

“The Rare Jewel of Loyalty”
1 Samuel 19:1-17
(Preached at Trinity, August 27, 2017)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. It was September 17, 1994. LSU and Auburn met for what would be one of the most memorable games in SEC football history. LSU quickly took the lead and went into the fourth quarter with a 23-9 lead. LSU quarterback, Jamie Howard, had enjoyed an impressive college career at LSU. He was the third leading passer in LSU history. This game, however, was a nightmarish disaster. This insurmountable lead evaporated after several interceptions and Auburn won the game. LSU fans responded with a terrible display of disloyalty. Jamie Howard suddenly went from the beloved champion to the object of vitriol from grown men idolizing a game.
2. This serves as a vivid example of the terrible absence of loyalty today. Examples of disloyalty are all around us.
 1. Husbands and wives are unfaithful to each other
 2. Many members of the modern church have little loyalty to their church – Most agree today that loyalty to church is almost non-existent. People leave their church at the slightest provocation always looking for something new or better.
 3. Pastors will leave their churches for no higher reason than a better offer. On the flip-side pastors find themselves out of a job often because of pettiness with the members of the church or simply a desire for change. Where is the loyalty?
 4. Businesses will lay-off employees who have served faithfully for years. At the same time, employees are seldom loyal to their employer. The rule of today is keep your resume’ polished and send it out often.
 5. People used to be loyal to their neighborhood grocery store. Now businesses seldom enjoy customer loyalty.
 6. Worst of all, few professing Christians show unwavering loyalty to Christ. They find it all too easy to compromise.
3. What a refreshing breath of fresh air when we find a display of loyalty and faithfulness.
 - A. Past generations knew the meaning of loyalty
 - a. Loyalty to country – men enlisted to fight for their country – often lying about age.
Nathan Hale was an American soldier for the Continental Army sent to gather intelligence. He was captured and sentenced to be hung. His final words: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."
 - b. To friends, to neighborhoods, to businesses
Most important, to God, to Church and to the ministry.

- B. In my 30 years of pastoral ministry I've seen many examples of faithfulness that have been wonderful sources of encouragement. I've also sadly seen examples of disloyalty.
- Proverbs 20:6 NAU** - "Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, But who can find a trustworthy man?"
- Proverbs 18:24 NAU** - "But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."
4. Loyalty is a character trait that must be held in high honor and given great value. Most would see themselves as loyal people, but few can actually express the meaning of the word. It is used so often today. We say of politicians, "He is a loyal American." What does that mean?
 5. In Martin Luther King's *I have a Dream* speech he spoke, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."
 - He recognized the importance of character.
 - Few today can even identify what good character is.
 6. Parents have a great responsibility to instill good character in their children. We must teach them the importance of honesty and integrity, kindness and compassion, respect and honor, graciousness and forgiveness—and faithfulness and loyalty.
 7. Loyalty is especially important when promises or covenants have been made. This would include our relationship with Christ as well as other covenant commitments such as marriage and church membership.
 - In **Chapter 20** David asks Jonathan to be true to his covenant promise.
 - 1 Samuel 20:8 NAU** - "Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you."
 8. What we see here in **Chapter 19** are examples of loyalty.
 - A. First of all, we see again the unflinching loyalty of Jonathan.
 1. As we've seen, Jonathan was a remarkable man of faith and virtue. There are few men in the Bible that are held forth as models of virtue. Daniel was one of these. We find nothing in Daniel that could be describe as a moral failure. This doesn't mean he didn't sin. It's that he never brought a reproach of such that God revealed it to us. Jonathan is another one of these examples.
 - The Bible doesn't bear record of Jonathans vices, only of his vibrant faith and love for God, and of his loyalty.
 2. He is portrayed as one who was loyal and faithful. As I pointed out before his virtue gave Jonathan the qualities that are demanded in a friendship.
 3. Jonathan was a man of faith and love for God and he loved David because David also shared these virtues.
 4. As Saul became increasingly jealous of David, Jonathan continually came to his defense. We must note that Jonathan would have been loyal to his father as well. But loyalty must never lead us to embrace evil. It was righteous loyalty that led Jonathan to defend David. Jonathan made covenant with David and would remain faithful to that covenant.

5. Jonathan always seemed to be there when David was in need. He was a wonderful source of strength and encouragement.
1 Samuel 23:15-17 NAU - "Now David became aware that Saul had come out to seek his life while David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. ¹⁶ And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged him in God. ¹⁷ Thus he said to him, "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father will not find you, and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also."
 6. Jonathan's heart towards David was always, "Whatever you need, I'll be there for you." That is loyalty.
1 Samuel 20:4 NAU - "Then Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."
 7. **Chapter 16** opens with Saul unveiling his plan to kill David. Upon hearing his father's scheme, Jonathan steps up to defend David. Jonathan was willing to stand up for David even if it meant alienating his father.
1 Samuel 19:4-5 NAU - "Then Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Do not let the king sin against his servant David, since he has not sinned against you, and since his deeds *have been* very beneficial to you. ⁵ "For he took his life in his hand and struck the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel; you saw *it* and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by putting David to death without a cause?"
1 Samuel 20:30 NAU - "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?"
 8. Every leader experiences the sorrow of those who are disloyal. David surely knew this pain – He experienced it in Saul, Abner, even his own son, Absalom. But how encouraging it must have been to have a friend like Jonathan, a man of unflinching loyalty.
- B. We must not miss David's own loyalty to Saul. He went wherever Saul sent him and faithfully served him despite Saul's threats and abuse.
1 Samuel 19:4-5 NAU - "Then Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Do not let the king sin against his servant David, since he has not sinned against you, and since his deeds *have been* very beneficial to you. ⁵ "For he took his life in his hand and struck the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel; you saw *it* and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by putting David to death without a cause?"
1. The innocence and loyalty of David will be a major theme for the rest of this Book.
 2. David was always a faithful and loyal servant to Saul
- C. And then there's Michal, David's wife and Saul's daughter.
1. She stands as an example of much of the loyalty we see today—partial loyalty. She was loyal, but hers was a loyalty easily forsaken—like the LSU fans I set before you earlier.

2. Like her brother Jonathan, Michal had to take a stand against her murderous father. As a loyal wife, she stood with David, her husband and helped him escape.
 3. But she then easily became a false witness, caring little for the reputation of her husband. She claimed David threatened to kill her.
1 Samuel 19:17 NAU - "And Michal said to Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I put you to death?'"
 4. Loyalty that is faithful one moment, and then turns against you the next is not true loyalty.
9. Let us consider for a few minutes the great value of this rare jewel of loyalty
- I. Loyalty is a character trait that demands a selfless commitment to faithfulness
- A. This is demonstrated in our text by David, Jonathan, and Michal
1. In all three cases it demanded personal risk
 - a. David served Saul even under danger. It wasn't until death was a near certainty that David fled.
1 Samuel 20:3 NAU - "But truly as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is hardly a step between me and death."
 - b. Jonathan faced the increasing insanity of his father, even as his own life was threatened.
1 Samuel 20:32-33 NAU - "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"
 - c. And what bold action of Michal in concealing her husband's escape from her father.
1 Samuel 19:13-14 NAU - "Michal took the household idol and laid *it* on the bed, and put a quilt of goats' *hair* at its head, and covered *it* with clothes. ¹⁴ When Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick."
 2. People often seem to be concerned only for themselves
2 Timothy 3:1-2 – "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ² For men shall be lovers of their own selves. . ."
- a. We are all keenly loyal to ourselves. We are self-willed, even when our wills come into conflict with God. This is the ultimate theme of this section of Scripture. Saul has been rejected by God and David has been anointed. This is the account of Saul seeking to usurp the will of God.
 - b. Self-will can lead to the abandoning of our integrity if we determine it is in our own best self-interest.
 - c. Loyalty demands looking outside ourselves. It demands faithfulness to something or someone outside ourselves.

- B. Loyalty also demands the ability to look beyond the failures of our fallen world
1. Was David perfect? No, he was but a man. But Jonathan remained loyal to him none-the-less.
 2. David was loyal to Saul even though Saul was unworthy of such faithfulness. Why? Because David knew that God had set Saul apart as his leader.
1 Samuel 24:4-6 NAU - "The men of David said to him, "Behold, *this is* the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly.
⁵ It came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's *robe*. ⁶ So he said to his men, "Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD'S anointed."
 3. It is a sad testimony when we see a dog demonstrate greater loyalty to his master than we often express in our relationships. Even when the master is abusive and harsh, the dog continues in unwavering loyalty. But as human beings, our loyalty isn't characterized by blind devotion but by a willful choice to be faithful.
 4. Sinful man demands perfection in others. We find it easy to be critical. Loyalty doesn't demand perfection.
 - Your country isn't perfect but you can be loyal to it as a faithful, law-abiding citizen.
 - Your church isn't perfect but you can be loyal to it as an expression of your covenant promise to labor for its prosperity and comfort.
 - Your pastors are not perfect but God has raised them up as your leaders.
 - Your husband isn't perfect but you can submit to him in faithfulness and loyalty.
 - Your wife isn't perfect, but you can love her sacrificially, denying your own agenda while faithfully looking to her needs.

II. Our chief problem with loyalty is our lack of loyalty to God.

- A. In all of the previous examples God expects loyalty
1. God sets the parameters of authority and leadership
 2. God sets the parameters of our responsibility to others.
 3. We owe our supreme loyalty to God. Our failures in our other loyalties reflect our loyalty to God.

For example, when we refuse to submit to our civil authority our chief problem is with God.

Romans 13:1-2 NAU - "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. ² Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves."

- B. God demonstrates to us unwavering faithfulness and loyalty
1. He will never forsake His covenant with us.
 2. He will never waver in His love for us, even when we are unfaithful.
2 Timothy 2:13 NAU - "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."
 3. Jeremiah writes of God's faithfulness
Lamentations 3:22-23 NAU - "The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness."

Conclusion:

1. Do you understand the importance of loyalty? Are you a loyal person? Most of us struggle with this. Are you loyal to one another as the body of Christ—or do you find yourself to self-consumed?
2. Do you express loyalty with a friend face to face, but then talk about them behind their back. The Bible describes this as double-tongued.
1 Timothy 3:8 NAU - "Deacons likewise *must be* men of dignity, not double-tongued"
3. Are you loyal to God and His Word? Are you unwavering in your commitment or do you find yourself often falling into compromise because it is more expedient?
4. What a wonderful virtue is loyalty. As I stated before, our loyalty isn't like the blind affection of a dog. We make willful choices to be loyal, even when it costs us; even when it is difficult. We value the covenant relationships in which God calls us to be faithful. May God be pleased to strengthen us making us faithful and loyal in all of our relationships. May loyalty be part of our character that we display in this world.