

## **Sunday School Lesson for October 4, 2020**

Good morning, I hope you are well and feel blessed.

Lesson for October 4, 2020, "Love and Devotion to Others"

Background Scripture from 1 Samuel 19:1-7; 23:1-18, and 2 Samuel 9.

From the text section, Stepping into the World, families, churches, organizations, states and nations all struggle with various forms of conflict. People have conflicts within themselves. We have been called by God to be peacemakers. What should we do? In the Bible scripture text for today's lesson we find that Jonathan's action on behalf of his friend David was also an act on behalf of his father, Saul. He cared for both. He wanted neither to sin against the other, an important point for consideration as we seek to correct injustice and bring peace to warring factions.

The text scripture notes, state that Saul's animosity toward David was rooted in fear and jealousy. Public adoration of David after the confrontation with Goliath seems to have initiated it (1 Samuel 18:6-9). Jonathan's deference toward David would have fueled Saul's fears. Jonathan's removal of his robe and putting it on David is symbolic of transferring the monarchy from the house of Saul to the house of David.

God stripped the kingdom of Israel from Saul because he did not follow God's direct orders and sought to justify his decision with half-hearted obedience (1 Samuel 15). But God is never without a plan, so He raised and anointed David to succeed Saul as the next king of Israel (1 Samuel 16). David was the least likely among his brothers to be king. David had a heart for God, and because he was a shepherd, David spent many hours alone with His Creator in intimate fellowship. As a shepherd, he fought to protect his sheep, and God developed his skill as a warrior. David went from fighting animal predators tending his father's flock, to the battlefield as a man of war, fighting most notably the Philistines starting with their nine-foot champion Goliath (1 Samuel 17). As a reward for his brave fight in the name of the Lord, King Saul asked David to live in the palace, where he played the harp for him and served in his army (1 Samuel 18). Feelings of love and honor would soon shift as King Saul exhibited irrational behavior because of David's growing success in battle and fame.

David became famous throughout Israel for his skill as a warrior and was put in a high position in Saul's house. One of the greatest blessings from

David's service to Saul was the friendship he developed with his son Jonathan. The two young men became fast friends and to signify this covenant relationship, Jonathan gave David his royal robe as the son of the king, his military tunic, sword, bow and belt as a commander and leader in the king's army (1 Samuel 18:1-4). Because of his humility, the Spirit of the Lord was with David, and He compelled Jonathan and Saul to acknowledge God's power in him. King Saul also grew jealous and more fearful of David's fame. A tormenting spirit drove the king to make multiple attempts on David's life (1 Samuel 18:6-11, 21-25).

King Saul ordered his son Jonathan and all of his servants to kill David. Jonathan recognized his father's erratic behavior. Rather than follow through with his father's plot, Jonathan warned David. He met with David secretly and because of their covenant friendship, he vowed to speak to his father on his behalf. Jonathan knew David was honorable and hoped he could respectfully disagree with his father and bring peace to Saul's soul.

Jonathan met with his father Saul, and as he said he would. He spoke well of David, pleading for his safety. He pointed out that David had in no way wronged the king and that his actions had been nothing but honorable. Jonathan went on to remind the king of all the good David had done for him, and the nation, by risking his life to defeat Goliath. Through David, the Lord had blessed Israel. He reminded his father how he too rejoiced as David triumphed. Jonathan could not understand why his father was so enraged to shed innocent blood for no valid reason. The prince hoped that his bond with his father would be enough to convince him to rethink his actions. Jonathan, for a few moments, was successful in reaching his father, and Saul listened to his advice. The king swore to his son before the Lord that he would not have David killed. However, Saul's promise would be short lived and broken.

This lesson can be applied to our society. No matter the relationship, as Christians, we must not be silent when someone is wrong, because it affects the whole. We can disagree respectfully, and if the parties are in Christ, there should be avenues to gain quick and peaceful resolution. Paul admonishes the church at Corinth in matters of dispute to forgive and comfort those who have offended as well as to reaffirm love, in this way the devil is not allowed a foothold to cause further damage in relationships or to the whole (2 Corinthians 2:5-11). Those in leadership in the home, church, work, and community should serve as models for reconciling behavior to support the well-being of others.

We can learn from this lesson that when God had decided that David would be the next king of Israel, He sent Samuel to anoint David. When Samuel

anointed David, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him (1 Samuel 16:13). In contrast, the Lord sent a tormenting spirit to fill King Saul with depression and fear. David was brought into Saul's presence as a harp player to help calm Saul of his tormenting spirit. Saul liked David, so much that he became a member of his staff. Armed with only a slingshot, David gained much providence when he killed their enemy, a giant named Goliath. Saul was impressed favorably with David and he made him a commander in his army (1 Samuel 18:5).

Saul's opinion of David changed dramatically when he started viewing David as a competitor for the admiration and adoration of the people. In particular, he became very angry when the women sang this song as the victorious Israelite army returned: "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousand!" (1 Samuel 18:7).

Saul now viewed David as a competitor for his position as king. This incident made Saul very jealous of David and one day he tried to kill him with a spear. In the meantime, David and Jonathan, Saul's son, had become very close friends: "And Jonathan made a special vow to be David's friend, and he sealed the pact by giving him his robe, tunic, sword, bow, and belt." (1 Samuel 18:3-4). Even though David's presence on the battlefield had brought glory and victory to the army of Israel, Saul, the king of Israel, was jealous and fearful. He wanted David killed (1 Samuel 19:1-2).

This is similar to the jealousy that Joseph's brothers had toward him (that we studied last month). Some of the brothers had such a jealous rage that they wanted to kill him (Genesis 37:18). But Reuben talked them out of killing Joseph (Genesis 37:21).

In the case of David, it was Jonathan, the son of King Saul, who talked the king out of killing David by pointing to many good things David had done while he had done nothing to harm Saul (1 Samuel 19:4). This appeased Saul and he relented in his effort to have David killed, temporarily.

Because of his good friend Jonathan, David was then out of danger (1 Samuel 19:6). Unfortunately, we will find that, the tormenting spirit will come upon Saul again and he will renew his efforts to kill David (1 Samuel 19:9).

This lesson can be applied to us. It shows the advantages of having good friends who will stand up for us when others are bent on causing problems for us like spreading disparaging gossip. Another way, the way we live will affect the opinion our friends have for us. We play roles on both sides; the side where we need a friend to speak up for us, and the side when we will

Speak up for a friend. What kind of friend does the Lord want us to be? He told us in, Mark 12:31, "Love your neighbor as yourself". "There is no commandment greater than these."

A good friend is one that will be there for you in a time of need. That friend is ready to offer good and godly advice but will also stand ready to do something helpful for you. This also describes how we should be towards our friends.

Most kings in David's time tried to wipe out the families rivals in order to prevent descendants from seeking the throne. But David showed kindness to Mephibosheth, whose father was Jonathan and whose grandfather was King Saul. David was kind, partly because of his loyalty to God's previously anointed king, partly for political reasons, to unite Judah and Israel and mainly because of his vow to show kindness to all of Johnathan's descendants. His treatment of Mephibosheth shows David's integrity as a leader who accepted his obligation to show love and mercy. His generous provision for Johnathan's love goes beyond any political benefit he might have received. Each time we show compassion our character is strengthened.

**Closing: For the love that casts out fear, the faith that sustains and the hope that never perishes, be with us now and forever more. Amen. God watch over us and take care of us.**

Next week's lesson October 11 2020, "Love Your Enemies"

Background Scripture from Luke 6:27-36.

*Sources for this lesson: The Bible, International Sunday School Lesson and Commentary, Lessons from Bible in Life, Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible, and The Present Word Adult Bible Lessons.*