

Lessons From The Life Of Jonathan

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I think we all know the account of where Christ was approached by a lawyer. And he asked, this lawyer asked Him a question. And the Bible tells us that he was testing Christ.

And he said, "Master, which is the great commandment of the Law?"

And Christ didn't hesitate. He just said, "You shall love God with all your heart, with all your life, with all your mind." And He went on to say, "This is the first and great commandment."

But then He didn't stop there! The question that He was asked is "Which is the greatest?" And so He gave him one, but Christ went on from there. He said, "This is the first and great commandment." And then He quickly said, "And the second is just like it. The second is like unto it." And then He went on to say, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. And on these two commandments," Christ said, "hang all the Law and all the Prophets." That's found in Matthew 22.

And then the apostle John went on beyond that to carry the theme forward. Let's go to 1 John chapter 3 and we're going to read verses 10 and 11. We're beginning to introduce a subject here in just a second. 1 John 3 verses 10 and 11, and John made it very clear that we are not the children of God if we don't do certain things. 1 John 3 verse 10, he says:

1 John 3:10. *In this the children of God are manifest ... (KJV)*

The word "manifest" means to be made apparent, to be made clear. So you can clearly see. So he says,

1 John 3:10. *... the children of God are [clearly seen] and [as well] the children of the devil: [Then he says,] whosoever [does] not righteousness ... (KJV)*

Meaning: whosoever doesn't keep the Law of God.

1 John 3:10. *... is not of God, neither he that [does not love] his brother. (KJV)*

So he's amplifying what Christ said. He said, "If you don't love your brother, and you don't love God, you're a child of the Devil. You're not the child of God.

Verse 11, he says:

1 John 3:11. *For this is the message that [you] heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. (KJV)*

Now it's interesting that the word "brother" in verse 10 is Strong's number 80. And it's *adelphos*. And it is a derivative of the word *philadelphia*. We'll get into that later on in the sermon, but *adelphos* is a derivative of the word *philadelphia*. And it can mean a brother, a literal blood brother, or it can mean a half-brother. It can also mean a countryman, somebody of the same tribe or the same clan or the same country. It can mean an associate at where you work. Say, two fellows out in an apple orchard pruning trees; they are brothers in that sense. It can mean any fellow, any man, or by extension any woman. Or it can also mean brothers in Christ. It can mean brothers in the Faith.

So this word "brother" that Christ used is all-encompassing. You can't say, "Well, it's just Church people," or "it's just a blood relative." It actually encompasses everybody. So this clearly tells us if we don't love our fellowman, if we don't do that, we're a child of the Devil. If we love our fellowman, then we are a child of God, in addition, obviously, to loving God with all our heart.

But notice what Christ added the night He was betrayed. He was trying to get across some critical information to the disciples in these last few hours before He was taken captive. Let's go to John 15 and we'll read verses 14 and 15, because He adds something. He's changing how He addresses the disciples. John 15 verse 14, He says:

John 15:14. *[You] are my friends ... (KJV)*

He had never said that before! They were disciples. They were students. But He says:

John 15:14. *[You] are my friends if [you] do whatever I command you.
15) [And He says, from hereon, I'm not going to] call you servants; for [a] servant [doesn't know] what his [Master or his] lord [does]: but I have called you friends; [because] all [the] things that I have heard [from] my Father I have made known unto you. (KJV)*

He says, "Now, I'm telling you, you're in a different category. You're not just a slave or a servant." He says, "You're My very friends."

And the word "friends" in the Greek is Strong's 5384. And it's *philos*. And that again is a derivative of the Greek word *philadelphia*. And it means a friend, or it can mean an associate, which the disciples were. And it can mean he who associates familiarly with somebody else, on a familiar level, or in other words, a companion.

So Christ is saying all of these things. We are associates. We're companions. And we are friends.

Now, if Christ said that about the disciples, and Christ said also said we should love our brothers as ourselves, and the disciples are friends, then isn't it logical that we should

be friends with one another? Since we're friends with Christ and we're all associates and we're all companions and we're all blood brothers in the spirit, should we not, therefore, then be friends one with another? Obviously, that's true.

And so that being the case, we have to ask the question: Well, if Christ wants us to be friends with each other, then where in the Bible is an example of how it should be done? Where in the Bible is there an example of absolute friendship, a model of how we should be friends one with another? And there is one example in the Bible that supersedes all others.

You probably know where we're going. And that is the friendship between Jonathan and David. That friendship is the greatest friendship in the Bible. And there are many Scriptures in the Bible that describe the relationship between Jonathan and David and the characteristics of that relationship.

So if you want to put a title on the sermon, it's *Lessons from the Life of Jonathan*. And what we're going to do is go through the Scriptures that talk about Jonathan and David and their friendship and learn lessons from those Scriptures. And then we're going to apply it today to us today as to how we can be true friends with one another.

Now let's give some background because this is very important. If you don't understand the background, then it's hard to understand the Scriptures.

Jonathan was the eldest of Saul's four sons. You can find that in 1 Chronicles chapter 9. He was the oldest. He was the firstborn.

He was married and had at least one son himself. We know that.

And if you read every Scripture about Jonathan—which I have done several times—it's very apparent that Jonathan was an athlete. And he was a warrior, and he was his father's right-hand man. He was his underboss, we would say.

And so, let's keep in mind; the most important thing to keep in mind as we go through is that Jonathan was next in line to be king. He was the firstborn son of the current king. Therefore, he was next in line to be king. The nation knew it. His father knew it. And he knew it. But we have to keep this in mind as we go through this.

This is very important because if he is next in line to be king, then his friendship with David is most extraordinary. And it's most unusual, because you see in the world if you were Jonathan and you heard that this upstart youngest son of a shepherd family was anointed somehow to be king and you were next in line, carnally you would be rivals. You wouldn't be friends. You'd be rivals.

And the carnal view is when you come into an organization—and I've seen it in business, and unfortunately, I've seen it in the Church. When somebody comes into an organization, the first thing that individual does is look at the number of people between

him—wherever he comes into the organization—between him and the boss, the president, the CEO. And what he does is start a campaign to eliminate or undermine each of those between him and the top. This is the carnal way to do it. I've seen it in business. And then I've seen it in the Church and been on the receiving end a couple of years ago when that same attitude or same motivation. Our son works on Wall Street and he says, "The rule in Wall Street is to crush anyone who is an impediment to your advancement." That is the carnal view.

So when we look at that and look at Jonathan being next in line to be king, and then look at the friendship, it is most extraordinary. It is most unusual. So keep that in mind now as we go through the Scriptures that talk about this wonderful friendship.

So, we're going to have Four Lessons from the life of Jonathan.

Number One and the most important of all and relative to the Scriptures that we used in the introduction is:

1. Jonathan loved David as much as he loved himself.

He loved David as much as he loved himself. Let's go to 1 Samuel chapter 18. And if you have a ribbon or a marker in your Bible, we'll be going through Scriptures from chapter 18 to chapter 23 and we'll be digressing from there, but we'll always come back.

1 Samuel 18, look at the very first verse. Now the context of 1 Samuel 18: David has killed Goliath—this upstart shepherd boy! And Saul and the nation are amazed. And so they drag David, after he takes off Goliath's head, to Saul. And so Saul and David begin a conversation. And in verse 1 of chapter 18, it says:

1 Samuel 18:1. *And it came to pass, when he [David] had made an end of speaking unto Saul ... (KJV)*

This is after killing Goliath.

1 Samuel 18:1b. *... that the [life] ... (KJV)*

The King James says "soul." The Hebrew word is *nephesh* and it means "life." It says:

1 Samuel 18:1b. *... the [life] of Jonathan was knit with the [life] of David, and Jonathan loved him as [he loved] his own soul [or his own life]. (KJV)*

Now think about this: This was apparently the first time the two of them ever met. There's no record of them meeting before. There's no reason for them to meet. Jonathan was the son of the king. David is the last born of a shepherd family out in the boondocks. And so there would be no chance, no need, no reason for them to meet. And yet, they met, because Jonathan was at his dad's right-hand, and David comes in from killing Goliath. This is the first time Jonathan has ever met him.

But it's like there was an instant friendship. And I think we've all experienced that when you meet somebody and you talk with them for five or ten minutes and you feel like you've known them all your life. You feel just a bond. And Jonathan felt that way toward David. And that happened just immediately. Now we read in Matthew 22 or we looked at the example where Christ said, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." We're told here in verse 1 that Jonathan loved David as much as he loved himself.

Now let's look at the New Testament and see that we, as God's people, should be doing exactly the same thing. Let's go to Revelation chapter 3. Normally when we go to Revelation 3, we're talking about Laodicea, but we're going to talk about Philadelphia because we're going to look at this meaning of the Greek word *philadelphia* and relate that to the subject at hand. Revelation 3, we're going to begin in verse 7 and go through verse 11. It says:

Revelation 3:7. *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; (KJV)*

Now the word "Philadelphia" is Strong's number 5359 and it means brotherly love, just like *adelphos* did when we talked earlier. They're derivatives one of another.

It says:

Revelation 3:7b. *These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. (NIV)*

Now Christ holds the key of David. No man. We've got to understand that.

Revelation 3:7b. *What he opens [meaning Christ] no one can shut ... (NIV)*

Now as we understand that, a huge door was opened to the Philadelphia Church of God [Era] during Mr. Armstrong's life and the gospel was preached to the world in a way it had never been prior to that time. And doors were open all over the world. And Christ opened the door and nobody could shut it.

But it goes on to say:

Revelation 3:7 continued. *... and what he shuts [nobody] can open. (NIV)*

And when Mr. Armstrong died, it is apparent by the fruits that that door is shut and it's not open because people have tried and tried and tried to open that door and nothing has happened. In fact, if you look at the baptisms since Mr. Armstrong's death, the vast majority have been of children of Church members—the vast majority, even to this day. And the number of new people coming in has been very small, but you take the total number of baptisms, really since the death of Mr. Armstrong or a few years after that, they don't equal the deaths in the greater Church of God. So this door has been closed.

He goes on to say—again, talking to Philadelphia now—He says:

Revelation 3:8. *I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that [nobody] can shut. I know that you have little strength ... (NIV)*

I mean, we were the weak of the world! We didn't have any strength. Maybe strength in a few numbers—a hundred and eighty, a hundred and ninety thousand sometimes.

He says:

Revelation 3:8b. *... [and] yet you have kept my word and [you] have not denied my name.*

9) I will make those ... of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews [spiritual Jews, claim to be Christians] though they are not, but are liars— I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. (NIV)

And in the hundred year period when those people are resurrected and God's firstfruits are spirit beings, they will bow down and acknowledge that they were wrong.

Verse 10, Christ says:

Revelation 3:10. *Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. (NIV)*

This tells us that there will be Philadelphians, members of that Era, who will be alive when Christ returns.

Verse 11, He says:

Revelation 3:11. *I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that [nobody can] take your crown. (NIV)*

So it is very clear, the Philadelphians have something very important. "Hold on to it and if you hold on to it, nobody's going to take your crown when I come." Now we have to ask the question. He says, "Endure patiently. To hold on" to what? What did they have? Well, their name says it all! God names people who they are. God names things what they are. He characterizes the name of the Church as a church that has brotherly love. And so, they are being told, the Philadelphians are being told "to endure patiently, hold on to what you have, and what you have is brotherly love. Don't lose that," because one of the signs of the end of the age is what? "The love of many shall wax cold." So those Philadelphians are told to hang on to that.

And so the fact is, as we relate it to the friendship between Jonathan and David, is Jonathan loved David as much as he loved himself in spite of the fact that David was anointed to be the next king over Israel. David was anointed to take his place and yet Jonathan loved him as much as he loved himself. Now that's a phenomenal thing when you think about it! And there's a lesson there for us today that we should love one

another as Jonathan loved David and as Christ told us that we should love one another as we love ourselves.

So the First Point is that Jonathan loved David as much as he loved himself.

The Second Point that we learn from going through these Scriptures is that:

II. Jonathan supported and encouraged David even to his own hurt.

He supported David. He encouraged David even though it hurt him because we're going to see even though it put his life at risk. Jonathan was in a painfully difficult situation. He was the son of his father. He loved his father. He was next in line to be king, but he loved David as much as he loved himself. And he was caught in the middle between showing honor to his father and loving his father and loving his friend. He was right in the middle—an incredibly difficult situation!

Now back to 1 Samuel 18. We stopped at verse 2. Now let's read verses 3 and 4. So we were told in verse 2 that Jonathan loved David as much as he loved himself.

1 Samuel 18:3. *Then Jonathan and David [at that moment, they] made a covenant, because he [Jonathan] loved him as [much as he loved] his own [life]. (KJV)*

Now notice what Jonathan did. He did something extraordinary.

1 Samuel 18:4. *And Jonathan stripped himself of [his] robe ... (KJV)*

Now if you look into the Hebrew word for robe, it means a garment worn over a tunic by men of rank. It was a symbol of his rank. And so what he did is he took off this very expensive robe and he gave it to David.

1 Samuel 18:4b. *... [and he] gave [also] to David ... his garments, even ... his sword [which is a symbol of his power], and his bow [which is another symbol of his power], and his girdle [which really means belt]. (KJV)*

All the modern translations translate it as "belt."

So, what Jonathan did, he humbled himself in front of his friend and he gave him all the symbols, the physical symbols of his rank and his power. Most unusual! He was humble enough to accept David as the next king because David had already been anointed king in 1 Samuel 16. And word of that probably had gotten to Jonathan. And then with the situation with Goliath, all of a sudden now, he is in this difficult position, but he takes off the symbols of his authority and he gives them to his new friend David. And he was perfectly comfortable in doing so! He didn't do it reluctantly. He didn't do it with grit teeth. He did it because he loved his new friend.

Now let's go to chapter 23. We'll jump forward to chapter 23 and let's read verses 15 through 18.

We're talking about Jonathan supporting and encouraging David. Now, as we know, in the interval, Saul became jealous of David. The ladies were singing "Saul kills his thousands and then David kills his tens of thousands" after he went out and won battle after battle after battle. Saul became jealous and he said, "What more can this kid have other than my throne?" And it says, "He eyed him from that day forward." Yes, he did. And so in chapter 23 verse 15, it says:

1 Samuel 23:15. *And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: (KJV)*

And we know that Saul threw the javelin at him. Saul plotted against him.

1 Samuel 23:15b. *... and David was in the wilderness of Ziph [in a forest] in [the woods]. (KJV)*

Now, notice what Jonathan did.

1 Samuel 23:16. *And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David in the wood, and strengthened [him] (KJV)*

Now the word "strengthened" in Hebrew means to encourage or sustain. He left where he was. He knew David was in hiding. He risked his life to go where David was with the sole purpose of encouraging him and strengthening him.

Now a carnal man wouldn't do that! If he knew where David was, he'd go tell his father and say, "David's in the wood. You can surround the wood and you can get him!" But he didn't do that.

He went to David, not just to go there, he went there with a purpose of encouraging his friend and uplifting his friend and sustaining his friend.

1 Samuel 23:16b. *... [So, he] strengthened his hand in God.
17) And he said unto him, [Don't be afraid]: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find [you]; and [you shall] be king over Israel, (KJV)*

He knew that! And yet, he went to David and supported David, the one who was going to really take his place.

1 Samuel 23:17b. *... [He says,] and I shall be next unto [you]; and that also Saul my father [knows]. (KJV)*

It was Jonathan's plan then to humble himself and he would be second to David as he was second to his father. And that didn't bother him! He wasn't jealous. He wasn't upset. He wasn't envious at all.

Verse 18:

1 Samuel 23:18. *And they two made a covenant before the [Eternal]: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house. (KJV)*

Jonathan didn't sit on his hands. He proactively went out and supported his friend, uplifted his friend, encouraged his friend. He just didn't sit there and just "Well, I'll let God handle it." No, he took action to support his friend. No jealousy. No envy. Joy for his friend! We won't turn there, but you know in 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 26, it says, "When one member is exalted, we should all be joyous and exalted. And when one member suffers, we should all suffer." Jonathan's friend was going to be exalted. And he was happy for his friend and he was happy for the nation of Israel because he undoubtedly knew that this God's will.

The same thing should be true for us. We should support and encourage and uplift our friends. We should do everything we can do to help them and when they're exalted, we should be happy. When they're suffering, we suffer with them and we go to their aid.

So the Second Point is that:

II. Jonathan supported and encouraged David, even to his own hurt.

The Third Point:

III. Jonathan spoke well of his friend even in the face of opposition.

Now in this case, the opposition was his father and his king! And yet, he had to character to stand up to his father and his king to support his friend. That took a lot of courage and a lot of character.

Let's go to chapter 19 now, 1 Samuel 19 and we'll read verses 4 through 6. Saul was out to kill David. Saul had spies out looking for David. Verse 4, 1 Samuel 19:

1 Samuel 19:4. *And Jonathan spoke good of David unto Saul his father, and [he] said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he [hasn't] sinned against [you], and because his works have been [toward you] very good: (KJV)*

He's standing up for his friend. He's saying, "Look, this is ridiculous. He's done nothing but obey you, support you. He's won battle after battle after battle. He hasn't tried to usurp any authority. He wants to be a good servant to you. Why are you doing this?"

Verse 5:

1 Samuel 19:5. *For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine ... (KJV)*

Remember Saul asked for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines to prove David's loyalty thinking that David would be killed in doing so. If I recall, I think it was two hundred or two hundred and fifty foreskins he brought back.

And it goes on her to say:

1 Samuel 19:5b. ... and the [Eternal] wrought a great salvation for all Israel: [you saw] it, and [you did] rejoice: [and he says, why are you sinning] against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? (KJV)

Now think about that. Here he is speaking this way to the king and his father. Now he's doing so respectfully, but that took a lot of guts. That took a lot of courage to stop the tide because I'm sure all of Saul's minions and his cabinet members and all of that were "Yes, men" saying, "Yeah! Go after David, we need to get rid of this kid." And his own son was a lone voice standing up in support of his friend David.

Verse 6, he says:

1 Samuel 19:6. And Saul [listened] unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul swore, As the Lord [lives], he shall not be slain. (KJV)

Well that lasted for a few hours and didn't work at all because Saul quickly changed his mind.

He risked coming under his father's wrath and his father's fury to tell the truth about his friend.

Let's go to Proverbs 17 and verse 17. Jonathan obeyed this proverb. Although it wasn't written at the time, he obeyed this proverb. And it's an admonition that we should take to heart. It says:

Proverbs 17:17. A friend [loves] at all times ... (KJV)

Not when it's convenient. Not when it's easy. Not when the whole crowd is behind you. He loves at all times even when there's opposition. And Jonathan did that.

Proverbs 17:17b. ... and a brother is born for adversity. (KJV)

Now the Hebrew word for "brother" here can mean a blood brother, but it can also mean a close friend outside of the physical family. So this tells us that a friend loves at all times. And a friend, not necessarily a blood relative, is born, is there when his friend is in adverse circumstances as David was.

Now I speak from personal experience because you just never know. You can't imagine how uplifting it is when a friend stands up for you in the face of a personal attack. And Dorothy and I have had that happen over the last few years where you hear by the

grapevine that a friend of yours stood up to somebody on your behalf. And talk about something that warms the heart! And I know it warmed David's heart relative to Jonathan.

Look at chapter 18 and the latter part of verse 24. Proverbs 18 verse 24b:

Proverbs 18:24b. ... *there is a friend that [sticks] closer than a brother. (KJV)*

Good and true friends can be more loyal, more faithful than a blood relative. And I think we've all experienced that. And it certainly happened between Jonathan and David.

Now, why did God want this? Why did God say this? The answer we find is in the next book over in Ecclesiastes chapter 4. And we're going to read verses 9 through 12. Friends are there for a purpose. Friends are there for a reason. And Ecclesiastes 4 beginning in verse 9 tells us a marvelous principle that God devised that helps friends. Ecclesiastes 4 verse 9:

Ecclesiastes 4:9. *Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. (KJV)*

Now stop for a minute and think. We've all been on work projects. And if you have a partner in a work project—I don't care if it's carpentry or putting up a building or working on a car or pouring concrete—if you have two guys that know each other's moves and know how to complement one another, the work can go very quickly. Two are better than one. And there's a good reward because they combine their labor and they can get more done than each would do individually.

Verse 10, notice, here's another principle.

Ecclesiastes 4:10. *For if they fall [one of them falls], the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he [falls]; for he [doesn't have somebody] to help him up. (KJV)*

Now David was on the run. David was being chased for his life. And he was the one that was falling down. And Jonathan over and over and over again picked him up. He encouraged him. He helped him. He told him where to go to get out of the way of Saul's spies and so on. And Jonathan was there when David fell.

Verse 11:

Ecclesiastes 4:11. ... *if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? (KJV)*

This is obviously pertinent in this winter because husband and wife, you get into bed together and it's awfully nice to get into bed when your husband or wife is warm right next to you. And if you get into a cold empty bed, it's difficult. And so this is a principle

that husbands and wives know, but the point is that two together have more heat than one alone. And it's a very graphic demonstration of this principle that two are better than one.

I know we have people in the Church, women particularly, who recently have lost mates. And they miss their mate. This is where friends come in. This is where friends come in to take over, to take the slack up of the loss of a mate.

Verse 12:

Ecclesiastes 4:12. *And if one [prevails] against [your friend] ... (KJV)*

Your friend's battling one person and that other person prevails, then:

Ecclesiastes 4:12b. *... two [meaning his friend and himself can] withstand [this one] and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (KJV)*

You can take a cord of a single strand and you can just snap it very easy. But you take three of those strands and interweave them, weave them together, you're not going to break that cord. And what that tells us is that two or three friends together can withstand a lot because they help and support one another.

And so the message here is before it's all over, before this time, the end of the age, if over with, I'm sure all of us are going to have the opportunity to stand up for our friends. God is going to bring circumstances to pass where we've given the opportunity like Jonathan was. Are we going to stand up for our friends? Or are we going to sit on our hands on the sidelines and do nothing? Jonathan stepped into the gap and he helped his friend.

So the Third Point is that:

III. Jonathan spoke well of David, even when David was being opposed by his own father and his king.

Now let's go back to 1 Samuel chapter 19. We read verses 4 through 6. Let's pick up the first two verses to make another point. The Fourth Point is that:

IV. Jonathan protected David.

He protected David. And, as we would say today, "Took his back." That's a military term that if you for example in Afghanistan or Iraq, you have a squad of men going into a building—they kick a door in thinking there are insurgents there—the point man goes , but there are people behind him that are looking back the other way so that he isn't hit from behind. They take his back. They protect him.

1 Samuel 19 verse 1:

1 Samuel 19:1. *And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. (KJV)*

Saul was not hiding this. It was all out in the open. Jonathan was sitting right there.

1 Samuel 19:2. *But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father [seeks] to kill [you]: now therefore, I pray, take heed to [yourself] until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide [yourself]: (KJV)*

Now, again Jonathan could have just sat on his hands, and said, "Hey, being king after my father dies is a pretty good thing. I think I'll just do nothing and let David be killed. And then I'll be the next king." That's the carnal view. But Jonathan proactively went out and took his friend's back and protected him.

Now the next Scripture we're going to go through is going to be fairly long, and we're going to spend some time with this one example because I want you to put yourself in David's shoes and in Jonathan's shoes. It's easy just to read through the Bible and it's like a story. You just kind of go through it verse by verse, but put yourself in their position. What would it really be like to be Jonathan? Or what would it be like to be David? Let's go to chapter 20, 1 Samuel chapter 20. We're going to read the first four verses and then jump to verse 11 and go through verse 42. So listen carefully with the mind of putting yourself in their shoes so to speak. Verse 1 of 1 Samuel 20:

1 Samuel 20:1. *And David fled from Naioth [to] Ramah, and [he] came and said before Jonathan ... (KJV)*

Now David is on the run. If you put yourself in David's shoes, we would say exactly the same thing! David says:

1 Samuel 20:1b. *What have I done? what is [my] iniquity? what is my sin before [your] father, that he [seeks] my life? (KJV)*

David was totally innocent in this. He hadn't done a thing. And he is whining like we would whine, but understandably so because his life's on the line.

1 Samuel 20:2. *And he [Jonathan] said unto him, God forbid; [you're not doing to] die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will show it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? [it's] not so. (KJV)*

So Jonathan idea was, "Look, I'm on the inner circle. My father will tell me everything." But David said, "No. Unh huh."

1 Samuel 20:3. *And David swore moreover, and said, Thy father certainly [knows] that [I've] found grace in [your] eyes [that we're friends]; and he [says], Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the Lord [lives] and as*

[your] soul [lives—David understood this], there is but a step between me and death. (KJV)

Most of us have not had our lives threatened over a continual period of time. David had. And he understood "If I make one wrong move, if I step in the wrong direction, I'm a dead man. I've got to be very careful."

Then Jonathan in verse 4 said to David:

1 Samuel 20:4b. *Whatsoever [your] ... (KJV)*

The King James says "soul", *nephesh*. It means "life."

1 Samuel 20:4b. *Whatsoever [your life desires], I will do it for [you]. (KJV)*

Now think about that. He didn't know what David was going to need down the road, but he knew whatever He did was going to be in opposition to the king's will, his father's will. And yet, he said to his friend, "Whatever you need, whatever you desire, I'll do it for you." That was a big commitment, a huge commitment, a very open ended commitment because he didn't know. Neither one knew what was around the next turn.

Verse 11:

1 Samuel 20:11. *And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.
12) And Jonathan said unto David (KJV)*

Now notice this! Jonathan begins a prayer. He's getting God involved in this situation. He says:

1 Samuel 20:12b. *O Lord God of Israel, (KJV)*

The two of them are there by themselves in this field and he is getting God involved.

1 Samuel 20:12 continued. *... when I have sounded ... (KJV)*

That word means "when I've found out," when I've discerned what:"

1 Samuel 20:12 continued. *... my father [is going to do] tomorrow [at] any time, or the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David ... (KJV)*

"Then I'm not going to do anything." He says:

1 Samuel 20:12 continued. *... then [I will not] send [it to you, nor] show it [to you];
13) The Lord do so and much more to Jonathan: (KJV)*

This was an Israelite idiom that said, 'If I don't fulfill this, then God punish me more than He punishes anybody else.'

1 Samuel 20:13b. ... *if it please my father to do [you] evil, then I will show it [to you], and [I'll] send [you] away, that [you may] go in peace: and the [Eternal] be with [you], as he [has] been with my father. (KJV)*

Now verse 14, we jump there. I'm going to read 14 through 16 out of the NIV because it's more clear. Verse 14:

1 Samuel 20:14. *But show me unfailing kindness [Jonathan is saying] like that of the [Eternal] as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, (KJV)*

Jonathan understands that David's going to be king. And who knows what kind of battles are going on and who knows if his father's going to try to kill him or one of his father's generals is going to try to kill him. And he says, "Do your best to protect my life."

Verse 15:

1 Samuel 20:15. *and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family— not even when the [Eternal] has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth." (KJV)*

Now you can read between the lines here and say, "Jonathan maybe understood that he might not be alive, but he said, 'Please take care of my family. Do your best to save me, save my life, but if you can't or if it's God's will that I die, please take care of my family.'"

Verse 16:

1 Samuel 20:16. *So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the Lord call David's enemies to account." (NIV)*

Now that included his father. He's saying, "If my father's doing evil, may God hold him accountable." Again, it takes a little guts to say that sometimes.

Verse 17, now back in the King James:

1 Samuel 20:17. *And Jonathan [made] David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself. (NIV)*

This is repeated several times in all of the verses about Jonathan and David. Verse 18:

1 Samuel 20:18. *Then Jonathan said to David ... (KJV)*

This is the plan. He said:

1 Samuel 20:18b. *To morrow is the new moon: and [you're going to] be missed [at court], because [your] seat will be empty.*

19) *And when [you have] stayed three days [in this wood], then [you shall] go down quickly ... (KJV)*

"Go down", the NIV says:

1 Samuel 20:19b. *... go to the place where you hid when this trouble began, and wait by the stone Ezel. (NIV)*

That was in chapter 19 and verse 2. So go back to the same place where you hid before.

"And I will come there," he said, "if there's evil, I will come there and":

1 Samuel 20:20. *I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark [or a target].*

21) *And, behold, I will send a [young boy], saying, Go, [and] find the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of [you—meaning toward Jonathan who shot the arrows], take them; [and] then come [out]: for there is peace to [you], and no hurt; as the Lord [lives]. (KJV)*

"But," he says in verse 22:

1 Samuel 20:22. *if I say unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond [you—on the other side toward David]; go [your] way: for the [Eternal has] sent [you] away.*

23) *And as touching the matter which [you] and I have spoken of, behold, the Lord be between [you] and me for ever. (KJV)*

And what he meant by that was is that Jonathan and David were walking down the same path. And what He's saying, "I want God between us. I want you to hold one of God's hands and I want to hold the other one of God's hands. And the Lord be with us as we walk forward."

Now we say that and pray for that today when we talk about Jesus Christ. We want to follow in Christ's footsteps. We want Christ to take us by the hand and lead us where we're supposed to go. And Jonathan was essentially doing the same thing. And he said, "I want that forever that God is between us forever." He was talking about Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament.

Verse 24:

1 Samuel 20:24. *So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat down to eat [with all of his court, with all of his cabinet members, with his generals and so on].*

25) *And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty. (KJV)*

Just that Jonathan had prophesied. Verse 26:

1 Samuel 20:26. *Nevertheless Saul [didn't say] anything that [first] day: [because] he thought, [Something's happened to David], he is not clean; surely he [can't be here].*

27) *And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, [He says, Where's] the son of Jesse, [why isn't he eating us with us. He wasn't here] yesterday, [he isn't here] today? (KJV)*

So Jonathan concocted a story in verse 28:

1 Samuel 20:28. *And Jonathan answered [his father] Saul, David earnestly asked [to go, to] leave of me to go to Bethlehem:*

29) *And he said, Let me go, I pray; for our family [has] a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he [has] commanded me to be there: and now, if I have found favour in [your] eyes [referring to Jonathan], let me get away, I pray [you], and see my brethren. Therefore he [doesn't come] unto the king's table. (KJV)*

Now Saul didn't believe that for minute because he suspected his son! He knew his son was supporting David and he suspected so. And then in verse 30:

1 Samuel 20:30. *Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, [You] son of the perverse [and] rebellious woman ... (KJV)*

Blame it on the wife! Nothing's changed. Not his fault! The problem was half his fault at least, but he blames it on his wife! And he says:

1 Samuel 20:30b. *... [Don't] I know that [you've] chosen the son of Jesse [for your] own confusion ... (KJV)*

The Hebrew word means "shame." "You're shaming yourself! You're going against your own house! You're going against your own blood! You're going against me!"

1 Samuel 20:30 continued. *... and unto the confusion [or the shame] of [your] mother's nakedness? (KJV)*

He's saying, "If your mother was found naked, and you walked in and saw your mother naked, everybody would be shamed." And he said, "You're doing the same to our family! You're shaming me. You're shaming the whole nation," in his warped view.

Verse 31:

1 Samuel 20:31. *For as long as the son of Jesse [lives] upon the ground, [you shall] not be established, nor [your] kingdom. (KJV)*

Now he's saying, "Wake up, kid! Be carnal like everybody else. You know that he's going to replace you! You shouldn't be supporting me, the king, because I'm going to go out and kill him. And then you can be king. Wake up!" He says:

1 Samuel 20:31b. *Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. (KJV)*

A carnal human being would do that and say, "I'm loyal to the government. I'm loyal to my dad. I'm loyal to the king. Let me report his location and then he dies. And I'll be the next king."

Verse 32:

1 Samuel 20:32. *And Jonathan answered ... (KJV)*

Notice what he said! He said:

1 Samuel 20:32b. *[Why] shall he be slain? [What has] he done?
33) And Saul [picked up] a javelin [and threw it] at him to [kill] him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David. (KJV)*

Because if his father would kill his own son, he would surely not think twice about killing David; and this was very plain.

So verse 34:

1 Samuel 20:34. *So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, [he didn't eat anything that day at all because] he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame. (KJV)*

This innocent man! And he was standing up for his friend.

Verse 35:

1 Samuel 20:35. *And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and [he took the] little [boy] with him.
36) And he said unto his lad, Run, find now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot [the arrows] beyond him.
37) And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and [he] said, [Isn't] the arrow beyond [you]? (KJV)*

Just like he said, if there was trouble.

1 Samuel 20:38. *And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, [be hasty], [Don't stay]. (KJV)*

He was really talking to David. This was a message to David. "Get out of here. Your life's in danger."

1 Samuel 20:38b. *And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.*

39) The lad [didn't know anything that was going on]: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

40) And Jonathan gave his ... (KJV)

The King James says "artillery" meaning the arrows and the quiver and the bow.

1 Samuel 20:40b. *... unto [the] lad, and said unto him, Go, [and] carry [it] to the city. (KJV)*

So as soon as the little boy was gone, in verse 41:

1 Samuel 20:41. *as soon as [he] was gone, David arose out of [the] place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times [to Jonathan]: (KJV)*

Now this is a form of love on David's side that he is saying, "My friend is risking his life! My friend is putting his life in danger. He is giving up his being king for me!" And it finally hit David. And David bowed down three times on the ground.

1 Samuel 20:41b. *... and they kissed one another, and wept one with another ... (KJV)*

The King James says, "until David exceeded." The New King James says, "but David even more so." David was more emotional. He was crying more. He was weeping more because he knew the sacrifice that his friend was making for him.

Verse 42:

1 Samuel 20:42. *And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of [God], saying, The Lord be between [you and] me, between my seed and [your] seed for ever. (KJV)*

Jonathan, is saying, "God be between us," but also he's really saying, "If I die, please put my seed in my place and take care of them."

1 Samuel 20:42b. *And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city. (KJV)*

So what Jonathan did was he protected his friend from harm. And he did so at the risk of his own life. Now think about that! It's easy to read over this as a story, but put yourself in Jonathan's position and David's position.

Now look what is going to happen very soon. We're going to go to Mark chapter 13, which is a parallel of Matthew 24. Let's go to Mark chapter 13. We're going to read verse 4, just to pick the context, and then verses 12 and 13. Now take that friendship and the depth of that friendship and take the fact that Jonathan took David's back and protected him and let's apply it to what lies ahead for us today. Mark 13 verse 4, the disciples said:

Mark 13:4. *Tell us, when [are] these things [going to] be? And what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? (KJV)*

Meaning: the destruction of the Temple and the return of Jesus Christ. Verse 12, "Now," Christ is saying, "one of the signs is that:"

Mark 13:12. *... the brother shall betray the brother to death ... (KJV)*

He's saying what's going to happen is a repeat of what happened with David and Jonathan, but notice what happened with David and Jonathan. Jonathan didn't betray his brother to death. He took his brother's back and he protected him.

Mark 13:12b. *... and the father [is going to betray] the son; and children [are going to] rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.
13) And [you] shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (KJV)*

"Endure" again! Doing what? Loving God with all your heart. Loving your neighbor as yourself. Very simple.

And David and Jonathan are the supreme example of doing that with great opposition, great distress. You talk about stress and tension in your life. David's on the run and Jonathan's there at court in between his father and his friend! And you talk about knots in your stomach and not being able to sleep at night and blood pressure going up and all of that, it was there.

Now what Christ is saying here in Mark chapter 13 is that the same loyalty that we have to God, we need to put into practice toward our friends, toward our true and dear friends. We are loyal to God, loyal to God's Law. We'll die for God's Law. We'll die for God. And what God is telling us, as we saw with Jonathan and David, we should do the same. We should be willing to do the same with our friends.

I can remember an example back Lubbock, Texas. Dorothy and I were there in the early 1980s. And I heard some gossip about a minister. And back in those days—it's before I woke up—I heard the gossip. And I went to the pastor of the Church and I repeated the

gossip. Didn't even think twice—just went and repeated it! I didn't know the guy that was being gossiped about. I wasn't there. Didn't know if it was true, but I went and repeated the gossip. We've all done that and shame on me for that sin! And the pastor looked at me in the eye and he says, "I know that man. And I know he would never do that."

Boy, that jerked me up the reins real hard, because I was ashamed number one of repeating the gossip. I was really ashamed. And I have repented of that and re-repented of that. And yet, at the same time, I thought in reflecting back on it, I thought, "Boy, someday I hope I have a friend like that!" Because this was an isolated case, hundreds, thousands of miles away from his friend; his friend would probably never know. And yet, this pastor said, "I know he would never do that." And he was taking his friend's back. And that's an example for all of us that we should do the same for one another, just like Jonathan did with David.

Okay, so we've seen Four Lessons that we can learn from the life of Jonathan and David and their friendship. Now how do they apply to us today? We're going to have just two lessons. First:

1. Successful friendship comes down to two characteristics.

By the way Jonathan had both and David had both. But the first one is:

a. humility

Remember Jonathan gave David his robe and his sword and his bow and arrows. Jonathan humbled himself in front of his friend. They were symbolic of his office and power. And Jonathan had the mind of Christ! Now Christ hadn't walked the earth yet, but Christ was the God of the Old Testament inspiring Jonathan and Jonathan had the mind of Christ.

Look at Luke chapter 14. We'll read verses 7 through 11. Christ was invited to a wedding and during that wedding He put forth this parable when He watched the behavior of the people at the wedding. You know the story. Luke 14 verse 7:

Luke 14:7. *And he put forth [this] parable to those [that] were [invited], [and how] he [remarked] how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them [His disciples],
8) When [you're invited] of any man to a wedding, [He says, don't go to] the highest room; (KJV)*

So it would be like today. If we, a wealthy friend of ours, Church Brother, whatever had a beautiful home and they had a formal dining room, a formal living room, nice big den and kitchen and full basement and all, Christ would say, "Don't go into the formal dining room and sit at the head of the table. Don't go to the living room and take the best seat." He says, "Go down to the basement or go into the kitchen," He would say today.

The middle of verse 8 He says:

Luke 14:8b. *[Don't sit down at the highest room], lest a more honorable man than [you] be bidden;
9) And he that [invited you] and him come and say to [you, Get you out of the head of the table at the dining room. He says, Let] this man [have your seat]; and [then you] begin with shame to [walk down into the basement]. (KJV)*

He says, "Don't do that." But He says, "When you're invited," in verse 10:

Luke 14:10b. *... go and sit down in the lowest room; [and then] he that [invited you, when he comes, and says, "Oh], Friend, [you shouldn't be down here, come up and sit in the living room beside me, so to speak]. (KJV)*

Verse 11"

Luke 10: 11. *Whosoever [exalts] himself shall be abased; and he that [humbles] himself shall be exalted. (KJV)*

And you know the fact that is that pride is at the heart of many problems in the Church over the years—just simple pride. It's caused so many problems in the Church. Pride has destroyed so many friendships over the years.

Dorothy and I were at the gym and we have these little TV sets in front of our exercise machines and we were watching. There wasn't anything on. So one of us turned to the show and got the other one on and it was a dating show. And there wasn't anything else to watch. I thought "Well, okay. We'll just watch this for a few minutes."

And it was about a woman who could never get a second date. She went out on her first date, but she would never be invited to a second date. So they had psychologists and they had counselors and they had a psychoanalyst and all and they were going to record her date and see what was going on, and then psychoanalyze the whole thing as to why she couldn't get a second date. So they did; they record.

She had two dates—restaurant, meets the guy. And so, they chitchat for a few minutes. And then she asked the guy, "Well, where do you work?" And he says, "Well, I've got such and such a position at this company." She kind of raises her head up a little bit and her nose up a little bit, "Well, I'm the Vice-President of such and such."

So then she asked, "Well, where do you like to go for vacation." He said, "Well, I went to Mexico a few months ago." And she said, "Well, I went to Naples last year." And then, on again....

And then the guy ordered some wine. And the waiter went to him and he ordered some wine. And so she made the comment, as soon as the waiter left, "Well, you really should

have ordered this other one. Now it's made over here and the grapes are done this, and it's aged this amount. And it's really a much superior wine to what you just ordered."

Well, it takes about two minutes to figure out what's going on here. Anybody in the Church could figure this out, but they went on for a whole hour with the psychoanalysis and all this kind of stuff. And it was obvious that this woman was filled with pride and she wasn't going to take a backseat to anybody. And she had to show everybody that she was superior. And no wonder she wouldn't get a second date. Nobody in their right mind wants to go through that.

And so, pride can just ruin friendships. And we're told in Philippians 2 and verse 3—we won't turn there—but what does it say?

Philippians 2:3b. ... *but in lowliness of mind [let's] each esteem [the] other better than [ourselves]. (KJV)*

Not to elevate ourselves as in that dating show! But when we humble ourselves as Jonathan did and esteem somebody better than yourself, that's the bond that brings people together. So, the first necessary characteristic of friendship is humility.

The second is:

b. love

We know Jonathan loved David as he loved himself. And in John 15 verse 13, again Christ said that His last on this earth. He said:

John 15:13. *Greater love [has] no man than this ... (KJV)*

What did He say?

John 15:13b. ... *that a man lay down his life for his friends. (KJV)*

Now the Greek word for "lay down" has two meanings. It means to "lay aside, set aside", or it means to "bend down." Now to "lay aside" means to give up your life. You're willing to lay aside your life for your friend. And that's the main meaning that we understand. But it also means to "bend down." That means to humble yourself by putting somebody else in front of you, as David bowed down to Jonathan three times and Jonathan gave David all of his symbols of power and authority.

And before this is all over, God is going to test each one of us to see if we will love one another as we love ourselves and if we will humble ourselves as Jonathan did. Jonathan had both humility and love and so should we toward our friends.

Okay, that's the First Lesson for applying it to today.

The Second Lesson is that:

B. Before this is all over, we are all going to need good and true friends.

We're going to need friends. As I said earlier, widows are going to need friends. When we get in tough times, we're going to need friends. Given what lies ahead, we're all going to need friends. And I'm here to tell you that Dorothy and I could not have gotten through 2008 and 2009 without good and true friends! We just couldn't have made it. But our friends helped us through.

Now how do we get friends? Let's go to Proverbs 18 and the first part of verse 24. We went to the second part earlier. Proverbs 18 and verse 24, I think you know the Scripture. It says:

Proverbs 18:24. *A man [or a woman] that [has] friends ... (KJV)*

What should we do?

Proverbs 18:24b. ... [we should] show [ourselves] friendly: (KJV)

We should be friendly if we want friends. That lady at the dating show didn't understand that. But if we want friends, we have to be friendly. And there are some proverbs that say—not Biblical proverbs—but proverbs that follow along that line. One says:

Friendship is like a bank account. You can't continue to draw upon it without making deposits.

And that's true. You can't just bleed your friend dry. You have to, we have to be friendly and sacrifice too.

Another proverb says:

Friendship can be purchased only by friendship.

That's what purchases, or that's what buys you a friend, is being friendly.

You see Jonathan had the mind of Christ! Let's go to Leviticus 19 and look at verse 18. Now the New Testament wasn't written, but the God of the Old Testament was Jesus Christ and the principles still hold true for people who like to do away with the Old Testament. Look what Leviticus 19 and verse 18 says. Jonathan had understood this and obeyed this. Leviticus 19 verse 18, it says;

Leviticus 19:18. *[You shall] not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of [My] people, but [you shall] love [your] neighbor as [yourself]: (KJV)*

That's what the apostle John said. "You've heard it from the beginning. This isn't anything new." Hillel the elder, who lived in the first century BC about a hundred years before Christ born, he said the following: "What is hateful to you, do not do to a friend." What is hateful to you, do not do to a friend. This is the entire Torah. The rest is commentary. Go forth and learn." What truism! Obviously, you have to put God first and love Him as yourself, but everything else is commentary!

We won't turn there, Matthew 7 and verse 12, Christ said, repeating the same thing:

Matthew 7:12. ... *whatsoever [you] would that men should do to you, [you] do so to them: this is the law and the prophets.* (KJV)

Same thing!

In Galatians 5 and verse 14, we won't turn there, it says:

Galatians 5:14. ... *the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; [You shall] love [your] neighbor as [yourself].* (KJV)

Christ said it as the God of the Old Testament. Christ said it when He walked the earth. And the apostles said it after Christ left this earth.

Notice what David did after Jonathan's death. Let's go to 2 Samuel chapter 4 and verse 4. Now David could have just of, "Well, Jonathan's dead." Blow him off. No more thought of Jonathan and get on with being king, but he didn't do that. 2 Samuel 4 verse 4:

2 Samuel 4:4. *And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame [in] his feet.* (KJV)

Remember I said that Jonathan had one son. 2 Samuel 4 verse 4:

2 Samuel 4:4b. *He was five years old when the [news] came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel [that they were both killed], and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, [when] she [was hurrying] to flee, that [she dropped him], and [he] became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.* (KJV)

So, this poor boy—because his father and grandfather had died and all the hassle in between and the fear and all that—he was crippled for life.

Now look at 2 Samuel chapter 9. We're going to begin in verse 1 and then skip to verse 5. 2 Samuel 9 verse 1:

2 Samuel 9:1. *And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul ...* (KJV)

Now most kings would ask that question because "If Saul has any relatives, I want to find them. I'm going to kill them because I don't want them coming after me in later years. I don't want them seeking revenge." But notice what he did—his reason:

2 Samuel 9:1b. ... *that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? (KJV)*

Beginning of verse 5:

2 Samuel 9:5. *Then king David sent, and fetched him. (KJV)*

Verse 6:

2 Samuel 9:6. *Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, [he] did reverence, (KJV)*

Because he didn't know if his head was going to be on his shoulders very much longer! And David said and he answered:

2 Samuel 9:6b. *And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! (KJV)*

Well, yeah. Verse 7:

2 Samuel 9:7. *And David said unto him, [Don't be afraid]: [he said,] I will surely show [you] kindness for Jonathan [your] father's sake, and [I] will restore all the land of Saul [your] father [Not just Jonathan, but Saul!]; and [you shall eat bread at my table [continuously.]] (KJV)*

And that's what happened. He was a member of David's court. And if you read the details, he took care of the head of the household, the servants of Mephibosheth, the servants of Jonathan. He took care of them for the rest of their lives. They wanted for nothing.

Now we had a taste of, I think, the love and humility between Brethren at the Feast. And we need to build on that because we're going to need friends. We will need friends before this is all over.

And we need to learn from the example of Jonathan as to how to be a good friend. And when Jonathan died—let's just summarize now. When Jonathan died, David just didn't blow him off. He grieved for his friend. Look at 2 Samuel chapter 1. We're going to read verses 25 through the beginning of verse 27. David grieved for his true friend because he knew the sacrifices that Jonathan made including his own life. 2 Samuel 1 verse 25:

2 Samuel 1:25. *"How the mighty have fallen in battle! (NIV)*

He was referring to Saul as well as Jonathan. Notice, but he said:

2 Samuel 1:25. *Jonathan lies slain on your heights [a mighty man, my true friend].*

26) *[He says,] I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was [as] wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.*

27) *"How the mighty have fallen!" (NIV)*

Now that word for "love" is Strong's number 160. And it can mean God's love to His people. It can mean the love between a man and a woman or it can be the love between a man and a man as friends. It covers the whole gamut. And what David is saying is that the passion between a man and woman, he says, "I have that kind of love for you and I know you have that kind of love for me." And so you see this also tells us that friends are friends—men to men, women to women, and men to women. We're all compatriots, companions, friends, brothers, and sisters.

And look at a final Scripture in 1 John 3 and the beginning of verse 14. This Scripture got my attention about fifteen years ago. It only took twenty-five or thirty years to get to that point, but you read sometimes Scriptures and it just hits you right between the eyes. And this did to me! And it relates today to what we're talking about. 1 John 3 verse 14:

1 John 3:14. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because ... (KJV)*

Now we all want to know if we've passed from death to life. What is the litmus test that we can tell if we've passed from death to life? It says:

1 John 3:14b. *... because we love the brethren. (KJV)*

Obviously with the love of God! That we love God with all our heart and then we love the Brethren and we would be willing to do what Jonathan did for his friend David.

Jonathan loved David as he loved himself. Jonathan supported and encouraged David even to his own hurt. Jonathan spoke well of David in the face of the opposition of the king and his own father. And then Jonathan protected David, spared his life, and took his back.

And we need to have the same approach with our true and dear friends in God's Church. We all need to learn from this lesson from Jonathan and David. And let's pray and let's work to develop true and close friendships, the like of which Jonathan and David shared. We will need them as we get closer to the end of the age.