

The first part of our reading today can, and has been, taken in a context that wasn't intended by the author by different groups wanting to 'prove' a point. This is one of those times when English is not the best language to use as we only have one word for love. Therefore, let us borrow a Greek word; '*filios*' meaning 'brotherly love' to avoid over-interpretation. David and Jonathan loved each other [as brothers]. We know that Saul was developing an obsessive fear of David, or rather David's popularity [18:8ff], but we are not told, at this stage, whether Jonathan was also under suspicion by the increasingly paranoid Saul [see chpt. 19].

The story develops in Chapter 20 where Jonathan makes an active choice to support David by lying to his father Saul. This is a 'Rubicon' moment, there is no going back for Jonathan. He has chosen David above his Paternal duty. It would also seem that Jonathan may not have been trusted by Saul quite as much as he believed [expected?], which would be in keeping with Saul's increasingly erratic behaviour.

Saul, chosen by God to be king of the Israelites – at their request. David, chosen by God also to be king of the Israelites. What can possibly go wrong?

Read 1 Samuel 18:1-4 & 20:1-17

There are many aspects in the story of David and Saul which sound very modern, a psychological thriller almost. Yet, the main characters are all, in different ways, victims. It can be a very lonely, dangerous place at the top when trust is scarce.

1. Jonathan and David's friendship is remarkable given the circumstances. What makes a great friendship? Why can it be hard to form relationships with other people? Is it helpful to see God as a friend? See John 15:12-15.

2. David and Jonathan's relationship is sometimes taken out of context and sexualised. Read Mark 12:28-34 where Jesus said: 'love your neighbour as yourself' but places it in a broader context than we usually hear it. How important is context when reading the Bible and is 'cherry picking' verses always a good thing? Discuss.
3. Jonathan and David '*became one in spirit*'. I read that as being significant as an expression of their relationship. Have you ever been '*one in spirit*' with anyone? What made it different from any other relationship?
4. Jonathan made a decision, albeit reluctantly I feel, to support David against Saul, his father. How does that fit in with: 'Honour your Father and your Mother etc.' [Ex. 20:12]. Compare with Eph.6:1-4. Are they both right? Did Jonathan do the right thing or was he too a victim?
5. David and Jonathan break another of the 'Laws of Moses', [9th]; 'Do not bear false witness'. In New Testament times Jews believed that if ALL Jews could obey ALL the Law of Moses for one day, the Messiah would come. Even today Jews revere David as their greatest king. Can you argue that David and Jonathan's behaviour is justified in relation to Exodus 20?
6. Verse 20:13 [end] says; '*May the LORD be with you as He has been with my father.*' Life gets complicated sometimes and loyalties can become split. How do you respond to Jesus' words in Luke 12:49-53? Why does the gospel test our loyalty to others?
7. Trust is delicate, it takes a long time to build up, but a moment to empty. Ask the question, in light of this episode of David's life: 'Who is it that I trust?'

Prayer Points

Please continue to pray for those who are taking their exams.

Pray for all who work in the NHS, the support staff and admin teams that provide the country with good health care.

Sermon Notes

The Meaning of Friendship

The Power of Friendship



BIBLE STUDY

May 28th 2023

The Life of David: A Deep Friendship. 1 Samuel 18:1-4 & 20:1-17

David is an extraordinary person in the Bible. He was a skilled musician, he was a formidable warrior who won a legendary battle against a great champion, he attracted the greatest soldiers of his day to serve under him. He was a poet, writing Psalms that expressed the deep longing of the human heart for God. His words were so personal and powerful that thousands of years later, they remain. As much as all the things listed earlier are impressive to other human beings, God was far more interested in David's heart. A close study of the life of David will open our eyes to both how much God cares about the condition of our hearts and the foreshadow of Jesus who truly redeems our hearts. The world spends a lot of time pressing us to focus on exterior issues but God looks on the inside.

If you would like to join a Connect Group, please contact the church office 01424 730001