

May 27, 2001

Friends
1 Samuel 23:14-18

Israel had been greatly distressed by the Philistines. Israel and the Philistines were aligned against each other in chapter 17. David volunteered to fight the Philistine giant, Goliath, and was successful. After his success, King Saul spoke with David. At that time, Saul's son, Jonathan, met David, and the *soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.* (18:1.)

As a result of David's great victory, Saul advanced him in the Israelite army, and David led many successful campaigns against Israel's enemies. Because of his success, Saul became very jealous of David, and Saul soon saw David as a threat to the kingdom.

Because of Saul's hardness of heart against God, God told Saul that the kingdom would be removed from him. But rather than repenting of his sin so the kingdom would stay in his family, Saul spent much of his reign trying to kill the one he saw was going to replace him and his family on the throne.

When Saul saw that his son, Jonathan, was David's friend and that Jonathan was determined to protect David, He tried to kill Jonathan.

By himself and all alone, David fled for his life from Saul. God gathered around David 600 men, yet rather than fight with Saul, he fled from hill to hill and from cave to cave, as Saul did everything in his power to kill David.

Here in chapter 23, Keilah, a small town in Judah, was being raided and plundered by the Philistines. David and his men delivered Keilah from the Philistine oppression. Saul was told that David was at Keilah, and he saw it as a chance to kill David. So he gathered the army together to go kill David.

David enquired of the Lord whether or not the men of the city would give him over to Saul, and the Lord told David that they would.

So David told his 600 man army to scatter, and it was every man for himself. And thus he escaped again from Saul. But though he escaped that day, Saul did not give up. V. 14, every day, Saul sought David with the intent of killing him. And God delivered David every day.

The passage reads as though David is alone here, but there were probably some choice men with him.

Notice some things here:

First, David is **being prepared** to lead Israel to the heights of her glory.

David could not learn utter dependence upon the Lord in the palace or with Saul's army around him, him being the captain. Saul saw David as a threat, so Saul ran him off.

Nor could David learn that dependence upon the Lord with 600 men around him, willing to protect him. So they were scattered, 23:13.

Nor could David learn that dependence inside the walled city of Keilah with the men committed to defend him. So they were going to deliver him to Saul.

We learn to trust God in the wilderness where we are **forced to trust the Lord** to protect us even while we sleep.

V. 14, notice that *The Lord delivered him not* into Saul's hands. Safety is of the Lord,

The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD. (Pro. 21:31.)

We grow in the wilderness where it seems we must run from one hiding place to another.

We form our habit of trusting the Lord in hard times, not in the good times. God builds us in the wilderness; God prepares us for His service in the wilderness.

Second, the friendship between David and Jonathan.

V. 16, during this time while David was fleeing for his life, Jonathan came to him.

NOTICE why Jonathan came to David.

It was not to discuss old times and how much they missed each other. Jonathan came to his friend David to **strengthen David's hand in the Lord**.

A) He hazarded his life to see David
His dad would have killed him if he had found him with David.

B) He encouraged David in the Lord.
A true friend will draw us closer to the Lord.

C) He reminded David of the promise of God
Encouraged David to claim those promises.

D) He exalted David above himself. He wanted God's will for his friend above his own welfare, at great personal expense.

He knew the promise of God, and that promise said that he would not be king but that his friend, David, would be king. He **willingly submitted** himself to God's will, even though he knew it would cost him the kingdom. David's friendship was more important to him than the kingdom.

E) He and David renewed their commitment and love for each other and for the Lord.

This is true friendship. It will override even family ties and personal desires in a godly manner. It **revolves around encouraging** each other in the Lord, not around drinking or other worldly pursuits

But there is always someone around to drag us down rather than build us up in the faith. There is always someone around to do just the opposite of what Jonathan did for David – weaken our walk with the Lord.

Notice Solomon's warning:

Proverbs 1:10 My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. 11 *If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: 12 Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: 13 We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: 14 Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: 15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: 16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood. 17 Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. 18 And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives. 19 So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.*

I must admit that in a social climate where everyone is doing it, it is difficult to teach our children that it is wrong for them to follow after the crowd.

It does not take a new Christian long to learn that those who reject the Lord will reject you if you are right with God. We must choose our friends based upon their needs and their desires for God's help through you. No matter how needy they may be, if they do not desire to be more for the Lord, **STAY AWAY FROM THEM**.

There are at least two kinds of friends:

First, there is just a casual acquaintances. These are folks maybe on the job; these are folks we say HI to every

day, and we might even sit at the same table with them at the restaurant.

Second, there are real friends. These are folks we might have into our home to watch a special show on TV, or spend an evening with at a special place. These are people we feel we can confide in.

These **real friends** are willing to pray with each other and encourage one another in the Lord; they draw one another closer to the Lord.

These are people like Jonathan was to David. They come to us in the time of stress, and encourage us in the Lord when it seems like everyone else had turned from us.

Then there are people who draw us away from the Lord.

What kind of friend are we? What kind of friends do we have?