

1 Samuel 18-19

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 October 2024

Preacher: Joe Sutton

[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Well, you can make your way to 1 Samuel chapter 18, 1 Samuel session number 12.

! That is the one and only slide I prepared for this morning.! Just thought you should know. Well, all my effort went into making the other slides. So, I'm going to begin our time together in the Word with some prayer, and then we'll get into the study.

Father God, what a wonderful thing it is to be able to gather together. It's just awesome, Lord. We thank you, Lord, for the sun shining outside. We thank you for this place that you've provided. We thank you, Lord, that you have given us one to another, that we may be this wonderful body.

We're so grateful to you, Lord. And Lord, as we, as a body, turn our attention to your Word, we pray that your Spirit would be moving. Lord, we know and we recognize that it isn't about an intellectual exercise to know your Word, but it is a spiritual one, to pursue your heart.

Just as David was a man after your heart, Lord, we would like to be men and women after your heart this morning. We want to know you, Lord. And Father, I also want to pray downstairs for the younger ones, for the children.

[1 : 29] We pray for their Bible study as well, that your Spirit would move and minister to them, that you would cause your Word to be exalted, believed, received, and that you would lay a firm foundation in their young hearts.

We pray all this, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, it's been a little while, so let's do a quick recap for our study in 1 Samuel.

So Israel is a nation, and they wanted a king. They wanted a king to be like the other nations. And we've seen Saul anointed the first king of Israel by the prophet Samuel.

And after some initial success, we then saw these two rather conspicuous failures that led to him being declared unfit, declared unfit by God, I should say.

And then God sent Samuel to Bethlehem. I've heard of that place, Bethlehem, yes. That is where he anointed the young David, the youngest son of Jesse, king.

[2 : 39] And at that time, we saw how the Holy Spirit came on to David, and the Spirit departed from King Saul. And it was replaced rather ominously by this evil spirit from God.

And I should say it's evil, not in the sense of moral, good and evil, but in the sense of harmful. It's an injurious spirit, if you like.

And it is best viewed as an aspect of the judgment of God. And so where he had spiritual empowerment, now he has a spiritual impediment. And it seems, as we read, that Saul is not aware of David's anointing.

If you recall, when we read it through, God told Samuel to go, and he's like, how can I go? Saul will kill me. And then there was a sort of a plausible reason set up, which was that he was going to sacrifice, which indeed he did.

But Saul isn't aware that this is happening. And we saw Saul bring David into his court as a musician, resident musician.

[3 : 44] And David's playing would ease Saul's suffering when this harmful spirit was impacting him. And then last time we read chapter 17, where we saw this pivotal battle between David and Goliath.

And Goliath, the champion of Gath, huge guy, nine foot, over nine feet tall, challenging Israel to a one-on-one. And hey, if I beat you, you'll all be slaves.

And vice versa, if anyone happened to be able to defeat Goliath. And we saw how Goliath, with his scaly serpent-like armor, and this repeated use of bronze four times to describe his armor and weapons, made him a picture or a type of the great serpent of old, or the serpent that tempted Eve, that devil and Satan.

And David stood up and defeated him, thus taking on the role of Messiah. And his victory over the serpent is a victory for all of Israel. Exactly.

And that takes us up to today, chapter 18. And today I want to cover two chapters, 18 and 19, where we'll start to see these different reactions and responses to David's victory.

[4 : 59] We'll see how there's a wonderful friendship that blossoms between him and Jonathan. We'll see how there is respect and high esteem from the majority of Israel and from the army.

But then there is this murderous jealousy that grows up in Saul. And over the course of our reading today, we'll see Saul tormented by this harmful spirit, and he'll try to kill David both actively and passively.

By my count, seven separate attempts in these two chapters. And we also see that Saul's sin escalates as well. Initially, Saul, and we'll see it today, he can be reasoned out of his error.

Jonathan's like, why are you doing this? He's been nothing but good to you. And Saul's like, oh yeah, you're right. But going forward, and especially in the forthcoming chapters, it's worse and worse and worse, to the point that Saul is murdering priests.

And it's really, really sad to see. So that's what we're going to see, the joy of godly fellowship and friendship. The sacrificial love of Jonathan is a wonderful picture that we'll talk about.

[6 : 08] And then David, in spite of all that's happening, he is unafraid, he's courageous, and he's victorious. And he's patient, trusting in God to do what's been promised.

Well, that's the intro. And really, these two chapters introduce a period of time that's, I would say, 10 to 15 years in length.

So quite a lengthy time where Saul has been anointed as a youth, probably at most 15 years of age when he was anointed. And then he went on to fight Goliath some point after that.

But he'll be 30, 30 years of age before he finally is crowned king. And that happens in 2 Samuel. So we've got a lot of ground to cover. Not this morning.

All right. Verse 1 of 1 Samuel 18. So this is picking up just after the death of Goliath.

[7 : 08] Now, it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul that Jonathan committed himself to David. And Jonathan loved him as himself. And Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house.

Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David with his military gear, including his sword, his bow, and his belt.

So this great friendship then between David and Jonathan. Just to recap one thing. And you may remember back in chapter 14 that we read about Jonathan going out to fight the Philistines.

And he had only his armor bearer to accompany him. And in verse 6 of chapter 14, we read this. Jonathan said to his young man who was carrying his armor, Come, let's cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised men.

Perhaps the Lord will work for us because the Lord is not limited to saving by many or by few. So that was Jonathan's theology. That was Jonathan's theology.

[8 : 18] Me plus the Lord is always a majority. The Lord plus anything is a majority. And that theology led Jonathan to step out in faith and courage.

And now Jonathan's just seen David displaying that same courage. A nine-foot guy. Compared to God, he's nothing.

So there is this sort of kindred spirit. Common faith which lays the foundation for this great friendship. The Hebrew text reads something like this.

The soul of Jonathan became attached with the soul of David. Soul is the Hebrew word nefesh.

And it has to do with the inner person. Where your desires, emotions and your intentions are found. So soul then is a good translation. And then attached means tied up or bound together.

[9 : 19] And it's a word that's sometimes used of pacts and contracts. Now, David and Jonathan are firm friends.

And they've got this deep mutual admiration for one another. And actually, when subsequently in 2 Samuel 1, Saul and Jonathan are slain in battle. Spoiler alert, sorry.

And David says this. He sings this, rather. He says, I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan. You have been a close friend to me. Your love for me was more wonderful than the love of women.

That's what he says. And there are some in our modern culture that try to make this into a homosexual relationship. And I only want to touch on it very briefly to say it's complete foolishness.

And it's unworthy of our time. Nobody can come to that conclusion if they are interpreting the text in good faith. But what I think it does do, though, is it evidences that the world of the ungodly is not able to comprehend the depth of love and friendship and fellowship that is available to the faithful.

[10 : 27] Amen. I want you to consider this passage. In fact, I'll give you a minute to turn to Galatians 5. And I want to read a few verses from Galatians 5. And I'm going to read from verse 19.

It says this. This is what Paul says. He says, So the unsaved, those who are not inheriting the kingdom of God, will tend to have relationships that feature jealousy, anger, factions, etc., etc.

And, on the other hand, those who are led by the Spirit will tend to have relationships that are characterized by love and joy and peace and kindness and goodness and all these wonderful things that we've just read.

Now, I know that doesn't always hold true. It is certainly possible that some friendships with the unsaved can be quite precious. And similarly, some relationships in the church can turn quite sour.

But what I mean to say is that when we're led by the Spirit, wonderful friendships can blossom. And it should be natural when the fruit of the Spirit is being displayed.

[12 : 35] It's natural if we're walking by the Spirit. And that, I suggest, is what's occurring between David and Jonathan. Now, we read there, verse 3, that Jonathan...

Sorry, back to 1 Samuel 18. We read there, verse 3, that Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. A promise, a commitment.

And the nature of the promise isn't made explicit for us. But it got me to thinking that people who are close are naturally committed to one another.

And they make commitments to one another. There's a level of interdependency and mutual commitment that is healthy. And actually, this is one of the reasons why we are working on formalizing church membership in the near future.

Not because it's necessary, but because it's good. It's good. It's good for us to commit to one another. And David and Jonathan are such good friends, it's natural for them to commit to one another as well.

[13 : 41] Now, I should also point out this. In the natural sense, this friendship is very unlikely. Because Jonathan will be heir apparent to the throne.

And David has been anointed by Samuel to take the throne. So in the flesh, these two men should be at loggerheads. And this is something that Saul is going to rage about in chapter 20.

Neither you nor your kingdom are going to be established as long as this son of Jesse lives on the earth, he will say. But this godly friendship supersedes selfish ambition, just as we read in Galatians 5.

Jonathan did indeed know that David would be king. You can check that out in chapter 23, verse 17, if you'd like to do that. And it is possible, then, that the covenant Jonathan made is connected to that knowledge.

I know God intends for you to reign, and I promise I will support you. And we read that Jonathan gave to David his robe, sword, bow, and belt.

[14 : 48] And it could be that this is symbolic of Jonathan giving the right to reign to David. Take my stuff, take my garments, take the things that the prince would have. You take them, David.

But it's also worth bearing in mind that David didn't have any armor. And he had no weapon but a sling. So it also could have simply been an act of charity. As we read, we'll see David say repeatedly, my family is poor.

We have nothing. So it could be that as well. Because, again, nobody seems to interpret this giving of those items as Jonathan abdicating.

That's not, nobody interprets it that way, it seems. Verse 5, then. Now that verse is a summary of what's coming up.

In the narrative, you'll remember they're still there in the Valley of Elah. And we read that Saul gives David a leadership position and is dispatched on multiple battles.

[16 : 00] That's what we just read. But in the next verse, they are making their way back from the Valley of Elah. So, yeah, we should take what we've just read as a summary. Verse 6.

Now it happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel singing and dancing to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with other musical instruments.

The women sang as they played and said, Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands. Then Saul became very angry, for this lyric displeased him.

And he said, they have given David credit for ten thousands, but to me they have given credit only for thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David with suspicion from that day on.

Well, ominous music plays. So there's joy and there's celebration in all the cities. Of course, the defeat of Goliath. Goliath and the Philistine army would have been this foreboding thing, weighing heavily on everyone's minds, and finally defeated.

[17 : 15] The Philistine threat has been dealt with. But David is getting the credit. One might argue why Saul was getting any credit, given that it was David and David alone who dispatched Goliath.

So again, the contrast for Saul and for Jonathan. Jonathan, a warm bond of friendship with his great friend David. Saul, suspicious. Suspicious and afraid of him.

Now you may recall that Samuel had said to Saul, back in chapter 15, verse 23, he said this, Since you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king.

And then in verse 28, the Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor who is better than you. And what are the women singing? David's better than you.

Paranoia grows for Saul as he starts to see the words of Samuel coming to pass. Verse 10.

[18 : 27] Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God rushed upon Saul and he raved in the midst of the house while David was playing the harp with his hand, as usual.

And a spear was in Saul's hand. Then Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, I will pin David to the wall. But David escaped from his presence twice. Now Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him, but had left Saul.

So Saul removed him from his presence and appointed him as his commander of a thousand. And he went out and came in before the people. David was very successful in all his ways, for the Lord was with him.

When Saul saw that he was very successful, he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he would go out to battle and return before them. Well, so this harmful spirit, again, evil in the sense of injurious or harmful, it's causing Saul to rave in the midst of the house.

And the word is actually prophesy. It's the same word that's used of prophecy and the same root that's used for prophets. And it is referring to what commentators call ecstatic prophecy, which is to say a trance-like state where the spirit seems to take over at least to some degree.

[19 : 50] Back in chapter 10, when Saul was initially transformed into this new man, we saw Saul prophesying among the prophets. Same word. And there it seemed somewhat involuntary, such that the bystanders were, the way that they reacted to it, was clear.

This is not in character for Saul. Is he really among the prophets? However, I would also point out that we note that Saul hurled this spear because he thought, I will pin David to the wall.

So Saul is still thinking. This is the will of Saul. And I guess you could think it's encouraged by the spirit.

The spirit is enabling him to do what he wants to do. Let's put it that way. Saul is still at fault. And again, and maybe it is somewhat similar to in Romans 1 where we read about how God gives over obstinate sinners to their desires, even when it is to their harm.

Now, I think that the writer of 1 Samuel, probably Samuel, intends for you and I to make a connection between Saul and Goliath.

[21 : 11] Because Goliath, you may recall, was a very tall warrior who wielded a massive spear. And he stood against God. And now here we have Saul, who is also a very tall warrior, now wielding his spear against the man God has raised up to be king.

You have the king of Israel who has become another Goliath, if you like. So there is a parallel, but there is also one very conspicuous difference.

And that is this. David will never, ever attack Saul. He will never come against him in any way. As we go through the book, we'll see David have opportunities to kill Saul.

And he will not take them. I think the worst he does is cut a bit of his robe off and maybe steal his jug of water or something like that to show that he could have done it. He could have taken Saul's life, this new enemy, but he doesn't.

And in fact, when a messenger comes to claim credit for defeating Saul in battle, it doesn't go well for that guy. David is grieved by it and weeps and commands weeping over the death of Saul because he is, after all is said and done, Saul was the anointed king.

[22 : 29] So what David does is wait for God. He waits for God's vengeance. Now, we just read David escaped the edge of a spear.

And then the very next thing we might expect to read is, now David was afraid of Saul. But we didn't read that. We read verse 12, now Saul was afraid of David.

Isn't that backwards? Terrified, in fact, in dread. And as we read the text, there's never any hint that David is afraid of Saul.

Now, he does flee, he does escape, he does evade persecution, but he's never stated as being afraid of him. So, anyway, so David is appointed this commander of a thousand.

So prior to that, David was armor bearer, if you remember, which was a role that would have kept him very close. And Saul is like, get that guy away from me. And so he sends him off to war.

[23 : 37] And we'll read later that Saul's explicit aim here is that Saul would die at the hands of the Philistines. Saul wants David to fall in battle. But, David is very successful.

Very successful indeed. And we read that all Israel and Judah love him. Which is an interesting little textual hint that this was, some things in this narrative were updated later because obviously there is no Israel and Judah separation yet.

Interesting. Anyway, so, anyway, David, one man, different perspectives. A great warrior, the terror of the Philistines, if you like, and for one man in particular, Jonathan, a very wonderful, precious, dear friend and confidant.

But for another man, an existential threat and a cause for great fear. Verse 17, then Saul said to David, here is my older daughter, Merav.

I will give her to you as a wife. Only be a valiant man for me and fight the Lord's battles. For Saul thought, my hand shall not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him.

[24 : 52] But David said to Saul, who am I and who is my family or my father's family in Israel that I should be the king's son-in-law? So it came about at the time that Merav Saul's daughter was to be given to David that she was given instead to Adriel, the Meholothite, as a wife.

Now, again, you may remember that in the last chapter, Saul had said, whoever kills Goliath will get to marry my daughter.

and here he's saying, oh, no, no, actually, it's also on condition that you keep fighting and hopefully you die. That wasn't the deal.

Saul is unfaithful in his promises. And it's actually, when you think about it, you know, Saul wants to make his own daughter a widow. It's really, really bad, really bad.

But David is humble. Who am I? Who am I to become a son-in-law to the king? And evidently, because of his humble hesitation, Merav there is married off to Adriel.

[26 : 02] So it seems that it was a time-bound offer and the time expired. Verse 20. Now, Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David.

When they informed Saul, the thing was pleasing to him. For Saul thought, I will give her to him so that she may become a trap for him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.

Therefore, Saul said to David, For a second time, you may become my son-in-law today. Then Saul commanded his servants, speaking to David in secret, saying, Behold, the king delights in you and all his servants love you.

Now then, become the king's son-in-law. So Saul's servants spoke these words to David. But David said, Is it trivial in your sight to become the king's son-in-law since I am only a poor man and insignificant?

Then Saul's servants reported to him, saying, These are the words David spoke. Saul then said, This is what you shall say to David. The king does not desire any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines to take vengeance on the king's enemies.

[27 : 11] But Saul plotted to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines. When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to become the king's son-in-law.

So, before the time had expired, David set out and went, he and his men, and fatally struck two hundred men among the Philistines. Then David brought their foreskins and they presented all two hundred of them to the king so that he might become the king's son-in-law.

And Saul gave him his daughter, Michal, as a wife. When Saul saw and realized that the Lord was with David and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, then Saul was even more afraid of David.

And so Saul was David's enemy continually. Well, so unlike Merab, Michal has feelings for David. And we read, Saul's motivations for this marriage are unchanged.

And also here in this text it is clarified that David does not have sufficient means to provide a dowry. And that seems to be one of his concerns, or it is a concern.

[28 : 21] So Saul asks for these one hundred foreskins explicitly motivated to try to put David's life at risk. A hundred foreskins.

Kind of gross and weird, surely. Why? Well, it's connected to the concept of circumcision, of course, which takes us back to the covenant God made with Abraham.

All your boys should be circumcised as a sign of this covenant blessing, he says there in Genesis. And then in Deuteronomy 10 and 30, two chapters in Deuteronomy, Moses clarifies that what matters is a circumcision of the heart and that the removal of the flesh is a symbol of the removal of fleshly passions to focus on loving God alone.

So that was the background. Now the Philistines have been repeatedly described as uncircumcised, which connotes two things. One, that they are outside of God's promise, but also that they are uncircumcised of heart, they are impure and ungodly.

So that's the connection. So the idea is bring these foreskins as evidence that you have, well, for Saul it's just evidence that they're dead. But that's kind of the connection there, the fact that they are uncircumcised.

[29 : 43] But let's not dwell on it any more than that. Although I do wonder what on earth Michal thought about this dowry. Anyway, moving on.

But note this, David doubles what was requested. He is a preview of what Jesus said in Matthew 5.41. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. He is going above and beyond.

And this is, in Matthew, they're talking about if someone makes demands and requests of you that are inconvenient or even unreasonable, go beyond to show your love for your enemies.

Matthew 5, and actually I will read this, because this, David's dealings with Saul are a vivid depiction of Jesus' words in Matthew 5.43.

You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may prove yourselves to be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

[30 : 46] For he causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. That was the heart of God. Pray for your enemies. And David does. David does.

And all it's doing is making Saul even more afraid of him. Or perhaps heaping burning coals on his head. Now, verse 30, to finish the first chapter.

Then the commanders of the Philistines went out to battle. And it happened as often as they went out that David was more successful than all the servants of Saul, so his name was held in high esteem.

That's how it reads in the 2020 revision of the NASB. I think the 95 says, behaved himself more wisely. And either of those options are good because what we're saying is David was successful because of his great wisdom and skill as a military commander.

Verse 1 of chapter 19. Now Saul told his son Jonathan and all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David.

[32 : 00] So Jonathan informed David saying, My father Saul is seeking to put you to death. Now then, please, be on your guard in the morning and stay in a hiding place and conceal yourself. And as for me, I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are hiding and I will speak with my father about you and whatever I find out, I will tell you.

And then Jonathan spoke well of David to his father Saul and said to him, May the king not sin against his servant David, since he has not sinned against you, and since his deeds have been very beneficial to you, for he took his life in his hand and struck the Philistine.

And the Lord brought about a great victory for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why then would you sin against innocent blood by putting David to death for no reason?

And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan and Saul vowed, As the Lord lives, David shall not be put to death. And then Jonathan called David and Jonathan told him all these words and Jonathan brought David to Saul and he was in his presence as before.

So, Saul's patience has worn thin waiting for David to die in battle and he's like, just get it done. Get it done. He issues a direct order to have David put to death.

[33 : 24] Now, we've seen a spear throw, which maybe Saul's court could put down to an emotional outburst.

They were aware that he had this harmful spirit. So, maybe they could put it down to he took leave of his thoughts. And then we've seen these passive, subtle attempts to kill David, which probably weren't obvious to his court.

But now an order is given, clear and explicit. Nobody could mistake it. I want David dead. And so we see Jonathan interceding on behalf of David, reminding Saul of how much blessing he's brought.

If not for him, we'd all be slaves and you'd probably be dead, Saul. But I want you to draw attention to that comment there. Why would you sin against innocent blood?

And it reminded me because those are the very words used by Judas when he regrets the betrayal of Jesus Christ. Innocent blood. Jesus' death on the cross was and is the ultimate shedding of innocent blood, which on the one hand is an outrageous sin, but on the other hand is the very mechanism by which salvation is made possible.

[34 : 39] And I think we have a picture here. Repeatedly we see elements of David's life that foreshadow the son of David to come. But this clear reference to innocent blood, I think, is one that we should observe and note.

So anyway, we see that Saul here is able, at least currently, to listen to reason. And David comes back into his court as musician again.

verse 8. When there was war again, David went out and fought the Philistines and defeated them with a great slaughter, so that they fled from him.

Now there was an evil spirit from the Lord on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing the harp with his hand. And Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he escaped from Saul's presence so that he stuck the spear into the wall, and David fled and escaped that night.

And I thought it was very interesting to read those verses and see this contrast, because on the one hand we've got David, this great military leader from whom the Philistines flee, great slaughter.

[35 : 53] And on the other hand, he's the sweet psalmist of Israel. Amazing. And we see David flee, once again from Saul.

And I thought to myself, does David have to flee? Does he have any other options here? David is a military leader of great skill.

He has the trust of the whole army. He has the trust of the son and heir apparent. The backing of the whole nation. He could have said to everybody, I've had enough of this.

You've seen the stupid order. You've seen him chucking his spear. Why does he even have a spear anyway? We can't trust him with that thing. Why doesn't David organize a coup?

do? And the answer is simple, because God hasn't told him to. And in the absence of that command, the right thing to do is wait. In Romans chapter 12 verse 19, we're instructed, never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

[37 : 09] But if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink, for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

And this is exactly what David is doing. And if we were to read on into Romans 13, it's all about being subject to the governing authorities. And Saul is still the anointed king of God's people.

Yes, he has had a prophetic you are no longer fit, but God hasn't yet removed him. And David is content to wait. And it also reminded me of, do you remember how Abraham was unwilling to take any money from those five kings back in Genesis?

And the reason was, he said, I don't want anyone to say that they made me rich. And I think it's the same here, or similar here, nobody can say David made himself king, David took the throne, it's all of God.

Nobody can say that, and that is, I think, another reason why David didn't proactively have a coup or some other thing. He simply fled and waited for God.

[38 : 26] Verse 11. Then Saul sent messages to David's house to watch him in order to put him to death in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, informed him, saying, if you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow, you will be put to death.

Now Michal let David down through a window, and he went and fled and escaped. And Michal took the household idol and laid it on the bed and put a quilt of goat's hair at its head and covered it with clothing.

When Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, he is sick. Then Saul sent messengers to see David, saying, bring him up to me on his bed so that I may put him to death.

When the messengers entered, behold, the household idol was on the bed with a quilt of goat's hair at its head. So Saul said to Michal, why have you betrayed me like this and let my enemy go so that he has escaped?

And Michal said to Saul, he said to me, let me go. Why should I put you to death? This is a very colourful episode about how Michal allowed David to have this head start in escaping Saul.

[39 : 38] So, a few things. Household idol. Single Hebrew word teraphim. An interesting word in that it is a plural.

The im is a plural ending, but it's used in the singular here. Now, teraphim are never described clearly for us in the scriptures. In Genesis 31, they are small enough to fit in Rachel's camel saddlebags and for her to sit on them.

And here, it's large enough to pass for a human. Now, there are occasions where teraphim are seen in a clearly sinful light.

For example, Judges 17, where Micah makes one for worship, idolatrous worship. But in other cases like with Rachel, and here, it's not so clear, it's not explicit, the text does not say this was an idol.

Okay, the English Bible says that, the Hebrew does not say that, it says teraphim. Now, I think it is possible that it was a simple statue with no religious connotation, but I don't know.

[40 : 48] And again, we don't know because it's not clear, commentators have got different views, we do know that it was against the Ten Commandments to have a graven image, unacceptable to have or to make, so if it was that, yes, it was clearly not acceptable for it to be there in the house of David and Michal.

Now, one other thing that I can't resist pointing out, because when I read this, I was like, huh, we've got this quilt of goat hair, actually the word hair isn't there, it should be in italics in your Bible, it's a quilt of goat, quilt of goat, and then the word for quilt is only used here in the entire Bible, and the meaning is not certain, and why would she put a quilt of goat and then cover it up with clothing anyway, if it's not going to be seen?

So, interesting sidebar, if you read the Greek Septuagint, then it assumes a tiny amendment to the Hebrew, which makes it, rather than this odd word that everyone's interpreted as quilt, into the word for liver, liver of goat, and that is what the Septuagint reads, it's a liver of goat, and this is what Josephus comments about this, this is great, so, Josephus, you remember, he's the historian, one or two generations after Jesus Christ, so, speaking of Michal, so she let him down by a cord out of the window and saved him, and after she had done so, she fitted up a bed for him as if he were sick, and put under the bed clothes a goat's liver, and when her father, as soon as it was day, sent to seize David, she said to those that were there, that he had not been well that night, and showed them the bed covered, and made them believe by the leaping of the liver, which caused the bed clothes to move, also, that David breathed, like one that was asthmatic.

What do you think about that? And it does indeed turn out that a goat's liver would twitch and spasm for several minutes after being removed, due to residual nerve activity.

What's the point of that story? Nothing, really, I just thought it was colourful. I wanted to share it. I just thought it was worth sharing. I don't think you'll get that in any other Bible study on this chapter, but there you go.

[43 : 18] So anyway, it's quite possible that Michal had set up a rather sophisticated ruse to allow David to escape. In any case, it is successful, and David cleans.

And Saul complains to Michal, and she says David threatens her life, and I do wonder whether Saul believed that. Saul knew David, and I can't imagine David would have believed that.

Saul would have believed David capable of that. And yes, Michal is deceiving Saul, and was that wrong?

Should she have let David be caught? I would suggest that in this case, it was the right thing to do. Saul needed to be opposed in his foolishness.

Verse 18. Almost done. So David fled and escaped and came to Samuel at Ramah, and he informed him of everything that Saul had done to him, and he and Samuel went and stayed at Naoth.

[44 : 22] Ramah, Samuel's hometown, as we know, Naoth seems to be a district that houses the prophets. So some kind of, there are a number of prophets there who seem to be under Samuel's tutelage, so a school of prophets, if you like.

The word for Naoth may simply mean dwellings or habitations. Verse 19. But it was reported to Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naoth in Ramah.

Then Saul sent messengers to take David, but when they saw the company of prophets prophesying with Samuel there and presiding over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.

When Saul was informed of this, he sent other messengers, but they also prophesied. So Saul sent messengers again the third time, yet they prophesied.

Then he went to Ramah himself and came as far as the large well that is in Seku, location unknown, and he asked, Where is Samuel and David?

[45 : 26] And someone said, Behold, they are at Naoth in Ramah. So he proceeded there to Naoth in Ramah, but the Spirit of God came upon him also, so that he went along prophesying continually until he came to Naoth in Ramah.

He also stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all night. Therefore, they say, is Saul also among the prophets?

So as we conclude this chapter, we see God directly intervene to prevent Saul from capturing David. And the episode here recalls 1 Samuel 10 when Saul was initially anointed, and there the Spirit of God rushed on him, causing him to prophesy.

And people said, Is Saul also among the prophets? prophets. And also in that scene, we saw Saul initially established as king.

Here, we see him stripping off his kingly garments, and most likely not naked in the sense that we would interpret it, but down to the linen undergarments. So the scene seems to indicate, it seems intended to show, Saul completely and utterly disarmed, completely and utterly undone.

[46 : 52] If we step back from our study this morning, we've seen Saul negatively compared to David. We've seen him foiled repeatedly in his attempts to take David's life. We've seen him foiled by David's might and strength, because Saul cannot get him to be defeated.

And then both his son and his daughter are for him, rather than for David, rather than for Saul. And then climactically here at the end, we see God directly coming against Saul to intervene and thwart his plans.

Amazing stuff. Well, a few notes to conclude then. So first, just to come back to that theme of wonderful friendships. And it is Ray's and my prayer that in this fellowship we would have friendships like that that blossom.

And it's just been awesome to see the activity on the WhatsApp groups and the sharing of prayers and the way that we're proactively looking for ways to serve one another. It's great. I love the ESV rendering of Romans 12:10.

It says, love one another with brotherly affection, outdo one another in showing honour. And I feel like we're starting to see that here. It's brilliant. And again, David and Jonathan's friendship is somewhat unlikely.

[48 : 14] It would be to Jonathan's detriment. And indeed, the friendships that we can form here may seem unlikely to the world. What do we have in common? We have a saviour in common.

And again, the relationships that we form here on earth, the Christian relationships and friendships, they're eternal. They last forever. Hallelujah. Secondly, a word on the downfall of Saul.

We've watched Saul fall. There was a time when Saul was God's man. He saved Jabesh Gilead from the Ammonites by the power of the Spirit of God.

And now, he's raving about on the floor like a madman. It started with a little foolishness. Performing a sacrifice in chapter 13 because he was anxious and impatient.

A little more foolishness with a rash vow that almost cost Jonathan his life. But we saw him, he was being valiant still, defeating enemies and saving Israel, even with a little foolishness.

[49 : 21] Just a little bit. And I thought about this. He was on a slippery slope very early on, but there was no one there to come alongside him and say, Saul, the way that you were going is not right.

Well, I guess there was Samuel. He didn't want to listen. So maybe Saul wouldn't be persuaded either way. But it did. I think the point that I saw here was that in the context of godly friendships, there is a call and a need for us to look out for one another.

Proverbs 27, 6 says, faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. And it is my prayer that we would watch out for one another and steer one another away from sin and error.

And finally this, David, he is as always depicting for us a picture of the son of David, Jesus Christ. And we've seen him modeling godliness in his love for his enemies and hence being unafraid of men.

But what I felt led to do as we close is draw attention to the fact that there are these different views of who David is. To most of Israel, he's this incredible, strong warrior who saved us from that Philistine, the one who is saving us.

[50 : 49] And then to Saul, he is an existential threat. He's the one who could end my dynasty and take the throne. And to Jonathan, he should be a rival but instead he is the most precious of friends.

And Jonathan is happy to lay down what would be his right to be friends with David. And if we zoom out even further, who is David to Jesse?

Well, he's my beloved youngest son. Who is he to his brothers? Well, he's a young upstart worthy of contempt. All these different views Christians.

In Mark chapter 8, Jesus said, who do people say that I am? Well, you're a prophet. Or people say you're the power of Elijah.

Some even say that you're the resurrected John the Baptist. Who do you say that I am? And that is the most important opinion, the most important question that we can answer.

[51 : 51] Because it isn't the matter of opinion, who we say Jesus Christ is. It is a matter of fact. And it is an answer to which we would give that is our eternity hangs upon it.

Not just a matter of opinion. It's not just a case of your truth and my truth about who Jesus is. Romans 10 verse 9 through 11 says that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the scripture says whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

Jesus Christ is an existential threat to the unsaved. And accepting him is to die to self.

For Jonathan accepting David as king was to forfeit his own inheritance and future which he was glad to do for the future hope in the son of David. Let us pray.

[53 : 08] Praise you Lord for your word this morning. Lord God we thank you for the way that you have worked and the example that you have laid down in the scriptures. Lord we're so grateful that ultimately we are the beneficiaries of your son.

The son of David Jesus Christ. We thank you for the picture of him that we see here in the text with David's gracious love for his enemies and the way that he dealt rightly.

Lord I do pray that in this fellowship we would see wonderful friendships arise. I do pray Lord God that you would help us to bless one another to exhort one another to encourage one another.

I pray Lord God that we would see these kind of friendships grow. Lord may indeed our fellowship always be just a warm place where you are worshipped where your love is displayed.

Praise your name Lord in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.