

I want you to think of someone you know who always seems to be blessed. Maybe it is a family member. Maybe it is a friend. Maybe it is a neighbor or maybe it is somebody you don't like at all.

Somebody who everything always seems to work out for.

No matter what they do it goes well.

It doesn't seem like they have to work as hard.

Opportunities just seem to fall in their lap.

Everybody seems to always like them.

And even when they mess things up it works out anyway.

They are just blessed.

And often they are blessed in ways that we aren't.

How do you feel when you see that?

And how do you react when other people seem to be blessed with what God is denying you?

That is the question our text in 1 Samuel 18 is asking this morning.

Because God is blessing David.

But not everyone reacts the right way.

I. We should bless those God has blessed (v. 1-5).

This is how we should react.

When we see God blessing someone else.

Even if it's a blessing that we wish that we would've had.

Even if we wish it's an anointing or a gift that we would've received.

The right way to respond.

The Christian way to respond.

The response that honors God the most.

This is the response that's most like Jesus.

And it is hard.

It is not fun.

It is not our natural response.

But in Jesus, it should be.

And as we see our story, this is how Jonathan responds.

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."**

There's a whole lot going on here.

I want us to see that this is Jonathan's response to being introduced to David.

He has seen David kill Goliath.

He has seen that God is with David.

He knows that his father has been rejected by God.

He knows that God has said he will not be king.

Someone has been sent to replace not just Saul but Jonathan.

This would have been someone he is looking out for.

It would have been impossible not to.

Any one of us in Jonathan or Saul's shoes would have constantly wondered who the person is going to be.

And you would normally be threatened by them.

Everyone who started to advance even a little bit is someone who is taking the blessing God was going to give you.

The king will be someone whom God is with.

Someone who God blesses.

Someone who delivers the people of God from their enemies.

And here the person is.

Someone who is now doing what Jonathan used to.

Someone who is going to replace him.

This is one he has been looking for.

This is the person he should hate.

This is the person he should be jealous of.

And instead his heart is knit to David.

His heart is drawn to him.

This is not something that just happens.

This is not something that just attacks him and overwhelms him.

This is a choice.
It is not something that just happens to him.
And this is the result of faith.

Jonathan chooses love.
He does not choose to resist.
He does not choose jealousy.
He chooses love.
Another way you might describe what Jonathan does.
Is that he loves David as he loves himself.
He lives out and models exactly what Jesus calls us to.

Verse 2, **"And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house."**

Already we see a difference in the way Saul and Jonathan respond.
We will unpack Saul's response more next.
But what happens here is that David now can't go back and forth with the sheep.
Now he needs to stay with the king.
He is too valuable to let go.

Verse 3, **"Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul."**

Jonathan again takes another step.
He is making a promise to David.
This is not just a pinky promise.
This is not a teenager pinky promising to be best friends forever.
He is making a biblical and serious covenant to support David.

Verse 4, **"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."**

And as a part of that covenant, he takes the steps.
What we need to see here is that this is a serious moment.

It is a ritual.

Jonathan is sacrificing of himself.

He is sacrificing his own advancement.

He is sacrificing his future.

He is sacrificing his royal standing.

He is giving of himself to elevate someone else.

And he does this practically.

He takes off his royal robe that signifies he is the prince.

The robe that says he is the heir to the throne, and he gives it to David.

He takes off the armor of the son of the king.

The armor that he has worn into battle to defeat thousands of Philistines before.

He takes off the armor of the heir and gives it to David.

He takes off his royal sword.

The sword that once was one of the only swords in the entire country.

It is the sword worthy of a king, and it is only for the king.

And he gives it to David.

And he gives him his bow and his belt, and he puts all of this on someone else.

He is sacrificially giving himself.

Now there are some who who read this passage and they read too much into it.

They see that maybe there are some sexual undertones to what's happening here.

And so then they suppose there must be some kind of homosexual relationship or feelings.

The Bible doesn't even hint it any of that.

That's a total misunderstanding what this is.

And it's pretty normal for our culture that is hyper sexualized.

And our culture has a total inability to see men have deep friendships with each other.

Our culture has an inability for two men to love one another in the Lord.

Everything that Jonathan is doing is an active choice that he is making out of faith.

He is trusting in the Lord.

He sees that God is blessing David.

And I don't know if Jonathan knows for sure that David is going to the king or if he just really thinks it's possible.

If he does know it's going to be and he does this that that's incredible.

And if he doesn't know when he does it anyway that's even more incredible because that shows more of his faith.

He does not feel threatened or need to defend himself or his own place.

He is happy to give it away.

We should love others in this kind of way.

We should love people in a way that the world cannot fathom and cannot understand.

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."**

So God continues to bless David and everything he does.

Like Joseph before him who God blessed and he kept moving up.

God is blessing, David and everything that he does.

So he gets put in charge of all of the army and more and more men.

And everybody sees it and everybody sees that God is with David and is happy about it.

But Jonathan is the standard.

This is how we are to act.

And how many of us do this?

How many of us could ever do this?

Yet, this is what he does.

He willingly sets his own advancement aside for someone else.

He does it without whining.

Without complaining.

We don't see him wrestling with the Lord or asking God to change his heart.

We just see him do it happily.

This would be like if somebody grew up in their dad's company.

And it was a family business.

And since they were a child, they had worked with their dad.

They had done all of the worst jobs and worked all their way up.

They had earned the respect of everyone in the company.

Because of how hard and how good they were at their work.

In fact, they did so well at their job that people could not wait for them to take over the business because they were even better than their father.

And then one day when the father was getting old, he decided to sell the company to a random kid who made much money on bitcoin or something.

That is kind of what happens to Jonathan at his response is to bless.

That is how we should respond in our lives.

When you see somebody conceive easily when you can't, it hurts, but we should bless.

When you see somebody get the promotion that you think should've went to you, we should bless.

When you see somebody be naturally gifted in the talent that you have tried so hard to get good at and you just can't, you should bless.

When you see somebody in here at a whole bunch of money that you don't think they deserve or haven't earned and you were struggling. You should just bless them and praise God.

How different would our lives be if this was our response?

If this was our natural response to seeing other people get what we want?

Now, what does all this have to do with Jesus?

Because this is good advice.

This is something we should do.

But if we look closely, we see that Jonathan shows us how Christ acts towards us.

Even though we do not deserve it like David.

Even though Jesus is the heir.

Jesus is the rightful king of kings and Lord of Lords.

Yet, he strips himself of everything.

He empties himself of the heavenly glory to become a man.

He gives up his sword and comes in meekness.

He gives up his throne and his glory and comes as a carpenter.

And He does this to save us.

Jesus makes a new covenant with His blood.

He gives up his very life to adopt us as His sons and daughters.

He gives up everything for you and for me.

Even though we do not deserve it.

Even though we have not earned it.

He does this for us, because He loves us like his own soul.

This story is a picture of the gospel.

II. We should not oppose those God has blessed (v. 6-17).

We see Saul has the exact opposite attitude as Christ.

Instead of blessing David, he opposes him.

And as we look at this closer.

I want you to examine your own heart.

Because if you were honest with yourself, I think you will find that you and I are way more like Saul than Jonathan.

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."**

This is happening right after.

Right after David has defeated Goliath, the giant who taunted their people for 40 days.

And the Philistines have been defeated.

With the army returns and they have a parade in a celebration.
And King Saul is riding ahead and coming out to meet him our thousands
of women to sing.
And so he would expect to hear their praise and their applause.
But it doesn't go how he expects.

Verse 7, **"And the women sang to one another as they celebrated,
"Saul has struck down his thousands and David his ten thousands."**

Hebrew poetry and music always has these contrasts.
So they are singing the greatness of Saul.
He is the one who has killed thousands of Philistine's.
He has killed thousands of the enemies of the people of God.

And also, David has killed even more.
I don't think this song is necessarily meant to be antagonistic.
It is the natural flow of Hebrew poetry.
I also think it is saying Saul is amazing and this David guy seems even
better.
It is meant to praise both men.

Verse 8, **"And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He
said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have
ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?"**

He is immediately angry.
He's counting.
If he was a musician, he would say they clapped a lot more for you than
they did for me.
He liked that he got praised, but somebody else got praised even more.
And it makes him angry.

And he recognizes if this is, what is he gonna get my kingdom?
To which the answer is yes.
Because this is the man God has chosen.
This is the day that you have long expected.

Verse 9, **"And Saul eyed David from that day on."**

It's so soul watches him closely.

It really has the meaning of his suspicion.

He is watching him very close.

And he, he's watching to see if this is the one God has chosen.

If this is the one who's better than him, God was going to give the kingdom to.

Saul and Jonathan both know this day is coming and it would be someone.

When Jonathan thinks this could be it, he responds by blessing and Saul responds by anger and suspicion.

We see Jonathan is drawn with love towards David.

Saul's anger will lead him to death.

Verse 10, **"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 his spear in his hand."**

The next day, God sends judgment on Saul.

He has rejected God and God is rejecting him.

And so Saul is raving through his house like a madman.

Someone who is losing his mind and it is a very dangerous mental state.

But again, we see David serving the king.

Praying for him as he does every day to try and help.

Verse 11, **"And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David evaded him twice."**

And so Saul tries to kill David.

He tries to stop God's blessing.

He opposes him.

The spear is not just a weapon. It is a symbol of Saul's kingship.

It is a symbol of Saul's authority.

Where Jonathan handed over his authority willingly.

Saul uses his to try and kill David.
And we see it happens twice.

We may have questions about that.
Maybe saw played it off the first time and then tried.
We may wonder why David didn't run faster.
But the point that the text wants us to see is not exactly how this went down to see Saul's heart.
This was not a moment of passion or emotion.
His continual attitude now is to kill David.
Jealousy leads to death.

Verse 12, **"Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul."**

This is again another chance, Saul has to repent.
And he again ignores it as he will over and over again.
He recognizes God is with and blesses David and not me.
And it does not lead him to love it, leads him to fear.
Because he is selfish, and he is only focused on his own standing.
He is only focused on his own blessing and his own experience of power.
And he is going to lose it.

The same thing happens to us we see God bless other people, and we can get afraid because we are looking at ourselves and not God.

Verse 13, **"So Saul removed him from his presence and made him a commander of a thousand. And he went out and came in before the people."**

So Saul casts him out.
He comes up with another plan to stop him.
He put him in charge of 1000 men in hopes that is if he sends him out into battle over and over eventually, someone will kill him.
He's pretending to elevate David, but he's really trying to stop him.
But it backfires

Verse 14, **"And David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him."**

God just continue to bless him.

Everything David does is going well.

He is successful in everything.

Listen, you can be as mad as you want to God is blessing other people.

You won't be able to stop it.

Saul is gonna experience that.

Verse 15, **"And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in fearful awe of him."**

So seize God's continuous blessing of David.

And He is still afraid.

He is amazed by it.

But this is not positive.

It is still not the right response to have.

The people respond the right way in verse 16, **"But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before them."**

The people love David.

They see what God does.

And they are moved with love.

They act like Jonathan.

And this just gives Saul more ideas.

He kicks into higher gear to oppose David.

Verse 17, **"Then Saul said to David, 'Here is my elder daughter Merab. I will give her to you for a wife. Only be valiant for me and fight the LORD's battles.' For Saul thought, 'Let not my hand be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him.'"**

Saul tries to manipulate David.

He wants the Philistines to kill David instead of him.

And Saul uses the name of God in vain.

He says he wants David to fight for God.
But he just wants him to keep fighting until he dies.

Verse 18, **"And David said to Saul, 'Who am I, and who are my relatives, my father's clan in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?'"**

David shows humility.

He recognizes that he is undeserving of this blessing.

And Saul doesn't keep his word anyway.

Verse 19, **"But at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite for a wife."**

This is not the last time that Saul will break promises.

He continues to lie and go back on his word.

Verse 20, **"Now Saul's daughter Michal loved David. And they told Saul and the thing pleased him."**

It only pleased him because he has another idea.

But again we see that everyone else is responding the right way but Saul.

His daughter grows in love for David.

Saul sinks further into his sin.

Verse 21, **"Saul thought, 'Let me give her to him, that she may be a snare for him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.' Therefore Saul said to David a second time, 'You shall now be my son-in-law.'"**

He tries the marriage scheme again.

Almost exactly the same thing.

Saul is very much an abuser who will continue to repeat this pattern.

Verse 22, **"And Saul commanded his servants, 'Speak to David in private and say, 'Behold, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you. Now then become the king's son-in-law.'"**

This time he has someone else pass on the message.

Verse 23, **"And Saul's servants spoke those words in the ears of David. And David said, "Does it seem to you a little thing to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man and have no reputation?"**

They do and David has the same response.

But David is also saying he cannot afford it.

In those days, the groom has to pay the father.

Partially to show he can afford to care for his daughter.

The king's daughter would command a high bride price.

And David is saying there is no way he could pay it.

Verse 24, **"And the servants of Saul told him, "Thus and so did David speak." ²⁵ Then Saul said, "Thus shall you say to David, 'The king desires no bride-price except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, that he may be avenged of the king's enemies.'" Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines."**

This is Saul's plan.

Instead of money, he can kill a hundred Philistines.

And he can bring back their foreskins.

This is gross.

It was actually common practice in the ancient world.

But the Bible doesn't show this as a good thing.

Saul is the tragic bad guy in our story.

But there also is some irony here.

Saul wants the sign that these men are not members of the covenant.

But Saul is actually uncircumcised in his heart.

And he is not behaving as a member of the covenant of God should.

Because here is the rightful king of the covenant people of God.

And he wants to kill him.

Verse 26, **"And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law. Before the time had expired, ²⁷ David arose and went, along with his men, and killed two hundred of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, which were given in**

full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter Michal for a wife."

David doesn't mind.

He wants to marry Michal.

Maybe David is starting to get ambitious himself.

I think there is a hint of that.

But he also knows what is up with Saul.

And he brings far more than is needed.

I think he wants to bring enough that he cannot be denied.

So he brings back 200 men.

Twice as many as he was supposed to.

And he gets to marry Michal.

Verse 28, **"But when Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, ²⁹ Saul was even more afraid of David. So Saul was David's enemy continually."**

Saul sees his plans fail for the fourth time.

Evidence after evidence that God is with this person.

That God is blessing him.

And he still opposes him.

He grows in fear.

And this person becomes his enemy.

Verse 30, **"Then the commanders of the Philistines came out to battle, and as often as they came out David had more success than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was highly esteemed."**

But it doesn't matter.

Because David continues to be blessed.

He continues to succeed.

And he has more success than anyone else.

And his name and fame only grow more and more.

Now it is a good thing we are not like Saul right?

We would never try to murder someone so many times.

And yet, Jesus tells us that if we hate someone in our hearts.
Then we have committed murder.
And all of us have people we hate.
Some of us hate whole groups of people.
And we especially hate when the people we hate are blessed.
Or when the people we hate succeed.
And we murder them over and over in our hearts.
We act like Saul.
Even if it is just inwardly.

Here is the other way we are like Saul.
Jesus is the rightful king.
Jesus should be the leader and ruler of our hearts.
If we call ourselves Christians, then we claim that Jesus is our Lord.
And yet every day we act like Saul instead of Jonathan.
We try to take the crown off of Jesus's head and put it back on ours.
We want to keep control over our lives.
We are constantly maneuvering and trying to stop what God wants.
And then we come and we apologize and we tell Jesus we're so sorry.
And then we do it again.
And then we do it again.
Listen, if you are not a follower of Jesus.
Your problem is not that you get jealous of other people. Your problem is that you are jealous of God.
And your problem is that you are opposing God instead of bowing down to him.

But the good news of the gospel.
The good news of Jesus is even though that's who we are he loves us anyway.
The wonder of Jesus is that even as we try to kill him, He dies for us.
And he forgives us.
Even as we are cursed, he takes the curse of sin from us.
He takes off our dirty rags and all of our sin.

And he puts them on himself.

And he clothes us in his righteousness.

The rightful king of the world came not to be served, but to serve.

And to give his life for the people who hated him.

And He blesses us.

If that is how he acts towards us.

Those who deserve nothing.

Then it should totally change how we act towards others.

Even if it seems like God is giving them something we don't think they deserve.