

34. The Book of 1Samuel—20:1-42

“Guided and Misguided Loyalty”

(1/17/16)

As we continue in our study of 1Samuel we come to chapter 20.

As we saw last week King Saul hated David and wanted to kill him because he saw David as a threat to his reign and to his legacy.

Now as we study chapter 20 and we look beyond the obvious theme (Saul’s desire to kill David) I see a secondary theme emerge—that of LOYALTY—and in particular the issue of *guided and misguided loyalty*.

I think we would all agree that loyalty (faithfulness) is a good thing.

Loyalty to your spouse; loyalty to your friends; loyalty to your birth family, to your adopted family, to your church family and to your country are all good things—but only if those loyalties are second and subject to your loyalty to God Almighty.

So when I say that loyalty to your spouse is good but only if your loyalty to God comes first I mean that if your spouse should ever want you to do something that God has forbidden or tells you not to do something He has commanded—then you must obey God because that’s where your primary loyalty lies.

And the same goes for your friends, your family, your boss, your country—all of these loyalties must take a back seat to your loyalty to God and His Word.

This then becomes the core teaching of our lesson today and must be the foundational principle upon which our Christian lives are built.

This will be tested and challenged more and more in our country in the coming months and years.

If you've been paying attention you've noticed how our government and in particular some of the leaders of our military have branded evangelical Christians as great a threat to our nation's security as any Islamic terrorist group?

And the reason for that is because they understand and are concerned that our primary loyalty belongs to God and not to the State.

And for those that want the State to be supreme they demand absolute loyalty to the government and its totalitarian dogmas—which means that any other loyalty that supersedes a person's loyalty to the State whether it be to family, friends and especially to God will not be tolerated and therefore must be eliminated.

Now this is what we see going on in our text this morning.

King Saul, who represented the State, saw David as a threat to his power and authority and therefore sought to eliminate the threat by having David killed.

And why did Saul see David as a threat to his kingdom—because God had told Saul that he would be removed as king and replaced with another because Saul wasn't loyal to God and refused to obey what God told him to do. (1Sam.13:13-14; 15:23)

Now because of David's success on the battlefield and because the nation loved David and constantly sang his praises—Saul had come to believe that David was the man God had chosen to replace him.

If that wasn't bad enough for a paranoid psychopath like Saul his own son Jonathan was more loyal to David than to him—which brings to our first main point:

I. Godly Guided Loyalty

1 Samuel 20:1-9, 13 (NKJV)

¹ Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What *is* my iniquity, and what *is* my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

² So Jonathan said to him, "By no means! You shall not die! Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing from me? *It is not so!*" ³ Then David took an oath again, and said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, *as* the LORD lives and *as* your soul lives, *there is* but a step between me and death." ⁴ So Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you yourself desire, I will do *it* for you." ⁵ And David said to Jonathan, "Indeed tomorrow *is* the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat [Numbers 28:11-15]. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third *day* at evening." ⁶ If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked *permission* of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' ⁷ If he says thus: '*It is well,*' your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, *then* be sure that evil is determined by him. ⁸ Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. Nevertheless, if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?" ⁹ But Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?" ¹³ ... But if it pleases my father *to do* you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And the LORD be with you as He has been with my father.

Why was Jonathan so loyal to David—even above his own father?

"Because Jonathan loved David and because they were best friends."

Well that's true but you need to understand that the real basis for Jonathan's loyalty to David wasn't his friendship with David—it was because of his (Jonathan's) loyalty to God.

You see when Jonathan said to David in v.13 **“And the LORD be with you as He has been with my father”** he was acknowledging the fact that God had anointed David to be the next king of Israel.

Saul opposed God’s will in this matter and sought to kill David so that he would never ascend to the throne.

But Jonathan was a man of God who sought to honor and obey the will of God with all of his heart.

And it was because Jonathan loved God and was loyal to His will that he could show such loyalty to David and vice versa.

We see in this passage that Jonathan and David made a covenant with each—first of all that Jonathan would protect David from his father (v.8); and then that David would treat Jonathan and his family with kindness once he became king—

1 Samuel 20:14-17 (NKJV)

¹⁴ **And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die; ¹⁵ but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” ¹⁶ So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “Let the LORD require it at the hand of David's enemies.” ¹⁷ Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.**

Godly loyalty toward others is always rooted in our loyalty to God and His Word.

It isn’t primarily rooted in friendship or family or country—it’s rooted in our commitment to God and His Word which is the only kind of loyalty that God recognizes as good and legitimate.

And that brings us to our second main point—

II. Ungodly Misguided Loyalty

1 Samuel 20:24-34 (NKJV)

²⁴ Then David hid in the field. And when the New Moon had come, the king sat down to eat the feast. ²⁵ Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall. And Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. ²⁶ Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him; he *is* unclean, surely he *is* unclean." ²⁷ And it happened the next day, the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, either yesterday or today?" ²⁸ So Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked *permission* of me *to go* to Bethlehem." ²⁹ And he said, 'Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me *to be there*. And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me get away and see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the king's table." ³⁰ Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious *woman*! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?" ³¹ For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die." ³² And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?" ³³ Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David. ³⁴ So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had treated him shamefully.

Saul was furious with Jonathan because he was siding with and showing more loyalty to David than to him.

You see even though Saul was going against God's will and was trying to kill a righteous man—Saul still thought that Jonathan's loyalty should have been with him and not with David because they were family.

That folks is ungodly misguided loyalty—the kind that puts loyalty to family, friends or anyone else before God.

Luke 14:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. (Explain)

I really felt the need to bring all of this out because of what I see going on around us in the church today.

There are professing Christians who are more loyal to a person or to a group of people than they are to God.

I'm sure that most of you remember that in the middle of December a political science professor at Wheaton College named Larycia Hawkins announced she would be wearing a hijab during Advent to show her solidarity with Muslims whom she believed were being unfairly scrutinized in the wake of the terror attacks in Paris, France, and San Bernardino, California.

She said on her Facebook page, *"I stand in religious solidarity with Muslims because they, like me, a Christian, are people of the book. And as Pope Francis stated last week, we worship the same God."*

Let me say categorically that Christians and Muslims DO NOT worship the same God.

Allah is the pagan moon god, war god, and sword god of the ancient Quraysh people of Mecca in Arabia.

Many people don't know that, they believe that Allah is just another name for the God of the Bible.

But Allah is anything but the God of the Bible—Allah lacks the attributes of the Christian God such as holiness, grace and love.

1. Allah is a distant god with whom no one can have a personal relationship unlike the God of the Bible.
2. Allah is not a god of love as the God of the Bible is. Allah's love is conditional and capricious. Throughout the Koran it is stressed that Allah only "loves" (is merciful to) those who do good, but that he is not merciful to those who are bad. Allah repeatedly emphasizes that he does not love the sinner.
3. Allah is considered the author of evil.
4. Muslims deny the triune nature of God as revealed in the Bible. The Koran emphasizes that Christians are unbelievers and infidels because they believe in the historic Christian doctrine of the Trinity.
5. Around the top of the Dome of the Rock shrine on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem are the words written in Arabic, "*God does not beget, neither is He begotten*"—a slam against the divinity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that and that He is the "only begotten Son of God".

In the face of the immediate uproar among alumni and donors concerning Professor Hawkins' statement that Christians and Muslims worship the same God Wheaton College had no choice but to suspend the professor and I believe is now moving to terminate her from her position at the college.

However not everyone at the College supports that course of action.

A number of faculty and students came out in support of Professor Hawkins either agreeing with her doctrinal belief that Christians and Muslims worship the same God—or simply supporting her out of blind loyalty to the professor rather than to God Himself.

I'm seeing this kind of thing more and more—look at how many professing Christians have come out in support of homosexuality and gay marriage.

We see this going on in many churches where it doesn't matter that God says homosexuality is a sin and forbidden—many churches, pastors and denominations have decided it isn't a sin because they don't *feel* in their heart that it's wrong.

They have made a judgment on this issue based on what they feel is right and now have determined that homosexuality isn't a sin and therefore gay marriage isn't wrong—even though God in His Word has said just the opposite—

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (NLT)

⁹ Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality,¹⁰ or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God.

Many in our own church have said they were called filthy names by other professing Christians in social media when they tried to be loyal to God and His Word on this subject—by those who have chosen to show loyalty to the gay community rather than to God.

I have seen Christians who are more attached to their pastor and more loyal to him than it seems they are to God.

So much so that when it comes to light that their pastor has been cheating on his wife or embezzling money from the church and needs to be removed from ministry—many in the church choose to stand by their pastor and follow him wherever he goes.

What are they doing but showing more loyalty to a man than to God?

I have known many of you in this church for over 20 years—some longer than that.

I know that you love me and that you constantly show your loyalty to me all the time.

But I also know that even though you love me and are loyal to me—your love for the Lord and your loyalty to Him is far greater than it is to me—and rightly so!

And if the day ever came when I started to teach you false doctrine or it came to light that I was stealing money from the church or I was involved in some other kind of sin that warranted my termination,

I know that you would still love me and pray for me—but that you would never put your loyalty to me above your loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Loyalty is good—but not blind loyalty—not misguided loyalty that places loyalty to people above loyalty to God and His Word.

1 Samuel 20:42 (NKJV)

⁴² **Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, 'May the LORD be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants, forever.' " So he arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.**

I'll leave you with the words of one author,

"Between Jonathan and David there was to be "peace." The cost of this peace, however, had been the enmity of Saul. The only way that Jonathan could have had "peace" with his father would have been to repudiate his commitment to David...

In many ways, in the story that 1 Samuel tells, Jonathan is a model of a disciple of the future King, the Lord Jesus Christ Who said, *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you"* (John 15:18), and we can well imagine David saying to Jonathan, *"If Saul hates you, know that he has hated me before he hated you."*...

Jonathan seems to me to be the Bible's clearest example of what Jesus meant when he said: *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."* (Luke 14:26)