

Series: David: Man of Passion and Destiny

Sermon: David 3 “A Fast Friend”

Scripture: 1 Samuel 18:1-5, 1 Samuel 19:1-7, 1 Samuel 20:1-42

Psalm: Psalm 37:1-6

Text: 1 Samuel 23:16 Saul’s son Jonathan came to David at Horesh and encouraged him with God.

Blurb: David had a fast friend in Jonathan. When we read this part of David’s story, we see that it is Jonathan who is the one who acts in a godly way, especially in the times of David’s struggles. Who has God placed as strategic friends in your life? How have they carried you through hard times? This week we’ll see what godly friendship looks like, and learn how we can be such a friend!

Sources: *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny* by Charles R. Swindoll

Bible Study notes by Bruce Moyer at Red Rock Camp, 2011

PP#1: David: Man of Passion and Destiny. A Fast Friend

“Saul’s son Jonathan came to David at Horesh and encouraged him with God.” -1 Samuel 23:16

David: Man of Passion and Destiny. A Fast Friend. 1 Samuel 23:16, “Saul’s son Jonathan came to David at Horesh and encouraged him with God.”

PP#2: *Pix of Oprah Winfrey and Gayle King, hugging or showing affection.*

I just spent a week with 100 teens on a mission trip. Over and over again, I saw girls, during free time, huddling over their cell phones, murmuring dramatically with one another at the same time as they texted frantically. A few times I broke into their passionate huddle. “Oh, my BFF just broke up with her boyfriend, I’m so sad! But she needed to. He was using her!” or “My BFF’s other BFF was saying to her guy friend how he just had to stop being friends with his other friend, because he was friends with this guy who was such a jerk to my BFF.” Oh my goodness! I had to be careful not to act too interested, because I just might be told the whole story. And I really just don’t care enough to hear even part of it.

So, here’s a question for anyone my age or older. What’s a BFF? [Best Friend Forever]

It’s normally used by teen girls to describe a very, very close friend. It’s supposed to mean a lasting friendship over time. But from what I could tell, the term really doesn’t mean “forever.” There were multiple BFFs made and lost during the week.

Here’s Oprah Winfrey and Gayle King. They have been BFFs for 30 years.

How about you? Who have been your best and closest friends in your life? If you had to name your top friends throughout your life, who would they be? Write down three of them on the bulletin insert where there’s room for notes.

PP#3: “Prayed for you in worship this morning. Thanks for being such a great friend!”

As you write them down, think about what a blessing they’ve been to you, a gift! As you write them down, pray on your own a thank you to God for them in your life, and pause now and pray for God to bless them. Go ahead. [Pause.]

If you’ve got your phone, send a text like on this screen here to those you are still in contact with. [Pause.]

PP#4: Qualities of best friends:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

So, think about it. What makes a really great and close friend? What makes best friends *best*? Again, on your insert, write down three essential qualities of great friends. Wait, before you do that, turn to someone close to you and tell them a couple of qualities of best friends. Each of you share two qualities. Then, afterwards, write down your top three qualities. Go ahead. [Pause.]

OK, what are some of the qualities of best friends? [Name what is mentioned.] The New Oxford American Dictionary describes BFF qualities as intimacy, trust, and a sense of permanence.

The term BFF really isn't used among guys, I don't think. But in the Bible, there are some famous guy who are close friends. Anyone remember who is called Jesus' best friend? Which of the disciples? John! Yes, he's described as "the one whom Jesus loved." Paul's best friend? Barnabas, and Timothy. Job had three best friends, who sat with him in his misery for weeks. Elisha and Elijah, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Today we take a closer look at perhaps the most famous friendship in the Bible. David and...? [Jonathan.] Right! They were truly best friends for life!

It starts on the battle field when David killed the giant Goliath. David is no more than 15. He had been sent to King Saul to play for him on occasion, and no doubt Jonathan, Saul's son and heir to the throne, knew of David. He probably appreciated the help David's playing brought for his moody dad. I don't know how well they knew each other yet, or if anyone but David and Samuel knew that David had been anointed the next king after Saul, which, of course, awkwardly, would mean in stead of prince Jonathan!

PP#5: 1 Samuel 18 (CEB)

1 As soon as David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan's life became bound up with David's life, and Jonathan loved David as much as himself. 2 From that point forward, Saul kept David in his service and wouldn't allow him to return to his father's household. 3 And Jonathan and David made a covenant together because Jonathan loved David as much as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his armor, as well as his sword, his bow, and his belt. 5 David went out and was successful in every mission Saul sent him to do. So Saul placed him in charge of the soldiers, and this pleased all the troops as well as Saul's servants.

Well, Jonathan was almost certainly also there on the battlefield when David killed Goliath. The Bible doesn't describe their early relationship, but it does say that from that point forward, the two became fast friends.

Turn to 1 Samuel 18. How do you find 1 Samuel? It's a bit before the middle of the Bible. Chapter 17 is the story of David defeating Goliath. We pick it up in 18. Verse 1, "As soon as David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan's life became bound up with David's life [the literal translation is that they became soul mates], and Jonathan loved David as much as himself. From that point forward, Saul kept David in his service and wouldn't allow him to return to his father's household. And Jonathan and David made a covenant together because Jonathan loved David as much as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his armor, as well as his sword, his bow, and his belt. [Jonathan gave David his weapons, undoubtedly

the best that could be made.] David went out and was successful in every mission Saul sent him to do. So Saul placed him in charge of the soldiers, and this pleased all the troops as well as Saul's servants."

Saul takes David to come live in his household, to play music for him, and to also serve him in the army. He becomes a heroic soldier, and his skill and abilities continue to improve. He's in charge of men much older than he is...I wonder what his older brothers, who were in the army, felt about that?

Anyway, the people begin singing praises of David's accomplishments, and Saul gets jealous. In one of his moods, while David is playing for him, Saul suddenly throws a spear at David trying to kill him. He misses, but imagine David's surprise when it becomes more dangerous to play his lyre for his own king than it is to go out to battle his enemies!

PP6: 1 Samuel 18 (CEV)

9 "And Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on."

28 When Saul knew for certain that the Lord was with David and that his daughter Michal loved him, 29 then Saul was even more afraid of David. Saul was David's enemy for the rest of his life.

In another plot hoping to get David killed, Saul tells David that if he killed 100 Philistines, he could marry his daughter, Michal. To Saul's surprise, David safely killed 200! Verse 28, "When Saul knew for certain that the Lord was with David and that his daughter Michal loved him, then Saul was even more afraid of David. Saul was David's enemy for the rest of his life."

What another tragic verse describing Saul's life story "Saul was David's enemy for the rest of his life." The giant that David faced on the battlefield wasn't the real enemy David faced that day. It was his own king, Saul.

Saul had turned his back on God, and had given into his waffling heart. And Saul begins to realize that the Lord's hand, which he remembered so vividly in his life, was now blessing David. And Saul also began to get suspicious that it was David whom God intended to make the next king.

PP#7: Insights for growing spiritually:

1. Defeating your giants doesn't necessarily bring respite

A couple of side thoughts: David's great victory over the giant Goliath didn't bring peace and prosperity for David. Actually, it brought further trouble and testing. Think about that in your own lives. We want the giants defeated so life will become easier and more calm. But the Bible shows that actually, that's not reality. Often times, defeating our giants actually ushers in a time of trouble.

For David, it lasted 15 years! David defeated Goliath, continued in humble submission, obedience, and service to Saul as his king, serves in the military, is promoted and esteemed by his men, and continues to call for honoring the king. What did David do wrong?

PP#8: Insights for growing spiritually:

1. Defeating your giants doesn't necessarily bring respite
2. Sometimes our trials are because of someone else's mess

Nothing! Second learning point here. Sometimes we don't cause our own trouble. It just happens. In fact, it can happen, like it did for David, from your own allies: the pain of friendly fire!

And like David, it can happen because he did the right thing! He stepped out in faith and let God work in his life. He had saved Saul, but now Saul is angry! It's not fair! David's misery is caused by the mess in Saul's life.

We see David's character, as a man after God's own heart, in how he handled each of his giants. Goliath he attacked with a faith-filled frontal assault. With Saul, however, he takes a different strategy. He continued to respect the Lord's anointed king, in spite of his failings, and waited on God to take care of the enemy. Both approaches are godly; they require the same amount of faith, just different amounts of patience! And it requires prayerful discernment to tell the difference.

PP#9: Insights for growing spiritually:

1. Defeating your giants doesn't necessarily bring respite
2. Sometimes our trials are because of someone else's mess
3. God still uses them to grow us, including spiritually

During the following years of struggle—and we'll take a closer look at this next week—God toned, trained, and conditioned David to be the leader he would need to be. David was to be a great king, but he struggled to follow God consistently. He could face a giant in a moment of conviction, but he needed to learn to trust God over the long, drawn-out chapters of life. Do you know about that? I bet you do. And remember, there is no “*test-ament*” without “*test*.”

PP#10: Insights for growing spiritually:

1. Defeating your giants doesn't necessarily bring respite
2. Sometimes our trials are because of someone else's mess
3. God still uses them to grow us, including spiritually
4. God provides friends to carry us through hardships

Knowing what David was about to face, God provided a means of grace to help David through. God provided Prince Jonathan as David's new best friend. Remember in your life, the intimate friends God has given to you? What blessings!

Well, back to our main message today. As we look at David and Jonathan's friendship, we can see four biblical characteristics of true friendship.

PP#11: A Fast Friend - Biblical Characteristics

1. A willingness to sacrifice

The first we've already seen. It's sacrificing of yourself for the sake of the other. When David and Jonathan made their covenant of allegiance together, Jonathan gave David his full set of armor. This is something that only a prince could afford, and everyone would be able to tell it was Jonathan's. It was a great gift, and very public. We'll see as the story continues that this is a characteristic that the two of them continually share, both giving deeply, time and again, of themselves.

There are times friendships cost more than they are worth. But true friendship is based on a covenant of caring for the other, no matter the cost. Easy words to say, but harder to live out over time. Our culture says we ought to lose those people who are a burden on our lives. But biblical friendship doesn't evaluate the friendship based on what you get out of it. Besides, as we'll see, there are seasons that friendship can be a burden, but there are others seasons that make up for it all!

PP#12-13: 1 Samuel 19

1 Saul ordered his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David, but Jonathan, Saul's son, liked David very much. 2 So Jonathan warned David, "My father Saul is trying to kill you. Be on guard tomorrow morning. Stay somewhere safe and hide. 3 I'll go out and stand by my father in the field where you'll be. I'll talk to my father about you, and I'll tell you whatever I find out."

4 So Jonathan spoke highly about David to his father Saul, telling him, "The king shouldn't do anything wrong to his servant David, because he hasn't wronged you. In fact, his actions have helped you greatly. 5 He risked his own life when he killed that Philistine, and the Lord won a great victory for all Israel. You saw it and were happy about it. Why then would you do something wrong to an innocent person by killing David for no reason?"

6 Saul listened to Jonathan and then swore, "As surely as the Lord lives, David won't be executed." 7 So Jonathan summoned David and told him everything they had talked about. Then Jonathan brought David back to Saul, and David served Saul as he had previously.

The second biblical characteristic of friendship is being a loyal defense. Look at 1 Samuel 19. David's victories continue to grow, as does Saul's jealousy. Verse 1. "Saul ordered his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David, but Jonathan, Saul's son, liked David very much." Ouch! Dad commanding son to execute his best friend. Jonathan goes to bat for David. "So Jonathan warned David, 'My father Saul is trying to kill you. Be on guard tomorrow morning. Stay somewhere safe and hide. I'll go out and stand by my father in the field where you'll be. I'll talk to my father about you, and I'll tell you whatever I find out.' So Jonathan spoke highly about David to his father Saul [Jonathan advocated for David, spoke David up to his dad!], telling him, "The king shouldn't do anything wrong to his servant David, because he hasn't wronged you. In fact, his actions have helped you greatly. [Remember, David has proved his allegiance!] He risked his own life when he killed that Philistine, and the Lord won a great victory for all Israel. You saw it and were happy about it. Why then would you do something wrong to an innocent person by killing David for no reason?' Saul listened to Jonathan and then swore, 'As surely as the Lord lives, David won't be executed.' So Jonathan summoned David and told him everything they had talked about. Then Jonathan brought David back to Saul, and David served Saul as he had previously."

PP#14: A Fast Friend - Biblical Characteristics

1. A willingness to sacrifice
2. A loyal defense

Because Jonathan stood up boldly for David, David was vindicated, Saul's mind was changed, and David was restored...at least for the time being. Jonathan was a loyal defense for his friend to those who misjudged him, accused him falsely, and tried to hurt him.

How have your friends been a loyal defense to you? What was the risk for them? What did it cost them? How important to you was what they did it all for you?

Well, again David is victorious in battle against the Philistines, and again Saul begins to hate him, and a second time Saul throws his spear at David while David is playing for him. David dodged again...my guess is that he kept a wary eye on Saul...and fled. This time, Saul then goes after him.

PP15-17: 1 Samuel 20

1 David fled from the camps at Ramah. He came to Jonathan and asked, “What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father that he wants me dead?...But I promise you—on the Lord’s life and yours!—that I am this close to death!” ...

9 “Enough!” Jonathan replied. “If I can determine for certain that my father intends to harm you, of course I’ll tell you!” ...

13b May the Lord be with you as he once was with my father. 14 If I remain alive, be loyal to me. But if I die, 15 don’t ever stop being loyal to my household.... 17 So Jonathan again made a pledge to David because he loved David as much as himself. ...

33 At that, Saul threw his spear at Jonathan to strike him, and Jonathan realized that his father intended to kill David. 34 Jonathan got up from the table in a rage. He didn’t eat anything on the second day of the new moon because he was worried about David and because his father had humiliated him. 35 In the morning, Jonathan went out to the field for the meeting with David.... David came out from behind the mound and fell down, face on the ground, bowing low three times. The friends kissed each other, and cried with each other, but David cried hardest. 42 Then Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace because the two of us made a solemn pledge in the Lord’s name when we said, ‘The Lord is witness between us and between our descendants forever.’” Then David got up and left, but Jonathan went back to town.

Excerpts from chapter 20. “David fled from the camps at Ramah. He came to Jonathan and asked, “What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father that he wants me dead?...But I promise you—on the Lord’s life and yours!—that I am this close to death!” David is scared for his life! But Jonathan pledges to be faithful to his friend and not conspire with his father against David. Verse 9, Jonathan says, “If I can determine for certain that my father intends to harm you, of course I’ll tell you!” Then Jonathan prays a blessing on David. Verse 13, “May the Lord be with you as he once was with my father. [Then Jonathan realizes that his friendship with David may cost him his own life! He asks David for a promise. Verse 14, “If I remain alive, be loyal to me. But if I die, don’t ever stop being loyal to my household...So Jonathan again made a pledge to David because he loved David as much as himself.”

Well, it doesn’t go well between Jonathan and Saul, and Saul accuses his son of treason. Verse 33, “At that, Saul threw his spear at Jonathan to strike him, and Jonathan realized that his father intended to kill David. [Will someone please keep that spear away from the king!] Jonathan got up from the table in a rage. He didn’t eat anything on the second day of the new moon because he was worried about David and because his father had humiliated him. In the morning, Jonathan went out to the field for the meeting with David.... [Jonathan conveys the bad news. David has to flee.] David came out from behind the mound and fell down, face on the ground, bowing low three times. The friends kissed each other, and cried with each other, but David cried hardest. Then Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace because the two of us made a solemn pledge in the Lord’s name when we said, ‘The Lord is witness between us and between our descendants forever.’” Then David got up and left, but Jonathan went back to town.”

David is heartbroken having to leave Jonathan. This is the end of their ability to spend time together. David records that he broke down and cried the hardest.

PP#18: A Fast Friend - Biblical Characteristics

1. A willingness to sacrifice

2. A loyal defense
3. An accepting heart

When your heart is bruised, an intimate friend will let you weep: freely and transparently. Do you have that shoulder? Are you that shoulder? Sometimes your best friends can't make it better. They can't fix it. But they can hold you and cry with you. Sometimes that exactly what you need.

One more. David is on the run for years, with Saul continually hot on his heels. At one point, it got really bad for David. 1 Samuel 23.

PP#19: 1 Samuel 23 (CEB)

15 While David was at Horesh in the Ziph wilderness he learned that Saul was looking to kill him. 16 Saul's son Jonathan came to David at Horesh and encouraged him with God. 17 Jonathan said to him, "Don't be afraid! My father Saul's hand won't touch you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be your second in command. Even my father Saul knows this." 18 Then the two of them made a covenant before the Lord. David stayed at Horesh, but Jonathan went back home.

Verse 15, "While David was at Horesh in the Ziph wilderness he learned that Saul was looking to kill him. Saul's son Jonathan came to David at Horesh and encouraged him with God. Jonathan said to him, 'Don't be afraid! My father Saul's hand won't touch you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be your second in command. Even my father Saul knows this.' Then the two of them made a covenant before the Lord. David stayed at Horesh, but Jonathan went back home."

PP#20: A Fast Friend - Biblical Characteristics

1. A willingness to sacrifice
2. A loyal defense
3. An accepting heart
4. A consistent encouragement

Jonathan came out secretly to his old friend in hiding, and "encouraged him with God." Jonathan's faith lifted him, and he shared it with David, who was having a hard time seeing God or God's plan at the moment! Do you know what that's like? Jonathan said that he figured it out that God was going to make David the next king, in stead of him. And Jonathan was OK with that! He said he would be content being David's second in command. Wow! What a great friend...what sacrifice! They again reaffirmed their commitment to their deep friendship, and parted ways. This will be the last time they will see each other.

True friends share their faith together. During those times when you struggle to see God's hand at work, you need your good friend to proclaim to you that God's way will succeed. Your friends are a spiritual gift to you, given by God! And there are times you need to do the same back.

Think about the friends God has put in your life. Give God thanks for the gift they are!

One last thing. Think about those whom God has called you to be a friend to! Who needs a word of encouragement from you this week? Who needs to hear you say that God is good all the time, and that all the time, God is good, no matter what? Who is God calling you to be a fast friend to?

A willingness to sacrifice, a loyal defense, an accepting heart, a consistent encouragement. How can you be a Jonathan?

Amen.

Benediction:

Psalm 37:1-6

- 1 Don't get upset over evildoers;
don't be jealous of those who do wrong,
- 2 because they will fade fast, like grass;
they will wither like green vegetables.
- 3 Trust the Lord and do good;
live in the land, and farm faithfulness.
- 4 Enjoy the Lord,
and he will give what your heart asks.
- 5 Commit your way to the Lord!
Trust him! He will act
- 6 and will make your righteousness shine like the dawn,
your justice like high noon.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR JULY 23, 2016

Sermon: “A Fast Friend”

Scripture: 1 Samuel 18:1-5, 19:1-7, 20:1-42, 23:15-17

Opening prayer

Introductions: Share about one of the best friends in your life. Describe his or her best qualities.

Background: Skim 1 Samuel 17. Share what you remember about David’s childhood.

Read 1 Samuel 18:1-9

1. God blessed David with a great friend just as he entered into a very difficult time in his life. Have you noticed God bringing people into your life just when you needed them? What impact did they have?

2. Share a meaningful gift that a best friend gave you.

3. What are parts of the covenant (formal or unspoken) that you share with your longest friendships?

4. Jonathan’s response to David’s success was quite different than from his father’s. Compare Jonathan’s supportive reaction with Saul’s suspicion reaction. What does this contrast teach us?

Read 1 Samuel 19:1-7

5. Saul turned on David and wanted him dead. In what ways have you experienced the pain of “friendly fire” (hurts coming from those supposedly on your side)? What did you do about them?

6. Describe a time when you had to stand up for a friend and advocate for him or her.

Skim 1 Samuel 20, each on your own.

7. What is one thing that stands out to you in this story?

8. In your opinion, what was the single most significant character quality that Jonathan displayed, and which his father lacked?

Read: 1 Samuel 23:15-17

9. What does it mean to encourage someone with God? Describe a time someone did it for you.

10. Application: What will you take away from these passages? How will you live it out?