

Friend of a King

- You may have heard it said that God first reconciled us to Himself in love so that we could then have true loving fellowship with one another
 - We sometimes describe this as a vertical relationship with God, resulting in a horizontal relationship with others
 - The principle here is simple
 - Before we enter into the New Covenant, we can only think and react in sinful, selfish ways
 - We are enemies of God
 - We are at war with Him and are evils hearts show themselves in our evil thoughts and actions with one another
 - But after we are made new by the blood of Christ, we are made to know God's love and we are capable of responding in that same love to others as we are sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit
- So, in the theme of renewal and reconciliation, we are going to study both axes of renewal and reconciliation
 - This morning we will study a remarkable story of redemption and reconciliation found in 1 and 2 Sam
 - A story that pictures how the grace of God to bring us near to Him
 - And during our Sunday school time I'll teach out of Matt 13 one of the most important and famous parables in all the gospels
 - One that illustrates what God expects from the Christian who has entered into that new relationship
 - Finally, this evening we will look at a story of the horizontal relationship between men and what our response should be to others, now that we have entered into a new relationship with God
 - Think of this Sunday as Christian discipleship 101, 201 and 301
 - I'll leave it to Marshall to teach 401

Prayer

The story of David in 1 and 2 Samuel is one of the best known in scripture, of course,

- And in so many ways, God worked through the life of David to bring us pictures of Himself and of His Son, our Savior
- And today we will study one of the most important - if lesser known stories
 - The story of Jonathan and David
- The framework for our study is found in 2Sam 9, though we will move around to other places in scripture to gain the full picture
 - Chuck Swindoll called 2Sam 9 the greatest illustration of grace in all the OT, and he may just be right

[2Sam. 9:1](#) ¶ Then David said, “Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”

- When I said verse by verse, I meant it
 - Actually, I’m stopping a bit quickly I know, but this opening verse gives us an opportunity to learn the back story on this chapter
 - By the time we reach 2Sam 9, David is king of Israel, having brought all of the kingdom under his authority after the death of Saul
 - You remember that Saul was the first king of Israel
 - A king the people demanded
 - And one they selected based largely upon appearances
 - Men chose a king based on what their eyes saw
 - Unlike God who chooses not based on appearances but upon a knowledge of a man’s heart
 - In Saul the people received the fruit of their desires...
 - A corrupt man who started well but ended poorly, filled with envy, paranoia, hatred

- Most of that hatred was ultimately directed toward David, the man God shoes to succeed Saul
 - A man who men never would have chosen as a leader
 - He was too young, the last born, a shepherd boy
 - Yet God made him into a great warrior and leader
- But David honored Saul, even as Saul tried to murder David
- And after Saul's death, and a brief power struggle ensued between David and his supporters and Saul's army commander and son
 - David retained control of the throne
 - And now at this early point in his reign, David remembers a covenant he made years earlier to Jonathan, another of Saul's son
- To understand that covenant and the significance of David's action in this chapter, we need to go back to when that covenant was established
 - Go back with me to 1Sam 18

[1Sam. 18:1](#) ¶ Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself.

[1Sam. 18:2](#) Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house.

[1Sam. 18:3](#) Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

[1Sam. 18:4](#) Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt.

[1Sam. 18:5](#) So David went out wherever Saul sent him, *and* prospered; and Saul set him over the men of war. And it was pleasing in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

- Chapter 18 opens immediately after David slays Goliath
 - This event transfixed the nation of Israel
 - A young teenage boy single-handedly kills a man so fierce that no warrior in the nation of Israel would dare go against him
 - Goliath probably stood somewhere around 8-9 feet tall
 - Yet David took him down in an instant, by the power of God of course

- Now to open chapter 18, we see a covenant established between David and Saul's son, Jonathan
 - More importantly, we see a changing of command
 - First, notice how verse 1 opens
 - The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David
 - Jonathan loved David as himself
 - The Hebrew word for soul is nephesh, which means lifeblood or living being
 - It's the Hebrew word for the living part of us that exists eternally
 - It implied a lifelong unbreakable bond
 - Then the word knit (qashar) literally means bind or in league together
 - For example, the same word used in Proverbs 6

[Prov. 6:20](#) ¶ My son, observe the commandment of your father
And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;

[Prov. 6:21](#) Bind them continually on your heart;

- Finally, Jonathan loved David as himself
 - The word for love aheb means beloved, dear friend
 - The sense here is the same as when Jesus told us to love others as we love our self
 - A selfless, sacrificial love
- So put it together, Jonathan felt a stirring in his soul that drew him to David with a brotherly love so deep that he knew it would be a lifelong bond
 - A bond of friendship that stood above any other personal interest or desire
 - And it was a selfless love that caused him to set aside any interest in the throne

- How do we know this?
- Well, consider for a moment who Jonathan is and who David is
 - Jonathan is son of Saul, the king
 - Which means that Jonathan is the rightful heir to the throne
 - He is the prince, the one who would be expected to inherit the kingdom from his father
 - And Jonathan – even more than Saul – has reason to look with suspicion upon anyone who stood a chance of challenging him for that position
 - Now consider who David is
 - David is the anointed successor to Saul
 - Look back a few chapters in 1Sam 16:13-14

[1Sam. 16:13](#) Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

[1Sam. 16:14](#) ¶ Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him.

- While Samuel the prophet was anointing David as the once and future king of Israel
 - Meanwhile, Saul still sat on the throne, defiant
- Yet it was very clear who was God's choice for king
 - It was the worst kept secret in Israel
 - Samuel had already designated the successor to the throne even as Saul continued to reign
- So here's David, the single greatest threat to the house of Saul
 - Not only to Saul, but especially to Saul's descendents
 - Because when a new king gained control of a kingdom, it was expected that he would put to death any living heirs from the previous ruling family

- In other words, if David were to succeed in inheriting the kingdom after Saul,
 - Then Jonathan should have expected David to order his death and the death of anyone else in Saul's family, servants, army, etc. who could lay claim to the throne
- In fact, when David does assume the throne, two brothers sneak into the home of one of Saul's sons, Ishbosheth
 - They murder him thinking they were doing David a favor by eliminating one of Saul's heirs
 - David responds by executing these two murders
 - This isn't the way David conducted his kingship
- So back to chapter 18, here's Jonathan looking upon David, the next appointed king of Israel
 - And rather than conspire to murder David
 - Rather than seeing David as the enemy
 - By the power of the holy Spirit, Jonathan acknowledges David as a lifelong friend
- And what does Jonathan do, therefore?
 - He makes a covenant with David that has the effect of disavowing any claim Jonathan had to the throne and offers it to David
 - Look in chapter 18 at what Jonathan does
 - Jonathan gives David his robe
 - This isn't a bathrobe
 - This is a robe for the prince, a robe of authority
 - Jonathan is transferring his robe of authority to David
 - Then Jonathan gives David his armor, sword, belt
 - These implements communicate the right to command military forces into battle, to wage war, to govern
 - And in verse 5 we hear of how David prospered from the Lord

- But now why did Jonathan enter into this covenant with David?
 - What did Jonathan get out of it?
 - Well, first Jonathan was a godly man who perceived the work of the holy spirit and was moved to support the man God had appointed as king
 - Secondly, there was something in it for Jonathan
 - He gained the eternal protection of the king for him and his descendents
 - Remember, a new king who assumes the throne will always vanquish all his adversaries who might try to lay claim to his throne
 - When David assumes the throne, however, he will not do as a king normally would
 - He will not come after Jonathan's family
 - As a result of Jonathan's covenant, David will protect them
 - Because Jonathan has already promised allegiance to the king, so there is no reason to fight against Jonathan's family
- Well, I think we're finally ready to return to 2Sam 9
 - David has entered into his kingdom, and what is the first thing he asks?
 - Is there anyone in the house of Saul family I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake

[2Sam. 9:2](#) Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David; and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant."

[2Sam. 9:3](#) And the king said, "Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?" And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan who is crippled in both feet."

[2Sam. 9:4](#) So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar."

[2Sam. 9:5](#) Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

[2Sam. 9:6](#) And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said, “Mephibosheth.” And he said, “Here is your servant!”

- A servant in Saul’s household says there is still one son from Saul, a man who is crippled in both feet
 - It’s interesting in a way that the servant described this son as a cripple
 - Perhaps the servant wasn’t sure of David’s motives
 - Perhaps the servant wondered if David’s purpose in asking was simply to eliminate any rivals and put any remaining heirs to death
 - Perhaps he was volunteering the detail about this son’s handicap as a way of gaining sympathy from David
 - This son is called Miphibosheth
 - The name literally means the dispeller of shame or the one cutting shame into pieces
 - He will be one whose shame is removed
 - We first hear about Miphibosheth in chapter 4 of 2Sam

[2Sam. 4:4](#) ¶ Now Jonathan, Saul’s son, had a son crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the report of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened that in her hurry to flee, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

- So this young man is crippled
 - And David calls for this descendent of Jonathan to appear before him
- Now imagine yourself Mephibosheth
 - But due to his crippled nature, Mephibosheth can’t stand before the king
 - He lies prostrate on the ground
 - And what must have been going through his mind?

- He probably doesn't know about the covenant between David and Jonathan
- All he knows is that he is the last living male heir to the house of Saul
- And his grandfather's rival has called for him to appear
- He must assume the worst
 - He must assume that he will be killed any minute
 - But instead, look what David does

[2Sam. 9:7](#) David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly."

[2Sam. 9:8](#) Again he prostrated himself and said, "What is your servant, that you should regard a dead dog like me?"

[2Sam. 9:9](#) ¶ Then the king called Saul's servant Ziba and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson.

[2Sam. 9:10](#) "You and your sons and your servants shall cultivate the land for him, and you shall bring in *the produce* so that your master's grandson may have food; nevertheless Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall eat at my table regularly."

Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

[2Sam. 9:11](#) Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant so your servant will do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table as one of the king's sons.

- David recognizes Mephibosheth's fear
 - And David understands why he's afraid
 - But David says don't worry, because I called you here to show kindness upon you
 - And why?
 - Because Mephibosheth deserved it?
 - Did David show kindness because of something Mephibosheth did?
 - No
 - And Mephibosheth knows he is receiving something he shouldn't receive

- He asks a rhetorical question...why are you showing regard for a dead dog like me?
- David was giving lovingkindness on account of Jonathan
 - The word kindness here is chesed
 - It means a special kind of underserved faithfulness

[Ex. 34:6](#) Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in **lovingkindness** and truth;

[Ex. 34:7](#) who keeps **lovingkindness** for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin...

- This is same kind of kindness David was prepared to show Jonathan's son on account of his father's covenant
- We have a word for this special kind of kindness
 - We call it grace...unmerited favor
 - It was the basis for David's actions
 - He was willing to restore Mephibosheth to the king's table on the basis of another's act of faithfulness
 - Not on the basis of Mepibosheth's own worthiness
 - But on the basis of an agreement the king made with Mephibosheth's father
- And look at the favor Mephibosheth received
 - Mephibosheth inherited the property that had been his grandfather's
 - And he had the benefit of servants to feed him
 - And he dined with the king at the king's table
 - He went from a dead dog, a worthless person in the eyes of all of Israel
 - To become as a son of the king
 - Eating at the kings table continually
- Did you know this is actually a story about you and I?

- Many of you probably already know this, but David is a type of Christ
 - In other words, God worked through events in David's life to create a picture of our Messiah
- And it's easy to see that type revealed through this story
 - In this story of David, we have a king showing grace – unmerited favor upon an unworthy man
 - And more than that, a man would be considered an enemy of David
 - Yet, on the basis of a covenant of faithfulness that the king made earlier with ancestor of this poor dead dog of a man
 - The king can now bestow grace upon this man
 - And he will enjoy the riches of the King's please, like dining at the king's table
- This is exactly the way our king, Jesus Christ, looked upon you and I
 - Before we were drawn to Him, we were dead in our trespasses

[Eph. 2:1](#) ¶ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, [Eph. 2:2](#) in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

- We were like that poor Mephibosheth, dead as dogs and unable to stand in the king's presence in our own power
 - But by the grace of the king we are made to stand

[Rom. 5:1](#) ¶ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, [Rom. 5:2](#) through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

- And what exactly did we do again to deserve God's favor?
 - In a word nothing
 - It was grace. Unmerited favor
 - And it was on the basis of an earlier covenant

- In Gen 22, Abraham is willing to sacrifice his own son, Isaac, for the sake of obedience
 - And God declared that Abraham would be one through whom God would bless many nations on account of his faithfulness
- Paul gives us the completes our theological understanding in Galatians

[Gal. 3:6](#) ¶ Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

[Gal. 3:7](#) Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

[Gal. 3:8](#) The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, “ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”

[Gal. 3:9](#) So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

- Mephibosheth was a descendent of Jonathan, and his relationship to the one who was in covenant with the King meant he participated in the blessings of that covenant
 - Likewise, by our faith, God makes us a members of Abraham’s family
 - Therefore we receive the same blessings from our King Christ as a result of our family relationship with the covenant holder, Abraham (verse 9)
- The scriptures speak of David as a man after God’s own heart
 - And I believe it’s in this sense
 - That like David was faithful to keep his covenant and to forgive those who were his enemies
 - Likewise, our Lord is such a king
 - We can be confident in that assurance
 - That as a son of the living God, we will always be welcome at his table
 - Having been renewed by His Spirit and reconciled by His Son’s sacrifice
- But I ask...what are you prepared to do as the son or daughter of the King?
 - How are you prepared to live and respond to others having been the recipient of so much grace yourself?