

1 SAMUEL. CHAPTER 20

AS TODAY'S LESSON OPENS, SAUL, THE NEAR-MAD KING, WAS STILL HOLDING THE THRONE OF ISRAEL, BUT DAVID HAD ALREADY BEEN ANOINTED AS GOD'S CHOSEN RULER. THIS SITUATION WAS NATURALLY BRINGING A DEGREE OF CONFLICT-A NATION CANNOT HAVE TWO KINGS, AND ONE OF THE TWO MEN WOULD HAVE TO GO. SAUL THEREFORE SET ABOUT GETTING RID OF DAVID IN THE VAIN HOPE THAT HE COULD HOLD ON TO THE KINGSHIP AND PASS IT ON TO HIS SON. WHAT DOES THIS TELL US ABOUT SAUL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD? WHAT ABOUT US? HAVE YOU EVER STRUGGLED WITH THE LORD OVER A SITUATION IN YOUR LIFE? CONFLICT OF LOYALTIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE FAMILY, IS ONE OF THE MOST PAINFUL DIFFICULTIES WE FACE IN THE LIFE OF FAITH. BUT REMEMBER JESUS' WORDS IN MATTHEW 10:34-39

34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 and a man's enemies will be the members of his household.

37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it. WHAT IS JESUS TELLING US? HAVE YOU EVER HAD A SITUATION LIKE THIS IN YOUR LIFE?

SAUL BEGAN TO SLIP INTO DANGEROUS INSTABILITY, ONE MINUTE SWEARING LOYALTY TO DAVID AND THE NEXT MINUTE THROWING SPEARS AT HIS HEAD. INTO THIS DEADLY SITUATION STEPPED JONATHAN, SAUL'S SON AND HEIR TO THE THRONE. BECAUSE DAVID WAS JONATHAN'S MAIN RIVAL TO THE THRONE, ONE WOULD EXPECT JONATHAN TO TAKE MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS AND KILL DAVID HIMSELF. BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT JONATHAN CHOSE TO DO. WHY DO YOU THINK JONATHAN WAS WILLING TO GIVE UP THE KINGDOM TO DAVID? THESE TWO GREAT MEN OF VALOR SHARED A DEEP LOVE FOR GOD, AND THAT FORGED THEIR DEVOTION TO EACH OTHER. IN ALL LITERATURE, DAVID AND JONATHAN STAND OUT AS EXAMPLES OF DEVOTED FRIENDS. JONATHAN HAD THE MORE DIFFICULT SITUATION BECAUSE HE WANTED TO BE LOYAL TO HIS FATHER WHILE AT THE SAME TIME BEING A FRIEND TO THE NEXT KING OF ISRAEL.

VS 1 WHAT IS THE "THEN" REFERRING TO? REMEMBER LAST WEEK WHEN DAVID FLED TO SAMUEL AND HIS "PROPHET SCHOOL"? THREE GROUPS OF SOLDIERS HAD FAILED TO CAPTURE DAVID BUT INSTEAD BEGAN TO PRAISE AND WORSHIP GOD. WHILE EVERYONE WAS OCCUPIED AT THE SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS, DAVID SLIPPED AWAY AND MEET JONATHAN SOMEWHERE NEAR GIBEAH. WHAT DOES DAVID ASK JONATHAN?

VS 2 HOW DOES JONATHAN REPLY? JONATHAN'S REPLY SOUND RATHER NAIVE, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF SAUL'S STATEMENT IN 19:1 Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David. JONATHAN MISTAKENLY THOUGHT THAT HIS OWN RELATIONSHIP TO HIS FATHER WAS CLOSER THAT IT REALLY WAS AND THAT SAUL WOULD CONFIDE IN HIM.

VS 3 HOW DESPERATE DOES DAVID THINK THE SITUATION IS?

VS 4 WHAT DOES JONATHAN SAY? JONATHAN OFFERED TO HELP IN ANY WAY HIS FRIEND SUGGESTED AND DAVID PROPOSED A SIMPLE TEST OF SAUL'S TRUE FEELING.

VS 5-9 **THE PLAN.** IT WAS CUSTOMARY FOR EACH JEWISH FAMILY TO HOLD A FEAST AT THE NEW MOON (NUMBERS 10:10; 28:11-15) AND SAUL WOULD EXPECT DAVID TO ATTEND. IF SAUL'S SON-IN-LAW AND LEADING MILITARY HERO DIDN'T ATTEND THE FEAST, IT WOULD BE AN INSULT TO THE KING AS WELL AS THE FAMILY, SO DAVID'S ABSENCE WOULD HELP TO REVEAL SAUL'S GENUINE ATTITUDE TOWARD DAVID. IF SAUL BECAME ANGRY, THEN DAVID'S ASSESSMENT WAS CORRECT, BUT IF SAUL EXCUSED DAVID AND DIDN'T PRESS THE MATTER, THEN JONATHAN WAS CORRECT. THE ONLY PROBLEM WAS THAT JONATHAN WOULD HAVE TO LIE BY SAYING DAVID HAD GONE TO BETHLEHEM TO ATTEND HIS OWN FAMILY'S FEAST. DAVID WOULD WAIT IN THE FIELD FOR JONATHAN TO TELL HIM WHETHER IT WAS SAFE TO COME HOME. BUT HOW WOULD JONATHAN GET A MESSAGE TO DAVID WITHOUT REVEALING HIS HIDING PLACE?

VS 10-11 WHAT IS DAVID'S QUESTION? SO THEY DEvised A SIMPLE PLAN INVOLVING SHOOTING THREE ARROWS OUT INTO THE FIELD WHERE DAVID WAS HIDING.

VS 12-23 DAVID IS SILENT WHILE JONATHAN REVIEWS THE COVENANT THEY HAD MADE WITH EACH OTHER IN CHAPTER 18:3-4 . **3** Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. **4** Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt. BOTH WOULD REMAIN TRUE TO THEIR WORD THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES AND DAVID WOULD BE FAITHFUL MANY YEARS AFTER JONATHAN'S DEATH.

VS 13 WHAT DOES JONATHAN TELL DAVID?

VS 14-15 WHAT DOES JONATHAN ASK OF DAVID? IT WAS CUSTOMARY IN THOSE DAYS FOR A NEW KING TO PUT TO DEATH ANY MEMBER OF A PREVIOUS KING'S FAMILY TO ENSURE NOBODY COULD LAY CLAIM TO THE THRONE. JONATHAN WAS ASKING DAVID TO NOT TAKE SUCH A STEP TOWARD THE FAMILY OF SAUL. ONE DAY, DAVID WOULD KEEP HIS PROMISE, SHOWING GREAT KINDNESS TO JONATHAN'S SON MEPHIBOSHETH, WHO IS LAME. (2ND SAMUEL 9). THERE WAS NO DOUBT IN JOHNATHAN'S MIND THAT GOD'S WILL WOULD COME TO PASS COMPLETELY.

VS 16 SO THEY MAKE A COVENANT. JOHNATHAN WAS A MAN OF GREAT FAITH AND LOYALTY.

VS 17 AN EXAMPLE- HOW DOES JONATHAN LOVE DAVID? THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN DAVID AND JONATHAN IS AN EXCELLENT MODEL OF THE LOVE THAT BELIEVERS ARE TO HAVE TOWARD ONE ANOTHER. DAVID AND JONATHAN WERE WILLING TO SACRIFICE THEMSELVES TO PROTECT THE OTHER. EACH MAN LOVED THE OTHER AS HE LOVED HIMSELF, AS JESUS COMMANDS US TO DO IN MATTHEW 22:39 The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

HATCHING THE PLAN:

VS 18-19 YOU WILL BE MISSED. "THE PLACE WHERE YOU HID YOURSELF" MAY REFER TO THE PLACE WHERE DAVID HID WHEN HE FIRST FLED FROM SAUL "ON THAT EVENTFUL DAY". (19:2 2 So Jonathan told David saying, "Saul my father is seeking to put you to death. Now therefore, please be on guard in the morning, and stay in a secret place and hide yourself.). "EZEL" MAY MEAN "DEPARTURE STONE". THE LOCATION IS UNKNOWN, BUT IT WAS EVIDENTLY A WELL-KNOWN LANDMARK.

VS 20 JONATHAN'S ELABORATE WAY OF COMMUNICATING THE NEWS TO DAVID WAS NECESSARY IF HE WAS TO KEEP DAVID'S LOCATION A SECRET. HE COULD NOT EVEN TRUST HIS OWN SERVANTS.

VS 21 WHAT WILL JONATHAN SAY TO HIS SERVANT IF THE "COAST IS CLEAR"?

VS 22 WHAT IS THE MESSAGE TO FLEE? JONATHAN ONCE AGAIN REVEALS HIS COMPLETE FAITH IN THE LORD'S SOVEREIGNTY. HE VIEWED DAVID'S ENTIRE PLIGHT AS PART OF GOD'S PLAN.

VS 23 WHAT DOES JONATHAN TELL DAVID?

VS 24-25 NOTICE THE PHRASE "THE SEAT BY THE WALL". WHAT DOES THAT TELL US? CONSTANTLY AFRAID OF PERSONAL ATTACK SAUL SAT WITH HIS BACK TO THE WALL, HIS COMMANDER, ABNER, NEXT TO HIM AND JONATHAN ACROSS FROM HIM. DAVID'S PLACE NEXT TO JONATHAN WAS EMPTY.

VS 26 HOW DOES SAUL RESPOND? THE FEAST CONSISTED PRIMARILY OF MEAT FROM THE NEW MOON FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS AND ANYONE CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN WAS PROHIBITED. IF IT WAS SO, ALL DAVID HAD TO DO WAS SEPARATE HIMSELF FROM OTHER PEOPLE FOR THAT DAY, BATHE HIS BODY AND CHANGE CLOTHES AND HE COULD COME BACK THE NEXT DAY.

VS 27 WHAT HAPPENS THE SECOND DAY? SUSPICIOUS OF ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY IN HIS OFFICIAL STAFF, SAUL ASKED WHY DAVID WAS ABSENT. NOTE HOW DISDAINFUL SAUL SPEAKS AGAINST DAVID CALLING HIM "THE SON OF JESSE" RATHER THAN HIS GIVEN NAME.

VS 28-29 WHAT DOES JONATHAN SAY?

VS 30 HOW DOES SAUL REACT? WHEN HATEFUL FEELINGS ARE IN THE HEART, IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH FOR ANGRY WORDS TO COME OUT OF THE MOUTH. REMEMBER WHAT JESUS TELLS US IN MATTHEW 12:34-35- You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. 35 The good man brings out of *his* good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of *his* evil treasure what is evil. SAUL'S WORDS SEEM TO DISPARAGE HIS OWN WIFE, BUT RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD, HIS WORDS DESCRIBE HIS SON AS THE LOWEST OF THE LOW, IT INDICATES THAT HE WAS NOT SAUL'S SON AT ALL BUT THE SON OF SOME OTHER MAN, FOR THE SON OF SAUL WOULD NEVER BETRAY HIS FATHER. HIS MOTHER HAD BORE HIM TO BE THE SUCCESSOR TO HIS FATHER, AND NOW JONATHAN HAD REFUSED THE CROWN IN FAVOR OF THE SON OF JESSE. SAUL'S GREAT CONCERN WAS THE PRESERVATION OF THE KINGDOM THAT THE LORD HAD ALREADY TAKEN FROM HIM! SO SAUL IS FIGHTING THE WILL OF GOD AND ASKING JONATHAN TO DO THE SAME. SAUL REVEILED HIS OWN SON WHILE EATING A HOLY FEAST!

VS 31 WHAT DOES SAUL SAY TO JONATHAN? DO YOU THINK JONATHAN NOW REALIZES HIS FATHER REALLY WANTS TO KILL DAVID? HERE WE SEE A STARK CONTRAST BETWEEN JONATHAN AND HIS FATHER. SAUL'S CHIEF CONCERN WAS FOR HIS OWN POLITICAL POWER AND HE WAS OUTRAGED TO DISCOVER JONATHAN DID NOT SHARE THAT PRIORITY. BUT JONATHAN'S HEART WAS FIXED ON OBEYING GOD, EVEN THOUGH IT MEANT HE WOULD NEVER BECOME KING. IS GOD'S WILL A PRIORITY IN YOUR LIFE?

VS 32 HOW DOES JONATHAN RESPOND?

VS 33 HOW DOES SAUL RESPOND? SAUL'S SELF-WILL WAS SLOWLY DRIVING HIM TO INSANITY AND HIS ANGER WAS CONSUMING HIM TO THE POINT HE WAS WILLING TO MURDER HIS OWN SON.

VS 34 WHAT WAS JONATHAN'S RESPONSE? WHY?

VS 35 JONATHAN WAITED UNTIL THE NEXT DAY AND THEN WENT OUT INTO THE FIELD WITH ONE OF HIS YOUNG ATTENDANTS AS THOUGH HE WERE GOING TO PRACTICE SHOOTING ARROWS.

VS 36 AS HE PROMISED DAVID, HE SHOT THREE ARROWS, ONE OF WHICH WAS SENT FAR BEYOND, MAKING IT NECESSARY FOR JONATHAN TO SHOUT TO THE LAD. BUT HIS WORDS WERE MEANT FOR DAVID.

VS 37-38 WHAT WAS JONATHAN'S MESSAGE TO DAVID?

VS 39-40 WHAT DO WE LEARN?

VS 41-42 DAVID'S BOWING DOWN MORE THAN ONCE ACKNOWLEDGED JONATHAN AS THE PRINCE AND EXPRESSES HUMBLE AFFECTION FOR HIM. THIS WAS NOT THEIR LAST MEETING BUT IT WAS CERTAINLY AN EMOTIONAL FAREWELL. THEY BOTH WEPT BUT

DAVID WEPT THE MOST. HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW MANY YEARS OF EXILE LAY BEFORE HIM AND PERHAPS HE MIGHT NEVER SEE HIS BELOVED FRIEND AGAIN. DAVID LEFT AND WENT TO THE PRIESTLY CITY OF NOB AND JONATHAN RETURNED TO HIS FATHER AND CONTINUED TO BE AN OFFICER IN HIS FATHER'S ARMY. FROM THIS POINT UNTIL SAUL'S DEATH, DAVID WAS AN OUTCAST FROM THE ROYAL COURT. WE DON'T KNOW THAT THEY EVER SAW EACH OTHER AGAIN. TEN YEARS LATER, THE PHILISTINES WOULD KILL SAUL, JONATHAN AND HIS BROTHERS ON THE BATTLEFIELD. THIS WAS PERHAPS DAVID'S MOST PAINFUL LOSS--SEPARATION FROM HIS CLOSET FRIEND.

SO WHAT HAVE WE LEARN FROM THIS STORY?

1. HOW DID JONATHAN DEMONSTRATE HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH DAVID IN THIS CHAPTER? WHAT DID IT COST HIM.
2. WHY WOULD A PERSON KNOWINGLY FIGHT THE WILL OF GOD?
3. WHAT WAS THE FOUNDATION OF DAVID AND JONATHAN'S FRIENDSHIP?
4. DO YOU AGREE/DISAGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT, "THE LORD IS PLEASED WITH THOSE WHO ARE FAITHFUL." WHAT DOES FAITHFUL MEAN TO YOU?
5. HOW IS GOD PREPARING YOU TO REIGN WITH CHRIST IN GOD'S COMING KINGDOM?

FINAL THOUGHT -DEVOTION TO GOD OUTWEIGHS THE RICHES OF THE WORLD. JONATHAN WAS THE SON OF A KING AND THAT POSITION BROUGHT WITH IT MANY ASPECTS OF POWER AND WEALTH. BUT JONATHAN CARED NOTHING FOR THE WORLD'S TEMPORARY ADVANCEMENTS AND FADING GLORY. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE EARTH'S KINGDOMS WILL ALL PASS AWAY AND ONLY LOVE SHALL REMAIN AND HE INVESTED HIS FUTURE IN HIS LOVE FOR DAVID. HE WAS WILLING TO SACRIFICE ALL THE GREAT HONORS THAT WERE HIS BY BIRTH AND HE EVEN HELPED DAVID ASCEND THE VERY THRONE THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN HIS. JESUS TELLS US IN LUKE 14:26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

WE ARE CALLED TO CHOOSE FAITHFULNESS TO GOD IN OUR LIVES.

