

The Book of 1Samuel—18:1-16

“Allies and Enemies”

(11/22/15)

1 Samuel 18:1-16 (NKJV)

¹ Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ² Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. ³ Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. ⁴ And Jonathan took off the robe that *was* on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt. ⁵ So David went out wherever Saul sent him, *and* behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. ⁶ Now it had happened as they were coming *home*, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. ⁷ So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands." ⁸ Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *only* thousands. Now *what* more can he have but the kingdom?" ⁹ So Saul eyed David from that day forward. ¹⁰ And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played *music* with his hand, as at other times; but *there was* a spear in Saul's hand. ¹¹ And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice. ¹² Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul.

¹³ Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. ¹⁴ And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the LORD *was* with him. ¹⁵ Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him. ¹⁶ But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

I've chosen to call this message *“Allies and Enemies”*.

As God's servants we can be sure that ministry will bring with it those that love us and will stand by our side to support us, pray for us and encourage us in the work God has called us to—they are allies.

But then there will be those that hate us, oppose us, and will do whatever they can to discourage and defeat us in our work for God—these are enemies.

Now when I say 'enemies' I'm not talking about the enemies we face in the world when doing the work of God—I'm talking about fellow believers that, for whatever reason, set themselves against us as our enemies.

We see this come through in our passage this morning.

In this passage David has just gotten done killing Goliath—a nine and a half foot tall Philistine warrior that every soldier in Israel, including Saul, was afraid to fight.

But here comes this teen age shepherd boy from Bethlehem, David the son of Jesse, who by the power of God goes up against Goliath, kills him and cuts his head off as a trophy.

This instantly made David a beloved figure in Israel and initially caused Saul to love David as well—

1 Samuel 17:55-58; 18:2 (NKJV)

⁵⁵ When Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son *is* this youth?" And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I do not know." ⁵⁶ So the king said, "Inquire whose son this young man *is*." ⁵⁷ Then, as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. ⁵⁸ And Saul said to him, "Whose son *are* you, young man?" So David answered, "*I am* the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."...

1 Samuel 18:2 (NKJV)

² Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore.

So initially Saul loved David—however as we’re going to see his love for David eventually turned into hate.

However before we look at Saul I want to look at Jonathan and his heart for David.

I. Jonathan—Ally of David

1 Samuel 18:1, 3-4 (NKJV)

¹ Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul...³ Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. ⁴ And Jonathan took off the robe that *was* on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

Jonathan and David loved each other as deeply as any flesh and blood brothers could have.

Theirs was a deep friendship love, holy, beautiful and completely undefiled by any homosexuality as some perverted people have maintained.

I want you to see here what Jonathan was saying when he put his robe and armor on David and then gave to him his sword and bow—

He was saying, *“I know that God has anointed you as the next king of Israel and I support you in your calling as the Lord has determined.”*

Now that’s quite a statement for Jonathan to make seeing as he was next in line for the throne as Saul’s oldest son—and yet Jonathan didn’t let jealousy, pride or a sense of entitlement control him—he simply bowed to the will of God and sought to support David.

Jonathan's humility in this is amazing and reminds us of the humility of another John in Scripture—John the Baptist... *"I am filled with joy at His success—He must increase but I must decrease"* (John 3:25-30)

Jonathan and David then entered into a covenant with each other that when David became king, Jonathan would be second in command (20:16–17, 42; 23:16–18), and David covenanted to protect Jonathan's family from being slain.

Some have wondered how rivals could wind up being such close friends—it was because each man had a genuine and deep relationship with the Lord and His glory not their own was at the heart of it.

Whenever I see Christians competing with each other or fighting for the spot light in ministry it tells me that they don't have a deep relationship with the Lord—because if they did they would be focused on His glory and not on their own glory and recognition.

So Jonathan was an ally to David—but Saul was an enemy.

II. Saul—Enemy of David

As I said earlier, initially Saul loved David, but things changed quickly when a new song hit the charts in Israel

1 Samuel 18:5-9 (NKJV)

⁵ So David went out wherever Saul sent him, *and* behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. ⁶ Now it had happened as they were coming *home*, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. ⁷ So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."

⁸ Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *only* thousands. Now *what* more can he have but the kingdom?" ⁹ So Saul eyed David [with suspicion] from that day forward.

Now Saul knew that God was replacing him as King in Israel (1Sam.13:14 and 15:23)—up until this point he didn't know who his replacement was going to be.

But as time went on and David began to have more and more success in battle and his fame increased more and more—Saul started to realize that David was the one God had chosen to replace him.

However unlike Jonathan who embraced God's will in making David King—Saul opposed it and tried to overthrow it by seeking to kill David thus removing him as a threat to Saul's reign.

1 Samuel 18:10-11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played *music* with his hand, as at other times; but *there was* a spear in Saul's hand. ¹¹ And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice.

One pastor summed up Saul's murderous anger as the result of envy—

"Envy is a dangerous and insidious enemy, a cancer that slowly eats out our inner life and leads us to say and do terrible things. Proverbs 14:30 rightly calls it "the rottenness of the bones." Envy is the pain we feel within when somebody achieves or receives what we think belongs to us. Envy is the sin of successful people who can't stand to see others reach the heights they have reached and eventually replace them. By nature, we are proud and want to be recognized and applauded; and from childhood we have been taught to compete with others... But envy easily leads to anger, and anger is often the first step toward murder (Matt. 5:21–26). This explains why Saul threw his spear at David while David was trying to soothe the king and help him overcome his depression."

This brings up another important point—it's up to us to choose if life's experiences are going to make us bitter or better—if we're going to obey God or fight against His will for our lives.

And as such it's up to us to decide what we're going to carry around with us—a harp or a spear.

Listen to what another pastor had to say about this—

“In David's hand was a harp—an instrument of worship. In Saul's hand was a spear—an instrument of war. In Saul's hand was an instrument of hurting. In David's hand was an instrument of healing. What is in your hand—worship or war, healing or hurting? Saul and David are both leaders. Both have been anointed. But one is on his way down, while the other is on his way up. You can always tell if you're on the way up or on the way down by what instrument is in your hand. A person who is losing the anointing, who is diminishing in calling, will be throwing spears, cutting people down with harsh words. Have you thrown a spear today? Have you made your “point”? When Saul threw the spear at David, this one who slew a giant, he didn't throw it back.”

Listen to me, the more you seek to ‘kill’ another child of God (not literally but kill their character, their ministry, their reputation) the more you will open the door in your own life to be oppressed and tormented by the devil.

1 Samuel 18:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house...

You're probably thinking, *“What in the world is going on here? God sent a distressing spirit upon Saul—I don't understand!”*

As Saul set himself against David the Lord allowed an evil spirit to torment him—why?

Because as God promised His people through the prophet Isaiah—*“No weapon formed against you shall prosper...This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD”*

And that also applies to a Christian that forms himself or herself into a weapon against another believer—a weapon of gossip or slander to destroy them—they will not prosper either.

In fact not only will they not prosper spiritually—it will open the door to demonic oppression manifesting itself in anxiety, stress, depression, fear, anger etc.

Look, it wasn't David's fault that God had removed His hand from Saul's life and had placed it on David's life.

Saul refused to obey God while David was loyal to God.

God called David a man after His heart who would do all He commanded him—this was not the case with Saul.

But instead of Saul repenting and getting his life right with God he chose to blame David for the Lord rejecting him and tried to kill David.

Now because Saul refused to see himself honestly, because he refused to get his life right with God—it began a downward spiral in his life.

He became more and more paranoid, tormented and phobic—he even tried to kill his own son Jonathan (1Sam.20:33) because he wouldn't side with him against David.

Often those who are your friends will turn on you if you don't take their side against their enemies. (Comment)

Saul became so paranoid, delusional and dangerous that God stopped talking to him—so that he even sought out a medium to contact God for him—the witch of Endor.

That was the last straw and within 24 hours God removed Saul from the earth.

Near the end of his life Saul summed up his life with words that could have been inscribed on his tombstone—*“Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly.”* (1Samuel 26:21)

There have been more than a few of God’s people where that statement could be the epitaph that sums up their life—Samson is one that comes to mind.

What are they going to write on your tombstone when you’re gone—

“Here lies a wise man (or woman)—they lived for God and have no regrets.” Or

“Here lies a person that played the fool in life and erred exceedingly—they refused to live for God and have nothing but regrets.”

I am told that there is an inscription on a gravestone in an old British cemetery not far from Windsor Castle. It reads:

*“Pause, my friend, as you walk by;
As you are now, so once was I.
As I am now, so you will be.
Prepare, my friend, to follow me!”*

A visitor who read that epitaph added these lines:

*“To follow you is not my intent,
Until I know which way you went!”*

Let me bring this to a close.

In ministry you're going to have people come against you—it's a given.

How do you handle it?

Matthew 5:43-47 (NLT)

⁴³ “You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴ But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! ⁴⁵ In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. ⁴⁶ If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. ⁴⁷ If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that.

Romans 12:17-21 (NLT)

¹⁷ Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. ¹⁸ Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

¹⁹ Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the LORD. ²⁰ Instead, “If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.” ²¹ Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

However you must counterbalance the enemies that come against you by surrounding yourself with people that will encourage you, stand with you and love you—these will build you up as others seek to tear you down.

But please understand, I'm not talking about surrounding yourself with “yes” people that will always tell you what you want to hear—

Proverbs 27:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend...

Psalm 141:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Let the righteous strike me; *It shall be* a kindness. And let him rebuke me; *It shall be* as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it...

Those that really love you will challenge you at times because they love you—they will tell you what you need to hear not necessarily what you want to hear.

It's a strange and tragic reality that those who are supposed to be soldiers in the same war fighting on the same side against a common enemy (the devil) will often turn on each other and begin to fight against one another—it's tragic but it happens.

You can't control how people treat you—but you can control how you treat them.

The only question you need to answer is what are you going to be to other believers?

Will you be a Jonathan or a Saul—an ally or an enemy?

Will you be someone that is envious of other's success or will you rejoice with them at what God is doing in their lives?

I'll warn you—it's not easy for the “selfie” generation to become a selfless generation.

It starts with your walk with God and who's glory you're most concerned with—His or yours.