

THE FRIENDSHIP OF JONATHAN AND DAVID

BIBLE TEXT: I Samuel 18:1-4; 20 :1-42

LESSON 212 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Ths is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Samuel 18:1-4

¹ And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

² And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

³ Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

⁴ And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that *was* upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

1 Samuel 20:1-42

¹ And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what *is* mine iniquity? and what *is* my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

² And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it *is* not so.

³ And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, *there is* but a step between me and death.

⁴ Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do *it* for thee.

⁵ And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow *is* the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third *day* at even.

⁶ If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked *leave* of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city: for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.

⁷ If he say thus, *It is* well; thy servant

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Friendship

1 The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, I Samuel 18:1;

Genesis 44:30

³⁰ Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad *be* not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;

1 Samuel 19:2

² But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret *place*, and hide thyself:

2 Samuel 1:26

²⁶ I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

2 Saul took David home, and Jonathan and David became great friends, I Samuel 18:2-4

II The Enmity of Saul

1 David complained to Jonathan of Saul's enmity toward him, I Samuel 20:1-4;

Joshua 2:14

¹⁴ And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

2 David and Jonathan arranged a plan to find out if Saul was seeking David's life, I Samuel 20:5-10

3 They went into a field, prayed, and renewed their covenant, I Samuel 20:11-17;

2 Samuel 9:1

¹ And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

4 They completed their plans for ascertaining Saul's true attitude, I Samuel 20:18-23

5 Saul was enraged at David's absence from the feast and tried to kill Jonathan, I Samuel 20:24-33

6 Jonathan gave David the proper signal, I Samuel 20:34-40

III A Sad Farewell

1 David and Jonathan met and wept together, I Samuel 20:41

2 Jonathan comforted David and gave him an affectionate farewell, I Samuel 20:42

NOTES:

Friendship

The friendship that existed between David and Jonathan was of such a character that it probably could not be surpassed, and we doubt if it ever was equalled in the annals of human history. Jonathan, a prince in Israel and heir to the throne, had a love for David that excelled anything we have any record of, regarding one man for another. It is repeated several times that Jonathan loved David as his own soul.

Human love is deep, especially that love of parents for their children or children for their parents. But when there is no

shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, *then* be sure that evil is determined by him.

⁸ Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father?

⁹ And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?

¹⁰ Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what *if* thy father answer thee roughly?

¹¹ And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

¹² And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to morrow any time, *or* the third *day*, and, behold, *if there be* good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee;

¹³ The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father *to do* thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

¹⁴ And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not:

¹⁵ But *also* thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

¹⁶ So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, Let the LORD even require *it* at the hand of David's enemies.

¹⁷ And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

¹⁸ Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow *is* the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

¹⁹ And *when* thou hast stayed three days, *then* thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was *in hand*, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.

²⁰ And I will shoot three arrows on the

blood relationship involved it makes it all the more a tie akin to Heaven.

The Unselfishness of Jonathan

Jonathan's brilliant victory over the Philistines, coupled with his unblemished character, were good evidences, from the natural viewpoint, that he would have made a good and worthy king. But God had chosen David. When David had won that gallant victory over Goliath and came in to have the laurels of the nation laid at his feet, Jonathan stripped himself of his own princely robes and gave them to David. He even handed David his sword, the sword which he had used when he and his armor-bearer had climbed up the steep cliff and routed the Philistines.

He did not hand over his robe and sword with the spirit of defeat and sullenness that would have characterized many in like circumstances. He had a tender love for David and a wonderful attitude of godliness. One can almost picture him helping David into the robe and, after embracing him with brotherly love, whispering in his ear, "Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee" (I Samuel 23:17).

There are many who cannot accept the fact of another's promotion with the same enthusiasm as they accept their own promotion. The Bible tells us that we should seek not our own, but another's wealth (**1 Corinthians 10:24** ²⁴ Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*. **Philippians 2:4** ⁴ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others), thereby pointing out the true spirit of the Christian, which is unselfishness and self-sacrifice. Christ, has taught us that it *is* better to occupy the place and position of humility than to seek for the things of the world, honor, or prestige among men. We are told to set our affections on things above and to have no love for the things of this world. The Bible has informed us that promotion is given to us by God and that it is He alone who puts down one and sets up another (**Psalms 75:6-7** ⁶ For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. ⁷ But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another). If we really believe the Word of God that tells us that promotion is by the hand of God, then we shall find it easy to rejoice in promotions when they come, even if they do not come to us personally.

Jonathan never allowed his personal ambitions or desires, if he had any, to interfere with the interests of the cause of Israel. This was very commendable in him and is also commendable in every one of us. There may be times when we must sacrifice some pleasure, some gain, some comfort, in order that the cause of God might go forward. If we give God the pre-eminence in our lives He will honor us and will bless us in every way, giving us a reward in the Kingdom that will far exceed anything we give up for Him here.

Saul's Jealousy

Saul's jealousy began when they returned home after the battle with the Philistines when the giant, Goliath, was killed. The women and children came out of the cities to greet them, singing, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." What a difference we find in the spirit of Saul and that of his son Jonathan! Jonathan manifested the Spirit of *Jesus* through it all, but Saul was possessed with an evil spirit. He suspiciously eyed David from that day forward. But all Israel loved David.

The sweet music from David's harp no longer quelled the

side *thereof*, as though I shot at a mark.

²¹ And, behold, I will send a lad, *saying*, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows *are* on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for *there is* peace to thee, and no hurt; *as* the LORD liveth.

²² But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows *are* beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath sent thee away.

²³ And *as touching* the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD *be* between thee and me for ever.

²⁴ So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

²⁵ And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, *even* upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

²⁶ Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he *is* not clean; surely he *is* not clean.

²⁷ And it came to pass on the morrow, *which was* the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day?

²⁸ And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked *leave* of me *to go* to Bethlehem:

²⁹ And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me *to be there*: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

³⁰ Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious *woman*, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?

³¹ For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

³² And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore

demon of jealousy and hate that reigned in Saul's breast. Saul threw a javelin at David, but he escaped it. God's hand protected him. Many times the devil would kill the saints of God if God's hand did not hover over them.

David's Discouragement

David became discouraged and started to flee from Saul. He talked to Jonathan and told him his troubles, saying that there was but a step between his soul and death.

Discouragement is a great and effective weapon of the enemy of our soul. What Christian has not, at some time, felt its sharp arrows pierce his soul? Courage lifts the soul, but discouragement causes it to droop. When the disciples were discouraged, at one time, Jesus said to them, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). What comfort those words brought to their heart! Here we find Jonathan comforting David.

Keeping Covenant

Jonathan said to David, "Come, and let us go out into the field." There they renewed their covenant with each other.

A covenant is a sacred thing. The Lord made many covenants with His people and He always kept His part of each covenant. God requires us to keep the covenants we make with Him and with each other. It means much for us to keep our covenants.

Jonathan must have realized that the kingdom would be given to David, for he caused David to swear that he would show him kindness as long as he lived and also extend kindness to his house forever. David kept his promise. We read that after Jonathan had been slain in battle and the kingdom had been given to David, he took the lame son of Jonathan to his house and provided a home for him.

Another Chance

Just before this visit of David and Jonathan, Saul had gone to Samuel, seeking David. While there he came under the influence and power of God that pervaded the life of Samuel and the school of the prophets that Samuel had there. The Lord dealt with him.

Possibly at that time he remembered the day when Samuel had anointed him to be king over Israel: the day when the Lord changed his heart and made a new man out of him. He was little in his own eyes then. Later his heart became lifted up. Jealousy, hatred, and anger had come in and, now a backslidden king, he is before Samuel and before God, still unrepentant in heart. The Spirit of God has striven with many backsliders when they have gone to the house of the Lord; but, like Saul, many have gone away unrepentant in heart.

Jonathan felt that his father would be different after his visit to Samuel, but David's heart was still filled with fear. Together they talked over a plan to find out Saul's true attitude toward David.

The feast of the new moon was at hand. David would be expected to attend the feast and be in his place at Saul's table. David asked leave of Jonathan to attend the feast of his father's family in Bethlehem. If his absence incurred the wrath of Saul they would then know that Saul still had hatred and mischief in his heart. When Saul asked why David was not at the feast, and Jonathan told him, Saul was angry not only with David but, in his wrath, he tried to kill Jonathan too.

shall he be slain? what hath he done?

³³ And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

³⁴ So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

³⁵ And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

³⁶ And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. *And* as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

³⁷ And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, *Is* not the arrow beyond thee?

³⁸ And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

³⁹ But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

⁴⁰ And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.

⁴¹ *And* as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

⁴² And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

A Sad Parting

The next morning, according to the prearranged plan, Jonathan went out into the field with his bow and arrow to let David know that he must flee for his life. He took his bow and arrow to make it appear that he was merely going for sport, thereby avoiding any suspicion that he had gone out to meet David, who was hidden at that time by the rock Ezel.

Jonathan shot beyond the mark and cried to the lad: "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" "Make speed, haste, stay not." This was the signal for David. When the lad had gathered up the arrows, Jonathan sent him back into the city and David came out from his hiding place. He fell to the ground and paid his respects to Jonathan. They embraced each other and wept, for their sorrow was beyond words. They wept until, as the Bible says, "David exceeded." Possibly he wept more than Jonathan. Jonathan comforted him by saying, "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever." The friendship of Jonathan put courage in David's heart to "fight the good fight of faith." All Christians benefit by the fellowship they have one with the other. This wonderful unity binds them together, enabling them to wage a more successful warfare for God and Heaven.

The time came in David's life when he could say, "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea" (Psalm 46:2).

QUESTIONS

- 1 What makes true friends?
- 2 Why was David fearful?
- 3 Why did Saul not like David?
- 4 What was the condition of Saul's heart?
- 5 Why was David supposed to be at Saul's table at this feast of the new moon?
- 6 What was his reason for not attending?
- 7 Did Jonathan befriend David?
- 8 Describe the scene as David bade Jonathan farewell.