

1 Sam 18:1-16 [25]-The COST of SUCCESS

PRELIMS. David has been anointed king, in **private**! He has just killed Goliath. God's Spirit has come on David - but has **left** Saul! David has defeated Goliath because his **faith** is in the God of Israel. **All** our struggles, are struggles of 'faith' in our 'god', whoever that 'god' may be. We **trust/depend** on **our understanding** of reality! Goliath trusted in his many gods - David trusted in the God of Israel!

Problem in [17:55-58] How does Saul ask **who** David is, when he is already in the palace? Ans: Saul's question is **not** 'Who is **David**? It is "*whose son*" is David? Saul wanted to know the **family** into which his daughter was going to **marry** (his promise in [17:25])! Saul remembers Sam's prophecy that the kingdom is to be given to "*a neighbour of yours, who is better than you*" [15:28] and wants to check up does any of David's family live anywhere near to the palace!

DAVID and JONATHAN

There must have been quite a lot said between David and Saul, and what was said **affected** Jonathan, Saul's oldest Son! Jon really '**took**' to David **after** hearing what David said "*As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David*"[1] **APP** What we **say** goes a long way in **defining** our **character**! "*The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks*" [L6:45] It was what David **said** that made Jon love him! When you watch TV you make judgments about people after hearing what they say? Right?

Now this was a **spiritual** love! The **homosexual** community latch onto this relationship to justify **their** behaviour, but this is clearly a **spiritual**, not sexual love. Jon loved David **in the Lord**! Paul calls on the Romans regarding Phoebe to "*receive her in the Lord*"[R16:1], and Amphias is "*my beloved in the Lord*" says Paul [R 16:8]. There **is** a 'love' in the Lord, which the 'world' know nothing about!

The Hebrew word 'nephesh' means **soul** and it is used each time here regarding the love of Jon and David. It could hardly be made clearer

that it was spiritual love rather than physical love! There was a rapport between them. They understood each other. They ‘hit it off’ together!

But it was **more** than that. Such was the **affinity** and **bond** between them, that they formed a **covenant** - the **deepest** and **highest** mark of **trust** in any relationships. **Covenant** is God’s **invention**. It is far more **serious****significant** than a **contract**. Miles away from contracts made between Football Managers’/Players’/Clubs which are meaningless, apart from being a means of obtaining large sums of money! There is seldom any **loyalty** (far less or **sacrifice**) in many contracts today! This past week has seen ‘Civil Contracts’ **failing** by celebrities!

A covenant is **sacred** and **unfaithfulness** by either party, invokes **judgment**. Ralph Davis reminds us that initially, when a covenant was cut an animal was killed and cut into two parts and both parties passed between them declaring that if any of them were unfaithful then may they end up as this animal - cut in pieces!

Now Jon takes off his **robe, sword, armour, belt** and gave them to David! This was an important cultural practice. What Jon was doing was **acknowledging** that David was **God’s** appointed king in waiting **in place of himself!** Jon being Saul’s son was **in line** for the throne, but Jon recognises the hand of God and **humbly submits** to it. In ancient Canaanite culture, clothes were set aside and put on the throne by those demitting office! It was a ‘habit’ which carried on into Israel. remember “*strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazer his son*” [Num 20:26] Also recall Elijah “*cast his cloak upon*” Elisha!

Now this took **great grace** on the part of Jon! To take a **lesser** place requires an inordinate amount of **humility!** Note: Jon “*stripped himself of the robe...*” - it was entirely a **voluntary** act of grace - no doubt to **encourage** David, especially as Jon’s father was opposed!

SAUL’S JEALOUSY

This whole passage is very clearly revealing how much David was **growing** in popularity among the people (and growing in **grace**), and how Saul was **losing** his popularity and even **common grace!** At one particular celebration - a victory procession - the girls came out to sing

praises - as was customary - but they said something which Saul never ever forgot - in fact it knawed like a worm at Saul! It “*Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his **ten** thousands*”! It was like a **dagger** in Saul’s **ego**! This event had the effect of a marked public opposition to David! Saul could not hide it! “*Saul eyed David from that day on*”[9] Saul began to see that ‘his days were numbered’! Saul was a very **proud** man. He wanted to be number one, not 2nd place!

APP It **is** very **daunting/intimidating** to see events **forming** into the fulfillment of a **threatening** prophecy! **That** is what disturbed Saul here. He could now see the ‘machinery’ was in place for God to fulfill Sam’s prophecy. Slowly, but **surely**, the kingdom was slipping away into the hands of a neighbour who was ‘better than he’!

We now see the **truth** of Scripture about the **process** and **progress** of sin! If we do not nip the beginnings of sin in the ‘bud’, it will **develop** into something **worse**! Saul’s jealousy, developed to **hatred** and hatred developed to a murderous spirit “*I will **pin** David to the wall*” and he actually “***hurled the spear***” at David [11] Every type of sin carries with it potential **for worse**! That is its **nature**! “*Sin, when it is **fully grown** brings forth death*”[Jam 1:15] That is why Jesus said “*whoever is **angry** with his brother is in **danger** of the judgment...*”[Mat 5:21] and John writes “*He who **hates** his brother is a **murderer***”[1J3:125]

Now we might say ‘How could Saul **miss** David when he was so **near** him?’ Well remember how David slung the stone and the stone winged its way directly between the little gap in the forehead of Goliath’s facial armour? So precise! Well, the very same **power** that directed that stone so accurately, directed Saul spear **away** from David! Every detail of life is governed and directed by God! Not just stones and spears, but the course of every single **bird**, and of every single **leaf** during the Fall, is directed by God! It does say that David “*evaded **him** twice*” [11c] ie, evaded Saul and his attempts at killing him.

Of course, David, no doubt had **prayed** about his ‘work’ and usefulness in the palace. David knew the **need** of **praying** for **protection**! In fact he wrote down some songs, regarding his need for **protection** from people like Saul! “*Deliver me O Lord from evil men; **preserve** me from*

*violent men, who **plan** evil things in their **heart**...**Guard me, O Lord from the hands of the wicked**"[Psa 104:1,4] Well, he was **guarded** and **preserved** from Saul. Whether David wrote this psalm **before** or **after** this event, it **teaches us** that God preserves those who **trust** in Him. Whether we are dodging bullets in **Afghanistan** or flying debris from suicide bombers in **Iraq**, we need God's protection.*

Jackie Pullinger was **protected** in the **gang-land** Walled City of Hong Kong where crime and vice abounded. God protected her from all the evil **infections**. Although stepping over blood-stained bodies to reach each new addict, she was **unafraid** of the danger because she **trusted** in God! Her one desire was not simply to get people off drugs - plenty people came to her for help, but she stated they were not a drug treatment centre, but a group of Christians who were concerned that their **whole life** should change - **forever**. 'If you simply want to get off drugs I can recommend a centre'. She wanted people to come to Christ and find new life in God - not just to stop taking drugs!

The COST of SUCCESS

Success and **position** can **make** or **break** you! Ask the **celebrities**! So many have come to ruin! People want to be famous. But there is a **cost**. You will be **exposed** to **publicity** - and not everyone can take it! There is great pressure in being a public figure. If you want to become a public figure - you need to be prepared to take **unfair criticism**!

The new book out this week in Dundee, 'Ralph Milne who played for Dundee United' reveals his **bitterness** at his former football manager and a **bad press** for his **failure** in life. Ralph is **bankrupt** through **drink/gambling** paying a fine at £5 a week! At one time he was a **hero**! But look what happened! Here is the lesson....

We need **God's grace** whether we are a success or a failure! We need to **acknowledge** that without **God** we are **nothing**! "*David had **success** in all his undertakings **for** the **Lord** was with him*"[14] "*Saul was **afraid** of David **because** the **Lord**..had **departed** from Saul...he stood in **fearful awe** of him*"[12,15] **Humility** is vital! **Pride** brought Saul down, humility brought David up! David: "*I am a **worm** and not a man, **scorned** by mankind...(but **added**) "O **Lord**...my **help**"*[Psa 22]