

Let's Make a Deal

(1 Samuel 20)

8/12/15; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

Most of you have heard me mention my childhood fear of thunderstorms and tornadoes..

I often unfairly blame that on my mom who also had and still has a fear of storms..

But as I grew up, night time storms are the worst.

You can't see the approaching storm; you just simply hear the thunder getting closer...

The flashes of lightning getting whiter and brighter, but then worst part is the wind beginning to blow and then starting to howl.

Now, my own kids have some of those same fears that I have so kindly passed on to them..

Though we explain that God is in control and though we encourage them to trust the Lord, what is their natural reaction when a storm hits at night?

Well, they are coming to our room, and they are climbing in our bed, and they are waking us up.

Now, the point I want to make with that is this...

Just because they come to our room, the lightning, thunder, rain and wind do not suddenly stop.

It isn't like dad has the power to control the weather that is suddenly activated by children crossing the threshold of our bedroom...

In fact, the storm usually gets worse once they arrive.

So, what gives?

Why would you head to mom and dad's room in a storm?

The wind will blow just as hard, the thunder will be just as loud, the lightning will be just as close...

The point is simply this....

Nearness gives comfort.

Relationships give comfort.

The security of someone close gives comfort.

Even if the storm doesn't go away, there is comfort in knowing that you are near someone who loves you.

Let me read a few verses that you all will know very well that relate this idea...

John 16:33...

33 These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

John 14:27

27 Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Romans 8:35-39

35 Who will separate us from the love of [m]Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, “For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us

from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All of these verses point to a great irony in the Christian life....

On one hand, we have perfect peace with God because the sin that separates us from Him has been paid for on our behalf by Christ..

But on the other hand, we live in a world that is far from peaceful.

Though we may not live in a war-torn country, our days are far from peaceful.

There is the threat of disease, and broken relationships, and financial troubles, and Christian persecution...

In short, we live in a broken world that is far from peaceful...

The strange truth of Christianity is that we have perfect peace in an imperfect and less than peaceful world.

And so how do we navigate through this world?

We rest in the peace found in the forgiveness of sin while we do battle in a sinful world.

In short, we do like my children do when a storm approaches...we seek our Father...

And though the storm may not stop, we have peace because of our right relationship with Him.

All of that is a lead in to 1 Samuel 20, which is a very interesting account of how Jonathan shows a loyalty to David over his loyalty to his own father.

We have seen this before in 1 Samuel, as we have watched a great friendship grow between the unlikeliest of friends..

Jonathan would be the heir to the throne of Israel since his father Saul is the king..

Yet, David will be the next king because God has taken the kingdom from Saul and sent Samuel to anoint David.

In a lot of ways, this is a most unusual friendship..

Men who should be enemies are best of friends.

And chapter 20 is going to be an illustration of how committed their friendship is to one another.

We are going to see an important biblical word in chapter 20, and that is the word covenant.

We saw in chapter 18 that David and Jonathan had made a covenant after David's defeat of Goliath.

Jonathan recognized that David should be the next king, and he pledged David his support through a covenant.

Now, the bible is full of covenants.

God's covenant with Noah after the flood.

God's covenant with Abraham.

God's covenant with Moses.

God's covenant with David.

God's new covenant that came through the death of Christ.

We usually yawn at the idea of a covenant because the idea of a promise is so overused in our society.

The word "promise" has lost so much meaning because promises are regularly broken.

Yet, the idea of a covenant with God and the idea of a promise from God is so central to the teaching of the Bible.

And chapter 20 is going to a great opportunity to help us better understand the importance of a covenant in our lives...

In fact, we are going to see 4 Benefits of a Covenant tonight in 1 Samuel.

Now, we are going to look at this covenant in the context of a friendship between David and Jonathan..

But from their situation, I hope we gain a better understanding God's covenant with us that comes through the New Covenant that was sealed in Jesus' blood.

So, let's look at chapter 20 in four parts...

I. A Covenant Comforts in Uncertain Situations (1-11)

II. A Covenant Leads to Uncommon Actions (12-17)

III. A Covenant Motivates Uncomfortable Loyalty (18-34)

IV. A Covenant Offers Unusual Peace (35-42)

Let's begin with the first 11 verses of chapter 20..

I. A Covenant Comforts in Uncertain Situations (1-11)

20 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said [a]to Jonathan, “What have I done? What is my iniquity? And what is my sin before your father, that he is seeking my life?”
2 He said to him, “Far from it, you shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small [b]without disclosing it to me. So why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so!”
3 Yet David vowed again, [c]saying, “Your father knows well that I have found favor in your sight, and he has said, ‘Do not let Jonathan know this, or he will be grieved.’ But truly as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, there is [d]hardly a step between me and death.”
4 Then Jonathan said to David, “Whatever [e]you say, I will do for you.”

Nothing has changed in chapter 20 in regards to the big picture..

Saul is still the king of Israel.

HE has been the king ever since Samuel anointed him publicly before all of Israel.

The nation had wanted a king like the other nations, and God gave them Saul but wanted them of the consequences of having a king.

And though Saul had a great beginning as king, he disobeyed God, who then took the kingdom away from Saul.

Though Saul is still king, he knows that another king unrelated to him is going to be the next king.

Then David arrives on the scene, kills Goliath, and there is a hit song written about him.

Saul then understands that David is going to be the next king, and he begins to plan how to destroy David in chapter 18.

And so in chapter 18, Saul's attempts to kill David are highlighted.

The same was true of chapter 19 as Saul hurled another spear at David and then sent assassins to kill him.

All of those plans failed, and by the end of chapter 19, Saul again tries to destroy David himself, but is stopped when God causes him to break out in song..

When we stopped last week in chapter 19, Saul stripped off his royal robes and has been praising God for 24 hours in the streets of Naioth.

This allows David time to escape once again and he heads straight for Jonathan.

Now, that is a great lesson for us all of right there.

In chapter 19, David has sought protection in Samuel, who was God's prophet and priest.

Yet, Saul even went after him in Samuel's presence.

Therefore, David heads to find Jonathan.

Now that is an unusual choice because Jonathan is Saul's son.

You would think the last place to seek comfort would be in the company of your enemy's son...

But that is just it....

The comfort for David doesn't come from Jonathan, it comes from the covenant that he has made with him.

Jonathan has vowed to David to be his friend and his help.

As I think through that from the perspective of our covenant with the Lord...

I would offer this...

When we sin, our sin is against the Lord.

You would thin that the last place that we would turn in our sin is to the One against whom we have sinned.

Yet, that is what we do as Christians.

We go the the One who has promised us that our sin is forgiven based upon our faith in the cross of Jesus Christ.

And we find comfort there, we find forgiven there, we find protection there.

God is holy. We are sinners.

Why would we run toward the One we have offended?

Because He has promised (covenanted) with us that we have forgiveness in his son.

Now in 1 Samuel 20, David is actually innocent in his relationship with Saul, and that is the first thing that he asks Jonathan when he gets there.

What is the world have I done to your father?

Jonathan doesn't seem to think that it is that bad.

He even says, “There is no way that my father wants to kill you. I would know it. He tells me everything.”

But David insists that Saul is after his life, and he is going to prove in to Jonathan...

Verse 5...

5 So David said to Jonathan, “Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I ought to sit down to eat with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field until the third evening. 6 If your father misses me at all, then say, ‘David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city, because it is the yearly sacrifice there for the whole family.’ 7 If he [f]says, ‘It is good,’ your servant will be safe; but if he is very angry, know that he has decided on evil. 8 Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the Lord with you. But if there is iniquity in me, put me to death yourself; for why then should you bring me to your father?” 9 Jonathan said, “Far be it from you! For if I should indeed learn that evil has been decided by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you about it?” 10 Then David said to Jonathan, “Who will tell me [g]if your father answers you harshly?” 11 Jonathan said to David, “Come, and let us go out into the field.” So both of them went out to the field.

At the beginning of each month, Saul would invite all his top officials to a dinner at the king's palace.

And so David comes up with a plan to prove to Jonathan that Saul is trying to kill him.

He is not going to go to the dinner, even though he was expected to go.

Instead he is going to hide in a field near the palace.

And he tells Jonathan to tell his father that David is away at a family reunion in his hometown.

This would be an acceptable excuse to take a little time off to spend it with the family..

And the test is to gauge Saul's reaction to the the news that David isn't there.

If Saul reacts kindly, that means David was wrong and his life is not in danger.

Is Saul reacts angrily, it would be proof to Jonathan that Saul is trying to kill David.

There is one final part of the plan that needs to be worked out.

As David waits in the field, how will he know that Saul reacted angrily when Jonathan offers David's excuse?

So they both head out to the field...

And so in these first 11 verses, we see one benefit of a covenant relationship...

IT gives us comfort when we don't know what is around the next corner...

David knows that Saul is after him, and he turns to the only one "on earth" who he knows can help, and that is his covenant friend Jonathan.

And so their plan needs one more part, and in this section, we will see another benefit of a covenant.

II. A Covenant Leads to Uncommon Actions **(12-23)**

12 Then Jonathan said to David, “The Lord, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if there is good feeling toward David, shall I not then send to you and [h]make it known to you? 13 If it please my father to do you harm, may the Lord do so to Jonathan and more also, if I do not [i]make it known to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And may the Lord be with you as He has been with my father. 14 If I am still alive, will you not show me the lovingkindness of the Lord, that I may not die? 15 You shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the Lord require it at the hands of David’s enemies.” 17 Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life.

18 Then Jonathan said to him, “Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed because your seat will be empty. 19 When you have stayed for three days, you shall go down quickly and come to the place where you hid yourself on that eventful day, and you shall remain by the stone Ezel. 20 I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I

shot at a target. 21 And behold, I will send the lad, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I specifically say to the lad, 'Behold, the arrows are on this side of you, get them,' then come; for there is safety for you and [j]no harm, as the Lord lives. 22 But if I [k]say to the youth, 'Behold, the arrows are beyond you,' go, for the Lord has sent you away. 23 As for the [l]agreement of which you and I have spoken, behold, the Lord is between you and me forever."

Let's cover the less important part of this section, which is the plan to let David know how Saul reacts at dinner...

Jonathan is going to go outside and shoot arrows, and the key word is "beyond you."

If Jonathan tells the boy to go pick up the arrows BEYOND you, that means trouble for David.

If he says pick up the arrows ON THE SIDE of you, that means Saul is not trying to kill David.

And so the plan is in place...

We got the bows, the arrows, and the boy to go retrieve the arrows...

And we got the code words...

That's the plan, but the important thing to see in this section is the covenant between Jonathan and David.

This time, Jonathan asks David for mercy for his family once David becomes king.

That is the focus of verses 14-15.

Jonathan knows that David is going to be king when Saul's reign comes to an end.

And so he asks for mercy from David when that happens..

Why is this important?

Because that is a very unusual request.

In our country, we are used to peaceful exchanges of power.

Regardless of whether a Republican or a Democrat is elected next year, Barack Obama will attend the inauguration of the new president.

Only 4 outgoing presidents have not attended the inauguration of the new president, and none in the recent years.

The peaceful exchange of power is characteristic of a government of the people.

Yet, that has not been the case in history.

The custom was to execute the former king and even his family to prevent them from trying to return to power.

This even happened with some of Israel's kings.

Now, Saul was the Israel's 1st king, and so no one knew what would happen when he lost power..

But Jonathan anticipated that David would wipe out Saul's family because that is what happened in the surrounding nations...

And so he asked for an uncommon promise...

David, don't destroy me when you come to power.

And that would have been a very uncommon practice considering the culture of that area of the world in that day.

Yet, what is true about a covenant?

It leads to uncommon actions.

It causes you to act unnaturally at times.

We all understand this as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What do we pledge to Him once we are saved?

Lay down your life, take up a cross of suffering and shame, follow him before anything else in this world..

What is all that? Unnatural actions.

The world says you own your life, you need to avoid suffering at all costs, and you are the only person that matters.

To the world, we act unnaturally.

Yet, we act unnaturally because our Savior act unnaturally in going to a cross even though he was innocent.

David pledged to protect Jonathan even when he rose to power because he had made a covenant with him...

So the stage is set; now, let us see how this plan works out.

In verses 24-34, we are going to see another benefit of a covenant and that is...

III. A Covenant Motivates Uncomfortable Loyalty (24-34)

Verse 24....

24 So David hid in the field; and when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. 25 The king sat on his seat as usual, the seat by the wall; then Jonathan rose up and Abner sat down by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. 26 Nevertheless Saul did not speak anything that day, for he thought, "It is an accident, he is not clean, surely he is not clean." 27 It came about the next day, the second day of the new moon, that David's place was empty; so Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal, either yesterday or today?" 28 Jonathan then answered Saul, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem, 29 for he said, 'Please [m]let me go, since our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to attend. And now, if I have found favor in your sight, please let me get away that I may see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table."

The plan is put in motion.

David doesn't show up on the first day, and Saul thinks little of it...

Maybe David is ceremonially unclean.

Maybe he is doing the prescribed cleansing ritual in order to be clean for the new moon meal.

However on day 2, Saul asks Jonathan where David is...

And Jonathan explains why David isn't there according to their plan...

Now again in these verses, we find deception.

Jonathan and David are lying, and people get hung up here on the lie.

This is simply a description of what happened here.

Nowhere does this passage say go and do likewise..

And nowhere does the Bible say this was a good idea.

They came up with a plan to lie, yet God works out his purpose despite man's sin.

And so now, we wonder how Saul is going to react...

Verse 30...

30 Then Saul's anger burned against Jonathan and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? 31 For [n]as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Therefore now, send and bring him to me, for he [o]must surely die." 32 But Jonathan answered Saul his father and said to him, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" 33 Then Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him down; so Jonathan knew that his father had decided to put David to death. 34 Then Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did not eat food on the second day of the new moon, for he was grieved over David because his father had dishonored him.

If Jonathan had any doubt before of his father's intentions to kill David, it is perfectly clear now.

Saul curses Jonathan.

Tells him that he should want David dead as well, and then sends him to go get David so that he can be killed.

When Jonathan tries to persuade Saul to change his mind, an arrow comes flying his head as well.

And I love how the text just describes this...

A spear comes at Jonathan and it simply says..

Jonathan then knew his father had decided to put David to death...

You think??!!

But the point I want us to see is how a covenant motivates us to uncomfortable loyalty...

We have seen this before and I don't want to beat a dead horse...

But a covenant even divides what we consider to be the closest earthly relationships...

It divided a son from his father...

Jonathan's covenant with David motivates his uncomfortable loyalty to his friend more than a loyalty to the king who is his own father.

Jonathan is going to honor his commitment to David even when it means he has to oppose his own dad.

Jonathan sees God's kingdom advancing through David, rather than his own father...

And that is tough to handle, no matter who you are because family ties run deep.

Yet, Jonathan is going to be a great example of what it means to love the LORD above anyone or anything else in this world.

And a covenant motivates that loyalty.

It is the same commitment we make to Christ.

To love him more than father, mother, sister, brother, wife and children...

And so, Jonathan leaves the dinner to inform David...

In the final section in verses 35-42, we see a final benefit of a covenant...

IV. A Covenant Offers Unusual Peace (35-42)

Verse 35...

35 Now it came about in the morning that Jonathan went out into the field for the appointment with David, and a little lad was with him. 36 He said to his lad, "Run, find now the arrows which I am about to shoot." As the lad was running, he shot [p]an arrow past him. 37 When the lad reached the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the lad and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?" 38 And Jonathan called after the lad, "Hurry, be quick, do not stay!" And Jonathan's lad picked up the arrow and came to his master. 39 But the lad was not aware of anything; only Jonathan and David knew about the matter. 40 Then Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad and said to him, "Go, bring them to the city." 41 When the lad was gone, David rose from the south side and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times. And they kissed each other and wept together, but David wept the more. 42 Jonathan said to David, "Go in safety, inasmuch as we have sworn to each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord will be between me and you, and between my [q]descendants and your [r]descendants forever.'" [s]Then he rose and departed, while Jonathan went into the city.

The plan is played out to the very end.

Jonathan tells his young helper to look BEYOND to find the arrows...

The code word is heard by David, and since no one else is around, David comes out to embrace Jonathan and weep for his situation.

It is clear that to both these men that Saul wants to kill David, and so they both began to weep, with David weeping a little harder.

And then if this scene wasn't so serious and sad, we could almost find humor in Jonathan's words to David...

Where he says, "Go in safety."

You translations may say "Go in peace."

But that is almost funny when we think about the situation.

How can David go in peace and safety?

Isn't King Saul determined to kill him?

That is like having a friend over to your house who is facing open heart surgery the next day...

And when he is leaving, you tell him...

Have a good day tomorrow...

It seems so unnatural to say “go in safety.”

The truth is that David has no safety. He has no peace.

His life is in constant danger.

So, why does Jonathan say that?

The simple truth is that the covenant between the two friends creates a peace even in the midst of chaos.

Why do we keep it together when the world is crumbling around us?

Our confidence is in the sovereignty of God.

But more specifically, our safety and our peace is that no matter what happen to us...

We rest in the covenant that was established at Calvary.

The covenant that says to those who are saved, ***“In this world you will have trouble, but take heart I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)***

That is why you can face uncertain days and situations and be able to sleep at night...

Knowing that whatever happens to you, your security is safe because you have peace with God through Jesus Christ...

And David here can go in peace because he has a faithful friend in an unfaithful world.

Jonathan has made a covenant with David and in the center of that covenant is God Himself.

And there is peace there, even when David doesn't know what tomorrow holds...

Conclusion

And there is application in that for all of us what are in a covenant relationship with God through the death and resurrection of Christ.

The covenant that we are forgiven is our anchor when the seas are rough..

Just like David, we have a covenant that comforts us in uncertain days...

We have a covenant that provides perfect peace in an imperfect world..

And I'll close with this...

Bill and Gloria Gaither have given us some wonderful music over the years...

Some of their songs have been a true blessing to me, and there are 4-5 in our hymnal...

One particular song really describes the peace that every believer has in the midst of trouble...

Gloria Gaither actually wrote the song, and here in her own words is the reason she wrote it...

I am a wife and a mother. It was in the middle of the upheaval in the sixties that we were expecting our third baby. The drug culture was in full swing,

existential thought had obviously saturated every area of our American thought, the cities were seething with racial tension, and the God-is-dead pronouncement had giggled its way all through our educational system.

On the personal front, Bill and I were going through one of the most difficult times in our lives. Bill had been discouraged and physically exhausted by a bout with mononucleosis, and in that weakened condition had little reserve to fight the psychological battle brought on by some external family problems. Someone whom we had cared about a great deal had hurled some accusations at us and at the Fellowship of Believers and at the whole idea of the existence of God.

It was on New Year's Eve that I sat alone in the darkness and quiet of our living room, thinking about the world and our country and Bill's discouragement and the family problems—and about our baby yet unborn. Who in their right mind would bring a child into a world like this? I thought, The world is so evil. Influences beyond our control are so strong. What will happen to this child?

Then my thoughts turned to the peace that comes from the knowledge of a resurrected Savior. The world was full of trouble, but I had peace because Jesus had overcome the world.

I then sat down and wrote "Because He lives."
Let's pray.