

The Life of David

Jonathan's Warning

1 Samuel 20:1-42

Rev. Freddy Fritz

August 4, 2019

Jonathan's Warning

Scripture

God rejected Saul as king over Israel because of Saul's disobedience. God chose David instead, and the Prophet Samuel anointed David as the future king over Israel. Even though David saved Israel from Goliath and the Philistines armies, Saul became extremely jealous of David. Saul's son, Jonathan, made a covenant of loyal friendship with David. Saul tried a number of times to have David killed, but God providentially protected David from Saul's murderous intentions. Then David went to the Prophet Samuel in Ramah, but Saul even pursued David there. David fled from Ramah to find Saul's son, Jonathan, and to tell him of his father's determination to kill him. Jonathan devised a plan to find out whether this was true and, if true, to warn David about it.

Let's read about Jonathan's warning in 1 Samuel 20:1-42:

¹Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came and said before Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?" ²And he said to him, "Far from it! You shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me. And why should my father hide this from me? It is not so." ³But David vowed again, saying, "Your father knows well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he thinks, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death." ⁴Then Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you." ⁵David said to Jonathan, "Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit at

table with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field till the third day at evening. ⁶ If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the clan.' ⁷ If he says, 'Good!' it will be well with your servant, but if he is angry, then know that harm is determined by him. ⁸ Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the Lord with you. But if there is guilt in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?" ⁹ And Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! If I knew that it was determined by my father that harm should come to you, would I not tell you?" ¹⁰ Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly?" ¹¹ And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So they both went out into the field.

¹² And Jonathan said to David, "The Lord, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father, about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you? ¹³ But should it please my father to do you harm, the Lord do so to Jonathan and more also if I do not disclose it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. May the Lord be with you, as he has been with my father. ¹⁴ If I am still alive, show me the steadfast love of the Lord, that I may not die; ¹⁵ and do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever, when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." ¹⁶ And Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the Lord take vengeance on David's enemies." ¹⁷ And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

¹⁸ Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed, because your seat

will be empty. ¹⁹ On the third day go down quickly to the place where you hid yourself when the matter was in hand, and remain beside the stone heap. ²⁰ And I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I shot at a mark. ²¹ And behold, I will send the boy, saying, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to the boy, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you, take them,’ then you are to come, for, as the Lord lives, it is safe for you and there is no danger. ²² But if I say to the youth, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you,’ then go, for the Lord has sent you away. ²³ And as for the matter of which you and I have spoken, behold, the Lord is between you and me forever.”

²⁴ So David hid himself in the field. And when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. ²⁵ The king sat on his seat, as at other times, on the seat by the wall. Jonathan sat opposite, and Abner sat by Saul’s side, but David’s place was empty.

²⁶ Yet Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, “Something has happened to him. He is not clean; surely he is not clean.” ²⁷ But on the second day, the day after the new moon, David’s place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, “Why has not the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?” ²⁸ Jonathan answered Saul, “David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem. ²⁹ He said, ‘Let me go, for our clan holds a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. So now, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away and see my brothers.’ For this reason he has not come to the king’s table.”

³⁰ 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? ³¹ 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.”³² Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, “Why should he be put to death? What has he done?”³³ But Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death.³⁴ And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him.

³⁵ In the morning Jonathan went out into the field to the appointment with David, and with him a little boy.³⁶ And he said to his boy, “Run and find the arrows that I shoot.” As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.³⁷ And when the boy came to the place of the arrow that Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the boy and said, “Is not the arrow beyond you?”³⁸ And Jonathan called after the boy, “Hurry! Be quick! Do not stay!” So Jonathan’s boy gathered up the arrows and came to his master.³⁹ But the boy knew nothing. Only Jonathan and David knew the matter.⁴⁰ And Jonathan gave his weapons to his boy and said to him, “Go and carry them to the city.”⁴¹ And as soon as the boy had gone, David rose from beside the stone heap and fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times. And they kissed one another and wept with one another, David weeping the most.⁴² Then Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.’” And he rose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city. (1 Samuel 20:1-42)

Introduction

Whoever said that you can’t buy “friends” didn’t know about the shallow shortcuts of our internet age. An article

in *Hemispheres* magazine explored a number of sites that are dedicated to helping you find online “friends.” These companies will create fake users or pay real account holders to follow and like you on various social media sites.

For instance, on the site Socialyup.com you can buy 500 likes for \$30 or 20,000 likes for \$699. For a mere \$10, Fan-MeNow will find you 1,000 Twitter followers and for \$1,750 you can buy a million followers. If you need to beef up views for your YouTube video, for \$150 you can buy 30,000 views from a site called 500views.com. For \$3,100 they’ll make your video go “viral” by getting you a million views.

The article concludes with the following advice: “No matter what social network you’re on, you can buy your way to popularity.”¹

After killing Goliath and saving the people of Israel from the Philistines (1 Samuel 17), David became extremely popular. In fact, David’s popularity grew while Saul’s diminished, and this caused Saul to fear David (18:15). Saul tried to kill David on a number of occasions, but God protected David from Saul’s murderous assaults. David then fled to the Prophet Samuel in Ramah (19:18). But, Saul even followed David there (19:22). It was clear in David’s mind that Saul was determined to kill David. And so David fled in fear back to Gibeah to find Saul’s son, Jonathan, his dear friend.

Lesson

1 Samuel 20:1-42 shows us Jonathan warning David about Saul’s determination to kill David.

Let’s use the following outline:

¹ See <https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2013/may/7052013.html>.

1. The Cause of David's Fears (20:1-23)
2. The Confirmation of David's Fears (20:24-42)

I. The Cause of David's Fears (20:1-23)

First, let's look at the cause of David's fears.

Saul had become extremely jealous of David's popularity. Saul had tried to kill David by throwing a spear at him three times (18:11; 19:10). Once he tried to have David killed by having him fight the Philistines (18:25). Then, he sent messengers to kill David when he left his home, but David's wife, Michal, helped him escape (19:11). Even after David went to Samuel in Ramah, Saul sent three sets of messengers to capture him and bring him back to Saul in Gibeah (19:19-21). Finally, Saul himself arrived in Ramah (19:22-24). But the Spirit of God prevented Saul or his messengers from capturing David.

A. *The Problem (20:1-11)*

First, notice the problem.

The problem was that David was convinced that Saul was trying to kill him. So **David fled from Natioth in Ramah and came and said before Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"** (20:1). But Jonathan was not convinced that Saul was determined to kill David. **He said to him, "Far from it! You shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me. And why should my father hide this from me? It is not so"** (20:2). Jonathan's belief that his father was not trying to kill David is quite astonishing. In fact, earlier in 1 Samuel 19:1a, we read, "And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants,

that they should kill David.” But time had passed, and Jonathan may have believed that his father no longer wished harm to David.

So, David suggested a way to see if Saul still was determined to kill David. The next day was the new moon, and David would have been expected to sit at table with the king. If Saul asked about David, Jonathan was to say that David was in Bethlehem with his family. If Saul was happy with that answer, then Jonathan would know that Saul no longer meant harm to David. But if Saul was angry, then Jonathan would know that Saul still determined to kill David.

Then David said to Jonathan, “Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly?” And Jonathan said to David, “Come, let us go out into the field.” So they both went out into the field (20:10-11).

B. *The Promise (20:12-17)*

Second, observe the promise.

Jonathan promised to warn David about his father’s plans. Then Jonathan made a comment that indicated that he knew that David had been chosen by God to succeed Saul as king over Israel. He said in verse 13b, **“May the Lord be with you, as he has been with my father.”** Of course, Jonathan meant that the Lord had been with his father *earlier*, when he first started reigning. But now, Jonathan knew that David would replace his father Saul as king over Israel.

Then Jonathan asked David not to kill him or his family. He said in verses 14-15, **“If I am still alive [when you become king over Israel], show me the steadfast love of the Lord, that I may not die; and do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever, when the Lord cuts off every one**

of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” It was common when a new king ascended to the throne that he would kill all his opponents so that they would not continue to threaten his kingship. Earlier, “Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul” (18:3). Now, once again **Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the Lord take vengeance on David’s enemies.”** And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul (20:16-17). This was a covenant loyalty between Jonathan and David.

C. *The Plan (20:18-23)*

And third, look at the plan.

David would hide in the field beside a stone heap after the new moon festival. Jonathan would warn David with a pre-arranged signal. He would shoot three arrows and tell the boy who was helping him to go and find the arrows. If he told the boy that the arrows were beyond him, then David would know that Saul was still determined to kill him, and that he should flee. Finally, Jonathan reminded David of their covenant commitment to each other when he said in verse 23, **“And as for the matter of which you and I have spoken, behold, the Lord is between you and me forever.”** Or, as the *New Living Translation* puts it, “And may the Lord make us keep our promises to each other, for he has witnessed them.”

II. **The Confirmation of David’s Fears (20:24-42)**

And second, look at the confirmation of David’s fears. Three things take place to confirm David’s fears.

A. *David's Absence (20:24-29)*

First, David's absence confirms his fears.

On the first day of the new moon, when David was absent from the meal, **Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him. He is not clean; surely he is not clean"** (20:26). But on the second day when David was still absent, Saul asked where David was. Jonathan told his father that David was in Bethlehem. This was not true, and it really was unnecessary to lie. But he did.

B. *Saul's Anger (20:30-34)*

Second, Saul's anger confirms David's fears.

Saul flew into a furious rage when he heard that David was not going to attend the feast. Jonathan questioned his father, **"Why should he be put to death? What has he done?"** (20:32). In response to Jonathan's questions, **Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death** (20:33).

C. *Jonathan's Arrows (20:35-42)*

And third, Jonathan's arrows confirms David's fears.

In accordance with their plan, the next morning Jonathan took a young boy and went to the field. He shot some arrows and said to the boy, **"Is not the arrow beyond you?"** Then **Jonathan called after the boy, "Hurry! Be quick! Do not stay!"** (20:37b-38a). The boy, who knew nothing about the plan between Jonathan and David, was then sent back to the city. Only then did David come out from behind the stone

heap. Jonathan and David kissed one another and wept with one another, because they knew that from now on David would be on the run from Saul, Jonathan's father, for the rest of his life. In fact, Jonathan and David only met one more time years later before Jonathan's untimely death.

Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.' " And he rose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city (20:42). Or, as the *New Living Translation* puts it, "At last Jonathan said to David, 'Go in peace, for we have sworn loyalty to each other in the Lord's name. The Lord is the witness of a bond between us and our children forever.' Then David left, and Jonathan returned to the town."

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed Jonathan's warning in 1 Samuel 20:1-42, we should choose loyalty to Jesus over anyone else.

Jonathan chose covenant loyalty to David, the God-anointed future king of Israel, over loyalty to his father, Saul. Jonathan understood that God's future kingdom lay with David and not with Saul. Jonathan seems to be the clearest example of what Jesus meant when he said, "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" (Luke 14:26). Jonathan's loyalty to David over loyalty to his father is picture of our loyalty to Jesus.

Let us always choose loyalty to Jesus over anyone else. Amen.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church
is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

This sermon, and other sermons, by the Rev. Freddy Fritz can
be found at:

1. www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/sermons.
2. www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/freddy-fritz-sermons-11181.asp.
3. www.sermonaudio.com/source_detail.asp?sourceid=Fred-dyFritz.

Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church (PCA)

Answers for Life!

Address: 19911 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., Tampa, FL 33647

Telephone: (813) 973-2484

Fax: (813) 973-4673

Email: Office@TampaBayPresbyterian.org

Web site: www.TampaBayPresbyterian.org