18 July 2015: David and Jonathan 1 Pr Greg Yeager

When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father’s house. 3 Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that he was wearing, and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

1. **Who needs a friend? Why are they friends? Because they love the same things! Everyone needs a friend, but especially God’s chosen, because it’s a cruel world out there, and we need all the help we can get.**

5 David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him; as a result, Saul set him over the army. And all the people, even the servants of Saul, approved.

**So far, people are helpful – but people can be trouble too.**

6 As they were coming home, when David returned from killing the Philistine, the women came out of all the towns of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments. 7 And the women sang to one another as they made merry, “Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” 8 Saul was very angry, for this saying displeased him. He said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands; what more can he have but the kingdom?” 9 So Saul eyed David from that day on.

 **Can’t Saul get some love? If you have a king, then the king comes first, no matter what. Arthur comes before Lancelot,. Simple as that!**

10 The next day an evil spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house, while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand; 11 and Saul threw the spear, for he thought, “I will pin David to the wall.” But David eluded him twice.

 **What’s not said, in this lovely bit. First of all, David is one busy poet warrior – marching in and out, getting out of his armor, quick, so he can tune his lyre. That’s a tough gig.**

**Then, Saul, suddenly, hey, there’s a spear in my hand! How’d that get there? And we get the nugget of information, David eluded him twice. You know, I’d only have to elude the king one time, right? Oh, you don’t like that song? Okay, what about this one? No, throw a spear at the musician, and the music is done for the night. Generally.**

12 Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him but had departed from Saul. 13 So Saul removed him from his presence, and made him a commander of a thousand; and David marched out and came in, leading the army. 14 David had success in all his undertakings; for the Lord was with him. 15 When Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in awe of him. 16 But all Israel and Judah loved David; for it was he who marched out and came in leading them.

 **So, Lancelot is taking over from Arthur, what’s to do? Throw some more family at him!**

17 Then Saul said to David, “Here is my elder daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife; only be valiant for me and fight the Lord’s battles.” For Saul thought, “I will not raise a hand against him; let the Philistines deal with him.” 18 David said to Saul, “Who am I and who are my kinsfolk, my father’s family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?” 19 But at the time when Saul’s daughter Merab should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife.

 **Have you ever heard about biblical, traditional marriage? Maybe you’ve heard about a recent, oh, I don’t know, dust up over the biblical view of marriage over against, say, worldly views of marriage. That’s cool. I understand. Everyone whose ever watched Game of Thrones, and I know you’re out there, yeah, you know what I mean. The bible is depressingly ambiguous about certain things that we think are set in stone. Faith, hope, love, these things ARE bedrock. You know as well as I do, grace, forgiveness, mercy, justice. These things are written in the fabric of the universe, in the bones of the earth, in the wind and light and fire of creation. But ‘biblical marriage,’ ‘biblical values,’…People quote Jesus all the time when he says, (in Matthew 19)**

“Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

**The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”**

*NO ONE EVER QUOTES THE DISCIPLES! And believe me, no one quotes Jesus after this, either where he goes on and on about eunuchs. We spay and neuter our animals, thanks. But, hey, didn’t God say ‘be fruitful and multiply?’ Right? Nope. Not a lot of folks, left or right talking about being eunuchs. And I don’t either.*

 *And don’t go thinking that King Saul is a bad example of biblical marriage, because the next king is this very David here, the “Man after God’s own heart.” Right? So did David marry one nice Israelite girl and stay faithful to her his whole life? Did they have a ‘Biblical Marriage’? Well, in so far as David is IN the bible, whatever marriage he HAD was in fact BIBLICAL. We’ll find out when we get to Second Samuel, but I can leak a spoiler right now, David dealt with women in his life worse than King Saul EVER did. David is NOT the poster child for one man one woman together forever till death do us part. Nope. People change. God does not change. People change. We are three thousand years removed from Saul and David. We’re not looking for examples of how to live Christian lives here. We’re looking for God in their lives. And things that DO NOT CHANGE. Like friendship. Like love. These things abide. And we want to tell the difference between what’s changing and what’s eternal, so we don’t value what’s changing in our lives, but instead what is eternal here right now.*

20 Now Saul’s daughter Michal loved David. Saul was told, and the thing pleased him. 21 Saul thought, **“Let me give her to him that she may be a snare for him** and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.” Therefore Saul said to David a second time, “You shall now be my son-in-law.”

*22 Saul commanded his servants, “Speak to David in private and say, ‘See, the king is delighted with you, and all his servants love you; now then, become the king’s son-in-law.’” 23 So Saul’s servants reported these words to David in private. And David said, “Does it seem to you a little thing to become the king’s son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man and of no repute?” 24 The servants of Saul told him, “This is what David said.” 25 Then Saul said, “Thus shall you say to David,*

‘The king desires no marriage present except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, that he may be avenged on the king’s enemies.’”

 **So, about these foreskins. Israelites hated Philistines. Philistines were the enemy of God. David didn’t go fight the King’s battles. He didn’t fight for freedom, or an Israelite way of life, or what ever. He went to fight ‘The Lord’s Battles.’ Anyone ever said to you, ‘Go, Bob, and fight the Lord’s battles.’ Where would you go? What weapons would you bring? Where would you find the enemy? That’s a tough one! Where are the Lord’s Battles to be fought?**

 *So some miserable sinner shot up a recruiting station in Chattanooga this week, and four Marines and one Sailor are killed, along with the perpetrator. Of course its not long after that hits the news then there’s a new call for some kind of crusade. Like we’re not serious about terrorism, and all of Islam is at war with all of us, and we have to wake up, and I don’t know, go kill even more people in the Middle East.*

*Because we’ve lived through a lot of war. The Revolution was eight long years. The Civil War lasted four years. World Wars One and Two combined maybe seven years total. Korea was three years tops. Vietnam in the 1960’s, was almost ten years long. We’ve been in Afghanistan since 2002. That’s thirteen years of war, including the whole Iraq adventure, thirteen years of the Global War on Terror. We also, lest we forget, are engaged in a War on Drugs, and if you remember even farther back, we waged a War on Poverty! These are wars on IDEAS. It’s hard to blow up an idea. To surround it and cut off its reinforcements. Our last battle exercise back when I was at the Basic School in Quantico with my fellow shiny second lieutenant Marine buddies, we had to drive a Soviet armored division out of Harper’s Ferry, Virginia. It was never exactly clear how this Soviet army had made it up the Potomac River, but there they were, ready to get pummeled by the best the Marine Corps could drum up in the summer of 1987. At least there WAS an enemy we could find – a map we could look at and say, “Here they are, let’s go get them.”*

*But when you fight a war against an idea, it just becomes so difficult. Your weapons are NOT sword and spear, or drone, or missile or assault rifle. Your weapons are reason, and justice, and perseverance, and courage, and finally, your weapons are grace, and hope, and forgiveness, and love. Those are the only weapons we have. THEY ARE THE ONLY WEAPONS THAT WORK! They are NOT flashy, you can’t take one out and polish it on the kitchen table when your daughter’s going out on a date. That sucks.*

 *I would much rather have a response team that was ready to go. Okay, you shoot up a recruiting station in Chattanooga? Okay, here let’s see you handle THIS! Some big bomb. Some explosion that brings the perps to justice. That evens the score that ends the threat! That will show them never to mess with us again! We’ll get some payback!*

 *But beloved, don’t believe what the angry voices on the television scream at you: Muslims are NOT the Philistines. To kill Muslims is NOT to fight the Lord’s battles, any more than killing native Americans was fighting the Lord’s battles, or killing anyone else because of their religion, or race!*

*I don’t know. I wish it were simple. Because if there IS a Lord’s Battle, it’s a battle for the heart, not Real Estate. And if there is a Lord’s Battle, it’s not a Right-Left, Conservative-Liberal, Redstate Bluestate battle.*

*Your weapons are reason, and justice, and perseverance, and courage, and your weapons are grace, and hope, and forgiveness, and love.*

*We think we live in crazy times. Some of us lived through the 1960’s, when we had another forever war, and what did our prophets finally speak that was true? Martin Luther King Jr, said “This is our hope, this is the faith that I go back to the South with, with this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a symphony of brotherhood.*

*And another prophet simply sang out, “Love is all you need.”*

*Because God is love. There is no deeper truth in all the bible, in all of history, in all creation than this simple yet mystifying claim: God is love.*

 *So if you’re angry about Chattanooga, believe me, you are not angrier than I am. Those are MY brothers dead there. My people, just as sure as you are my people here. And if I thought for a minute that another bomb, another invasion, another bajillion dollars we’d have to borrow from China would make a shred of difference, maybe I’d be up for some payback, too. I’d love to see some of the Lord’s enemies blown to bits.*

 *But it wouldn’t change a thing. No vengeance will make a difference. Only love can change the world. Jesus was clear on that, too. “Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.” These are the hardest, truest, deepest words in scripture. They are inscribed by the finger of God into the bedrock of creation. They are insanely difficult, and many have sought easier solutions. But again, we’re not here in First Samuel to learn the changing things, we’re here to learn the eternal things. Things that last forever. Things that don’t change – but instead, they change the world. Love your enemies. God is love. Love is All. You. Need.*

 *All the rest of this is the same – King Saul plans things to entrap David, and it all goes David’s way. Maybe, just maybe if King Saul had loved David like everyone else seemed to, maybe things would have turned out differently. But there it is.*

Now Saul planned to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. 26 When his servants told David these words, David was well pleased to be the king’s son-in-law.

Before the time had expired, 27 David rose and went, along with his men, and killed one hundred of the Philistines; and David brought their foreskins, which were given in full number to the king, that he might become the king’s son-in-law. Saul gave him his daughter Michal as a wife. 28 But when Saul realized that the Lord was with David, and that Saul’s daughter Michal loved him, 29 Saul was still more afraid of David. So Saul was David’s enemy from that time forward.

30 Then the commanders of the Philistines came out to battle; and as often as they came out, David had more success than all the servants of Saul, so that his fame became very great.