those places (see Genesis 19 and Judges 19–20). In the New Testament, homosexual behavior and other sexual sins are clearly condemned as punishment for rejecting God and are a sign of unbelievers (Romans 1:24–28; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11).

Our first parents, Adam and Eve, lived in a perfect world where there was no sin. But now, after the fall, sinful desires and behaviors characterize mankind. Because of our fallen nature, all people are born as slaves to sin and have desires contrary to God's law (Romans 6:15–21; Galatians 5:16–21). Some people report that they experience same-sex attraction, but this does not make it normal or moral. People also experience other sinful desires (e.g., greed, improper heterosexual desires, covetousness, envy, etc.). All of our desires and behaviors must be evaluated by God's Word.

Christians who condone a homosexual lifestyle (or any sinful lifestyle) are rejecting the truth given in Scripture. It is not hateful to share the truth in love with them. Those trapped in the lie that they can't control their sexual desires can experience God's forgiveness, grace, and power to live in victory over their sin. Let us be faithful and courageous to share this message in love.

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