

Security in Covenant

I Samuel 20

Intro: “**Then David fled from Naioth**” when last we left Saul, he was lying on the ground under the influence of the Spirit of **YHWH**, prophesying 4 a whole day & a night. So, if God has gotten a hold of Saul, why does David leave? Why not stick around & see what happens? Maybe David knows that an ecstatic experience w/ God has a tendency 2 change the posture of a person but not change their heart. David knew Saul’s would be over soon enough, what he didn’t know was if Saul’s heart & intentions towards him had changed. David leaves 2 find out the status of Saul’s heart & if there was still a possibility of reconciling w/ his old boss, the anointed King of Israel.

1- What?- Saul’s current **charismatic** disposition gives David the opportunity 2 escape 2, of all places, Gibeah: Saul’s home town. It’s also Jonathan’s home town. David is fleeing 2 the last person in a position of power that he can trust.

Note: David’s not trying 2 determine if Saul is hostile towards him; that’s not his question. He knows what Saul’s trying 2 do he just doesn’t know **why** Saul is still after him! What have I done? Have I wronged Saul in some way? Have I failed in some duty? Knowing a killer’s motives doesn’t make 1 safer but might remove the **irrationality** of it.

Of course, it m/b that David’s just trying 2 make Saul’s intentions clear 2 Jonathan who seems incredibly naïve here.

2-4- hide- Jonathan still doesn’t seem 2 think David’s in any real danger. He is, after all, his father’s closest counselor & Saul hadn’t mentioned anything about a new plan 4 eliminating David. David knows it doesn’t take a rocket scientist 2 figure out that since Jonathan’s shown himself 2/b pro-David, Saul won’t continue 2 keep him in the loop. Saul had lost the Spirit of **YHWH** but he hadn’t lost his political sensibilities. Jonathan’s under the delusion that he’s closer 2 his father than he really was. In his defense, he’d heard Saul swear that David “**shall not be killed**” (19:6) but David knows the true score, since Saul made **that** oath, he’s attempted 2 take David’s life 4 times already.

On oath, David assures Jonathan that there’s just **a step between** him & **death**. This shows David’s **discouragement**. He knows Saul wants him dead & won’t stop until he’s accomplished it. David feels his death is inevitable, even tho **YHWH** has told him he w/b king. Sometimes it’s hard 2 see the **truth** thru the fog of **difficult circumstances**. What he needs is encouragement & that’s what Jonathan gives. He reaffirms his commitment & loyalty 2 David by offering 2 assist him in any way he can. If David had any questions about Jonathan’s loyalties b/4, they were dispelled here.

5-7- told- 2 reveal Saul’s true intentions, David proposes a test scenario: he would skip out of the monthly feast of the New Moon. As the king’s son-in-law & leading military hero, David’s absence would be an insult 2 Saul & the royal family. How Saul responds 2 this insult will determine his genuine attitude towards David, beyond a doubt.

8- David then appeals 2 Jonathan 2 **deal kindly** w/ him (Hebrew: **hesed**). 2 the casual

observer, this may seem like an incredible request. How could David dare turn 2 Saul's son 4 help, let alone rely confidently in help forth-coming? Only b/c **Jon** had entered into a **covenant of YHWH** w/ David, that is, a covenant in which **YHWH** was witness 2 & guardian of the firm promises & solemn commitments contained in it. That's why when David's world is falling apart & he's running 4 his life, he turned 2 Jonathan. There's a covenant, a certainty, a safe haven in dangerous times.

In fact, its **b/c of** the covenant, David can expect Jon 2 extend **hesed** 2 him, even tho he's the **lesser /needy** party in the covenant (**your servant**). **Hesed** is the natural result of a covenant & oddly enough, the reverse is also true! Here hesed is rendered **deal kindly**, other translations say **show faithful love**. The term appears almost 250Xs in OT & is often rendered as **mercy** (KJV), **steadfast love** (RSV), **lovingkindness** in (NASB) or simply **love** (NIV). It carries ideas of **love, compassion & affection** w/ the added emphasis of **loyalty, reliability & faithfulness**. It's **not just** love, its **loyal love**; **not just** kindness but **dependable kindness**; **not just** affection but **committed affection**.

David appeals 2 Jonathan 2 treat him w/ **devoted love** & can **expect** him 2 do so in spite of his ties w/ David's antagonist b/c he had **promised** 2 do so in the **covenant of the Lord**. Thus, the covenant gives David reason 2 look 4 & depend on **hesed** (devoted love) from Jonathan. **Remember** - Jonathan's covenant w/ David was itself an expression of love, initiated by love (18:1, 3). The order is clear: love **gives** itself in covenant & gladly **promises devoted love** in that covenant; the covenant partner then **rests** in the security of that promise & may **appeal** 2 it!

But this wasn't written just 2 describe their relationship, it was meant 2 instruct & comfort any Israelite who would receive it. In the midst of confusion & trouble, turn 2 the 1 person who has made a covenant w/ you. We see believers doing this thru-out the Bible: running 2 the 1 dependable refuge, the 1 Who has bound Himself 2 them by covenant & from whom they can expect **hesed**. Ultimately, hesed doesn't flow from a formal covenant promise but from the very nature of the covenant God Himself! **Ex 34:6 abounding in goodness & truth** (**rich in hesed & fidelity**). We'll never perish if we fall into the abyss of God's glorious lovingkindness. It's not the last resort, it's our only resort!

But how is this possible? B/c the 1 Who is **rich in hesed & fidelity** has already come near 2 beleaguered humanity b/c if you translate the Hebrew of **Ex 34:6** into Greek & then into English, you come face 2 face w/ Him who is **full of grace & truth** (**Jn 1:14**). If you go looking 4 true hesed, you'll find yourself in the arms of Jesus Christ. The lesson David teaches is true 4 us: in times of confusion & trouble, take yourself 2 the 1 Who has made a covenant w/ you. He is the only source of certainty in uncertain times.

9-11- far be it- Jonathan rejects the idea that David has sinned & reconfirms his loyalty 2 David by assuring him that when he has sounded out Saul's attitude /intentions towards David, he would make David aware of them. **But how?**

12-17-witness- B/4 Jonathan divulges his plan 2 inform David, he reviews the terms of the covenant between them. 1st, he formally swears 2 warn David if his father intends 2 harm him. By doing so, he formally commits himself 2 always act in David's benefit, 2 always have his back. This wasn't just encouraging, it was miraculous! You just don't surrender your place 2 your rival & then promise 2 protect him, especially when your place was that of

crown prince! If he were “normal” he’d liquidate David, not solidify his kingdom. In fact, that’s what angers Saul so much: Jonathan’s commitment 2 David flies in the face of all political sense b/c he really did “**seek... 1st**” another kingdom.

Then, Jonathan looks beyond the immediate crisis 2 deal w/ future events. Time’ll come when Jonathan, not David, w/b the fugitive, the needy 1. He knew David would 1 day be king & according 2 the wisdom of that society, when a new regime came 2 power, the name of the game was **purge** not **preserve & protect**. The new king needed 2 solidify his new position & conventional policy was **solidification** by **liquidation**. Everybody knew it, expected it, practiced it.

Almost everyone. David swears that when he comes 2 power, he would preserve Jonathan’s life & in the event that he died, David promised not 2 wipe out his descendants (**house**). This was David’s part in the covenant. Tho culture & politics said otherwise, covenant conquered both. Their commitment trampled on customary human standards. This should also teach us: the covenantal benefits we enjoy also come w/ responsibilities. We are now responsible 2 live as covenant people. Here’s the problem: most people are fine w/ having a covenant w/ Jesus until it becomes inconvenient, until it forces them 2 choose between covenantal commitments & customary standards. Covenant not only brings security in the believer’s life, it should also prompt us into uncommon faithfulness 2 God’s word & will.

18-23- why the cloak & dagger? You never know when Saul’s informers are going 2/b around.

24-27- **seat**- this section begins w/ David’s seat being empty & will end w/ Jonathan’s seat being empty. David’s a no show the 1st day but Saul lets it slide. But when David’s missing on the 2nd day, that’s when things really get exciting.

28-34- **your**- Saul blows a gasket at *Jonathan*! His 1st attack was 2 question the legitimacy of his birth. By choosing 2 befriend David over his father suggested he wasn’t truly Saul’s son b/c a son of Saul would never betray his father! Of course, this would imply that his mother was a woman of loose morals, an adulteress who practiced perversion. Saul’s saying that Jonathan’s actions are not just a **slight** against him, they are a **slander** against his mother.

Saul’s 2nd attack was 2 appeal 2 Jonathan’s pride. The carnal mind can never understand the wisdom or the power of God & Saul’s no exception. Jonathan’s recent choices are what set Saul off. He put **YHWH’s servant (D)**, **Word (rejection of Saul, D w/b king)** & **kingdom 1st!** **Mt 6:33** wasn’t a cliché 4 Jonathan but the desire & focus of his life. The only thing that matters 2 Saul is “**you...your kingdom**” (31)! But that didn’t move Jonathan, he was bound & committed 2 David by covenant & he’d remain faithful 2 that covenant, even if it cost him the goodwill of his father.

What do we learn from this? The Christian life doesn’t consist in securing your kingdom but in revealing God’s faithfulness thru covenant relationships: loving your wife, respecting your husband, honoring your parents, pursuing intimacy w/ the Lord, supporting the ministry w/ your time, talents & finances: meeting your covenantal commitments.

Seek 1st doesn't= think about God (kingdom) 2 the exclusion of all else but **2 look at all thru filter of God & kingdom.**

My relationship w/ spouse, parents, boss, church, neighbors, co-workers, etc. does it point **2 or away from Jesus?**

35-40- **beyond**- how it must have pained Jonathan 2 wave the boy on; 2 cry out 4 him 2 **make haste, hurry, do not delay**. The lad thought he was talking 2 him but really he was signaling 4 David 2 run 4 his life. A sad day indeed!

41-42- Mutual gratitude, affection & grief marks the parting scene. David has no idea how many years of exile lay b/4 him or whether he would ever see his beloved friend again but Jonathan offers him 3 words of encouragement: **go in peace!** Really? It'd be funny if we didn't know he was serious. **Go in peace** while Saul **hunts 4 your life?** He doesn't say all is peaceful or that danger won't lie around every corner. He's saying David can **go in peace** b/c **there's peace between the 2 of them**. Their covenant bond has established peace between them. "Go in peace b/c there's peace in this 1 area; there's safety in this 1 relation. It's an **anchor** that will **hold fast** when everything else is slipping away.

Isn't this an accurate depiction of Biblical peace? **Not** an **overall tranquility** but rather rightness in the midst of turmoil.

That why Paul says we can enjoy **peace w/ God** (Rom 5:1) at the same time we are enduring **tribulation** (5:3). Jesus told us in Jn 16:33, **in Me you may have peace, in the world you will have tribulation**. Thus, believers don't have peace b/c things are peaceful, we have peace b/c **1 greater than Jonathan** has **pledged** His undying friendship 2 us!

Do you doubt it? If so, you weren't listening earlier when I read: **this cup is the new covenant in My blood**. It is the covenant bond of that unforsaking Friend that speaks peace in our disappointments, dangers & even disasters. Do you believe it? Do you trust /rely on it? Do you honor your responsibility to it?

Maybe you're here today & you've never experienced the kind of peace in the midst of the storm that David had. I must tell you tho, you'll never experience true peace until you meet the Prince of Peace – Jesus Christ. But, b/4 you can receive the peace of God you must 1st have peace w/ God. The Bible says, in our natural state, we are **children of wrath**, at enmity w/ God & under His just judgment (**Eph 2:3b**). But now, b/c of Christ's death on the cross, we have the opportunity 2 move from being God's enemy 2 being God's friend, His child – the object of His great delight.

Would you like 2 experience the true peace & security that comes from entering into a covenant of love w/ the Creator of the Universe? You can know that peace & security today.

