

Introduction: In these days, not many Americans have a close relationship with God. And sadly, for those of us who enjoy His presence in our lives, more and more people have no relationship with God at all. This lack of knowing God, results in weaker communities, and even the loss of any sense of community at all. The image that comes to mind, as more and more people spend more and more time addicted to virtual lives centered on social media, is that of solitary people standing alone on top of a tower, hurling hand grenades at people holding the ‘wrong’ opinions on any matter, no matter how trivial! *** I will speak to Church people first: shallow unity, consisting of little or no connectedness or mutual support for six days a week, and only an hour of worship, and quick superficial fellowship following worship, is not the relationship God wants with His people, or for them to have with one another. How can our neighbors embrace the true faith of Jesus, and themselves enter into God-pleasing relationships, unless, by the grace of God, they see people with deep and meaningful relationships with God and each other (read Isaiah 57)? *** And, there are many Americans today who are ‘religious’ like Saul. This is their ‘faith’: When God gives me just what I want, and it costs me nothing, then I am fine with God. But, when I see God anointing and blessing a ‘nobody’ more than me, I have a right to be angry at God in my jealousy. *** And none of all these people is aware of the danger they face and how desperately lost the whole human race is; that is, not fully, all out surrendered to God, IN Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 1:8-10; 1 John 1:1-7). *** In the first act of our story this morning, Jonathan is an excellent role model for all of us. He shows what God expects from all His covenant people. In a psalm David wrote after God established him as king of Israel, it is possible the words are his Spirit-directed reflection on the blessing of Jonathan’s covenant relationship with him that made them closer than brothers (Proverbs 18:24b).

I. Jonathan strengthens David, he will be king, they renew their covenant; the Ziphites tell Saul where David is, urging him to attack, Saul blesses them and warns them that David is shrewd. (1 Samuel 23:15-18)

- A. Jonathan goes to David in the wilderness to strengthen him, affirms that David will be king in Israel, and they renew their covenant. (*Verses 15-18*)
1. Then David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life, and David was in the wilderness of Ziph, in Horesh. (*Verse 15*)
Saul and David: After David sought Yahweh for guidance, Saul now seeks David out of a selfish desire to eliminate the man he believes is threatening him. David is still in the forty square mile rocky wilderness of Ziph in a high elevation forest.
 2. Jonathan, Saul’s son, rose up and went to David at Horesh, and he strengthened his hand in God; he said: Thou will not be afraid, for the hand of my father Saul will not find thee; and thou, thyself, will be king over Israel; I, myself, will be second to thee; also my father Saul knows this. (*Verses 16-17*)
Jonathan encourages David: Jonathan strengthens and encourages David by reminding David of God’s will. It is remarkable that Jonathan has no ego and is willing to accept God’s will for him to be king David’s second man.
 3. Then the two of them cut a covenant before Yahweh; then David stayed in Horesh and Jonathan went to his house. (*Verse 18*)
Covenant: Jonathan initiated the covenant between himself and David by giving all that was his to David (1 Samuel 18:1-4). Then Jonathan requested they add to their covenant that they would each look after the other’s descendants if either should die (1 Samuel 20:12-17, 42).
Finally as equals: They now modify their covenant again as they pledge support to one another as equals before Yahweh. This is just what David needed from his friend as Saul is seeking his life.

God can provide through friends and enemies

Application: Just as Jonathan’s love of David foreshadowed Jesus’ love for us, our covenant relationships should reflect God’s covenant relationship with His people, especially IN Christ Jesus. God always initiates His covenant with people, and we must receive the benefits by the faith of Jesus.

- B. The people of Ziph tell Saul where David is hiding and say they will surrender him to Saul; Saul blesses them, asks them for more information, warning them of David’s shrewdness. (*Verses 19-23*)
1. The Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah, saying: Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds in Horesh in the hill of Hachilah, south of Jeshimon? (*Verse 19*)
Stronghold: The people of Ziph come to Saul with useful information about David. The additional place names indicate David’s stronghold is on the southern border of the wilderness.
 2. Now king, for all the lust in thy soul: thou, thyself, must come down, and (it is) to us, to surrender him in the king’s hand. (*Verse 20*)
Wrong desire: The Ziphites now incite Saul to act on the blood lust in his soul towards David and pledge their support in this evil intent.
 3. Then Saul said: Y’all are being blessed by Yahweh, for y’all have had pity on me. (*Verse 21*)
Blesses David’s betrayers: He presumes Yahweh is blessing David’s betrayers because it benefits him! He is right that they pity him, because those who want to commit murder do not deserve compassion.
 4. Y’all must go, please, and y’all must further establish and know and see the place where his foot will be; who has seen him there? For, it is told to me, he is indeed shrewd; and, y’all must see and know all the hiding places where he hides there; then y’all come back to me with certainty, then I go with you; if he is in the land, I search him out in all the thousands in Judah. (*Verses 22-23*)
Establish situation: With many words Saul wants to have established with total certainty where David is located. | Then he will go with their help to dispose of David.

II. Saul pursues David and almost captures him, but leaves when the Philistines invade; David declares the goodness of brothers united together to the anointing of the high priest and dew on mountains: it is Yahweh's blessing to life everlasting. (1 Samuel 23:24-29; Psalm 133)

- A. Saul seeks David, and learning David's position, he pursues him and is about to seize him when he learns the Philistines have invaded the land. (1 Samuel 23:24-29)
1. Then they arose and went to Ziph before Saul; and David and his men (were) in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain to the south of Jeshimon. (Verse 24)
David in Maon: David's new location is ten miles south of where he had been. It means habitation.
 2. Then Saul and his men went to seek him; then it was told to David and he went down to the high rock and dwelt in the wilderness of Maon; then when Saul heard, he pursued after David. (Verse 25)
Pursue: David stays at a place on a cliff as Saul pursues him. The word used for Saul's action was used by David (in Psalm 23) to describe Yahweh's goodness and steadfast love pursuing him!
 3. Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain; and David was being hastened to go from before Saul, and Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to take them. (Verse 26)
Early tenth century chase scene: There must have been ledges to use as paths all over this mountain with cliffs. We can imagine how Cecil B. DeMille might have put this epic chase scene on film!
 4. A messenger came to Saul, saying: Thou must make haste and come, for the Philistines have invaded 'the land'; then Saul returned from pursuing David to encounter the Philistines; therefore, the place is called: The High Rock of Division. (Verses 27-28)
God acts: As David was about to be captured, God sovereignly prompted the Philistines to invade 'the land', a term used by Israelites to describe the land God told Abraham his descendants would receive from Him after four hundred years of captivity in Egypt (Genesis 13:14-15; 15:12-16). God used Israel's common enemy to rescue David from Saul.

God can provide through friends and enemies

Application: We must learn this general truth about God: He does not usually deliver us as we would expect Him to, or even as we might imagine He would do!

5. Then David went up from there and dwelt in the strongholds of En-Gedi. (Verse 29)

David now regroups: The proper name means 'fountain of the young goat'. After God provided rescue for David he took his men to rest and regroup in a stronghold (*masada* in Hebrew), ten miles southeast and near the northern shore of the Dead Sea. This is where the last rebellious first-century Jews were destroyed by the Roman Empire.

God can provide through friends and enemies

- B. In a pilgrimage song, David declares the goodness of brothers dwelling together to the anointing oil on the first high priest and dew on mountains, it is the blessing of Yahweh to eternal life. (Psalm 133)
1. { A song of ascents: to David } Behold! How good and how pleasant / brothers dwelling also united. (Verse 1)
'Brothers' united: It is good and pleasant in God's sight when people live united to each other in the mutual bond of God's covenant love. Jonathan and David were not biological brothers, but their friendship brought them very close to each other. David may have told this to Solomon.
 2. As good (anointing) oil on the head / running down on the beard // the beard of Aaron / which (is) running down on the collar of his robes. (Verse 2)
Anointing on high priest: The unity of the sons of Israel is compared to anointing oil on Israel's first high priest. Unity in the Church of Jesus testifies to His being the Great High Priest of His people (Hebrews 4:9-16; 10:23-25).
 3. Like the dew of (Mount) Hermon / which is running down the mountains of Zion // for there Yahweh has commanded / the blessing of life until eternity. (Verse 3)
Blessing: The unity of love brothers and sisters in Christ have for one another is the assurance of the gift of eternal life IN Christ.

A brother's love is a blessing from Yahweh

Application: We must all seek God to find a fellow Christian, outside our family, with whom to have a Jonathan and David friendship that is closer than that of siblings so we will strengthen one another in trials.

God can provide through friends and enemies

Conclusion: Jonathan strengthens David, certain he will be king, and they renew their covenant. The Ziphites tell Saul that they know the location of David; they urge him to attack, and Saul blesses them, warning them that David is shrewd. Saul pursues David and almost captures him, but he leaves when the Philistines invade Israel. David declares the goodness of brothers united together to the anointing of the high priest and dew on mountains: it is Yahweh's blessing to life everlasting.

God can provide through friends and enemies