

THE Rock COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Samuel 18:1-16

“Be a Jonathan”

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17:18

Good morning church. It's been a while since I've been here. Well, I've been at church, but not up here. And it's a pleasure to be here. So if you would turn to First Samuel as we continue our trek through this very interesting and historical book. Now the last time, or actually the last two weeks, we've been dealing with the story of David and Goliath.

17:43

And what a wonderful story and a great illustration of what Jesus Christ, the son of David, the greater than David, did for us when he single-handedly destroyed the enemy. Not Goliath, but the devil who would try to dominate and destroy us.

18:05

There were many parallels that we saw in David and Goliath that pictures Jesus Christ in his victory over the enemy, and how we enjoy the victory like the people of Israel. And they enjoyed the victory that David accomplished.

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You see, we don't fight for victory, we fight from victory. Now we left off in chapter 17. So let's go back, turn in your Bibles right to the end of chapter 17, and let's set the scene before we jump into chapter 18.

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So in chapter 17, we finished up with David killing Goliath. Verse 56, and the king said, Inquire whose son the boy is, and as soon as David returned from striking down the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

19:12

So picture this, David is standing there with the head of Goliath, which is a huge head. I mean, what a scene. I don't know how far it was from the battlefield to the palace or wherever King Saul was, but David is still hanging on to this head like a trophy.

19:34

He's not letting go. Can you imagine that? So Saul says, who are you? And David says in verse 58 of 17, I am the son of your servant. I'm Jesse's kid. So let's read our text for this morning, verses 1 through 16 of chapter 18.

20:01

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house.

20:17

Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as his own soul and Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David and his armor and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

20:34

And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him so that Saul sent him over the men of war and this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. And as they were coming home when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel singing, dancing to meet Saul with tambourines, songs of joy and musical instruments and the women sang to one another as they celebrated.

21:07

Saul has struck down his thousands and David is ten thousands and Saul was very angry and this saying displeased him. He said they have ascribed to David ten thousand and to me they have ascribed thousands and what more can he have but the kingdom and Saul eyed David from that day on.

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The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre as he did day by day. Saul had a spear in his hand and Saul hurled the spear for he thought I will pin David to the wall but David evaded him twice.

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Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him but he had departed from Saul. So Saul removed him from the presence and made him a commander of a thousand and he went out and came in before the people and David had success in all his undertakings.

22:13

For the Lord was with him and when Saul saw that he had great success he stood in fearful awe of him because all Israel and Judah loved David for he went out and came in before them. Would you pray with me? Father we thank you for your precious word. We thank you for your word Lord that gives us light to our path and directs us. Lord I just

pray this morning that you would help us to focus in on your word Lord and let there be no distractions father. As you speak to our hearts, Lord, we pray you we would receive your word and teach us Lord how to be faithful in doing your word. We thank you for this story, Lord, that teaches us who should be in control of our lives. We thank you in Jesus name. So before we jump in I'd like to piggyback on what Mike was showing us last week about reading and studying the Old Testament.

23:20

The Old Testament and the New Testament is about Jesus Christ. Now Paul gives us some examples of that. Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction that through endurance and hope and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

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So what was written before the New Testament, right? It was the Old Testament. It was written that we might have hope. And for us, what is that blessed hope? Well, Paul tells us in Titus that it's the return of Jesus Christ.

24:05

In Psalms 40, Jesus said the volume of the book is about me, is written of me. And in Colossians 2, Paul is explaining and teaching about all the sacrifices, the rituals, ceremonies, and he says those are just a shadow of things to come, but the substance, the reality is Jesus Christ.

24:38

So I think you will see some of this unfold in our passage today. Verse 1, as soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

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And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. So now David leaves the shepherd's fields and is moving into the palace. Says Jonathan loved David as his own soul. Is this the kind of kind of relationship that everybody in this congregation should have with each other?

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Well that's the goal because Jesus in defining the Ten Commandments said, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all your mind and strength, and your neighbor as what?

25:37

Yourself. So now David is the number one draft pick for Saul's team. Saul saw this new greatness in this young man, so David took him and he would not let him return to his father's house. From then on he says, you are with me.

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So Jonathan, verse 3, and David made a covenant. Now literally in the Hebrew that word karat is a cut covenant. And the idea there is in the Old Testament days when people were making an agreement and they were serious about it, they would take a bull or a heifer and split the animal in two, and the two parties that were making the agreement would read the agreement as they walked between the animal.

26:32

And they would pronounce the agreements. So the idea was that they were serious about this. We are deadly serious as they were walking between the animal. And if one of us fails to keep our end of the bargain, they were dead meat.

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That's the idea. We're deadly serious about this. This is not a lightweight deal. And for more detail on that, if you read Genesis chapter 15, you will see that played out when God makes a covenant with Abraham known as the Abrahamic Covenant.

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Verse 4, and Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David and his armor, even his sword and his bow and his belt. You see, Jonathan was the son of Saul. He was Prince Jonathan.

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He was heir to the throne and Jonathan was next in line. He was to be the king, but he takes his royal robe off. He gives it to David, and his garments, that day. Even his sword and his weapons that were strapped to himself.

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And he too gave everything to David. It all goes to David. So that's interesting to me, but we see here, Jonathan is doing something that ought to happen in our lives. When the person really realized what the son of David, the greater David did for them.

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Like Jonathan realized what David did for him, and not only for him, but the whole nation in defeating Goliath the enemy. Now, Jonathan looks at David and he could have been jealous. He could have been in competition with David.

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David won this great victory and now all the people are looking at him instead of me. Jonathan could have said, hey, I'm next in line. David comes on the scene, but that's not what Jonathan does. Jonathan realizes David, you are the one.

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I might be Prince Jonathan, but you are to be King David. The robe that I wear, he says, my royalty, my humility, my weapons, everything, it's yours. Now I'm vulnerable. I have no more weapons. I don't have the royal robe.

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And it says here that Jonathan stripped himself. He gave away his regality, his humility. He made himself completely vulnerable. He became open before David and Jonathan dethroned himself. He was stepping away from being king, a radical thing that he was doing.

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So let's see what kind of a covenant this was. Later on in our story in chapter 20 of First Samuel verses 14 through 16 we read, if I'm still alive, show me the steadfast love of the Lord that I may not die.

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And do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth. And Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David saying may the Lord take vengeance on David's enemies.

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In other words, we have a covenant here that transcends death. Now Jonathan had a son that was five years old when Jonathan was killed. And his son, Mephibosheth, he was a cripple. Years later, David seeks to keep his covenant after Jonathan's death and he seeks out Jonathan's only child.

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It's a wonderful story. It's in Second Samuel chapter 9. So he invites Mephibosheth to the palace, this disabled man, and he treats him as his own son. He adopts him basically. And he has him sit with the royal family at the king's table.

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He gave him the land that had previously belonged to his grandfather, Saul. Then he instructed Saul's former servants to work the land for his benefit. Jonathan's kindness, or David's kindness to Jonathan's son was motivated by nothing more than grace.

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Gracious love. Nothing more than covenant faithfulness. And this is a beautiful analogy of God's unmerited love for sinner. That painting that is on the wall on the screen, I forget the, it's a famous painting, but I forget the painter's name, but the name of that painting is called Amazing Grace.

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So, let me give you a few thoughts with regard to Mephibosheth and see if this sounds familiar. David took all the initiative. David sought him out. He welcomed him to the palace, even though he was the grandson of David's greatest enemy.

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And he could do nothing to repay David. He couldn't offer him, as a cripple, any useful service. Nevertheless, David brought him into his family, invited him to his table, and gave him an inheritance of land that he was not legally entitled.

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And in grateful response, he became a lifelong loyal servant to David. He transformed Mephibosheth life. What a picture of amazing grace. This is a picture of God's love for sinners. This is the gospel.

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Tucked away 2,600 years ago in this little book of Samuel. Now, Saul, as we're going to see in a moment, has the opposite reaction. He is determined, Saul is determined to stay in control and on the throne.

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And it's going to cause him all kinds of problems. Saul goes down in infamy, but Jonathan, he is exalted eternally. So, the issue is a simple one. When you talk to people at work, or when you talk to people on campus, or in the neighborhood, it's always the same issue.

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It's not, well, where did Cain get his wife? Or did Adam have a belly button? Or could God make a rock so big he can't lift it? The questions people raise are usually just smoke screens. It's none of those things.

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It's always one issue when you're talking to people and that is are you willing to get off the throne? Are you willing to give up control of your life to the God that loves you so much that he became the Good Shepherd and gave his life for you?

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And in doing that, he defeated the enemy who would destroy us eternally. So will we get off the throne and let God have control of our life? That is always the issue. And evolution, the fundamental issue in evolution, there is no God because if there is, then I have a responsibility

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to the Creator, and I don't like that. I want to be a party animal, so I'll say I evolved from the animals, right? Or I'm kind of a slime ball, so I'll say I evolved from slime and ooze. But it's always the same issue.

35:31

Who's going to be on the throne? And it's not just when you become a Christian, but it's for us also that walk with the Lord and know the Lord. It's a day-by-day choice and decision. Who's going to be on the throne?

35:49

Am I going to say my abilities, my weapons, everything I have I lay at your feet? Jesus in Luke chapter 9, if you remember our study in chapter 9, he explains this as there were a lot of people following him and he was giving them the conditions for becoming a disciple.

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Luke 9 :23, he was saying to them, if anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me. Coming after Jesus involves self-denial, and Jonathan is a perfect example of dying to self.

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He understood the gospel according to Jesus Christ. So how does this happen? Well, remembering what the Lord did for us, the victory that he won for you and me. And one of the benefits that makes this, of the communion ceremony is so important.

37:07

At that time we have the opportunity to remember that it was you Lord that defeated the enemy. You were broken, you're the one that bled. He gave it all for us and now we bow our knee as we take this cup. I'm here to say have it your way I remember what you did I remember that you're the victor and you won the war. The first communion service Jesus

said Luke 22 he said this is my body which is given for you do this in remembrance of me and likewise the cup after they had eaten saying this cup is poured out for you is the new covenant my blood. We cut covenant, this is the blood of the new covenant. Jesus would say I'm deadly serious in my love for us. I was nailed to the tree,

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he would say. A spear was thrust through me. I made a covenant. Will you meet me? And this covenant that Jonathan made with David can be experienced by you and me when we realize, like Jonathan, we need to get off the throne.

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The Lord would say, let go. Give me your robe, your weapons. Knit your soul with mine and you'll find fulfillment like you never have known. This man, Jonathan, he's a man of great character. This is a great example for us.

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Now verse 5. And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

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So now David is in the royal court and he's doing what Saul commands. Very interesting here. It says David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him. More literally, he behaved wisely. It means to be prudent, to act wisely, to comprehend, to have success.

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He didn't say, Saul, you don't have the right to tell me what to do. You're the guy that chickened out when Goliath was stomping up and down the valley. Where were you? How dare you tell me what to do?

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I'm the one that fought the giant. But David didn't do that. Why? Because he was a man after God's own heart. A couple weeks ago we saw the definition of a man with God's own heart. Acts 13:22. It's someone who is obedient to God's will, unlike Saul.

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David went out and behaved wisely wherever Saul sent him. He didn't say, Saul, you have no authority over me. I'm the anointed one. Samuel, when he anointed me, he poured a whole horn of oil onto me.

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You just got a little vial. I got a big anointing. You got a small one. That's not what David did. David realizes that God has a perfect plan and it was unfolding. He just, David just trusted the sovereign ability of God to work things out.

41:04

He said, okay, okay to the Lord, whatever you want me to do. He behaved wisely. And notice this, this was good in the sight of all the people in the sight of Saul's servants. They recognized that he was a man of humility, he was a faithful man, he had humility.

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He's with the people. Verse 6, as they were coming home when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel singing and dancing to meet King Saul with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments.

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The women sang to one another as they celebrated. Saul has struck down his thousands and David his ten thousands. Uh oh, watch out. Saul hears the first verse of that song, that's pretty good. And then verse 2 comes.

42:09

And it would enrage him, verse 8, and Saul was very angry and saying, this saying displeased him. And he said they've ascribed to David ten thousand, and to me they've ascribed thousands. What more can he have but the kingdom?

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Now the paranoia sets in. They're singing songs about him, pretty soon he's going to take over the whole kingdom. Whereas Jonathan dethroned himself, Saul is determined to defend his turf. But the women, it says here, were the ones that sang this song.

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Saul his thousands, David his ten thousands. Now sometimes women could be a problem. Remember back in, what happened back in the book of Exodus with Moses, chapter 15 of Exodus. The Red Sea parted, Pharaoh's army was drowned, and they got to the other side.

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Same thing happened. It said the women sang a song, and the song they were singing, it said, the Lord has triumphed gloriously the horse and the rider of Pharaoh's army he has thrown into the sea. See, the song wasn't about Moses, right?

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Well, look at what Moses did. What did Moses do? Well, he held up his staff, and he stood there with that fancy robe, and the wind was blowing through his long beard and his white hair. Pretty awesome.

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I think they ought to make a movie about him. No, an Exodus story, which was a far greater victory than what we're talking about here in Saul and David. You see the

women sang praises to the Lord, but something's happening here that's going to cause problems.

44:08

Here they're talking about who their favorite warrior is. They're talking about men, not the master. They're talking about servants, not the savior. The name of Saul is on their lips and even more, now David's name is being sung and this is gonna cause problems.

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It's the Lord, right, that ought to receive all the praise and honor, period. Proverbs 27 tells us, as the refining pot for silver and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise. Praise is like a hot furnace.

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It reveals what a person is really made of. The praise that made David humble only brought the dross up in Saul's heart and revealed his pride and his desire for glory. Verse 9, and Saul eyed David from that day on and the next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul and he raved within his house.

45:18

While David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day, Saul had a spear in his hand. So the evil spirit from God, evil demon spirit, that was allowed by God to function in this way came upon Saul. Sometimes God uses evil to chase evil.

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It says that he prophesied in the midst of the house, which shows you that John was right in First John 4 when he said, test the spirits to see whether they're from God. Test the spirits when prophecy is being spoken.

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We are continually evaluating what we hear, what we read, what we see to determine if it's really from God. Paul tells us in First Thessalonians 5, do not despise prophecies, but test everything, hold to that which is good.

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Just because a person prophesied in the Spirit previously like Saul did in chapter 10, now he's prophesying, but not by the Holy Spirit. He's being inspired by an evil spirit and he's talking and acting like a madman.

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That's why there is to be discernment. There is to be a testing and observing of what's being said, matching it up with what the word of God declares. Verse 11, and Saul hurled a spear at him for he thought, I will pin David to the wall, but David evaded him twice. So the day after they're singing praises, Saul is chucking spears.

47:19

Now, one thing I've discovered over the years is that God is faithful in keeping his people humble. He balanced, it seems like he balances things out. He gives us encouragement when we need encouragement, but also sometimes he allows the spear to come after us, right?

47:43

And it's important for us to realize that God sometimes allows this, a spear to come in my direction. Just, Lord, help me duck, like David. And Lord, you've allowed this to happen and maybe because the day before, a song was sung about me, so to speak.

48:07

Dangerous to start believing your own press releases. It's part of what it is when the Lord says, I want to encourage you, but he doesn't want us to become proud or self-confident. Verse 10 tells us that David was innocently playing his harp.

48:33

Now, I want you to notice the contrast here. David played with his hand and there was a javelin in Saul's hand. David's hand was an instrument of worship and Saul's hand was an instrument of war. David's hand was an instrument of healing.

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The harp was being played to soothe Saul's troubled soul. And in Saul's hand, there was an instrument of hurting. So the question for you, for me today, is what's in our hand? What's in your hand?

49:17

Is it worship? Is it war? Is it hurting or healing? Because that will really determine who we are in the roles of our ministry, our family life, whatever it might be. So both these guys are leaders, Saul and David.

49:35

And they've both been anointed and they both have a calling. But one is on his way down fast. And the other one is on his way up, David. And you can always tell if you're on the way up or if you're on the way down by what's in your hand.

49:54

If you're on the way down, you're throwing spears. You drive home from that meeting, from that place, that dinner, As you talk to your wife, are you throwing spears at the people you just left? At work, talking to someone by the water cooler.

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Are you throwing spears at the boss? That means you're on the way down. A person that's losing their anointing, failing in ministry, is throwing spears. Now David was younger and stronger than Saul.

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He could have easily grabbed that spear and thrown it right back at him. David was more popular than Saul at this point, and from here on, he had greater popularity. His name was on the lips of the ladies that were singing, and the men in the army were now following David.

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David could have easily said, Oh yeah, you old demonized guy, boom, take that. But David never threw the spear back. In fact, he just came back continually to play the harp in Saul's presence. He continually did what Saul requested him to do.

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So question, have you thrown a spear today? Have I said to my wife, shh, yeah, but I have a point. This needs to be said, does it? To the extent that I do that is the degree that I'm on my way down.

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Now David had a true anointing, incredible. He knew that God was his defender. David never tried to defend himself. Psalms 35, David wrote this, the first three verses of Psalm 35. David says, contend, O Lord, with those who contend with me.

51:56

Fight against those who fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler and rise for my help. Draw the spear and the javelin against my pursuers. Say to my soul I am your salvation. Let them be put to shame who dishonor and seek after my life. See David let the Lord defend him. Later on in our story we're gonna see that Saul goes into a cave. What he doesn't know in the back of that cave is David and his boys. So Saul falls asleep and David's men said David lop off his head here's your opportunity to get ahead, literally. He would not touch Saul. He's good, the instrument of God to prepare me and make me the man I'm supposed to be. I wonder if we truly looked at people, difficult people, problem people and challenging situations as just being the instruments of God.

53:10

Those people we want to get away from. They might be there in our lives for God's purpose. And I know everyone in here has had that experience. If I could get just transferred to a different department, if I could just get, maybe it's even a spouse.

53:31

If I could just get rid of them, my life would be wonderful. But maybe these people and these situations that are troubling you, God has there for your benefit. Like Romans 8 tells us. So honestly, what's in your hand today?

53:49

What's in my hand? A weapon of war or a weapon of worship? Verse 12. But he came back and Saul was afraid of David. How do I deal with a guy like this? The Lord is with him and the Lord is departed from me.

54:10

Verse 13. So Saul took David and removed him from the court and made him a captain of a thousand soldiers. Why? He was setting him up to die in battle. I'm going to send this kid out to war and maybe he'll die.

54:28

But it says David went out and came in before the people. Saul would say oh no, he's back. Another victory to his credit. Verse 14. David had success in all his undertakings. For the Lord was with him.

54:46

And when Saul saw that he behaved wisely, himself very wisely, he stood in fear and awe of him. He was more afraid of David because he knew David was doing the right thing. Verse 16. But all Israel and Judah loved David for he went out

55:07

and came in before them. David was with them. He was among them. He was leading them in battle and they loved him. So today we have a choice. We could be on the way up or on the way down. We could live by the Spirit or we can live by the flesh.

55:28

Saul was jealous and it drove him literally crazy. Jonathan was free from jealousy because of one simple thing. He says, I'm going to help David accomplish his goal. I realize that this is the anointed one of God and God's hand is on him.

55:53

Even though that means I am not going to rise to the throne, I see that David is the anointed one. Jonathan says, I'm going to bow my knee, deny myself and give it all. Jonathan is free from jealousy and he goes down as a great man in history and is rewarded eternally.

56:22

So the choice is up to you and me, you and me. Do we wanna be a Saul or a Jonathan? What can we do? Well, on a practical level, that person that normally in my flesh, I would be in competition with, I would be jealous or envious of, I can pray for them.

56:43

I can help them to succeed, I can give to them and what'll happen, we'll go up. Now on a spiritual level, the issue is to say I need to get off the throne. And Lord have you rule my life. Deny myself, cut covenant with you again.

57:06

And Lord, I want you to be the king of my heart and rule my life completely and He will. Please pray with me. Lord, what a privilege it is to have the story, the story in so much detail about your faithfulness to your people.

57:28

Lord, we know that you're a God who keeps covenant forever and we know Lord, you will fulfill all your promises and we can rest in those promises that you gave us through your son. We are thankful Lord, that you are seen in scripture and you are presented as a faithful God.

57:53

Lord, may we be a people of Jonathan's, may we be selfless, humble, loving and grateful. Lord, we thank you again for your word in his glory. Your word shines every time that we open it. We're grateful for it in the name of Christ, amen.