

1 Samuel 20

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[0 : 00] Today we're just going to cover the one chapter, chapter 20. It's probably going to take 50 minutes or slightly more.! There's a lot here in the one chapter. So we will see how we get on and without further ado, we will get in.

It's worth taking a minute just to recap where we are. So we've seen in Samuel the installation of King Saul. And you remember that Saul was like the best choice that man could offer.

He was man's choice. Tall and strong and handsome. And he actually had some really good successes. You remember he defeated the Philistines. He saved Israel from the Ammonites, I think it was.

He did some good things. But we've also seen him sin severely enough that God has rejected him as king. And we've read how God sent Samuel the prophet, who had anointed Saul, now to the house of Jesse down in Bethlehem and anointed him as king.

And David is described as a man after God's heart. Now, Saul doesn't know about that anointing, or at least there's no evidence that he knows about that anointing. In fact, Saul initially is quite taken with David and he brings him into the court as a musician and one of his armour bearers.

[1 : 17] But the other detail that we saw was how when David was anointed, the Spirit of God left Saul and came upon David. And in its place, Saul was left with this evil or harmful spirit from God.

And we've talked about that and how it's best seen as an aspect of God's judgment on Saul. And I think what we see in this chapter, and certainly last week, is the influence that harmful spirit is having in the decisions and the actions of Saul.

So last week we saw, or last time, we saw Saul beginning to become jealous of David. David did what Saul would not do, which is to say he stood up to Goliath and defeated him.

Saul was obliged as the king and also probably the biggest guy to take that on, and he did not. And in those last two chapters, we saw Saul try to kill David, by my count, about seven times.

Seven times. And the other key thing we saw last time was the friendship between David and Saul's son, Jonathan, which is very, very unlikely.

[2 : 30] Apart from God, the very unlikely friendship. Because Jonathan is the heir of Saul, Jonathan and David should be rivals for that throne. But they're both very godly men.

Never is there any hint of rivalry. In fact, on the contrary, Jonathan is fully aware of what God intends to do, in that he will bring David to the throne.

And indeed, doesn't God bring together unlikely bunches of people and make firm friends? You know, when actually the twelve apostles are a great example of that.

Perhaps even a greater example than this fellowship. Now, Jonathan has been an intercessor for David, and in the last chapter, chapter 4, we read how Jonathan...

Sorry, chapter 4, verse 4, chapter 19. We read that Jonathan spoke well of David to his father, and said how beneficial he had been. And Jonathan was, at that point, initially, able to convince Saul not to put David to death, but subsequently, things changed.

[3 : 38] And David once again picked up that spear. I'm sorry, Saul picked up that spear once again, and wanted to kill David with it. So, at the end of the last time, we saw David flee to Samuel in a place called Ramah, which is Samuel's hometown.

I just thought I'd chuck up a couple of maps on the screen, just to give you a sense. So, Ramah is there, Bethlehem is there, and Gibeah, which is not on the map, is about three miles south of Ramah.

The colours are the tribes. The red is Judah, and the white is... That's the tribe of Benjamin. Saul, of course, from the tribe of Benjamin. David from the tribe of Judah.

And then the journey that he took is that. It's tiny. Yeah, I could say about three miles through the mountainous region there to Samuel.

Now, and then Saul tried to capture David. He sent men, and you remember the story. God intervened and caused the men that Saul sent to prophesy, and then, indeed, Saul himself went, and Saul prophesied.

[4 : 46] And it was quite amazing. Everyone there at Naoth, in Ramah, saw it. Saul among the prophets? Well, today we're in chapter 20, and this is really the, I guess, the proper, the climax of the beginning, the end of the beginning, let's say, of David's flight from Saul.

As Saul's murderous rage boils over, he starts lashing out even at his own son, we're going to see today. And then in a couple of chapters, we'll see that Saul is so committed to this wickedness that he will even order the death of priests at a place called Nob, or Nob.

So, anyway, today it's all about reading this plan, this scheme that David and Jonathan put together to try to clarify Saul's disposition and to safely communicate it.

So let's get into it. Verse 1, 1 Samuel 20. Then David fled from Naoth in Ramah, and he came and said to Jonathan, What have I done? What is my guilt and what is my sin before your father that he is seeking my life?

And he said to him, Far from it, you shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing, either great or small, without informing me. So why would my father hide this thing from me? It is not so.

[6 : 03] Yet David vowed again, saying, Your father is well aware that I have found favour in your sight. And he has said, Jonathan is not to know this, otherwise he will be worried. But indeed, as the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, there is just a step between me and death.

Then Jonathan said to David, Whatever you say, I will do for you. So David makes his way back to Gibeah, presumably while Saul is still prophesying.

And he speaks to Jonathan with this sort of staccato, like, what have I done? What is my guilt? What is my sin? How have I offended your father so? And I have noted before that we never see the writer of the book of Samuel, probably Samuel himself, ever comment specifically that David is afraid.

But the way that this is phrased, and the way that this is written, it does imply that David is really upset. He's upset. Whether that is fear, I don't know.

But certainly this is impacting him, and he's upset, he's grieved. And I also think that the questions that he's asking should be considered as rhetorical.

[7 : 21] He's not genuinely asking, how have I sinned? And we know that from, for example, Psalm 18, where David talks about he's confident in the cleanness of his hands. He's got a clear conscience.

So you should see those questions as more like, hey, I know I've done nothing to deserve this persecution. So what's going on? And Jonathan's response, far from it, I was, I don't know, it probably amused me more than it should to discover this is just one Hebrew word.

Halila. And I went off on one about that because I thought it was such a cool little word. And it's a very, very strong negation. The King James puts God forbid. God forbid. Which is actually quite close.

It's a word that is strongly denying the thing with a vowel. It's there, Paul used the equivalent in Greek in Romans 6.

Well, throughout the book of Romans, you know Paul's posing these questions. For example, in Romans 6, verse 1 and 2, he says, what do we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

[8 : 26] Far from it. Or the same equivalent, the same single word, Halila. Perish the thought. Far from it. So, I don't know, I enjoyed that. But it's a strong denial.

This is not so. I would know. My father tells me everything. Well, last time we saw Jonathan spoke to his father, again, as I've said, he did, he did manage to talk his dad around.

But subsequent to that, we saw the, that colorful episode with David, David's wife Michal. And David had to scramble down the wall and to flee.

And I find myself thinking, how did Jonathan not know about this? Saul was ordering members of his court. Anyway, he didn't. And David responds, he vows again, which is interesting, he's swearing an oath.

Again, this is definitely so. And he says, your dad knows we're friends. He's going to keep this from you. He doesn't want you to be grieved or worried. It's a Hebrew term that conveys emotional, sorrow.

[9 : 38] Saul doesn't want you to be upset by this. But then David says, as your soul lives, there is just a step between me and death. Verse five.

So David said to Jonathan, tomorrow is the new moon. Here comes the plan. And I am obliged to sit down to eat with the king. But let me go so that I may hide myself in the field until the third evening.

If your father misses me at all, then say, David earnestly requested leave of me to run to Bethlehem, his city, because it is the yearly sacrifice there for the whole family.

If he says, that is good. Your servant will be safe. But if he's very angry, be aware that he has decided on evil. So, the plan.

David has this plan or test to reveal Saul's disposition. And that is to say, I think, reveal it to Jonathan because David is already very clear on the situation.

[10 : 42] And the essence of the plan is that there is a... David is going to pretend that there is this familial obligation. There is an annual sacrifice which should be a reasonable excuse for failing to attend the monthly new moon feast in Saul's court.

Now, you may be aware that the ancient Hebrews, actually, I think even the modern Hebrews, I forget, but they based their calendar around the cycles of the moon. So, the first sighting of the new moon, the crescent, would indicate the start of a new month.

And Numbers 28, verse 11 through 15, refers to a prescribed set of offerings for the new moon. Originally, they would have been offered by the priesthood on behalf of the nation.

It seems, as the nation grew, it evolved into a practice that would feature... that the families would then do in many cases.

Amos 8.5, interestingly, implies that the new moon was also a time, at least by Amos' day, it was a time when trade stopped. So, the new moon had become another Sabbath rest.

[11 : 52] The annual feast that David mentions as a family sacrifice, I couldn't find any Levitical background to that. But if there was one, it's not really important because the point is he's made it up.

There isn't a feast. But we have to ponder on that, don't we? So, David's just asked Jonathan to lie. David has asked Jonathan to lie to God's anointed king.

And I wonder what we think about that. Was that okay? Was it righteous? And as is often the case, the writer of 1 Samuel does not give us any indication as to what we should think about this.

Was it right or wrong? And I would refer you back to the episode we saw with Michal. She also lied to Saul. Oh, David, I had to let David go, otherwise he would have killed me.

No. So, was it right? Did she need to repent of this? Well, if you were with us back in March 22, then you will remember that Ray preached a whole sermon on this.

[13 : 03] So, Ray, no. And I don't think we've got the report. Yeah, brilliant. So, and we do have the slides, actually. I happen to find them. So, we do have the slides.

I don't think we recorded that one. But the morality of lying, and it isn't as straightforward as never, ever do it, ever do it. I think that there's a principle in Matthew 12.

Well, Matthew 12 verses 1 through 7 is where the disciples are picking the grain on the Sabbath. And the Pharisees get all uppity about that. Oh, how dare they harvest? How dare they harvest? And you know what they're like.

And we could also look at the example next week when David eats the holy bread. Because Jesus refers to that and says, haven't you read about this? It was okay for David to eat the bread.

Why? Well, it's a big thing. I want to just point this passage out to you from Matthew 12 verse 7. Jesus says, if you had known what this means, I desire compassion rather than sacrifice, you would not have condemned the what?

[14 : 08] innocent. Innocent. The disciples did not need to repent of picking the grain. David did not need to repent of eating the show bread.

Technically, the Sabbath was broken, but Jesus says they're innocent. Why? Because there is a greater principle at play, the principle of preserving life. The higher priority to preserve life is a greater good.

And it's exactly the same. We saw Jesus do this time and again in the synagogue. Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath, to preserve life? Answer, yes. Yes.

And here we are in David's case. His life is in immediate danger from Saul. Saul is acting evilly, and David is acting in a way to preserve life. Michal did the same thing.

She acted in a way to preserve David's life and then her own. And so I would contend that there's no need for repentance. What they've done is, right, because they have done what is necessary to preserve life.

[15 : 12] Right, the plan is set. If Saul is angry by what is clearly a reasonable excuse, then there is harm. So, reading on verse eight.

So deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the Lord with you. But if I am guilty of wrongdoing, kill me yourself. For why then should you bring me to your father? Jonathan said, Far be it from you.

Halilah. For if I in fact learn that my father has decided to inflict harm on you, would I not inform you? And David said to Jonathan, who will inform me if your father answers you harshly?

Jonathan said to David, come and let's go out to the field. So both of them went to the field. Now deal kindly there is to do chesed.

And chesed is just an amazing word and I've got a little thing on that in a minute. So pause on that. But it's loyal love. Be faithful in commitment. Now we read that they've made a covenant together and we saw that back in chapter 18 verse 3 and I commented at the time that the details of it aren't clear.

[16 : 22] I think we get into that covenant and we start to see the details coming up. But David is saying in essence look if I'm wrong David is saying if I'm wrong here then let's not waste any time.

If I do deserve death let's just get it over with. You do it. Our friendship should not override what is right if it is right that I deserve death.

Hallelujah. God forbid. If my father does seek you harm I will side with you. And again the word harm there is the word which is sometimes translated evil.

Evil and harm is the same word in Hebrew. We saw it with evil spirit harmful spirit. Same word. So they head out into the field and whenever you see two men going to a field it always makes you think back to Cain and Abel because the field is a place that privacy is afforded.

But unlike Cain and Abel of course the privacy of the field allowed one to strike down the other in jealous anger. Here we see Jonathan and David coming together for this wonderful selfless commitment.

[17 : 37] It's a very striking contrast I thought. Verse 12 then Jonathan said to David. So they're in the field now. The Lord the God of Israel is my witness.

When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow or the third day behold if he has a good feeling toward you shall I not then send word to you and inform you.

If it pleases my father to do you harm may the Lord do so to me and more also if I fail to inform you and send you away so that you may go in safety and may the Lord be with you as he has been with my father.

So here we have a vow. Jonathan invoking the name of the Lord. The name Yahweh. May the Lord do so to me and more also. Common phrasing we see.

In fact actually we saw it Saul had made a very similar vow when he said he was going to kill his own son. Saul doesn't do very well does he? That's 1 Samuel 14 verse 44. But Jonathan is using this phrase to say one very simple thing to David.

[18 : 44] He's making a very solemn vow. I am with you. I'm on your side. If your father is set on killing you I will put my life ahead of yours.

I will do everything I can to get you out. Everything in my power even laying down my own life to allow you to flee to safety. Amazing commitment.

And then we read this. May the Lord be with you as he has been with my father. And to me that seems to be a kingly blessing. The Lord was with Saul.

You recall he came upon him by the spirit. And we read in 1 Samuel 10 verse 9 and 10 how God changed Saul's heart. And the spirit of God rushed on him and he became a new man.

And then we saw him empowered to defeat the Ammonites in the things that he did. But then following his failures, following the anointing of David, the spirit left. And we the readers know this.

[19 : 43] We know that the spirit is on him. We know that the Holy Spirit has left. Does Jonathan know that? I'm not sure. It's interesting to ponder. I don't know.

But the prayer there, may the Lord be with you as he has been with my father, is I think asking exactly that. May the Lord empower you to be king. Verse 14, continuing then, and if I am still alive, so Jonathan is like, if I survive this thing, if I am still alive, will you not show me the faithfulness of the Lord so that I do not die, and you shall never cut off your loyalty to my house.

Not even when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David saying, may the Lord demand it from the hands of David's enemies.

And Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he had loved him as he loved his own life. So here is that covenant. And notice that little detail.

Jonathan made a covenant with who? With David? With the house of David. Who's that now? This is looking forward of course to David's dynasty and the line of kings that will come.

[20 : 59] Covenant with the house of David. And what is the nature of it? Well, here again we see two instances of that wonderful Hebrew word chesed. If you're reading from the 1995 NASB, then in both cases it's put the word loving kindness for chesed.

The updated 2020 edition uses two different words which were faithfulness and loyalty. You see, chesed is one of those words that it just doesn't have a, there's no equivalent.

There is no English equivalent for chesed. When you read the NASB 95 then you will find that it's pretty much exclusively translated as loving kindness.

But the updated 2020 edition has got all these different translations. Faithfulness, mercy, kindness or kindness, favour, loyalty, goodness, graciousness, devotion, compassion, compassion.

Because there is no direct equivalent and there is so much to the word chesed it is impossible to really capture it with one word.

[22 : 11] Chesed. And it won't surprise you to know that there are reams written on this little word. Countless theses, many people have got their doctorate I am sure in this little word.

So what does it mean? Time to get my doctorate. Well it has to do with the actions, the good actions that derive from a loving and committed loyalty.

There is a commitment that is made like a covenant or an oath and because of that commitment or oath then there is an ongoing decision to honour that commitment by doing good.

It is an action oriented love that demonstrates commitment and faithfulness.

So as I was pondering on this I thought it was, you know, it's kind of like the loving actions that spouses will do for one another. In the ideal case spouses will choose to be faithful to each other and they will choose to bless one another and that's partly because they made a commitment to do so.

[23 : 21] But it's also, and I would argue primarily because there is a love, there's a loving desire in their commitment. But of course, ultimately God is the source of chesed.

God is the one who has chosen to make covenants and commitments and of course his chesed is perfect. Exodus 15, 13 In your chesed, in your faithfulness question, why did God bring Israel out of Egypt at the Exodus and lead them to Mount Sinai?

Because of his chesed, because of his covenant that he had made, because of a commitment that he had made to Abraham. another key topic that you could study would be Psalm 136.

Psalm 136, you can look at the whole thing. The first couple verses, give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his faithfulness is everlasting. Give thanks to the God of gods, his faithfulness is everlasting.

And other Bible translations have got different things there, his love and kindness and so on. It's his chesed, it's everlasting. The pattern continues throughout the psalm saying that God's chesed underpins creation, redemption and his provision on an ongoing basis.

[24 : 51] They're all aspects of God's commitment to do good to his creation. There's a lot more we could say here. 2 Samuel 7, 15 is interesting if you're taking notes, because there we read that Saul lost God's chesed, it was taken away from him.

And Micah 6, 8 is worth a quick look. Micah 6, 8, because here Micah is speaking for God, saying ultimately, what does God expect from people?

He has told you, mortal one, what is good. What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love chesed and to walk humbly with your God?

Do justice, love chesed, love kindness, as it says in the Bible there. And I think the point of that passage is that God expects us to reflect God's chesed by doing good ourselves, making commitments to one another, honouring, fulfilling those commitments, whether that is marriage, family, church, covenant, contracts, whatever it is, be honourable people who do good.

Do justice, love chesed. Awesome word. So, verse 8, in verse 8, we saw David say, you and I have a covenant of the Lord, so do chesed, which is to say, do the kindness that derives from that covenant.

[26 : 15] And here we are now in verse 14 and 15, and Jonathan is now asking David, David, will you show me the chesed of the Lord? Never cut off your chesed to my house.

Let our commitment bind our descendants forever. And indeed, this does take place. When we get as far as 2 Samuel 9, David has been crowned king, Saul and sadly Jonathan have been killed in battle, and David asks, saying, is there anyone still left in the house of Saul that I can show kindness to him for Jonathan's sake?

Kindness chesed. And of course, there's the story of Mephibosheth, which we will get into in the future. So, they covenant together. Jonathan would be king, but he says, no, you're going to be king.

May the Lord's spirit be on you. May God anoint you. May the Lord be with you as he was with my father, but don't cut off my family. Don't cut off my family.

And they vowed. Anyway, verse 18. Let's see the plan unfold. So, then Jonathan said to him, tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed since your seat will be empty.

[27 : 33] When you have stayed for three days, you shall go down quickly and come to the place where you hid yourself on that eventful day, and you shall remain beside the stone Ezel.

And I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target, and behold, I will send the boy, telling him, go, find the arrows. If I specifically say to the boy, behold, the arrows are on this side of you, get them.

Then come, because it is safe for you, and there is nothing to harm you, as the Lord lives. But if I say to the youth, behold, the arrows are beyond you, go, because the Lord has sent you away.

As for the agreement of which you and I have spoken, behold, the Lord is between you and me forever. ever. So David is to hide in the place he hid that eventful day.

Literally, the day of the deed. Somewhat enigmatic, most likely referring back to the previous chapter, when Jonathan had him go hide, because Saul had issued this command to kill David.

[28 : 44] And the stone, as well, is a little bit of a mystery. Stones were used as landmarks, boundary markers, and so on. But the meaning of Ezel is not exactly clear.

It could be related to a word that means separation or going away. So it could be that this is the stone of separation, as David and Jonathan separate. I don't know. I was somewhat underwhelmed to find in the Septuagint it just says, box.

Go and stay near that box. I was like, oh, maybe it's just that. So the plan is set. Jonathan will fire these arrows. I'm sorry, shoot these arrows.

Archers will be offended by that. Shoot three arrows, and then how he directs the boy to collect them will be the code. Verse 24, so David hid himself in the field, and when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food.

Now the king sat on his seat as usual, the seat by the wall, and then Jonathan stood up, and Abner sat down by Saul's side. But David's place was empty. Nevertheless, Saul did not say anything that day because he thought, that must have been an accident.

[29 : 53] He's not clean. Undoubtedly, he is not clean. And that's a reference to, in the law, there were a number of things that could happen to render a person unclean.

Touching something is unclean, such as a carcass, would do it. Coming into contact with someone unclean, such as with a disease. There were many, many ways that could happen. And then when that happened, one would be counted as unclean until evening, which is when the new day was reckoned as starting.

So if David missed a feast for one day, he'd be expected the following day. And it's also worth highlighting the detail here. The king takes his seat by the wall.

Jonathan stood up, and Abner sat down at Saul's side. And this is eyewitness level detail, which I'm imagining that Jonathan must have at some point shared this with Samuel.

Interesting stuff. But anyway, verse 27. Yeah, verse 27. But it came about the next day, the second day of the new moon, that David's place was empty again.

[31 : 00] So Saul said to his son Jonathan, why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal, either yesterday or today? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly requested leave of me to go to Bethlehem.

He said, please let me go because our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has ordered me to attend. So now, if I have found favour in your sight, please let me slip away so that I may see my brothers.

For this reason, he has not come to the king's table. So Jonathan delivers this ruse. For what it's worth, Jonathan seems to omit the detail that this is an annual sacrifice.

what will Saul say? What indeed will he say? Verse 30, then Saul's anger burned against Jonathan and he said to him, you son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?

For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now then, send men and bring him to me, for he is doomed to die.

[32 : 13] Saul's anger burned. To use the wonderfully colourful Hebrew idiom, he became hot of nose. I love that.

And this outburst, if I was really going to try and capture the force of it, I would need to use expletives. It's a shameful, outrageous thing he's saying. The thrust of it is that he's casting aspersions on the legitimacy of his birth, that he was born to a loose and rebellious woman.

And I'm thinking, bro, is your wife there? I mean, I don't know, I don't know, but I'm just thinking to say that before all the guests, his wife Ahinoam, I just, wow, it's an incredible, incredible outburst.

And, you know, it would be one thing for Saul to say, I doubt this. You know, it's a it's plausible, it's a perfectly plausible reason.

And, and, and, Saul could say, I doubt this, I'm going to have to do something about this afterwards. But, and he may even say, I would have expected to be involved in that consultation.

[33 : 24] I would have expected to be consulted before you gave him permission to not be here. but no, it's rebellion. Wow. We also see in the text that Saul intended for Jonathan to continue the dynasty.

Because it, even, even though Samuel were told him plainly in chapter 13 verse 13 that his kingdom is not going to endure, David, in Saul's mind, you're now, now neither your kingdom is going to be established.

And Jonathan's thinking, well, it wasn't going to be anyway. There are many, many ways in which Saul is wrong here. But the thing that struck me was just this complete lack of self-control.

Self-control is, of course, an aspect of the fruit of the spirit and Saul does not have the spirit. It would follow then that he lacks self-control. Verse 32. So Jonathan replied to his father Saul and said to him, why must he be put to death?

What has he done? And then Saul hurled his spear at him to strike and kill him. So Jonathan knew that his father had decided to put David to death. And then Jonathan got up from the table in the heat of anger, hot of nose, and he did not eat food on that second day of the new moon because he was worried about David since his father had insulted him.

[34 : 48] So Jonathan attempted to engage his father with a rational question. Why? Why does he need to be put to death? To which Saul has no response except murderous violence.

And I mentioned last time how Saul is probably unwittingly making himself into a new Goliath, a very tall, fierce warrior who wields a spear and stands in opposition of God.

And Saul continues. And so now the truth is clear to Jonathan and it's Jonathan's turn to become angry and he leaves immediately. And we read that he was worried about David, grieved about David.

Septuagint uses a word that means broken or heart broken. Jonathan is just broken over this. very, very upsetting indeed.

Verse 35, Now it came about in the morning that Jonathan went out to the field at the time agreed upon but with David and a little boy was with him and he said to the boy, Run, find now the arrows which I am about to shoot.

[35 : 57] The boy ran and he shot an arrow past him. When the boy reached the location of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the boy and said, Is the arrow not beyond you?

Then Jonathan called after the boy, Hurry, be quick, do not stay. And Jonathan's boy picked up the arrow and came to his master but the boy was not aware of anything.

Only Jonathan and David knew about the matter. And then Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy and said to him, Go, bring them to the city. So they carry out the plan and the only thing that really struck me was the somewhat lax standard of health and safety firing arrows over the head of a boy.

But, well, a different time. Verse 41, When the boy was gone, David got up from the south side, then he fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times and they kissed each other and wept together until David wept immeasurably.

And then Jonathan said to David, Go in safety since we have sworn to each other in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be with, that Lord will be between me and you and between my descendants and your descendants forever.

[37 : 13] So David set out and went on his way while Jonathan went into the city. So David and Jonathan wept greatly, David weeping the most, or possibly David wept greatly, different ways to understand the Hebrew there.

Septuagint had, they each wept for his friend until the great end. They wept a lot. So David and Jonathan part, and again David's flight from Saul begins properly.

David will never return to Gibeah or Ramah as far as I can see. And the two friends will meet just one more time when Jonathan will briefly visit to encourage David in a place called Horesh.

And Jonathan heads back to Gibeah and we know nothing about how he interacts with his father. Did they patch things up? Did they remain unreconciled? Don't know.

All we really know is that neither one of them changed their minds. Saul remains actively against David and Jonathan remains faithful to his friend. Well that's the end of our text and I had three themes struck me as I went through and I thought man these are all massive and I didn't really have time to develop them fully.

[38 : 31] So I hopefully will give you enough to sort of whet your appetite on some things. The first thing that struck me was this. Why is it that Jonathan needed such convincing that Saul was trying to kill David?

We've seen multiple attempts on David's life. We've seen Saul issue edicts. I want that boy dead. Seven times he's tried to kill him.

He's camped outside his house and David had to shimmy down a rope to escape. Now yes again Jonathan did successfully challenge Saul that one time and brought temporary reconciliation but then Saul tried to pin him again.

I mean you would think that the spear holes in his wall would give it away. So why then did Jonathan need convincing? Now of course we don't know.

We don't know Jonathan's mind. We don't know what was revealed to him. But as I reflected on this I thought that we can easily see all these major character defects.

[39 : 37] We sort of sit somewhat we've got the narrator's view of what's happening. We've seen the foolish vows in which Saul ordered the death of Jonathan in chapter 14 and we've seen Saul make these promises to the one who kills Goliath and then completely renege on them.

We've seen the physical threats and the abuse and we've seen the messengers that he sent. And it's obvious to us that Saul is completely untrustworthy, that he's egotistical, that he's given to outbursts of anger and physical violence.

Obvious. But when you are a son with a father figure, someone whom you love, and someone who's been a blessing to you, it can be very, very difficult to see their flaws.

And if I'm honest, you don't want to see them. It can be very difficult to accept that this person that you've loved and respected for a long time is actually harming people. David says, I am being harmed by Saul.

Jonathan, maybe you've misinterpreted it? It can't be. And you know, I've experienced this myself. I've seen it in different contexts. You know, I had a boss that I got on well with quite well at work.

[40 : 49] We got on well. But others were saying, he's a bully. He's a bully. And people were resigning rather than keep working with him. And I'm like, well, you know, he's not perfect, but you've just got to learn how to deal with him.

Well, in the end, there were grievances raised and he was fired. I didn't want to see it because I thought he was good. As in, he was good to me. And I've come to learn that I have a bit of a blind spot.

Maybe I'm like Jonathan in that regard. Now, what do the scriptures say about this? 1 Timothy 5. 1 Timothy chapter 5. And I'm going to read from verse 17 and through to verse 22.

And this is where Paul is laying down some principles for Timothy. Timothy being in the role of someone who is to establish elders in the church. Amazing.

Amazing stuff. Right, verse 17. Paul says to Timothy, the elders who lead well are to be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

[41 : 54] For the scripture says you shall not muzzle the ox while it is threshing. And the labourer is worthy of his wages. Do not accept an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

Those who continue in sin rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. I solemnly exhort you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of his chosen angels to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.

Do not lay hands upon anyone too quickly and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others. Keep yourself free from sin. So, Timothy is instructed about establishing elders, leaders into the church.

Don't be too hasty to lay hands, hands, which means that is the prayerful laying of hands for ordination or for establishment into the role. Don't be too hasty.

But then once an elder is in office, an accusation against that elder needs a minimal of two or ideally three witnesses, which is intended as protection to avoid spurious or malicious charges.

[43 : 08] But then if you have two or three, there's something to do. And I think way, way too often the church is far too slow to accept that there's a problem.

Way too often. If there are two independent allegations, the church should take action. Timothy was instructed by Paul, look how solemnly, I solemnly exhort you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of his chosen angels.

I don't know how Saul could have made that more firmly stated. And then he says, Paul says, the elders who continue in sin rebuke in the presence of all.

Well, the church has a massive problem, doesn't it, with failing to deal with abusive men. What did we read recently about Justin Welby and his resignation over that wolf, John Smythe, and how he knew about this abuse.

I'm assuming you saw the articles about him. And this was known about, the charity that he chaired, that John Smythe chaired, knew about this abuse as early as 1982, but they failed to involve the police, they shielded him from investigation.

[44 : 25] And Paul says he should have been rebuked before all. And so often we see it in the church that the church will side with the alleged abuser instead of seeking to minister to the hurting.

And then if things do transpire to be true, they want to dismiss it as quickly as they possibly can. And I know this is somewhat tangential to the sermon, but I guess what I saw in Jonathan was a man who is slow to see when there's a problem.

And I'm not saying that we should look for problems, but I'm saying if there's two or three, action needs to be taken. The second thing I wanted to take a look at and consider was this theme of emotion.

Because in our narrative today we've seen extreme emotions, right? Anger, extreme sadness, and I think we can infer fear from David, and their emotions being shown by men.

Interesting. because in a lot of cases, we are brought up to suppress feelings and emotions, and I think that's particularly true of men, but we are brought up to believe, and if not stated, then it's implied often, that to express emotion is a sign of weakness.

[45 : 47] And I think that can be a very harmful perspective for both men and women. Failing to give heed to negative emotions, failing to allow them a voice, failing to weep when it's appropriate, is demonstrably negatively impacts our health, physical health and mental health.

And studies have shown this, that if we suppress our negative emotions, they don't just disappear. Actually, they build up, and in time they will damage us, they will damage our relationships, and they will damage our health.

Now, for Saul, clearly his anger emotion is wrong. He needed a rebuke, he needed correction, he needed to repent before the Lord.

Now, in the case of David and Jonathan, their sadness is perfectly appropriate, given the situation. It was very, very healthy for them to express it together the way they did.

The truth is that emotions are part of creation. we are created by God, originally good, impacted by the fall, and in that creation we have these things called emotions.

[46 : 59] So they are originally good, to some degree, broken. And I had so much I wanted to say, and then I realised I had no time left. So I want to give you some verses to jot down if you want to.

First, you need to know that Jesus Christ demonstrated a number of emotions himself. compassion in Matthew 15, verse 32. Anger. Jesus was angry.

Mark 3, verse 5. Jesus was amazed in Matthew 8, verse 10. Jesus expressed sadness himself in John 11, 35. Jesus expressed distress, or rather, he is explicitly written as being distressed.

Luke 12, verse 50. He had joy in Hebrews 12, verse 2. Jesus displayed all of these emotions, and by definition, he was without sin.

None of those things can be considered absolutely sinful. And our challenge is to learn how to respond to emotions, those that we feel and those that we see others experiencing.

[48 : 06] And again, a big, big topic. I want to share one more verse on this, which is Romans 12, 15. Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

For those who are experiencing emotions, we enter into them and we share them. And that's part of what a healthy church does, is in their care for one another, we have empathy, we have understanding.

I love that we're already doing that. I think it's awesome. Right, I've got one more thing to say, sorry. And this is where we will close. Final point of application.

I want you to observe that Jonathan is laying down everything for the anointed one. He is laying down everything for the Messiah, even David.

Jonathan is turning away from his father, Saul. He is turning away from his birthright. He is turning away from the throne, which he could claim he's probably turning away from family as well.

[49 : 08] In Matthew 10, 37, Jesus said that the one who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and the one who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

And Jonathan was ready to die by his own father's hand, rather than deny his faithfulness, his chesed towards the true anointed one. And you and I, we are called to follow the son of David, right?

We are called to follow the true king of kings, the one who truly embodied chesed, because he, in his love and faithfulness and promise from ages past, went to the cross.

God promised long ago that he himself would bear our sins. That was the commitment that was made, and he bore our griefs and our sorrows. He bore our emotions. In fact, in Hebrews 4, verse 14, we read about this great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the son of God.

God, therefore let's hold firmly to our confession, for we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, one who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin.

[50 : 17] Therefore let's approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find help in our time of need. And that, I think, is where we want to close.

We are called to lay down all that we have for this great high priest who understands our weaknesses and who loves us so greatly. Amen.

Thank you, Father. Thank you, Father God, for this study. Thank you, Father God, for the great high priest we have. Thank you, Lord, that your chesed towards us, your love, your faithfulness endures forever.

Thank you, Lord, that you are always working out your faithful purposes. And I do pray, God, that you would teach us and help us to love you, to love one another, to share our burdens with one another, to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

Thank you, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.