



David and Jonathan – 1 Samuel 20
December 7, 2021

1 Samuel 20:1 – 11

Then David fled from Nioth at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, “What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to kill me?”

“Never!” Jonathan replied. “You are not going to die! Look, my father doesn’t do anything, great or small, without letting me know. Why would he hide this from me? It isn’t so!”

But David took an oath and said, “Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said to himself, ‘Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.’ Yet as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death.”

Jonathan said to David, “Whatever you want me to do, I’ll do for you.”

So David said, “Look, tomorrow is the New Moon feast, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow. If your father misses me at all, tell him, ‘David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because an annual sacrifice is being made there for his whole clan.’ If he says, ‘Very well,’ then your servant is safe. But if he loses his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me. As for you, show kindness to your servant, for you have brought him into a covenant with you before the LORD. If I am guilty, then kill me yourself! Why hand me over to your father?”

“Never!” Jonathan said. “If I had the least inkling that my father was determined to harm you, wouldn’t I tell you?”

David asked, “Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?”

“Come,” Jonathan said, “let’s go out into the field.” So they went there together.

What has David experienced to this point in his life that should bolster his faith and cause him to be confident in God’s purposes for his life?

What emotions are evident in David’s words and actions in his conversation with Jonathan here in 1 Samuel 20?

What is uppermost in David’s mind during this conversation with Jonathan?

Here is another example of a man who demonstrates great faith at one point in his life, and then seems to be filled with fear at another. Who else in the Bible had that same propensity?

What does this say to you and me about our faith journey?

Psalms 77:

I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. ²When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted. ³I remembered you, God, and I groaned; I meditated, and my spirit grew faint. ⁴You kept my eyes from closing; I was

too troubled to speak. ⁵ I thought about the former days, the years of long ago; ⁶ I remembered my songs in the night. My heart meditated and my spirit asked: ⁷ “Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again? ⁸ Has his unfailing love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time? ⁹ Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he in anger withheld his compassion?” ¹⁰ Then I thought, “To this I will appeal: the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand. ¹¹ I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. ¹² I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds.” ¹³ Your ways, God, are holy. What god is as great as our God? ¹⁴ You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. ¹⁵ With your mighty arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. ¹⁶ The waters saw you, God, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed. ¹⁷ The clouds poured down water, the heavens resounded with thunder; your arrows flashed back and forth. ¹⁸ Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and quaked. ¹⁹ Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen. ²⁰ You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

What cure do you see here for fear? Focus on verses 11, 12, and 14 – 15

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

We must intentionally change our thought patterns. How do you do that?

David asks Jonathan to lie for him. Is there ever a good reason to lie?

One lie usually leads to another.

Colossians 3:9-10:

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

1 Samuel 20:18 – 29

Then Jonathan said to David, “Tomorrow is the New Moon feast. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty. The day after tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where you hid when this trouble began, and wait by the stone Ezel. I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I were shooting at a target. Then I will send a boy and say, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to him, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them here,’ then come, because, as surely as the LORD lives, you are safe; there is no danger. But if I say to the boy, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you,’ then you must go, because the LORD has sent you away. And about the matter you and I discussed—remember, the LORD is witness between you and me forever.”

So David hid in the field, and when the New Moon feast came, the king sat down to eat. He sat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan, and Abner sat next to Saul, but David’s place was

empty. Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, “Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean—surely he is unclean.” But the next day, the second day of the month, David’s place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, “Why hasn’t the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?”

Jonathan answered, “David earnestly asked me for permission to go to Bethlehem. He said, ‘Let me go, because our family is observing a sacrifice in the town and my brother has ordered me to be there. If I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away to see my brothers.’ That is why he has not come to the king’s table.”

David and Jonathan concoct a plan as a warning sign for David, to tell him if Saul is trying to kill him or not. This signal from Jonathan will determine the course of David’s life – as it turns out, for the next ten years.

What do you imagine David was thinking and hoping for as he waited there behind that heap of rocks?

Could it be true that it could be God’s will for him to be sent away and live as a fugitive? Why would the God who had selected him to be king and blessed him with so many victories now consign him to such a terrible life? Why did God not do the one thing that seemed to make so much sense?

We must trust the loving purpose of God in the strange times. Seek God instead of an explanation!

David learned this. Eventually during his fugitive days he wrote

Psalm 63: 1-4:

You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.

How else could he have learned this lesson? Suppose God had immediately killed Saul and David became king, without the years as a fugitive. Do you think the Psalms would be the same?

William Cowper wrote:

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

1 Samuel 20:35 – 42

In the morning Jonathan went out to the field for his meeting with David. He had a small boy with him, and he said to the boy, “Run and find the arrows I shoot.” As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. When the boy came to the place where Jonathan’s arrow had fallen, Jonathan called out after him, “Isn’t the arrow beyond you?” Then he shouted, “Hurry! Go quickly! Don’t stop!” The boy picked up the

arrow and returned to his master. (The boy knew nothing about all this; only Jonathan and David knew.) Then Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy and said, "Go, carry them back to town." After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most.

Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.'" Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.

What a moment this is for David. God had taken away his position, his wife, and Samuel. Now, he loses his closest friend, Jonathan. All the props are being removed from David's life. What good can come from this? Why would God allow this to happen to his anointed king?