

FIVE FORKS BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH
9244 Five Forks Road
Waynesboro, PA 17268-9612 **Tel: (717) 762-2991**

SCRIPTURE: *I Samuel 18:1-14*

DATE: *August 16th, 2020*

LOCATION: *Auditorium (Bill)*

SERMON: *He Loved Him as Himself*

(Acknowledgement to Tim Keller for various sermons on the life of David.)

Good morning Five Forks Church, glad to be with those of you who have come out this morning, and glad to be joined by those who you who are tuning in to the live stream.

Let me ask you, let's say that someone close to you experiences some type of success, or somebody else's son or daughter experiences success...do you find that it is easy for you to be happy for them, or do you find that difficult?

I played various sports back when I was in school, and I hate to admit this, but I found myself really struggling to enjoy the success of teammates who were better than I was. I know I was insecure as most teenagers are, and I overlooked the fact that I was a pretty decent athlete, instead being disgruntled because I wasn't one of the best. Couldn't appreciate any success that I had, couldn't enjoy the success of others.

The Sermon Series that we're in is called **Make or Break**. Here at Five Forks we want to be serious about following Jesus, we're identifying at a number of things that can either make us or break us as we look to follow Him.

Today's topic is **Goodwill**. I acknowledge this is a word that we rarely use...yes, it's the name of a local store...and yes, we sing it every Christmas: "*Peace on earth, good will towards men.*"

Still, it's not a word we commonly use, but it's the word that best describes what we're going to be looking at this morning. This morning's message is titled ***He Loved Him as Himself***, and as you know, we're looking at a number of events that transpire in the life of David.

Go ahead and open up your Bible, get out your device, or follow along on the screen as we head to **I Samuel chapter 18** where David's story continues.

As you find your way there, by now you know that every week we're asking the same three questions: First, **What's Happening?** (in the Scripture text.) Second, **What's Noteworthy?** What catches our attention? And third, **What's Your Next Step?** In light of what God reveals to you this morning, what is the next step that He is asking you to take?

First question...

1. WHAT'S HAPPENING?

When we left off last week, David had just defeated and killed Goliath. Instead of returning back to his home in Bethlehem, David remains in Jerusalem by Saul's orders. David quickly becomes very close friends with Jonathan, Saul's son.

I Samuel 18:3-4 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

This is all very interesting, and we'll talk about that in a bit. But for now, Saul ends up giving David a high rank in his army, because David was very successful in whatever Saul sent him out to do. And this recognition – this high ranking appointment - pleased all the people as David has become quite popular.

Then came this day when the Israelite army was returning home from battle, and as these men were making their way to Jerusalem, the women came out from various towns, playing instruments and singing and dancing.

I Samuel 18:7 As they danced, they sang: “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.”

See any problem here? Saul certainly does...these words galled him, and he became very angry.

I Samuel 18:8b “They have credited David with tens of thousands,” he thought, “but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?”

It was at this point that two things happen: Saul becomes increasingly jealous of David...and an evil spirit comes upon Saul. All this led to Saul taking a spear and hurling it at David...twice, with David eluding the spear each time.

Saul ended up sending David away from him, giving him command over a thousand men, and...

I Samuel 18:14 In everything he did he had great success, because the LORD was with him.

Let's stop there, and next week we're going to fast forward way ahead and pick up on an event that occurs much later, but for now, it's time to ask our second question, which is...

2. WHAT'S NOTEWORTHY?

What is it that catches your attention from this passage?

I think one thing that stands out is...

A. David's Success

Since killing Goliath, it's all going his way. His success in all that he does is brought out on two different occasions in this passage and so it's easy to see. But what I really want us to look at this morning are the two totally different reactions we see to David's success.

Let's start by looking at...

B. Saul's Envy

It's easy to see, isn't it? Let's look at it again, as the women have turned out from all these neighboring towns, dancing and singing:

I Samuel 18:7b-9 "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" And from that time on, Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

This refrain that the women sang had a devastating impact on Saul. Up until now, Saul appears to have little to no problem with David's success. It was David, not Saul who killed Goliath, but Saul doesn't appear to have a problem with that. In fact, when David continues to be successful, Saul's the one that gives David a high rank in his army.

But it's this refrain that stirs up envy within Saul, and it just takes over and it's going to ruin his life. And here in this passage we see **two signs that show how envy is working in Saul's heart.**

First, he's unable to enjoy David's success, and second, he's unable to enjoy his own success.

And you want to know what is behind both of these...his inability to enjoy David's success and his inability to enjoy his own success? **Comparison.** Look how Saul does it here, take a look at this sentence in verse 8...

I Samuel 18:8b “They have credited David with tens of thousands...but me with only thousands.”

See it there? **“He... But me...”**

Comparison. He – David - is getting credit for this. But me...I’m only getting credit for that.

Comparison.

It’s one of the first signs of envy. You can’t observe the success of someone else without connecting it to you. You see, envy makes everything about us. And when we play this game of comparison, it’s a game we can’t win. Because people all around us are going to be successful.

And not only are we not happy for the success of others...second sign...can’t be happy for ourselves.

Someone once pointed out that of the seven deadly sins...envy is unique. Even though the six other deadly sins can destroy you, for a while those six may feel pretty good. Lust feels good for a while...gluttony feels good for a while...greed feels good for a while. But envy sucks all the joy out of your life immediately.

So...two signs that show how envy is working in Saul’s life, he’s unable to enjoy David’s success and unable to enjoy his own success.

One more thing about the envy of Saul that isn’t as obvious, because you need to read on through the upcoming chapters, but another thing about **envy...it can spiral out of control.**

In verse 8 we read that this refrain that the women were singing galled Saul...it made him angry. In the original language, the implication is that envy begins as a warm glow...gets warmer before blazing up out of control. You can see the beginning of this for Saul here in today’s passage.

I Samuel 18:10b-11 Saul had a spear in his hand and he hurled it, saying to himself, “I’ll pin David to the wall.”

Now at this point, it doesn’t appear that Saul is actually looking to kill David, but as envy takes over his anger will grow...in the next chapter he will order his son Jonathan to kill David...in the chapter after that, when Jonathan comes to the defense of David, Saul will hurl a spear at Jonathan in order to kill *him*. And It will just spiral out of control as Saul will look to kill David on about a half dozen occasions.

This is how envy often works. While we could be envious of just about anybody, sometimes there are certain people that for whatever reason, any success they experience just eats away at us...and our hearts grow colder and colder towards that person.

How do we steer clear of envy, and if we haven’t, how do we get out of its spiral? We read about Jonathan’s reaction to David’s success at the beginning of our passage. So let’s turn our attention to...

C. Jonathan’s Goodwill

I Samuel 18:1-4 After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father’s house. And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

What is going on here? We have two men – Saul and Jonathan- who both see the same thing. Two men who see that God’s hand is upon David. Two men, both of them seeing that they have something to lose.

Saul is afraid of losing the kingdom, and this has already been settled for all intents and purposes. But you could say that Jonathan has even more to lose, because he’s never been king...and he’s the heir to the throne.

And yet we see that while **Saul opposes what God is doing, Jonathan embraces it.**

And you don't want to miss the significance of what Jonathan is doing here in this passage.

In ancient times, the robe carried great significance. If you were a king and you abdicated – gave up your throne - do you know what you did? You would leave your robe lying on the throne. It was symbolic of abdicating the throne.

And so this is no small thing when Jonathan takes off his robe, and gave it to David. He's giving David his crown rights. Now why would Jonathan do this?

It's not as simple as just friendship. David loved Jonathan as much as Jonathan loved him, and he didn't respond by saying, "No, the robe is yours, I want you to keep it." It's not a matter of friendship.

And it's not that Jonathan is weak, that he doesn't feel up to the challenge of one day becoming the king. A few chapters back, chapter 14, we read about how Jonathan, along with his armor bearer attacked the Philistines.

I Samuel 14:13b-14 The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer followed and killed behind him. In that first attack Jonathan and his armor bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre.

He's a strong and valiant man. And so why does Jonathan give David his robe?

It's because he looks at David and is able to perceive that God is working through David, and he knows the only way that he will be able to participate in this is to get off the throne, and allow David on.

There is not one hint of envy in Jonathan's reaction to David's success. **His reaction is one of goodwill. "I am genuinely happy for you David."**

You may have noticed that here at Five Forks, we as your pastors will try to keep before all of us what Jesus refers to as the two greatest commandments...love God and love others. And it's in passages like this one that God shows us what loving others really looks like.

Love isn't just a warm feeling. When you truly love someone, you want to see them prosper, you want to see their joy...this is when you know that you love someone. This is the golden rule, which is "Love others as you love yourself."

This is what Jonathan does...twice our Scripture text tells us that Jonathan loved him (David) as he loved himself. David's success was not a cause for envy...Jonathan's love for David was so real that David's success was his success.

So from this morning's text we clearly see three things...we see the success of David...the envy of Saul, and the goodwill of Jonathan.

Time for our third question:

3. WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP?

For one or more of you in here...for one or more of you out there...your next step is really your first step, and that is to **accept Jesus' invitation to follow Him.**

You see, Jonathan gave up his crown rights for David, Jesus wants you to know that He gave up His crown rights...for you.

We read in Philippians how Jesus shared the throne with the Father, but He left His throne, took off His royal robe you might say...took off His robe, took on flesh...in order to be able to give His life for yours.

You see, His attitude towards you is the exact opposite of envy... *"Father, I don't want to be the only Son of God"...and the only way for this man, this woman, this child, to be raised up to life is for me to lay my life down.:*

In Isaiah 61:10 we read words that I hope will become your words...

Isaiah 61:10 I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness.

If you receive His robe, if you accept Jesus' invitation to follow Him, would you please be sure to let me know? Because I don't want you to just look to the death that Jesus died, as incredible as that is...but I would like to help you look to the life that He lived. So please reach out to me if you would, I would love to pray with you and for you and help you take your first couple of steps with Jesus.

For those of you who have already accepted Jesus' invitation to become one of His followers, perhaps your next step is to **Look for the signs of envy in your heart.**

Look for the signs. When a friend or even an acquaintance experiences success or receives some sort of recognition, how does that make you feel? Do you find that you are happy for them, or does it open the door to comparison? *"He/She has done this... but me...not so much."*

And if you see this sign - unable to be happy for others – you probably see the second sign and are unable to see and appreciate the things you have...and the things you have accomplished.

I love sports and follow certain teams, and there is, as many of you know, the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. In the past, if the teams my friends were rooting for were better than my teams, I would find myself not just rooting for my team, but rooting against theirs. Did this start from the time I was a kid...did this last for years.

A couple of years ago I came to my senses, and said: *"What is wrong with me? These are my friends. I know full well the agony of defeat. Why would I want my friends to be miserable rather than happy?"*

One word: Envy. Their team is better than mine. Comparison. His team wins all the time...but not mine... He...but me. And so for a number of years now I'm rooting *for* my friends teams...as long as they're not obnoxious. 😊

So again, look for the signs. Look for signs of comparison that leaves you resenting other people's success, and unable to enjoy your life.

And I can't move on without addressing what I think we already know...social media is a breeding ground for envy. A few weeks in one of his sermons, Shaun encouraged us to log off of Social Media for a while. I remember saying, "Amen" because it's not social media as much as it's social comparison.

You put out there about your family and your vacations and your successes, and I'll naturally compare my life to yours. And I'll put out there about my family and my vacations and my successes and you can compare your life to mine.

Actually, I don't do that...I stay off of social media just because it would not be good for me. I find it challenging enough not to get pulled into this "comparison" mindset in the normal course of the day to day. It would be that much more challenging for me to go on social media and be exposed to what others are putting out there, which is often the very best that their life has to offer. I'm only going to see other's success...what I won't see are the failures. Social media isn't real life in other words.

Having said that, I believe that because it is a very effective means of positive communication, it's not going anywhere. And so if and when you're on social media, look for signs of envy in your heart. Ask God's Spirit to help you recognize any comparison that is going on, and if you do, close that door by clicking off and walking away from that screen.

If you're going to do any comparing, compare your life now to what your life was. I'm talking to those of you who have made a decision to follow Jesus. This means that you are wearing garments of salvation and a **robe of righteousness. (bring up Isaiah 61:10 verse on PP)**

Why not go home, or those of you who are at home...go ahead and print out or write out or if you're artistic make a drawing of Isaiah 61:10 and put it somewhere where you will see it and instead of being reminded of what you don't have, be reminded of what you do have.

Finally, for some of you, perhaps your next step is to recognize and **rejoice in the work that God is doing in other people's lives.**

I talked back at the beginning of the sermon about how I envied some of my teammates when playing various sports in high school.

These days, I'm on a different team...the pastoral team...and to be more specific, I'm part of the preaching team. And there is not a bone in my body that wants anything less than the absolute best for both Shaun and Ray...the other two guys who preach.

When I hear someone say how much they appreciated Ray's sermon, or if I hear someone say they really love Shaun's preaching, it is music to my ears. There is no envy whatsoever, Why? Well, it's not just because I love those two guys, but because I see that God is working through them.

Jonathan saw God working through David, and he wanted to be a participant in the work that God was doing. If God is working through Shaun and Ray, and I believe that He is, and if God is working through Pastor Chris and Pastor Brady in their roles, and I believe that He is...this means God is at work here at Five Forks, and I want to participate in that.

As I've been saying, you are a child of God, you are already a participant...we are all participants in the work that God is doing, and so rather than being envious of one another, let's recognize and rejoice in the work that God is doing in our lives, in this church, in this community...in other words, let's display an attitude of **Goodwill** towards one another as we follow Him.

I don't know what your next step is to be...whether it's making a decision to follow Jesus or put an end to the comparison or start rejoicing in the success of others. Some of this might sound hard...but I'll be praying that you will do what we talked about just last week...look to Jesus to

help you find the courage to do the right thing, even when it's hard. I will be praying for all of you this week...and I'd like to begin now...

PRAYER