

Series: **Godly Transitions in Life** – week 2

CDOBC – beginning on 1/15/17

Today's Title: **"When God Changes Everything"**

(Jonathan)

January 15, 2017 ~ 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:31; 23:16-18

OBJECTIVE: To help believers make God's plan and purposes the highest priority in their life.

Opening Prayer

I have a question for you. This is not a question intended for those who are guests today - although it still might apply.

- ***Why are you here?***

For those of you who have made this church your church home - you've committed to this church - maybe you're a member of this church - ***Why are you part of this church?***

Is it because you like the people?

You like the music?

You like the sermons?

You like the view?

It's convenient - close to your home?

The Biblical commitment?

I want to gently - but directly challenge you...if these are the reason(s) you are here, I want to challenge you to dig deeper - to look outside of yourself - to look at Jesus and what His reason was for instituting the Church.

It's so easy for us to embrace a church for the good things I mentioned - without ever considering what God might want - what His reasons are for leading us to this church.

Let me help you dig deeper by asking you a different question - a question which demands you answer from a different perspective.

- *Why does God want you at this church?*

Isn't this a better question?

The earlier question is about your likes / dislikes, etc.

This question is about God's plan - God's will - how God has gifted you to give and serve in the local Body of Christ.

When we think of change - and the transitions which change entails, we often look at it from our human perspective.

This makes perfect sense...we're human!

But we must learn not drive the stake too deeply in the ground of our human perspective, because it's not the most important perspective!

God's perspective - and His clearly stated purposes for the Church should be dominant in our thinking - and in our heart.

The plans we make - the preferences each of us have - must be made in an attitude of humility - an attitude of teachability and flexibility to the plans and preferences of God.

When God brings change into your life - are you willing to adjust your plans to His plans?

Turn in your Bible to 1 Samuel 18 - this morning we're going to look at the life of Jonathan and how the changes God brought into his life changed everything - yet he was obedient to them - and submitted his plans to God's plans.

Embrace God's plan for your life. *1 Samuel 18:1-5*

In 1 Samuel 18, The plan of God was in direct contrast to the human way of doing things. The changes God was bringing into the life of Jonathan changed everything about his life - yet he was obedient to God's plan and he set aside his own plan to be involved with the changes God was bringing into his life.

As the oldest son of the king, Jonathan was next in line to sit on the throne. This would have been taught to him as soon as his father was made King over Israel, and this was the pattern and plan for his life.

So let's do a quick survey of the biblical account of King Saul and his son Jonathan.

In 1 Samuel 10, Saul was anointed King over Israel.

In 10:17-27, Saul is proclaimed (inaugurated) King before all of Israel.

We're introduced to Jonathan in 13:1-4 and we see he was a leader in the military, in charge of 1/3 of the troops.

Biblical scholars tell us to be in Saul's army Jonathan would have to be 20 years old (Be Successful, by Warren Wiersbe, p. 100).

We're never told his age, but it seems logical to think he was well beyond 20 years old because when we're introduced to Jonathan, he's already a very accomplished warrior - a man who was trained in battle and successful in battle (see chapter 14:1-23).

It is very possible that Jonathan was in his 30's, while David was much younger - in his late teens or early 20's.

Jonathan was the prince over Israel - a successful war hero prince. He was also a righteous man before God - a man who knew right from wrong and often took bold ethical stands in opposition to his father, King Saul.

These were not simply family disagreements; they were actions which could have gotten Jonathan killed - and nobody would have thought twice about it.

Jonathan was a good man - and, due to no fault of his own, his life's plan took a huge detour one day, when a young shepherd boy from Bethlehem showed up at the battle field where the Philistines were lined up against the army of Israel.

The Philistine champion, Goliath, was taunting and belittling the armies of Israel - along with the God of Israel.

When David showed up, he heard one of Goliath's rants - and he was furious!

You probably know the story (1 Sam. 17). Goliath, whom we often refer to as a ‘giant’ since he was over 9’ tall - was a huge man who would make professional football players look like the JV team. He was the Philistine champion and nobody in Israel’s army was willing to fight him...until little Dave showed up. It wasn’t public knowledge, but in 1 Samuel 16 the prophet Samuel anoints David to be the next king of Israel.

In chapter 17 David shows up at the battle lines to bring his older brothers (who were in the army) a care package from home - and David ends up defeating Goliath in a lopsided and inspiring victory. David’s victory over Goliath led to a total route of the Philistine’s by the army of Israel.

This boy - David - came out of nowhere.

In one afternoon, he became a national hero - and a military Phenom.

After this amazing victory, King Saul had David summoned to find out who he is; where he’s from and what family he comes from.

Then we read in 1 Samuel 18:1-5

“As soon as he (David) had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

2 And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house.

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.

5 And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.”

In one afternoon, God changed everything in Jonathan’s life.

Somehow (we’re not told ‘how’ in the text), Jonathan realizes David is destined for the throne. Some commentators write that in this first meeting David told Jonathan about being anointed as the next king, but I find that highly unlikely.

“Hello Prince Jonathan, I’m David, from Bethlehem - and by the way, Samuel anointed me to be the next King of Israel. I know you had your hopes set on the throne - and you’ve been preparing for many years to follow your dad in the family business, but I’ve been appointed instead.”

How awkward!

It’s not as clear to our modern mind when we read vs. 3-4, but Jonathan’s actions here indicate he was supporting David as the next king. Giving David his royal robe, armor, sword, bow and belt were symbolic transfers of honor, position and rank

([Apollos Old Testament Commentary 1 & 2 Samuel](#), by David G. Firth, p. 208 - see also: [1 Samuel](#),

[Looking for a Leader](#), Preaching the Word Series, by John Woodhouse, edited by R. Kent Hughes, p. 350).

His future was now tied to David - not his father King Saul - and he gets behind David and makes a covenant with him. (evidence of the covenant - 2 Samuel 9:1, 7)

This is amazing - that Jonathan would accept this change in such a thorough and devoted way.

When God brings change into your life - change which alters the trajectory of your life - how do you respond?

- Do you fight it?
- Do you resent it?
- Do you have ill-feelings or hatred toward those involved with the change?
- Do you trust God or fight His leading?
- Do you cling to the past and hold onto your dreams and desires - or do you *'let go of the familiar'* and begin embracing the change?

We often fail to see the hand of God directing the affairs of our life.

- We lose our job - and we don't see it as God moving us and changing our life - we see it as an evil and spiteful thing our employer has done.
- We are diagnosed with a troublesome health condition, and we get frustrated and angry - determined to keep living as we had planned on living.

- Jan. 8, 2011 - Jim & Doris Tucker - BGEA Rapid Response Team

This doesn't mean everything which happens in life we just shrug our shoulders and accept what the day brings. It means we live each day with an awareness of God - of His sovereign hand in our affairs - and we pray, seek His direction - read the Bible - talk with other Christians who can speak wisdom into our life - and we do our best and determine God's will.

It means we consider the possibility that God is moving in our life and bringing change into our life - instead of the usual consideration that we are being mistreated, persecuted, maligned or victimized in some way.

Be strong against opposition

1 Samuel 20:30-31

Knowing God is leading something new in our life - and accepting the new thing He's doing in our life - doesn't mean others will agree - or accept what's happening in our life.

Often, those who give us the greatest resistance to the change in our life are those closest to us. This is not difficult to understand...because the change will also affect them - it will alter something in their relationship with you - the plans they had for you - the future they are hoping to share with you.

When this happens, you must be gracious to them - but firm in your resolve. Have empathy for their feelings, but remain faithful to God's leading in your life.

King Saul had numerous problems - primarily spiritual problems, which caused him to fight the change God was bringing into his world.

Think about this from Saul's perspective: he had plans for his son Jonathan - plans for his son to succeed him and lead the nation as king.

Due to his spiritual failures, he was very insecure and was desperate to hold onto power. He was very jealous of anyone he perceived as a threat to his position as king - and he saw David as the primary threat.

David was very popular with the people. Not only was he a national hero for his defeat of Goliath, but he was successful in many other battles as well. There were even songs which became popular throughout the nation which celebrated David's accomplishments above Saul's accomplishments.

This didn't sit well with Saul.

A few chapters later - in **chapter 20** - we read of Saul's resistance to the changes God was bringing to the nation.

Jonathan had sided with David - Jonathan was supporting David as the next king - but Saul was not. Saul refused to let go of the dream he had for his son.

1 Samuel 20:30-31

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?"

NLT: "Stupid son of a whore"

The Message: "You son of a slut"

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."

Saul would not let go of his plan for Jonathan's future - for keeping the monarchy in his family, even though the prophet Samuel had clearly told King Saul - because of his disobedience, God was going to tear "...the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you." **1 Samuel 15:28** (see also: 13:13-14)

Jonathan tries to bring reason before his father - and he asks in **vs. 32**

"Why should he be put to death? What has he done?"

Of course, David was not guilty of any crime deserving death. The opposite was true - David was a hero.

vs. 33: "But Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death."

Saul refused to let go. He refused to believe what the prophet Samuel had told him in **chapter 15** - that the

kingdom would be given to a neighbor - someone better than Saul.

Jonathan remained faithful to David - and faithful to God's plan - despite this intense pressure from his father.

How many times do we see this in our culture?

A parent has worked for years to support their child's athletic interest and talent, weekend trips to tournaments with the club teams - driving their kid to practice - paying for private lessons and sports camps - and when the child loses interest as they enter their teenage years, the parent doesn't - and the parent keeps pushing their son/daughter to excel in the sport and conflict - possibly a great divide enters the relationship.

The person who has a dream of playing music / becoming an author / making it big as an artist / hopes to build their business - and its clear God is moving a different direction in their life - and they become delusional and dysfunctional in their thinking and living. Everyone in their life can see the dead-end street they're on - and they need to make a change in life - but they refuse to let go of the familiar dream.

They have become too wrapped up in the dream and the identity of their dream - they can't imagine how to live and how to adjust to the changes needed in their life.

But we must be open to God changing the direction of our life - changing our plans to His plans.

Isaiah 43:18-19

“Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.
19 Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”

One of the biggest problems Israel had throughout their history is never realizing the changes God was bringing into their life.

This is most pronounced in the time of Christ - as the ideas and plans they had of the Messiah was not accurate to the reality of God’s plan and they rejected God’s plan of salvation - Jesus - sinless - sacrificed on the cross for sin - buried and resurrected from the dead. God is all about new things - changing ‘*what is*’ to ‘*what should be*’.

God wants us to be in constant change - constant change from the “old self” to the “new self”.

Constant change as we are transformed by His truth and Spirit - into the image of His Son.

Go “all in” with God’s plan *1 Samuel 23:16-18*

Giving lip service to the changes God brings into your life is not what He requires.

Eventually, you must choose between your plans and God’s plans. There is no middle ground.

Jesus said this about money and clinging to the material things of this world.

“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

Matthew 6:24

Our plans...our dreams can be the same attraction and idol as money is.

You can idolize things - money - and your own ideas, dreams and plans.

Paul said in **1 Corinthians 6:12**

“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything.”

You can be enslaved by your plans.

The future you envision - if God gives you a different future - will you be enslaved by your own plan?

When Saul was hunting David - and David was hiding in the wilderness, Jonathan went to David and encouraged him.

And Jonathan, Saul's son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God.

17And he said to him, “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. Saul my father also knows this.”

18 And the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home. (1 Samuel 23:16-18)

Jonathan took a courageous step of faith in God as he went to visit his friend David - and encouraged him to keep his faith in God's plan for his life (vs. 16b).

Jonathan was "all-in" despite the intense pressure from his father.

Personally, from a strictly human perspective, God's plan was not as good for Jonathan as the original plan...unless you understand that God's plan is always better - even if it involves less in this world.

Are you "all-in" for Christ?

No matter what happens in life - no matter who mocks and ridicules your faith - no matter what happens in the culture - are you "all-in" for Christ?

Or...are you along for the ride as long as it doesn't mess with your life too much?

Do you have a plan - and invite God to jump in the car and ride along?

Or... do you ask God what His plan for your life is - and jump in His car?

If your spouse walks away from Christ - wants to give up on the church - will you do the same?

If your kids walk away from Christ - will you give up on Him also?

If you lose your job - or fall into bad health - will you get angry at God?

Or... will you realize that God works through the changes in life to grow our faith and to accomplish His will?

Apply it...

God's plan and purposes must be the highest priority in your life.

God's plan and purpose must be the driving force behind your choices.

God's plan for the church must be why you're here.

Why does God have you here today?

Why has God saved you and made you one of His own?

How has He gifted you?

Let go of your plans - and follow His plan for your life.

Use your life for His glory - for His purposes - not your own.

God's plan is always better than ours.

Embrace His plan for every single day of your life.

Close in prayer