

1 Samuel 18. Let's have our study tonight. We're having communion as well. Lookin' forward to that. Some of our men will be serving, from our men's ministry.

Paul, when he wrote to the Romans (in chapter 15:4), said of the Old Testament, "Whatever was written beforehand was written for our learning, so we through the patience and through the comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." So one assurance you can have, as we go through these Old Testament books, is that God has written them down so that you and I might learn to trust Him. And as we go through these narrative studies that report stories that God wants us to hear - only what He wants us to have, sometimes there're big gaps in the story, other times God slows down and seems to spend hours and chapters on a day in the life of - but they're all designed to bring you to a place where you know the heart of God and the nature of God and the love of God and the plans of God. And so we're going slowly; we're trying to absorb it all and asking the LORD to speak to us.

1 Samuel is a book that starts with the birth of Samuel. He's the last judge in the list. He's also the first official prophet to the nation of Israel. There were others who prophesied but never someone who held that office. And he was also a priest. So he served the LORD at a time when the nation was doing poorly. He served faithfully, bringing God's Word to bear for over sixty years. The first seven chapters, especially, are dedicated to his ministry. But the whole 1 and 2 Samuel together only cover 130 years - with the birth of Samuel to the death of David, from 1100 B.C. to 970 B.C. or so. When Samuel got old and the people realized that maybe his sons would follow him to a place of authority (and they didn't appreciate his sons - they were not very honest), they asked if they could have a king like the other nations roundabout that would protect them and all. Old Samuel's heart was broken. He took it to the LORD who said, "They're not mad at you, they're rejecting Me. They've been doing that since they came out of Egypt. Warn them what it's going to cost them, and then we'll give them what they want." And to that point, God gave them Saul. He would rule for forty years. His life and his disdain for the things of God are shown in, basically, a couple of chapters: two military campaigns - one against the Philistines, one against the Amalekites. And in the first one, he lost the right of succession for his boys to follow him to the throne; in the second, he lost his place, and God set him apart. Those are separated by

many years of history, but those are the two reports that God gives us. In the last seven-and-a-half years of his forty-year reign, he will spend his life with one goal: I want to murder my successor. And he will go after David with all that he has.

In chapter 16, two weeks ago, we saw David's calling. The LORD said Saul would be rejected. The prophet told him so. And God sent Samuel to the house of Jesse, and eventually they got to David, the youngest boy, and anointed him to be God's next king - the one that God chose; not the people but the one that the LORD chose. He was anointed in private. His calling was out of sight of the people. Eventually the LORD would introduce David into Saul's life because David was a really good musician. And when a spirit from God, a troubling spirit, came to bother Saul, they looked for someone who could ease his hurt with music and worship. And there were a lot of people around him who said, "Who know this kid, David. He's really good." And so they brought him in, and David would, in this part-time role, begin to play for this rejected king and yet would still shepherd his father's sheep. There's a lot to learn from David. The LORD gives him forty chapters - forty years of life, forty chapters - almost one per year, I guess. His walk with the LORD, his rise to the throne is the remainder of this book. The next ten chapters, in 2 Samuel, will discuss the victories, the triumphs, the advancement of the kingdom. The last ten chapters or so will discuss his troubles and how he kind of got off in a couple of places, pretty badly so. Eventually we'll go to his death in 1 Kings 2.

But last week, in chapter 17, we went over a pivotal moment in David's life, where the LORD sought to establish David in the eyes of the nation in a very giant way by fighting against this giant, Goliath. If you missed the study, we're happy to have you go through it again or go back to it. But, as you can imagine, the defeat of this 9'6" monster by this little ruddy, red-headed kid, teenager, had left quite an impression on everyone. And it opened the doors for David to, first of all, get instant notoriety in the nation. But also it opened the door for David to permanently come out of the fields of his father's sheep and into the palace of the king. The death of one giant enemy, however, would be the birth of another one because as Saul first noticed David with friendship and kindness, and he thought him an asset, it wouldn't be long before the wisdom that David showed, the blessing upon David's life - God's Spirit upon him making him wise in his decisions - Saul soon began to realize that he had been set aside, and this was his replacement; and he says that a couple of times, his son as well. Everyone knew, but Saul wouldn't relent. He would go to his death seeking David's death.

In chapters 18, 19 and 20 we'll get (kind of) the quick alienation, and then in chapter 21 through the end of the book, we'll get the chronicles of David, the fugitive. He's the Richard Kimball of the Old Testament, for those of you old enough to remember that series, "The Fugitive." In these chapters, God sets these two men in contrast. It really is a picture of contrasts. Here's David, and here's Saul. Here's a rebellious guy, and here's a man who has been faithful to the LORD. You learn from David how to count the cost for doing what's right, how to wait upon the LORD when you would like the LORD to hurry up. How you wait. Not just why you wait but how. For David, it meant seven-and-a-half years of running. For Saul, it meant seven-and-a-half years of holding to the throne in a stranglehold though God had rejected him. But David was going to have to wait. When you read through these chapters, you want to ask yourself - how come it is that God allowed Saul to stay on the throne for so long? Why didn't He remove him quicker? Why was He not blessing David, who had been so faithful? Why was this mercy extended to a man He had set aside? And what was David really learning? And I think we'll pick up the answers as we go. But, for me, the best lesson I can give you from David's life - through these seven-and-a-half years - is that every delay in your life as God's child is a divine delay. It is God's choice. You've handed the LORD your life. He may not explain why you're waiting but that you have to wait has a purpose, and God has purpose for allowing you to sit and wait. On the other hand, if you want Saul's big lesson, it is how patient God is with a life lived in rebellion. How long God waits for this guy to come to his senses, the blinding influence of self and greed and the horror of living and, unfortunately, dying while refusing God every step of the way. He's sorrowful, but he's never repentant. He strives to hang on to what God has removed from him. He is absolutely the presentation of the tragedy of a wasted life. What he could have been, so much, he was none of those things.

So, last week we ended with David slaying Goliath, fighting the Philistines that day, and then bringing the head of this monster into Jerusalem where Saul wanted to know whose boy this was. And they told him, "This is the boy of Jesse. He lives in Bethlehem."

And so that's where we pick up tonight, in chapter 18:1, "Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and

gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt." We are introduced to Jonathan, a young man who was a man much like David. He's a little older than David was, but he was a man who loved the LORD. He had been there when Goliath was defeated in the name of the LORD, and it immediately stirred something in his heart. Here was a guy that loved the LORD as he did. Imagine being a man committed to the things of God and then living with Saul as your father. All of the duplicity and the struggles, and yet here's a man who was determined to do things right, and now he gets to meet David who, to all intents and purposes, is the very kind of friend that he would want and someone that he would have fellowship with. We will find Jonathan constantly having great faith in the LORD. He and David would make a relationship that would last for years. It was a precious find in the days of Saul to find anyone that had the kind of faith that you had, that you could share. For now, according to verse 2, Saul recognizes the hand of God upon David's life. He takes him in fulltime as one of his servants. He is making good judgments in the midst of his ongoing choices to reject the LORD, which would tell you that God is directing David where He wants him to be because Saul seems to make good choices when it comes to David and yet poor choices when it came to the LORD.

So, here's God opening the doors that He alone can open, and we see everything for David heading in the right direction. He would find favor with a madman, and this guy was a madman for sure. It reminds me of some of the stories in the Old Testament. Joseph, when he went to prison - unjustly accused by Potiphar's wife. He made friends with the jailers, he was given favor by the LORD, he stood out wherever he went, and yet he was in a situation that he didn't belong in, and he certainly hadn't done anything to cause it. We think about Israel leaving Egypt after 400 years, and God, for one moment, gave Israel favor in the eyes of the Egyptian population, and they began to hand over to them their jewelry, their cash, their wealth because the LORD figured they owed them for 400 years of work. And for that minute of favor, they walked off with the riches in Egypt. So, God's favor is a good thing to have, isn't it?

Notice in verses 3 and 4 that this instant friendship was sparked by a mutual faith in the LORD. Jonathan and David would make a pact together based on brotherly love, a move that was pretty amazing from Jonathan's viewpoint because, get this: Jonathan was the rising star in Israel. His dad was the king, had been the king for almost three-and-a-half decades. He would have been the heir apparent. I don't know that there's an indication, really, in the Scriptures that Jonathan was aware

of God's judgment years earlier against his father as far as that he couldn't succeed to the throne. I'm not sure his dad would have told him that. But I do know this - Jonathan was sure David would be the one. And so there is this....what could have been disaster, I think, turned out to be an amazing thing because Jonathan, who had been kind of the national hero for years - the heir apparent to the throne - was now meeting the fellow that would take his place. In fact, I think that Jonathan was probably unaware of the judgment that we read back in chapter 13. He didn't resent David, but notice that he recognized (verse 4) God's hand upon David; so much so that he hands to David his royal robe, the royal armor - the armor that signified the relinquishing, I think, of his position. And he was willing to say, early on, "I know God's called you. You're gonna be the one that's gonna replace my father and be the king over Israel." Quite a guy! Selfless, humble, amazing. Great fellowship between these two men. Great humility and respect and submission to the will of God. It is an amazing work of God's Spirit that Jonathan will find himself so humbled before the LORD. Nothing done by vain conceit, lowliness of mind (Philippians 2:3). It is a friendship that not only would sustain David and Jonathan but it would save David's neck more than a time or two.

It's always good when you can find this kind of friend in the LORD. I hope you have one. If you have ten, you have too many. But to have one - a Barnabas, a Timothy, someone that can encourage you - is amazing. You know, I was thinking about Barnabas today, reading these things. Barnabas was an amazing guy even though he and Paul had some arguments down the road. I mean, when Paul finally came out of the wilderness and through Damascus after he had been saved for three years, and wanted to meet the apostles, there was no apostle in Jerusalem that would meet with him. They all went, "He's a killer, man. I'm not meetin' with that guy." Wisdom rather than valor at this point. And Barnabas actually went and met with this former killer of believers and assured himself that Paul was the real deal. And he took him to Peter and a couple of others. The rest of the guys wouldn't even see him. And he only lasted two weeks before they kind of moved him down the road because he was trouble by reputation everywhere that he went. But, had it not been for Barnabas, none of the apostles would have met with him. Years later, when there was a revival that broke out in Antioch, it was Barnabas who went, "I can't teach. I can encourage. But I should get a teacher. I'll go lookin' for Saul." And he went to find him. Brought him to Antioch and gave him the church that he had all but pastored for who knows how long - because he recognized God's hand upon Paul. It was only when his little nephew, John Mark, had quit on their first trip, and I think he felt bad about it, and Paul (tough guy),

"I'm not takin' him again, he's a hazard, he's dead weight, he's in the way, he's not helpful," that Barnabas said, "Well, you can go, I'll give up my career," which it would have certainly been, "and I'll stay with this young man and try to help him." And he took him back home to his place in Cyprus, and eventually he and Paul would make up, if you will. But kind of that relationship between Jonathan and David. And so I say may God give you a Jonathan in your life. Treasure them richly. They're hard to find. They're worth their weight in gold. And it's not bad if you have one of those in your life. So they became the best of friends, and this friendship was proven and solidified even though Jonathan's father wanted to kill David in the worst way. I wrote in my Bible years ago (in the margin, of these verses), Hebrews 10:24-25, "Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." Good thing to be in church, especially in our culture today; the more you can hang around Christians, the better off you'll be. You know? And so we gather as often as we're able to, together. So David had an instant friend in the palace, if you will.

Verse 5 says, "So David went out wherever Saul sent him," (and I want you to mark this little phrase) "and behaved wisely." We'll see that mentioned more than once. "And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. So the women sang as they danced, and said: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.'" Ohhhhh. That was it, wasn't it? Verse 8, "Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, 'They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?' So Saul eyed David from that day forward." And I don't think with a nice look. So David went out, and he began to serve. Again, time passes. We're not told how long. He was obedient to the direction of the king, though the king was not a godly man. It would have been a difficult, I think, relationship at best. I don't know if you have an unbelieving boss; put yourself in that position. But he behaved himself, notice, wisely in all of his ways - he knew his place, he did what he was told, he served the LORD by serving Saul, and God continued to promote him. Eventually, we are told here in verse 5, he became chief of staff, if you will, in Saul's palace. Everyone looked up to him and accepted him

for who he was - from the general public to the army leaders to the government officials. But I want you to notice that David got to this place of honor just by faithfully serving God wherever he was. Right? He didn't promote himself, he wasn't out on a campaign trail. He just was faithful where he was, and by being faithful, God began to establish him. He was a faithful shepherd, he was a faithful court musician, he was a faithful armorbearer, and now he's a faithful military leader. Faithful in the little, God will give you much. You want to find where God wants you to be, just be faithful, and more will come your way. And God will bring you to that place, hopefully, where you'll be full of what the LORD has for you. Now, look, make no mistake - David is able to stand in this lofty place publicly because privately he has a good relationship with God. So stuff at work or stuff with Saul or stuff in the army - we don't know what he might have faced, but he was strong because he had a personal relationship with God. And so, without depending on his own selfish pursuits or his arrogance or demanding his rightful place, he was just going to wait upon God to open some doors; which is a pretty good thing to learn. He will stick to it....it got him here so far. "Let God be God, and I'll just rest in Him." He did it well. There's a verse in Ecclesiastes 9:10 which says, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all of your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going." In other words, get busy now. Be diligent, fervent in the Spirit. "What you do," Paul said to the Colossians, "do it heartily unto the Lord" (Colossians 3:23). So here's David. Here's how David was promoted to that place of service. He did everything really well to the LORD - wisely and diligently.

We read in verses 6, 7 and 8 that the custom of those days - and you can read it historically as well - was that when armies returned from battle, they would often have parades in the streets of the capital to honor the king or to honor the fighting men. Unfortunately, the people often sang louder or long for the praises of men more than the praises of God. But David.....this young kid, this could turn his head. "David, you're so amazing! All the girls like you." But David's eyes were only upon the LORD. He wanted to please God. He wasn't moved by glory. This was another test for this would-be king. But his praises would only be to the LORD. Unfortunately, Saul was just the opposite. Right? We know Saul to be a man who lived for the praises of men. When Jonathan (a couple of weeks ago, when we were studying) had a victory in battle, it would be his dad who blew the trumpet and took the credit. "Aren't we great?" is what he'd say. But what he meant was, "Aren't I great?" When he was rejected by the LORD, back in chapter 15, and Samuel said, "God is done with you," it was Saul who said, "Well, can you at least go to worship

with me?" And Samuel said, "I got nothin' to do with that." And he said, "Well, could you at least go with me so the people will think well of me?" He wanted the appearance of godliness. So he covets the people's praises. He reacts in anger and suspicion when he hears their singing. And he comes to the conclusion, "He's after my job, my place, my spot. Note to self: keep an eye on that opportunist, David."

So, Saul appreciated David for a little while, but it wasn't long before jealousy and the inevitability of what God had told him sets into Saul's understanding. "I'm done. God has set me aside." Saul was a very brave soldier; you'll read that everywhere you turn. He fought a lot of battles, but it was always for Saul's glory. And even when Jonathan, like I said, would win, Saul would take the credit. So now the people had set David above him, and you know where that was goin', right? The division between them is pretty quick. All because David's done the right thing. I want you to notice that. I know sometimes in our life we see trouble come our way, and we want to say to the LORD, "Gosh, I've been so faithful!" To which you may hear the LORD saying, "I know! And look what that's got ya." Because trouble comes from the world to those who want to walk with God. So, be faithful. But it isn't long before faithful David has a powerful king eyeing him with suspicion. "Maybe this is the guy that God is going to replace me with." Saul had been receiving many messages from the LORD. Number one - his kingdom was taken from him. Number two - the Holy Spirit departed and an evil spirit came to hang around from time to time, "That victory of David over Goliath - either that was a really lucky shot, or God was really with that kid." Jonathan's friendship - even his son had turned and admired David. The people loved and honored David above Saul. And Saul saw that God was with him; wherever David went, David was blessed. In fact, look at verse 12, and we'll get there in just a moment. But it says, "Now Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul." Saul was greatly aware of his position. It left Saul hanging on to self-glory with a slippery grip and with, kind of, deep suspicions. And then you have David on the other side. No ambition. None. Serve the LORD. Protect the sheep. Kill a bear. Take on a Goliath. Serve the people. Make good choices. David always found himself unmoved by his circumstances, just willing to submit himself to the LORD - face of adversity, unjust suspicion, praises of men, hatred of the king. Poor young guy! And yet he's surviving all of it. So David just remained faithful, and, like I said, these trials were caused by his faithfulness. He was just simply trying to do the right thing.

"And it happened," verse 10, "on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house." By the way, the word for "prophecy" there is the Hebrew word for "ranting," so don't mix it up with the word "prophecy" as you would normally know it. "So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand." Like a Texas bar. Verse 11, "And Saul cast the spear, for he said, 'I will pin David to the wall!' But David escaped his presence twice. Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul." So just a day later, here comes this evil spirit because that's what Saul has invited into his life. Notice, by the way, the close connection between jealousy and murder. Open the heart and watch the enemy step in. So here's plan one on Saul - still kept to himself, but here's his secret plan: "I will kill David with a javelin." Saul is slipping further and further away - not seeking God's deliverance, not sorry for his ways. Meanwhile, David is playing dodge ball with javelins while Saul is playing pin the javelin on David. So if you ever wanted to be in ministry, think again. Because there're always a few people with javelins that want to pin it to you.

I wonder, and I don't know, but if young little 17-, 18-, 19-year-old David didn't say within his heart, "Man, to just be back with my dad's sheep about now! Wouldn't it be an easier life than this life turned out to be?" I don't know if it ever crossed his mind to quit. It's crossed mine several times.

But, verse 12, Saul recognized that God had left him and joined with David. But it didn't bring him to his knees. It's just amazing to me. He's still fighting God on his downhill trek, and in verse 15, in a minute, we'll read that he was even more afraid as time went on. So David - for his part, look at David again - doesn't retaliate for his murderous intent (I'm not sure that he could have), turns the other cheek. David is still doin' the right thing - having to learn to trust God.

Verse 13, "Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people." And then we read again, "David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the LORD was with him. Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was" (by application) even more "afraid of him." So all of Israel and of Judah - they loved David because he went out and he came in before them. Plan two, plot two - get rid of David: "Let's demote him from chief of staff to the head of an army of a thousand people. Maybe that humiliation would suffer. Maybe he would get killed in battle. Let's put him out there where the fight is, with the soldiers." And it still

backfired. Why? Because the evilness of one man won't be able to turn the hand of God who is with you. "Greater is He that's in you than he that's in the world" (1 John 4:4). Maybe, people, tonight you have enemies that don't love you, that don't even like you, that dislike you greatly. But if the LORD is with you, what do you have to worry about? And David's a pretty good example of that. He's a young guy with very little power yet, and yet he acted wisely, and we read again, "God was with him to bless him. And David gets more acclaim and more notice - said it in verse 5, said it in verse 12, said it in verse 15. David stays right in the will of God, in the center of God's will, and every plot of Saul's fails. It reminds me of Joseph's words to his brothers when they finally met. He said, "Whatever you planned to do, you planned evil, but God used it for good" (Genesis 50:20) "to bring about as it is this day, to save many people alive." Joseph was able to see beyond the wickedness of men to the goodness of God. And I think David was able to do that, too, because Saul was a guy that I think he'd like to just slit his throat, certainly, or get away from him as far as you could. David did neither.

So here comes the testing of David's trust in the LORD: he's given a dangerous job, he's been a personal musician to a murderous boss, he's been chief of staff and then demoted to the captain over just a thousand men, he's seen the cheering crowds and then the hatefulness of his boss. All in the same week. But I love the end of verse 16, where it says that the people loved David because he was available to them. Isn't that great? Right? In other words, he came in and then he came out before them. He wasn't detached from the people; he didn't run out the door. He was a man who served the people with his life. I don't know if David - well I'm sure he didn't know that, for the next seven-and-a-half years it was about to get a whole lot worse - I'm sure that he didn't realize this is what he had signed on for. But why does God allow this? God allows things to test you, to strengthen you, to enable you. There's never any learning if there's no pressure. I guarantee you - we don't learn when there's no pressure. I thought about Moses. He spent forty years at the back side of the desert to learn he was a nobody; but that God could make somebody out of a nobody if he would just trust the LORD. So, look, if you're goin' through it today, I would say to you either (a) you're really livin' in sin, or (b) God's got some really good things for you to do, and He wants to teach you great things. So the road was going to get harder for David, but so far all he's done is kill a giant and showed up and been faithful and wise in everything he's done. And he's gotten javelins thrown at him and been demoted and publicly humiliated, and he continues to be faithful.

Verse 17, "Then Saul said to David, 'Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife. Only be valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles.' For Saul thought," (see how the LORD knows what you're thinkin'?) " 'Let my hand not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him.' So David said to Saul, 'Who am I, and what is my life or my father's family in Israel, that I should be the son-in-law to the king?' But it happened at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife." Saul pulled the plug. Plot three - "Let me use my oldest daughter as a hook to further have David risk his life in fighting." Now, if you were with us last week in chapter 17, one of Saul's promises to whoever would kill Goliath was that he would give them his oldest daughter, which happened to be this one. So, you know, shouldn't David have had her anyway? I guess he should have. So here's what he says, "Go fight the LORD's battle, and I'll give you my beautiful older daughter." Translation: "Go get yourself killed, and I'll be rid of you, and I won't get blamed for it. No blood on my hands at all." And he hides his ways under this spiritual kind of language; he's real good at that. Psalm 55:21 says, "The words of his mouth" (the wicked one) "were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords." That's a pretty good description of this man. He is just slippery.

Notice, in verse 18, again it doesn't work. David wasn't driven to self-gain. He had a love for the LORD, so he answered Saul very humbly. "Look, me or my family are in no status to become kids of the king or relatives of the king. I'm in no position to hold such an honor." And he refuses that honor. Jeremiah said, in chapter 45:5, "Would you seek great things for yourself? Don't seek them. But I'll give you life as a prize wherever you go. Don't seek glory for yourself." Here's David. Humble. And because he's humble, notice, he doesn't fall into the trap. Saul, in verse 19, realizing this had also failed, gives his promised daughter to another; just kind of pulls the plug. By the way, this is free (well, it's all free, but this is free) - in chapter 21 of 2 Samuel, all five kids of this woman and this man are going to be hung by the Gibeonites. So the future of this family does not turn out very well; nor their relationship with God. But for now, again, here's the father doing what he does best.

In verse 20, "Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. So Saul said, 'I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him,' " (again, same plan) " 'and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.' Therefore Saul said to David a second time, 'You shall be my son-in-law

today.' " So, David does appear to have had a real love for this girl, Michal. Saul, discovering that, thinks, "All right. I'll use that." Now he's motivated not just by loyalty but by love. And so the LORD reveals the heart of Saul to us again. "Maybe I can use this to kill David." And here comes yet another trial. Right? I mean, David, he's just faithful, and he can't get a break.

Verse 22, "And Saul commanded his servants, 'Communicate with David secretly, and say, "Look, the king has delight in you," ' " (I can't believe he'd believe that) " "and all his servants love you. Now therefore, become the king's son-in-law." ' So Saul's servants spoke those words in the hearing of David. And David said, 'Does it seem to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing I am a poor and lightly esteemed man?' " (In other words, "I have no position, really, of honor.") "And the servants of Saul told him, saying, 'In this manner David spoke.' Then Saul said, 'Thus you shall say to David: "The king does not desire any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies." ' But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. So when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king's son-in-law. Now the days had not expired; therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law." So, ridiculous request. David, again, humbly refuses. Slow to receive it. Saul is stymied by David's honesty - admits his poverty, his inability to pay a dowry to marry this woman. And he says, "Well, I'll make it easy for you. Here's what you can pay." And so David thankfully, he loved her, goes out and does twice what he's been asked to do. He does twice as much in half the time. And Saul is obligated to give David Michal as his wife, and it's the old "curses, foiled again."

Verse 28 "Thus Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David," (man, how long would that take?!) "and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him; and Saul was still more afraid of David. So Saul became David's enemy continually. Then the princes of the Philistines went out to war. And so it was, whenever they went out, that David behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed." I want you to notice - three times you read here Saul is aware that God had chosen David, and God continued to bless David's faithfulness, but Saul doesn't respond to what he sees. He sees it; he doesn't respond to it. On the other hand, David continues to draw closer to the LORD. As he becomes Saul's enemy, he still maintains his friendship with God. God continues to bless him. And,

as the months and maybe more go by, at every place of battle, David is just that faithful, godly man, acting wisely before the LORD. And he's not trying to promote himself; he's just trying to be faithful. And that's where he gets to where he's going to be king, but he gets there because he has been faithful.

Back in verse 3, before we have communion tonight, we are given this beautiful picture of Jesus' love in type. And you find it in the relationship of Jonathan's love for David. Think about it this way - David is being loved by the son of the king, and he is being hated by a deposed king. Satan, who was the god of this world - was your god for a time, hates you now. Well, he hated you before, but now he overtly hates you. In chapter 19, Saul will throw off all pretense and come out in the open with his one intention - kill David. He throws money and troops and time and weapons at it and bribes and everything else. There're no more schemes, no more plots. It's public welfare and murder. That's all that he has in his heart. Well that's kind of what happens when you and I get saved. We experience the love and the fellowship of Jesus, but we also incur the wrath of the enemy who wants to destroy that which God wants to do. God has defeated the enemy for us. It won't be long before Satan is removed, but much like Saul, in this life he's going to hang around, isn't he? Though he's not your god anymore and you're not a part of this world, he is going to do everything he can to destroy. But you remain faithful, and one day you will be gathered together with Him. So, God makes a covenant of love with you, even as Jonathan and David made with each other. God says to you and me tonight: He's never going to leave us, never going to forsake us (Hebrews 13:5); He's going to finish the work that He started (Philippians 1:6). It's a love that is hard to comprehend but wonderful to rest in - it is beyond our understanding. Paul, when he prayed for the Ephesians in chapter 3:18, prayed that the Ephesians might know what the length and the breadth and the depth God's love for them was. I don't know if you realize it. I mean, communion is a good way to think about it, though. This happened so that you could go to heaven. This was a huge sacrifice. It was a love where God sent His best. Love is measured by a gift, and the gift's value is measured by its cost - and God sent His best so that you and I could be saved. God demonstrates His love towards us, Romans 5:8 says, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. In this is love, John would write (1 John 4:10), not that we love God but that He loves us. That's an amazing thought. That we love God. Given. How could you not love God? That He loves you and me? Unbelievable! For some of you, worse than others. Right? And you know who you are. Hopefully all of us. At the last supper, Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for you" (1 Corinthians 11:25). They made a covenant. These two men

made a covenant out of a love for the LORD, a devotion. But in that, you get this wonderful picture of God's love for you and for me. And all that God requires of us is obedience or allegiance to that covenant. You can go back and read Psalm 91; it's a great psalm. But it says because we've set our love upon Him, that's why the LORD is going to respond and bless. In fact, if you can read Psalm 91, there're thirteen verses of what you've done in your obedience and will to walk with God, and the last three verses are God's response to a submitted life; what He will do, what He promises to do in response.

So, we'll leave David, tonight, in jeopardy. I mean, he's done all that he could to do the right thing, and he finds himself in a terrible place. But if you outline the chapter, here're the points for David: he's faithful, he's not self-seeking, he's wise, and he's dependable. And then there's this other guy who is frightened, suffering, aware of what's going on, and unwilling to surrender. Seven-and-a-half years of God waiting upon Saul. Maybe he's waited for you twice that long. When are you gonna wake up and give Him your life? For the rest of us, hey, the LORD is taking you through it, there's a good purpose for it. Every delay in the life of a believer is divine. Right? Is divine! And rather than struggle with it, let's let the LORD just be the LORD, and let's, like David, serve Him faithfully wherever He puts us. And God will open the doors that no man can shut.

Next week, our intention is to take two chapters because the story kind of stays together. So if you'll read through them, I think there're....., you'll make it, and then we'll gather together next Wednesday night, and we'll take a run with David.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
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