

## **Introduction**

George Washington is regarded as the father of our country. He lived a relatively quiet life for his first 43 years. There was a little military activity as well as a short stint as a land surveyor. Mostly he lived the life of a gentleman farmer and was involved some in politics. However, in 1775 Washington's life took a dramatic turn. He was appointed commander of the Continental Army which he led for 8 years. He successfully commanded the victory over the British to gain American independence. A grateful nation expressed its love and admiration for George by electing him president for two terms. It would have had him for a third if he would have wanted it. Great victories promote the affection and admiration of nations. Such is the case in our text this morning as we return to the life of David and look at the outcome of his victory over Goliath.

[Read text and Pray]

By God's grace and power, David killed Goliath. Forty days of misery, dismay, and fear for the Israelite army ended suddenly in an instant. It was over and David brandished the head of Goliath as evidence of his victory. Because the Lord was with him, David accomplished the unimaginable. He slew the giant. He possessed now his head, his sword, and his armor. He was a hero for the Israelites. The impact on those around him was obvious. Great was the admiration and affection for David. But so was the contempt. Our text this morning highlights four results of the battlefield success of David.

## **I. A Relationship of Devotion.**

The son of the king, Jonathan, became a deeply committed friend to David. We need to take a moment to get a glimpse into the heart of Jonathan. If we look back to 1 Samuel 14, we discover Jonathan together with his armor-bearer going up against the Philistines. Let's start with verse 6.

Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the Lord will work for us, for nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few." 7 And his armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul." 8 Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them. 9 If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go up to them. 10 But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up, for the Lord has given them into our hand. And this shall be the sign to us." 11 So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves." 12 And the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing." And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Come up after me, for the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel." 13 Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him."

These verses detail how Jonathan not only was responsible for the deaths of 20 Philistines but also how he put the Philistine army to flight. And what we notice about him is that he has a heart far more like David than that of his own father. Saul did his own thing and rejected the Lord. But Jonathan, like David would later do, refers to the Philistines as the uncircumcised. For him it was to say they were outside the people of God. We also note his trust in the Lord. He said, "Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few." His heart is like the heart of David for whom the

battle was not about might, power, size, or number but about the fact that these uncircumcised people were against the people of God. He goes on up to face the Philistines because he is convinced that the Lord has given these foes into his hands. It was for Jonathan like it was for David. The victory will be had because the battle is the Lord's battle. Unlike Saul, Jonathan trusts the Lord.

So in facing and slaying Goliath, David has stepped forward in an exhibition of faith of the same kind as Jonathan, and yet when even Jonathan would not step forward. Moreover, David has now led in this massive defeat of the Philistines. You can imagine the great deal of admiration, honor, and respect that would flow from the inner being of Jonathan in David's direction. And clearly, it did. These men are kindred spirits. They both trust in the Lord and they both have a high regard for the Lord. Their hearts beat to defend the reputation of the Lord and to defend the people of the Lord.

And so the text says here in chapter 18:1 that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved David as his own soul. The well-being and success of David became a cause to which Jonathan himself would be committed. This is not a romance. There is nothing sexual about it. But the relationship is deep and it is devoted. It is man-to-man friendship. There is a strong bond and an intentional commitment.

Elsewhere in the scripture, we find a similar kind of connection between Jacob, the father of the nation Israel, and his son, Benjamin. Joseph, the son of Jacob who had risen to be prime-minister in Egypt, was going to send his brothers back to their father Jacob but keep his younger brother Benjamin there in Egypt. But Judah stepped forward and explained to Joseph that if these men returned to their father without Benjamin, it would likely kill him because, as Judah said, "his life is bound up in the boy's life." While David and Jonathan are not father and son, Jonathan has such a deep admiration and affection for David that David's life has become bound up with his own. David's success will be his success. David's well-being will be his well-being. He gives of himself in order to benefit and bless David.

To have a friend like Jonathan is indeed a blessing. You cannot manipulate this kind of friendship in someone else. But blessed are you if someone is this kind of friend to you. Don't miss the gift. Certainly also, you can be this kind of friend. And the more you and I are friends like Jonathan, the more likely we are to experience this kind of friendship from others. Brothers-in-Christ and sisters-in-Christ should be this kind of friend to one another. Husbands and wives should be this kind of friend to one another, letting the well-being of the other be bound up in you. You come to the relationship not first-and-foremost for what you can receive but for what you will give. That is being a friend.

But there is an even deeper aspect of this relationship between Jonathan and David. It comes with the covenant and it comes with the significance of the gifts Jonathan gives to David. I remember the picture in a Bible storybook I had as a child. It depicted Jonathan giving to David these items, and I guess I always thought, "How generous!" But there is more here than simply generosity.

In 1 Samuel 13, Saul disobeyed the instructions of the Lord and offered the sacrifice before the arrival of Samuel. Samuel informed him that because he had rejected the word of the Lord, his kingdom would not continue. That is he would be the end of his own dynasty. His sons would not reign over Israel.

And then we come to 1 Samuel 15. This chapter is the one that tells of Saul's second major instance of disobedience. The Lord had directed him to strike the Amalekites and devote everyone and

everything to destruction. But this he did not do. Samuel rebuked Saul and informed him that the Lord had rejected him from being king. As Samuel turned to leave, you may remember that Saul seized the skirt of Samuel's robe, and it tore. Samuel, the prophet that he was, made a solemn declaration: "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours who is better than you." That was not a secret prophecy.

Jonathan as the son of Saul was nevertheless regarded as the crown prince. By nature, everyone would be looking for Jonathan to follow in the stead of Saul one day. But now we see Jonathan himself to be a man of God. I am unaware whether Jonathan knew about Samuel's coming to anoint David. But I do know that the covenant between Jonathan and David is one in which Jonathan is pledging to David his own life and submitting himself in love and admiration. David, and not Jonathan, will be the next king of Israel. Notice the first article of royal clothing he gives him—his robe. It was a robe that was involved when Samuel told Saul the kingdom was torn from him. Now a robe is given to David. Jonathan is not just a generous friend although he is that. Here is the crown prince yielding up sovereignty. "And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt." Why ALL of these? His submission was absolute and complete. Jonathan removes the emblems of his position. He places them in the possession of the friend he admires and loves. He willingly, even joyfully, submits himself to that friend to support and to follow and to stand beside. If you have any doubt about what I am suggesting, I point you to 1 Samuel 23 at a time when Saul was later pursuing David. Jonathan came to David and encouraged his heart in God, and he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. YOU shall be king over Israel, and I shall be NEXT to you."

Jonathan's love for David is exemplary. His soul being knit to the soul of David is instructional. His covenant and the removal of his royal battle attire and placing those items in the possession of David is demonstrative. These acts exemplify, instruct, and demonstrate how we should respond to the successful battle of our anointed one. Surely we can say we learn how to be a friend to those in the army of the Lord who lead the way before us. But more to the point, the one who has gone into the valley and who has slain our great enemy is Jesus.

Jesus has wounded our consummate enemy on the head. On the cross Jesus went to battle against our great foes—the devil, sin, and death. He defeated death. He broke the demand of our sins for wrath. He defeated death itself. He has decimated our enemies. And he is destined to reign as king.

The right response of sinners is to turn to him in awe and in admiration and in affection and love and to knit our souls to his. It is to remove the garments of our own rule over ourselves and to submit to him as our king and to pledge that we will be by his side. We take up our cross and follow. This image of Jonathan with David is a picture of what true and deep friendship looks like, but it is also a picture of Christian discipleship. If you really, really want to follow Jesus, this is how you do it. You knit your soul to his and love him supremely. You take your place by his side as his loyal subject, friend, follower, and disciple.

So the initial outcome of David's success was a relationship of devotion, but there was also . . .

## **II. A Relationship of Hate.**

Jonathan loved David and submitted himself to David with admiration, but that is not the way his father Saul responded to David's success. Saul became acutely jealous of David. After the now

successful campaign against the Philistines, the Israelite army headed back home. And what a greeting they received from one Israelite city to the next! The women of the villages came out to meet to meet the king with tambourines and musical instruments. They were singing and dancing joyously, exulting in the victory of their men. But it was the words of the song they sang that Saul could not shake. Oh, these ladies rejoiced in their king, but they ascribed an even greater place to David. "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his TEN thousands." And Saul began to feel the weight of the looming replacement that would eventually take place.

We should all be able to identify with what Saul was feeling. Have you ever been doing a job and suddenly, out of nowhere, someone shows up who does it better than you? People begin commenting about the excellence of the other person in a way they never commented to you. Within your soul you feel overlooked, mistreated, unappreciated. You may know it is wrong to feel this way, but the feelings are so strong. And if you were the head honcho, like Saul, and the Spirit of the Lord had left you, you know the "me monster" would take over. Bitterness and rage would begin to engulf your being. That is what took place with Saul. Saul felt that the only place David lacked was the throne of the kingdom. David was constantly on his mind. He became murderously jealous. His jealousy was accompanied by despondency. That dreadful spirit descended upon him again. While David played the lyre to soothe Saul's soul, Saul hurled the spear in David's direction in an attempt to pin him to the wall.

Jealousy is a vicious enemy to your soul. It will rob you of peace. It will fill your heart with anger. It will prompt you to hate. It will destroy others as well. Jealousy and envy are among the works of the flesh Paul lists in Galatians 5 when he says that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Not long ago we were in James where he asks, "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel." James points out that where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

Things would have been completely different if Saul had responded differently. He had disobeyed the Lord. He was rejected. The success of David evidenced that the Lord was with him. How much better if Saul would have humbled himself and responded the same way as Jonathan. Well, it is too late for Saul, but it is not too late for you and me.

We need to look at Saul and his misery and be warned and encouraged. Let us be warned against allowing ourselves to be overcome by jealousy. Let us be encouraged that there is a better way. There is a way of joy and peace. It is the way of submission to the true king. It is the way of humility. It is the way of serving others rather than seeking to be served ourselves. Putting away the "me monster" is one of the best and most loving things you can do for the honor of Christ and for the peace of those around you. Everybody seems to be so happy in this text, but one man ruined it all. He loved himself and would not let go of what he could not hold on to anyway. What about you?

We observe a third outcome of David's execution of Goliath . . .

### **III. A Series of Successes.**

The word success appears twice in this text in relation to David. We see it verse 5. David went out and was SUCCESSFUL wherever Saul sent him. Then in verse 14 we are told that David had SUCCESS in all his undertakings. In addition we find that David was successful in eluding the hurled spear of Saul.

There are a couple observations here. One, David's successes did not come without threat. I mean everywhere he goes things are just the way you would want to draw them up. David goes out to battle, and he comes back successful. But in real life, there is always something. And the something here was the hostility of Saul that was rooted in his jealousy. So David was kept from getting a big head. I think of Paul and how even he needed a thorn in the flesh to keep from thinking too highly of himself. Until we get to heaven even when everything seems great, there will always be something to deal with. Thank God for it! He is using those struggles to keep our feet on the ground.

Observation number 2 is the cause of for David's successes. Verse 14 reminds the reader in case we had forgotten that there is an explanation for David's success. The reason David succeeded is that "the LORD was with him." And yet it is worth noting here that while the Lord's presence with David made him successful, he was not passive. He was not sedentary. David did not just sit there and watch success flow to him. There is this "going out and coming in" language. Verse 5 says "David went out and was successful." Verse 13 says, "he went out and came in before the people." He would go out to fight and come in to rest and celebrate. The power of God upon him moved him to battle. It moved him to lead men into battle. They went out and they came in and they were successful in the midst of their efforts.

God grants success to his children. But he demands diligence and effort. He calls for exertion and intention. The Spirit of God produces fruit in the life of the believer. It because God is with us that we experience spiritual success—that is obedience and our growth in the likeness of Christ. But the scriptures are clear that our success, will not be had without "going out and coming in." Keeping in step with the Spirit means taking steps. Peter fleshes this out in the first section of his second epistle. On the one hand, he says (verse 3) God's "divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness." Peter declares that God "has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them [we] may become partakers of the divine nature." But then he says, "For this very reason, make every effort," and then he says, "be all the more diligent."

God gives Christ's followers success in godliness, in doing the daily battles with the world, the flesh, and the devil. But he grants it as we work out our faith in Christ and apply ourselves toward sanctification. So, live this way. Looking unto Jesus, run the race. This is not earning one's salvation. This is working out what God has already given.

A final overflow of David's success jumps out at us . . .

#### **IV. A National Wave of Endearment.**

This theme runs through the verses of our text this morning. David's success was becoming well-known and was celebrated by the nation of Israel. Verse 5 says, "this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants." Verses 6 and 7 recount the dancing women who were celebrating that David had struck down his ten thousands. And then there is verse 16 which says, "all Israel and Judah loved David."

The people wanted a king to go out and fight their battles, to protect and defend them. And this is what David is doing. And the hearts of the people rejoice in his work on their behalf. They love him. And doesn't this bring us back to where we were at the beginning of the chapter with the love of Jonathan for David? And it raises again the question of our love for Jesus.

Christ Jesus came and won the victory. Paul wrote the Corinthians that "the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." He overcame and has sat down at the right hand of God. The sins of those who turn in faith to Jesus have been washed away by the shedding of his blood. We are justified. We are being sanctified. And we shall be glorified.

Our victory song should ring loud and strong like that of Wesley:

O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise  
the glories of my God and king; the triumphs of his grace

His love my heart has captive made, His captive would I be,  
For He was bound, and scourged and died, My captive soul to free.

He breaks the power of canceled sin, He sets the prisoner free;  
His blood can make the foulest clean; His blood availed for me.

So now Thy blessed Name I love, Thy will would e'er be mine.  
Had I a thousand hearts to give, My Lord, they all were Thine!

What a friend we have in Jesus, but are we a loving, soul-knit friend to him?

### **Conclusion**

A grateful America loved its commander and first president. A grateful Israel loved its brave and godly war hero. How much more so shall a grateful church love, serve, and sacrifice for the Lord Jesus who has fought our supreme battle with the greatest enemy of all time and rendered it completely impotent and shattered.