

Introduction: Be honest: I think everyone alive has this one experience in common. Most of us think we are reasonably happy people and get along fairly well with most people. But, there is one thing that happens often enough that angers us, and we over react to it. Or, there is one person who can be counted on every few months to do something to make us want to scream, and sometimes we do! *** One of my pet peeves is summed up in the title of Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.'s *Christianity Today* award winning book: *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be*, subtitle: *A Breviary (summary) of Sin*. It was required reading my first semester at seminary. I remember that in first grade we all wanted to be grown up because we thought they always did what was right and didn't make little kid mistakes. Then as I got older I saw an uncle wink at me as he lied, and another uncle played a reflex game with me that I always lost and he slapped my hands so they hurt. I got angry about this and when I told my mother about it she had to talk me out of my hurt and anger. And, adults behaving very badly still sets me off, even though I know I still do horrible things sometimes myself. When I was almost fifteen years old MLK was assassinated, and I went badly down a spiral staircase of hurt and frustration. In comparison, these examples might make me look good; but, my sister or childhood best friends, could tell some bad stories about what made me angry that I can't even remember. *** About thirty years ago, I began to understand how God fits into this flaw that I believe is in all people. God is ultimately in control of everything (Job 1-2, 38-42); and, He disciplines those He loves so they may live according to His instruction and become righteous peacemakers (Hebrews 12:7-13). So He will systematically work on our character flaws by bringing something into our lives to make us fail in the characteristic of our lives He wants to correct. If we respond poorly, He will give us some time to pray and seek to do better with His help; but, in His time, He will send a variation of the same event to try to correct the flaw in us that needs to be fixed. He will not stop doing this until we finally get it right and that flaw becomes a thing of our past. *** Our passage this morning in the life of David is primarily about Jonathan's rescue of his covenant friend's life from the deadly word of his father. It is also a variation of what happened in the previous chapter. In both situations, Jonathan and David act in the best interests of each other. Then David has success against the Philistines. This causes Saul to become unsettled. Then, while David is playing soothing music on the hand harp, an evil spirit comes on Saul and he tries to kill David. *** After today's event, Saul tried to kill David for another ten years. He never fully repented of his evil intentions towards David so as to receive forgiveness and relief from the covenant God, Yahweh. As a result, Saul was doomed to make the same mistake over and over again! *** We must let God use the wrong choices of Saul to motivate us to realize what God is trying to do in our lives through the thing that always makes us angry. Then we need to repent and turn to Him and confess so we receive forgiveness through Jesus and receive grace to break our cycle of disobedience. Then, we will be ready for the next flaw in us that God wants to fix.

I. Saul tells Jonathan to kill David, but Jonathan delights in David and he pleads to Saul who vows to let David live; then an evil spirit comes on Saul and he tries to kill David. (1 Samuel 19:1-10)

A. Saul orders Jonathan to kill David, but he delights in David so he warns David and advocates for David with his father; then, Saul vows to let David live. (*Verses 1-7*)

1. Then Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and all his servants to kill David; Jonathan was exceedingly delighted in David. (*Verse 1*)

Saul wants to kill: Saul now makes it explicit to all in his household, son and servants, what was implicit before (1 Samuel 18:17, 21, 29): he wants David killed!

Jonathan delights: But, one thing: Jonathan and David are bound together by a strong covenant friendship of mutual admiration (1 Samuel 18:1-4).

2. Then Jonathan told David: Saul, my father, (is) seeking to kill thee; and, now, thou must be on thy guard – please! In the morning, stay in a secret place and hide thyself. (*Verse 2*)

Hide: Jonathan knows his friend's life is in great danger, so he begs David to be cautious and hide himself the next morning. They have become brothers before God.

A spiritual brother rescues from death

3. I will indeed go out and stand at my father's (right) hand in the field in which thou (are) there; I will indeed speak concerning thee to my father; and what I have seen, I (will) tell to thee. (*Verse 3*)

Jonathan will see: Jonathan says that, after a good night's sleep, he will have a heart-to-heart talk with his father about David. He will pay attention to body language, and non-verbal communication, and give David a full account of his observations.

4. Then Jonathan spoke well of David to his father: The king will not sin against his servant David because he has not sinned against thee; and, because his deeds (are) exceedingly good to thee; and he put his life in his hand and slew the Philistine; then, Yahweh worked a great salvation; and, thou saw it and thou rejoiced: why will thou sin against innocent blood to kill David without cause? (*Verses 4-5*)

Not sin: Jonathan is challenging his father to find any sin in David. If David has not sinned against king Saul, then he must not sin against David.

Great deliverance: Not only is David not guilty before Saul, he was used by Israel's God, Yahweh, to bring about a great salvation for Israel and Saul!

5. Saul heard Jonathan's voice; the Saul swore: As Yahweh lives, (not) he will be put to death. (*Verse 6*)

Saul repents: Apparently Jonathan was persuasive. For now, Jonathan has saved the life of his close friend and spiritual brother.

A spiritual brother rescues from death

6. Then Jonathan called David and told him all these things; then Jonathan brought David to Saul; then, he was before him as in times past. (*Verse 7*)

As before: Thanks to Jonathan an uneasy truce is re-established. David now had some hope; but, how long can Saul be trusted?

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Application: We must all be motivated to be peacemakers like Jonathan. Then, according to Jesus, we will be blessed as God's children (Matthew 5:9).

B. David smites the Philistines again, then while he plays music for Saul, an evil spirit comes on Saul again, and once more he tries to kill David. (*Verses 8-10*)

1. Then there was war again, then David went out and fought against the Philistines; then, he slew them (with) great slaughter; then they fled before him. (*Verse 8*)

David defeats: Once again the Philistines make war against Israel. David leads the men of Israel into the battle and God gives them a great victory and drives the enemy away before David.

2. Then an evil spirit from Yahweh came upon Saul as he was in his house sitting with a spear in his hand and David is playing (an instrument – hand harp, 1 Samuel 16:14-23) by hand; then Saul sought to smite David with his spear, but he separated from Saul's presence, the spear struck the wall; and David fled and escaped that night. (*Verses 9-10*)

Evil spirit returns: Yahweh-God again sends the evil spirit upon Saul.

Second spear episode: This second episode (1 Samuel 18:10-12) shows Saul still does not understand what God wants to do in his life. Once again, out of his insecurities, he tries to kill the man who has done so much good for him.

Application: We must deal with the reality that there is still evil in this world; and, we must fight it in the power and love of the Holy Spirit without sinning. Furthermore, we must also submit to God's discipline in our lives so our sin is replaced with Jesus' righteousness (Hebrews 12:7:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

II. Jesus commands His disciples to love one another, willing to lay down their lives as His obedient friends;

He chose them to bear fruit that will remain. (*John 15:12-17*)

A. Jesus commands His disciples to love one another as He loved them, willing to lay down their lives as His obedient friends. (*Verses 12-15*)

1. [Jesus continued], this is being My commandment: that you all would love one another even as I have loved you all. (*Verse 12*)

Love as Jesus: Jesus gives a commandment telling His disciples the purpose behind the love He has shown to them from the beginning. He intends that all His disciples love one another in the same way He has loved them.

2. Greater than this love, no man is having: that anyone would lay down his life on behalf of his friends; you all are being My friends, IF you all are doing whatever I, even I, am commanding to you all. (*Verses 13-14*)

Sacrificial love: Jesus emphatically states that the greatest possible human love is to sacrifice one's life on behalf of friends.

Jesus commands: Jesus says that IF people are doing (obeying) whatever He is commanding; then, they are His friends.

This is just before He did His greatest act of love to all people by willingly dying on a Roman Cross for the purpose of reconciling all who turn to God in child-like humility in Him so they may be adopted into God's family (Galatians 4:1-7).

Obedience to Jesus leads to His friendship

Application: We must accept the necessity for sacrificial love toward every other member in the Church because Jesus has commanded us to do this.

3. No longer I am calling you all servants, for a servant has not known what his lord does; but, I have called you all friends; because all things I heard from My Father I made known to you all. (*Verse 15*)

Friends: Jesus is elevating His disciples from servants to friends by making known to them what He is about to do, and the reason He will die for them.

Make known: As He makes this known to them, they are not yet able to understand Him.

B. Then Jesus tells them He chose them and appointed them to bear fruit that should remain so prayer in His Name may be answered. (*Verses 16-17*)

1. Not you all chose Me, but I, even I, have chosen you all, and I have appointed you all, that you all may go; and, you all may bear fruit, and your fruit may remain; in order that, anything you all may ask The Father in My Name, He may give it to you all. (*Verse 16*)

Chosen: The greatest reason disciples of Jesus have for hope is He chose them with a purpose in mind.

To bear fruit: Jesus' purpose for His disciples is that they bear fruit that will remain. The fruit is to share His love with others so they may become His chosen disciples and enjoy His love.

2. These things I am commanding to you all in order that you all may love one another. (*Verse 17*)

Prayer: If we love one another sacrificially, as Jesus loves us, then we will pray in His Name, which means Savior, so more and more people will be saved to be His disciples. He has said it is God's purpose that people be saved into a living hope (1 Peter 1:3-5).

Application: So, this Advent season we must seek to fulfill the role to which Jesus called us as His chosen people with the task of bearing the fruit of making new disciples so that our prayers in His Name are answered. Then, these new disciples will have the same blessed hope that we have (Titus 2:11-14).

Conclusion: Saul tells Jonathan to kill David, but Jonathan delights in David and he pleads to Saul who vows to let David live. Then an evil spirit comes on Saul and he tries to kill David. Jesus commands His disciples to love one another, willing to lay down their lives as His obedient friends. He chose them to bear fruit that will remain.

A spiritual brother rescues from death