

## Connection to Passage

The friendship between David and Jonathan was sealed by a covenant. Their friendship proved more powerful than prestige, power, security, and family. While Saul saw David as a threat to his crown, Jonathan saw their friendship as life's true crown.

## Introduction/Opening

Perhaps the most misunderstood word in the English language today is "love." We have reduced love to something we fall in and out of. This view places feelings as the center point of love. It's all about you and how you feel. By contrast, the Bible has a radically other-centered view of love. Love is sacrificial; it gives itself away for the sake of the beloved. Nothing demonstrates love more than this: "That while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!" (Rom. 5:8). Jonathan and David's covenant friendship demonstrates what love looks like when God is in charge.

## Outline

- I. Love Bears All Things (1 Sam. 18:1-3)
  - a) Loving others more than one's self is the hallmark of any great friendship. When we love ourselves more than others, we begin to use others to benefit ourselves rather than helping them flourish and succeed. Saul loved himself and was bent on protecting his name and his title. He saw David as a threat to what was most precious to him, his fame and power.
  - b) Jonathan sealed his friendship with David by making a covenant with him. This often involved cutting animals in half and declaring that the same may happen to the ones making the covenant if they broke it (see Gen. 15). By making a covenant, Jonathan would now be bound to David even against his own father. Jonathan would have much to bear by making this covenant.
  
- II. Love Believes All Things (1 Sam. 18:4-5)
  - a) Jonathan gave David his royal robe along with his military gear. The clothes signified the person and his position; thus, Jonathan was renouncing his position as crown prince and transferring his right of succession to David. Jonathan, unlike his father, believed that David was the true chosen king.
  - b) Jonathan's deed was an act of faith. Only faith makes one willing to be less so that another can rise up. It is similar to John the Baptist's decree concerning Jesus (John 3:30). Faith causes us to surrender our own rights to Jesus, the one true King. Whereas Saul was jealous of David's successes, Jonathan rejoiced.

### III. Love Endures All Things (1 Sam. 20:35-42)

- a) Saul's jealousy caused David to go into hiding and Jonathan to risk his own life in order to protect David. But Jonathan was knit together to David through the covenant, and thus he endured that risk.
- b) After Jonathan sent the boy away, David emerged from his hiding place, and the two embraced in tears. Even though David was now a fugitive, Jonathan reminded him of the covenant promise between them. No matter what happened, their friendship would endure to the end. In much the same way, God's covenant relationship with us through Jesus will always endure all things, thus providing us with security and hope.

## Conclusion

We all desire to be known and loved. So many of our actions are attempts at earning the love of others. We perform for others hoping in turn that they will repay us with love and acceptance. The amazing truth of the gospel is that while we were still sinners, God loved us (Rom. 5:8). His love for us is not based on our performance, but on what Jesus did. Jesus lived in perfect obedience and love, then died in our place and rose again. God's love for His children is breathtaking in its magnitude. In Christ, you are loved beyond measure, and you don't have to do one thing to earn it. Your performance is not what God requires. What makes friendship with God possible was the performance of the sinless Son of God, who was tested in every way as we are, yet was without sin (Heb. 4:15). When we truly believe that God loves us unconditionally, we don't need to seek love from others for fulfillment. By embracing God's great love, we are then free to love others.

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