

## Message #49

## I Samuel 20:10-23

There was a middle school teacher who gave an assignment to her class to write down a definition of a friend. One of the students wrote this: "A friend is a pair of open arms in a society of armless people." That is powerful.

It seems to me that God is showing us an important point in this section that He clearly wants us to see. There are times when we need a friend. A true friend will be one that God puts into your life to promote God's word and will. Do not forget that. If a person tries to get you to do what is wrong, that person is really not your friend. But a true friend wants the best for you and will point you to the truth of God because that is the best life you can have.

At just the right time, God will bring a true friend(s) into your life to help you cope with the pressures and stresses of life and ministry in a God-honoring way. This unique friend will be very rare and they will be there sent by God. This was certainly true in the life of David.

What is truly amazing about this text is that David appears to be the one losing. Everything seems to be against him. Yet in all reality, David is the one winning and there was one friend who sensed that. His name was Jonathan, who at this point was David's brother-in-law.

Jonathan had a sense about things that was totally and completely different from all other people, with perhaps the exception of Samuel. Jonathan saw everything that was hitting David but he sensed God's hand was on David. Jonathan sensed that David was God's man. He sensed it when no one else did.

Jonathan knew David was going to replace his father and be Israel's next king. Jonathan knew that David would eventually have great sovereign power, even though at the present time it didn't look like it.

The truth is it would be another ten years before David would come into power. But Jonathan was one who knew the truth, saw the truth and spoke the truth. He was a very rare friend to David in the midst of a world that wanted him dead.

Now the irony in this text is that David is the one running for his life and Jonathan asks David to promise that David won't end up killing him or his family. The one who looked like he would be killed was David, not Jonathan.

What God was doing here with Jonathan for David was demonstrating His care of David and even revealing His plan to David. Even though the fulfillment of this plan seemed far away, God raised up a friend to see it and sense it and communicate it.

**WHEN A CHOSEN SERVANT OF GOD IS UNDER ATTACK, GOD WILL RAISE UP A RARE FRIEND WHO WILL ENCOURAGE HIM OF THE VICTORIOUS OUTCOME.**

One commentator observed that one of the most striking features of this text is that Jonathan was willing to make amazing self-sacrifices for David. He is doing this when no one else is.

There are five narrative observations we want to make:

**NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #1** – David wants to know how he will know Saul's response.  
**20:10**

Let's refresh our memories on this point. David has told Jonathan that his father's attitude toward his absence will determine whether he is pleased with David or whether he hates David (20:7). What David wanted to know is how he would actually find out what Saul's attitude actually was.

There is much to glean from this text. God's Spirit was on David and yet he still did not know everything. He needed someone to help him. Furthermore, he had just come from a meeting with Samuel and the prophets (19:18, 20), who clearly spoke and prophesied the word of God.

What we may observe from this is that just because one is a great instrument of God and just because one loves God and knows the word of God, does not mean he knows everything. David is the second most godly man on this earth and he did not have the answers to every perplexing situation of life. There are times when even those most godly don't have the answers.

God could have revealed Saul's response to David, but He obviously was not going to do it. David needed to do what he humanly could to find out answers and he needed someone to help him.

**What David is learning is day by day dependency.** He is learning how God cares for him. He does not have all the answers but God will protect him and provide for him every step of the way through life.

**NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #2** – Jonathan asks David to go out into the field. **20:11**

Apparently as Jonathan was talking to David, he did not feel safe, so he requested that they go out into the field. It seems that this would be a place where the two could talk without fear of being seen.

Just because God is sovereign, does not mean we do not need to use common sense when it comes to our own survival. One may think, well God is sovereign so I can just walk into Satanic territory and walk through fire. That is a good way to get burned.

At times, if we are to truly ascertain the will of God, we need to get away from the world and get alone with Jesus Christ. There are times we literally need to go for a walk and talk with Him.

**NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #3** – Jonathan devises a plan to inform David. **20:12-13**

Do not miss this; it is Jonathan who is coming up with this plan to inform and help David. David is not manipulating this in any way. He is not trying to somehow get Jonathan to favor him and turn against his father. This is all Jonathan.

Jonathan was a man who had a profound sense of the sovereign, observing, seeing eye of God. Jonathan knew the plan of God and he knew David was destined to be King.

There is no hint that Samuel had revealed this to Jonathan, but Jonathan sensed it and knew it. You can tell if God's hand is on someone. Some may not like it, but they can tell. Jonathan certainly could and did. Jonathan's plan was simple.

He would talk to his father in a day or two, and he would determine his father's attitude toward David.

If his father had a good feeling for David, he would send for him. If his father was out to harm David, he would make that known to David.

As we will see, for Jonathan, he is really laying his life on the line. Michal, Saul's daughter, had already helped David to escape and now Jonathan, Saul's son, would also help David to escape.

This is truly an amazing display of the sovereignty of God. God is rising up people to help David and support David and protect David, who are from Saul's own family. God's hand was on David.

To put this in some political perspective, this would be like Chelsea Clinton and Hunter Biden helping Donald Trump get reelected. Now you must admit that would be an amazing display of the sovereignty of God.

**NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #4** – Jonathan knows God's hand is on David and he makes very specific requests. **20:13b-17**

This is a very critical text. At the end of **verse 13**, Jonathan wants God to be with David as He once was with his father. Jonathan knew God's hand was on David. Jonathan clearly saw and sensed the destiny of David even though it appeared as though David was losing.

In recognizing this, Jonathan makes two requests to David:

**Request #1** - If he is still alive when David becomes King, he wants David to let him live. **20:14**

The irony of this request is that David is the one running for his life. This is one seemingly odd request. David is on the brink of becoming a flight fugitive for the next ten years and Jonathan is asking David to spare his life when he becomes king.

Jonathan did know the will of God in this. He knew that David was not going to be executed but would eventually be in a position where he could execute others.

This is an eye-opening text. Those who have done things against faithful people of God need to know that there will come a day when things will be reversed and there will come a day when the score will be settled.

There are three applications we want to make here:

**(Application #1)** - What initially appears to be the outcome may eventually not be the outcome.

**(Application #2)** - God will often surface people who will have a true sense of the will of God when others do not see it or sense it.

**(Application #3)** - There will come a time when Jesus Christ will be King and He will not show Grace to His enemies.

**Request #2** - When David becomes King, he would not cut off his relatives. **20:15-17**

Jonathan was well aware of the fact that God does eventually cut down and destroy the enemies of His chosen servants. There does come a point in time when God says I am going to rip the enemies to shreds.

**Verse 16** says that Jonathan made a covenant with David and all connected with David. The covenant was that God would wipe out David's enemies with the exception of his family.

According to **verse 17**, Jonathan asked David to vow that he would not kill him or his family because he loved David as he loved his own life.

We may recall that Jonathan made a covenant with David back in I Samuel 18:3. The difference this time is that David was now under great threat of losing his life. If one took David's side, one risked his own life. However, if you didn't take David's side, one risked a much greater loss.

Love really gets put to the test when you stay with someone who is being attacked and made to look like a loser.

A great illustration of that is Jesus Christ Himself. Those Jews would have rallied around Jesus Christ if He would have been sitting in Jerusalem, wearing a crown and robe and wiping out enemies. But when they saw Jesus Christ looking like a loser, they abandoned Him.

**NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #5** – Jonathan devises a plan to communicate Saul’s attitude to David. **20:18-22**

Jonathan said that he would attend the New Moon festival and determine Saul’s attitude toward David. Jonathan knew that David would be missed at this festival because he would not be sitting at the table.

According to **verse 19**, Jonathan told David to stay put for three days and then go to the place where he hid himself near the “stone Ezel.” The word “Ezel” means stone of departure.

Apparently there was some rock formation that was very noticeable that had that name, which was known by both Jonathan and David. We are assuming in view of what Jonathan proposes that he could hide behind that rock formation.

Now there were no high tech communication devices back at this time, so Jonathan came up with a way he could communicate long distance.

According to **verse 20**, Jonathan would shoot three arrows like he was shooting at some target.

According to **verse 21**, he would send a boy to get the arrows. He would either shoot the arrows short of where David was hiding or shoot them beyond where David was hiding.

According to his plan if he told the boy that the arrows were on the near side of David, then he could come and no harm would be done to him (**verse 21**).

If he told the boy that the arrows were beyond where David was hiding, he needs to go because God was sending him away (**verse 22**).

Jonathan’s last words to David in **verse 23** were we have an agreement between you, me, and God forever.

**PRACTICAL LESSONS:**

- 1. God’s faithful people often look like losers for a lengthy period of time.**
- 2. God will always care for and protect His faithful people.**
- 3. God will raise up a true godly friend we need at just the time we need it.**
- 4. Enemies of God’s faithful people better realize that the clock is ticking and things will be reversed. Now is the time to enter into a peace covenant with God. That covenant is found in Jesus Christ.**