**DAVID’S SUCCESS AND SAUL’S JEALOUSY**

1 Samuel 18:1-30 (Key Verse: 18:14)

“In everything he did he had great success, because the LORD was with him.”

Through Msn. Gideon’s message last week we saw how a shepherd boy and the youngest could become a great warrior of faith that brings glory to God and victory to his people by defeating a fearsome foe, Goliath. The confidence David had was not groundless but from his daily shepherd life and his incredible power came from his genuine love for the sheep. In today’s passage, we see how God continuously blessed David wherever he went or whatever he did while Saul’s jealousy and obsession grew more and more. We also see how David’s friendship with Jonathan started and later blossomed in the darkest hours. Saul’s plan did not work out when God intervened. May God grant us success with His presence and bless our friendship so that as our gathering’s name says we may have more wonderful Bible-based fellowship in and through us!

1. **One in Spirit; Loving Him as Himself (1-11)**

Look at verse 1. After the great victory, David’s life was no longer the same. What changed? Aside from instant fame and adoration from people, David got his one and only BFF (best friend forever). Note the phrase, “Jonathan became one in spirit with David.” What does it mean by “one in spirit”? It is as if Jonathan and David became one person in every aspect. They would think the same, act the same and desire the same like one person would. Before David spoke, Jonathan already knew what he was trying to say. Before David’s action, Jonathan could figure out why he does it and with what kind of faith he would do it. They were instantly connected like WiFi (our WiFi name is John316). How is this possible? It is because both of them had a personal relationship with God. It is because they loved God and His people and fought their enemy valiantly. God, the people, and the fight were their greatest common factor (GCF). That’s why they could become one in spirit. Note that David and Jonathan came from a very different background and yet still could be connected. Surely, we cherish this type of oneness and have witnessed it in our gatherings. During the NASC last month, leaders from all corners of North America came to New York and had genuine fellowship with each other. Each had unique personality, background and ministry and yet no one claimed anything but when they got together they were instantly connecte like WiFi and became one in spirit, connecting with old friends and making new ones in their own unique styles. So is our DuPage UBF worship service. For six days, we all had very different walks of life and yet when we are gathered on Sunday we put aside all math and logic but solely focus on worshipping God together and open our hearts to each other at the fellowship time. Apostle Paul well pointed out how our Lord Jesus made us one and even created one new humanity (Eph 2:14b-16a) in his letter to the Ephesians: “… who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, …”

In verses 3-4, we see further development of friendship between Jonathan and David. Jonathan made a covenant with David, which was the only kind comparable to that of wedding. What about Jonathan’s giving away his royal robe and weaponry to David? Previously, we learned that only Saul and Jonathan had swords among the Israelites, so giving away his sword really meant giving his own life to David. We can see why. It is because he loved him as himself. Love does not calculate but gives away. We have a similar example with us. Jesus loved us more than himself and gave everything including his own body to us. We live by faith but we also live by his love. We can say Jesus is not only Son of David but also Friend like Jonathan. May God raise up many Davids and Jonathans among us!

In verse 5, we see David’s exceedingly successful life. Whatever mission Saul sent him on he accomplished it so successfully that he got a high rank in the army. He was like General Ike Eisenhower in WWII or Major Winters in Band of Brothers movie who got promotion in very short period of time. Obviously, David was a war hero whom all the troops including Saul’s officers loved. But in verses 6-7, we see not just troops alone. When the men were returning home after David’s great victory over Goliath, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing with joyful songs. How did the song go?

“Saul has slain his thousands and Davd, tens of thousands!”

Everyone was happy to see their men winning a great victory. It was like the World Series parade in Downtown Chicago after Chicago Cubs won it in 103 years. However, Saul was not happy. Rather, he was very angry because of the song’s lyric. His thought process was like, “they have credited David with tens of thousands but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?” This was a very sick process. Who would think about losing one’s kingdom because of a song’s lyric? Additionally, “thousands” and “tens of thousands” are just different expressions acknowledging both with David’s effect a little more. The women loved Saul too. In the beginning, Saul was very humble and was even afraid to come out in front of the people to be selected as king. Now he wanted to get all the attention, honor and glory, fixated on his throne. In our Friday meeting, one man of God aptly explained to us that when one does not repent but harbor on certain things, it would come out on actions. Alas, that was what exactly happened to Saul. When Saul did not repent but harbored on thinking about killing David, with an evil spirit promting him, he acted upon trying to kill David by hurling a spear at him. By God’s grace, however, David eluded him twice. It was a miracle! Let us pray that we may not act upon what we harbor in out thoughts but repent of them instead.

1. **Saul’s Plans Thwarted; God’s Plans Worked (12-30)**

Look at verse 12. Now Saul’s jealousy turned into fear because he realized that the LORD was with David but had departed from him. It was bad enough that Saul was jeoulous of David and yet it would be worse when he got fearful of him. Why? Saul could and would think of more evil things against him. As a starter, Saul sent David away with a thousand men so that his unit might be in trouble in their campaigns. Saul hoped that somehow David might fall at the hands of the stronger Philistine forces. Against his wish, however, David had great success in everything because the LORD was with him. He was like Joseph whom God was also with and his work prospered greatly. Saul became more fearful but all Israel and Judah loved David.

Then, Saul hatched another plot to get rid of David. This time, Saul used one of his daughters to trap David. He made an offer to David with his older daughter Merab’s hand. He asked him to only serve him bravely and fight the battles of the LORD. In doing so, again, Saul wanted David dead by the hands of the Philistines. For David, it could be an opportunity to be the king’s son-in-law, a great promotion! What did David say in response to this? Verse 18b reads. “Who am I, and what is my family or my clan in Israel, that I should become the king’s son-in-law?” David humbly and politely refused to be Saul’s son-in-law. So, Merab, Saul’s older daughter, was given to Adriel of Meholah on the wedding day. It was sad that Saul did not care about his daugher’s feeling had David actually married her and possibly got killed in action (KIA). Merab would be a widow for the rest of her life and be miserable!

Look at verses 20-25. This time, Saul ​made an offer that David couldn’t refuse. After learning that his second daughter Michal was in love with David, he sent his attendants to David privately and made the second offer to him with Michal’s hand. Again, David respectfully refused to be the king’s son-in-law claiming that he was only a poor man and little known. In other words, he felt undeserved. At this, Saul reduced the price of becoming a king’s son-in-law drastically, with only a hundred Philistine foreskins as the token of his revenge on the enemies. Getting a hundred foreskins meant killing hundred or more Philistines and taking more time in the battlefileds to procure them. The odds of dying would greatly increase when you stay in the battlefields.

What was David’s response? He was very pleased to become the king’s son-in-law and before the allotted time, he collected two hundred foreskins and brought them back to Saul. He looked like Jacob who was in love with Rachel and took the seven years of service as an easy peasy job. With David’s fulfillment, Saul could not say anything against him. So, he gave him Michal in marriage. This incident made Saul more afraid of him and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.

What can we learn from this? Even though Saul planned an evil plot or two against David, when God intervened, no plan would work! On Friday, I was at Wheaton to receive my adjunct office keycard and other things to finish. Then, I briefly stopped by the student center and there I met Sam Hwang and his parents, Saehan and Msn. Hannah! Previously, I was so worried about Sam because of his hospitalization, but he was very happy to see me and so did Saehan and Msn. Hannah. While we were joyfully talking about many things like Sam’s future plan to an exchange student, suddenly Sam’s roommate Kevin appeared, and we all exclaimed, especially, Sam, claiming, “What is happening with me?” I added “God was happy with you and brought your friends here!” In God, unexpected things like this has happened a lot.

Msn. Mary Kim and I originally planned to go to Minnesota as a pioneering house church. However, U of M (gophers) rejected me as a student, so, we were sent to Arlington, Texas and stayed there for 7 and half years. After that, we had 10 years of wilderness training in “Deep South,” navigating, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana and then finally DuPage UBF, Illinois. Many of us had plans in place but sometimes those did not work out, like Saul’s and David’s. What can we do? Pr 16:9 says, “In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.” May God help us to establish our steps in God’s great plan!

In conclusion, we learned how Jonathan and David became one in spirit. Both of them loved God, loved His people and were warriors of faith against the enemies. They were connected in God and became best friends despite many differences and so are we! David’s success was due to God’s being with him while Saul’s jealousy and fear was due to his unrepentant heart and his obessession on earthly things like human honor. Saul’s plans were thwarted because God intervened and His plans for David would work out greatly! May God raise many Davids and Jonathans among us!