

The Life of David

Long Live the King

Study 4 | I Samuel 20

News and Needs

Upcoming Events:

- **Prayer Class**, Sunday, May 9th, immediately following the service in the sanctuary. The topic will be: *Notes From the Field*.
- **Prayer Night**, Thursday, May 13th at the church, 7:30 PM.

Opportunities to Serve:

- **Easter Sacrificial Offering** - please consider giving above your regular contribution to support our ministry to assist the financial needs of members and friends of our congregations.

“A Friend for the King”

The sermon text for Sunday will be 20:1-17. I suggest reading the entirety of chapter 20 for your discussions. These questions take in account the whole chapter.

1. In chapter 20, what are the ways that Jonathan shows his loyalty to God by showing loyalty to David? What does Jonathan give up in order to see David succeed? How does Jonathan prefigure the life of Jesus? In what ways does Jonathan's sacrificial loyalty challenge our loyalty to King Jesus?

Jonathan, in verses 12-17, makes strong declarations of his conviction that David is in fact the Lord's anointed King. He acknowledges that the throne is indeed passing to David, and prays for David's vindication, even if it means his own father's household will be destroyed as David's enemy. But Jonathan recognizes that the true king is a king of mercy, as is the Lord, and asks for David to promise David will protect Jonathan's house. At risk to his own life, Jonathan participates in David's ploy to determine Saul's intentions. Jonathan defends David and gets a spear thrown at him for it by his own father (vs. 26-34). Jonathan further risks his life to send word to David of Saul's threat (vs. 35-42). Jonathan loved David as he loved his own soul (v. 17). His speech and actions show that his loyalty to David is rooted in his love and loyalty to God the King, the one who is caring for Israel by raising up a true king like David to lead and defend God's people.

Don't miss that Jonathan is giving up his own right to be king by placing his loyalty first with God, and therefore with David. Saul says so himself, "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" (v. 31). Think about Jonathan's plan to send word to David if David is in danger or not. David fully trusts Jonathan. David is unarmed. How easy it would have been to put an arrow in David's heart, to kill his father's enemy. Instead, Jonathan remains true to his promise to David. Maybe, so as to remove any temptation to murder David, Jonathan gives all his weapons to the boy to carry home (v. 40). Jonathan chooses to decrease, so that the true King may increase. Jonathan does not see equality with David something to be grasped. Jonathan choose humble submission to God's plan of redemption rather than taking what should be rightfully his.

John the Baptist declared that when his cousin Jesus, the true King, came onto the scene, "I must decrease, but he must increase" (John 3:28-30). When tempted to grasp for the power and authority that was rightfully his, Jesus resisted temptation, and put the Father's agenda above his own

(Matthew 4:1-11). When the Father's agenda meant choosing sacrifice, Jesus prayed his Father's will be done (Matthew 26:42). Jonathan foreshadows the path of the true King, who "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 4:6-11).

Our city eats, sleeps, breathes a loyalty to self. Protect your agenda. Protect your rights. Protect your authority. Take what is rightfully yours. Let no one stand in the way of your happiness. The tricky part is that we do have rights, we do have authority, we are to make plans, have agendas, and we are meant to be happy. Combine those two things together, and it can be very difficult for a Christian to know how to draw the line between what is God given and what is an idolatrous loyalty to self. We must first, like Jonathan seek to plant our loyalty firmly and unwaveringly in the true and living God. Even if it costs us A LOT to do so. Even if it means giving away our rights, our authority, our agenda, our kingdom. But this is the way to living truly human. This is the way of enjoying the kingdom God has given us as "little kings" under his Kingship. Otherwise, we become less than human, less than kings. We become raving tyrant beasts like Saul.

At the time when temptation was probably at its height for Jonathan to reach out and grasp for his own authority and agenda, he gave away his weapons, thus removing the temptation to betray God by murdering his friend. How might we, as a community, help one another remove the temptation to grasp for a loyalty to self? How do we help one another make decisions that sacrificially seek God's kingdom first, before we seek our own? How do you make this kind of living attractive to your brothers and sisters in Christ who don't want to be challenged to live loyal to the King first in their lives?

2. What is Saul's response to Jonathan's loyalty to David? What parallels can you draw from this persecution to the warnings that Jesus gave his disciples? In what ways is your loyalty to King Jesus bringing the persecution of "Saul" upon you?

Jonathan's defense of the Lord's anointed, his loyalty to God the King by being loyal to God's chosen King, gets him some nasty insults (v. 30) and a spear chucked at his head by his own father (v. 33). Reminds me of what Jesus said to his followers, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you

as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. (John 15:18-23)

Perhaps one of the most difficult sacrifices a Christian can make in order to follow King Jesus faithfully is when that decision brings them into direct conflict with one's own family. Many in our congregation unfortunately know this pain. Some may even know what it means to receive death threats from their own family members for following Jesus. Whether this conflict be mild or severe, it is difficult to heal this pain. We must start with the truth that there is a family greater than our own blood family. In that family, our elder brother, Jesus, knows what it means to be hated by his own kindred. Jesus knows what it means to bear a father's wrath. As our elder brother, he is also God's true King, the one who loves us more than his own soul and promises to keep steadfast love with us forever. The one who gives us the bad news that the world will in fact hate us as it hates him, but the one who also promises, "in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

King Jesus doesn't ask anyone to go out and find persecution. Which is why many who claim they are "persecuted" at work or home are actually being persecuted for being an obnoxious jackass, rather than for living a life faithful to King Jesus. Nevertheless, the question still remains, in what ways is living a life of loyalty to Jesus as your King bringing you into conflict with those opposed to Jesus' Kingdom? If it's not happening, why is that? It's closely related to asking yourself, if we are commanded to give an answer for the hope we have in Jesus, why is nobody asking me the question? (I Peter 3:15, note: giving an answer with "gentleness and respect")

You can go on and on with your groups that the answer to those questions is because we live our lives as chameleons, doing our best to blend in to our surroundings. Thus, we don't get insulted or threatened and no one ever asks us why our lives seem to have a hope they do not possess. Or your social circle is surrounded by no one other than other Christians so there's no opportunity to rub shoulders with someone who may be puzzled by your choice to follow King Jesus.

You can go that route, but perhaps in light of the text, let's think about ways we are step into the path of the bullet by standing up for our friends. What do you think would happen if our church engaged social structures that promote oppression and injustice? What would happen if we defended victims of child or spousal abuse? What if we advocated for the housing rights of those victimized by slum lords?

Maybe that's too big picture. When is the last time you confronted a brother or sister in Christ about the choices they were making that were not honoring to Jesus? Often, from the very brother or sister you seek to restore, you get yelled at or threatened. In a context that says spirituality is private and we should all just mind our own business anyway, this is a tough thing to do. Yet, we are saved by Jesus into a new community and that new community is accountable to one another. Sure, there are risks that Christian brothers and sisters abuse this accountability, and thus we are prone to not meddle. But abuse does not negate proper use, and often, we use this danger as an excuse to stand idly by while we watch our friend wreck their life or be eaten alive by their sin and the attacks of Satan.

Whether it's on a macro level or simply in relationship with a friend, make no mistake that once you start stepping in to defend your friends or neighbors from the attacks of the Enemy, the Enemy will turn his guns on you as well. It is a common to experience spiritual attack when you are living a life loyal to King Jesus in this way. Do you know what this is like?

notes

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
