

THE LEADER'S "DEFERRAL"

Text: I Samuel 18:1-4

Subject: Characteristics of Jonathan's Healthy Spirituality

Introduction

Someone once said: The greatest freedom in life is having **nothing to prove** and **no one to impress.**" I think Jonathan (Saul's son and David's friend) is a great illustration of this truth.

How Jonathan Comes On the Scene

1. David slays Goliath at the Valley of Elah where the Philistine army is in a standoff with the army of King Saul (Jonathan's father).
2. David's victory begins a rout of the Philistines who are driven back to Gath.
3. Abner brings David to Saul while David is still holding Goliath's severed head.
4. Jonathan (the eldest son of Saul) makes a covenant with David and purposes to protect him from the carnal pursuit of his father (Saul).

(Leadership Lessons From Jonathan's Life Story)

I. Healthy leaders live without a sense of entitlement!

(Which protects you from feeling cheated, shortchanged or discontent)

"And Jonathan made a special vow to be David's friend." (I Samuel 18:3)

Question: Who was Jonathan?

Answer: The son of King Saul!

Question: What was Jonathan's privilege in life?

Answer: To be next in line for the throne!

Question: What decision does Jonathan make?

Answer: To give up something that is rightfully his for the sake of supporting David (and advancing the kingdom).

In other words,

- Jonathan has an excuse to be envious, jealous and hate David (treat him as a rival).

But instead,

- Jonathan overcomes the temptation of entitlement (and is content in doing so).

(Grasp the magnitude of this moment)

1. In the glow of David's great victory (or the spur of the moment) Jonathan makes a covenant with David.
2. Jonathan strips off his royal insignia and royal armor – to give them all to David.
3. This was more than spontaneous generosity – but a recognition of David's worth and value.

In other words,

- Jonathan is willing to give his all (even his right to the throne) for the sake of another.

(Sounds like Jesus in Philippians)

"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:7, 8)

- Like Jonathan, Jesus sees **your value** and worth!
- Like Jonathan, Jesus gave up **his rights** for you and me!
- Like Jonathan, Jesus sees **your potential** and usefulness in His kingdom!

II. Healthy leaders possess the heart of a servant!

(Which allows you to be a giver instead of a taker.)

"And Jonathan sealed the pact by giving David his robe, tunic, sword, bow and belt."
(I Samuel 18:4)

Question: What is a servant?

Answer: According to Mark 10:44 (DOULOS) and Matthew 23:11 (DIAKONOS) the two Greek words for "servant" mean:

1. One who **advances others** at the expense of them self.
2. One who **cares less** who gets the credit.
3. One who doesn't need to be **thanked** for their service.
4. One who takes up their cross **without complaint**.

This is Jonathan all the way!

- He elevates David and supports him in battle.
- He cares less about getting the praise that David is receiving for victory in battle.
- He needs no "thank you" from David to serve.
- He doesn't complain about ministry "behind the scenes".

(Sounds just like Jesus in John 13)

Question: Why did Jesus model servant hood by washing the disciple's feet?

Answer: Because after the Lord's Supper, a dispute arose among the disciples over who was top dog. (Luke 22)

So Jesus washes feet to teach us:

1. Real leaders serve despite their **pain**!
 - Jesus was facing impending death and God's wrath to bear our punishment for sin.
 - Jesus was feeling the "weight of the world" yet He serves without self-pity.
2. Real leaders serve despite their **title**!
 - Jesus is the King of the Universe yet He is washing dirty feet.
 - Jesus teaches us that a real servant is never too proud to do the little things.
3. Real leaders serve despite their **reward**!
 - Jesus ministers to those who are ungrateful.
 - Jesus knows that one will deny Him, one will sell Him and all will forsake Him.

(Mark 14:50)

III. Healthy leaders are secure when rejected!

(Which protects you from being intimidated and manipulated by people)

“Saul boiled with rage at Jonathan and said, ‘you stupid son of a whore. Do you think I don’t know that you want David to be king in your place, shaming yourself and your mother? Go get David so I can kill him’. ‘But what has he done?’ Jonathan demanded. Then Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan intending to kill him. So Jonathan left the table for he was crushed by his father’s shameful behavior.” (I Samuel 20:30-34)

Question: Why was Saul so enraged?

Answer: Because David was receiving praise for killing the giant. (Ch 17)

Question: What did Jonathan do with his father’s plan to kill David?

Answer: He sided with truth (instead of a relative) and defended David.

Question: What did Saul do to Jonathan?

Answer: He rejected him and tried to intimidate and manipulate his son for personal advantage.

So much so that...

- Saul tried to kill his own son Jonathan!

Saul uses intimidation with Jonathan:

“As long as David lives on the earth, you, Jonathan will never be established nor your kingdom; now send for David so that I can kill him.” (I Samuel 20:31)

Question: How does Jonathan respond to intimidation and manipulation?

Answer: He leaves the feast and all its guests who had witnessed the scene.

Question: What produces security in someone’s heart? (In a very unpredictable world)

(Five Unchangeable Truths)

1. Knowing the **fear** of the Lord keeps you secure when other people try to intimidate, manipulate or coerce you to please them at the expense of pleasing God!
 - The fear of the Lord is a **steadfast disposition** that takes God extremely serious in every area of my life.
2. Knowing the **sovereignty** of God keeps you secure when you experience dents, detours, delays and disappointments along life’s journey!
 - You just flat out believe that God works all things together for good, makes no mistakes and redeems your pain and tears for His ultimate glory.
3. Knowing the future **judgment seat** of Christ keeps you secure when you are criticized, judged or misunderstood!
 - You know that God is the One who will examine and judge your works, and this provokes you to live to please Him in all you do.

4. Knowing the **justice** of God keeps you secure and enables you to “hold your peace” when tempted to retaliate and “get even” with those who hurt you.
 - This allows you to forgive, relinquish self-vindication and trust God to defend what’s work defending.
5. Knowing the **grace** of God keeps you secure when your thorn in the flesh is not removed and you feel weak, infirmed, perplexed and cast down!
 - God’s sustaining grace is so sufficient that you are able to “glory in infirmity” because of Christ’s power resting upon you.

“Those who fear the Lord are secure.” (Proverbs 14:26)

Fact: The fear of the Lord produces a deep security which...

1. Allows you to overcome the “disease to please.”
2. Allows you to overcome self-consciousness.
3. Allows you to still feel ok when you don’t meet everyone else’s expectations.
4. Allows you to say “no” without feeling guilty.
5. Allows you to fulfill God’s will instead of everybody else’s will.

(Sounds just like Jesus in John 17:4)

“I have glorified you (Father) on the earth; I have finished the work which you have given me to do.”

IV. Healthy leaders can trust God with faith and patience!

(Which protects you from worrying over what is outside of your control.)

“Then David bowed to Jonathan with his face to the ground. Both of them were in tears as they embraced each other and said good-bye. At last Jonathan said to David, ‘Go in peace for we have made a pact in the Lord’s name. We have entrusted each other and each other’s children into the Lord’s hands forever.’ Then David left and Jonathan returned to the city.” (1 Samuel 20:41, 42)

Question: What does Jonathan say to David the last time they are together?

“We have entrusted each other and each other’s children into the Lord’s hands forever.”

(In other words David...)

- “Even though Saul is jealous and angry.”
- “Even though our future is uncertain.”
- “Even though things seem out of control.”
- “Even though we cannot control the king.”
- “Even though we may not see each other again.”

“Let’s remember this”

- “We have entrusted *each other, our futures and our children into the Lord’s hands forever.*” (V. 42)

Question: What is worry?

Answer: It is **accepting responsibility** that God never intended for you to carry!

Question: Why must we address it?

Answer: Because most people crucify themselves between two thieves:

- The regrets of **yesterday** or the worries of **tomorrow!**

(Sounds just like Jesus in Hebrews 12)

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God;

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (V. 2, 3)

Question: How did Jesus respond when He had every opportunity to panic and worry?

Answer: I Peter 2:23

"Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

- The words "**committed himself**" are banking terms.
- They mean "**to deposit for safe keeping**".

V. Healthy leaders possess an immeasurable inheritance!

(Which allows you to look beyond your measurable rewards.)

"And Saul's son Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth who was crippled as a child." (II Samuel 4:4)

"One day David asked, "Is anyone in Saul's family still alive - anyone to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" He summoned a man named Ziba, who had been one of Saul's servants. "Are you Ziba?" the king asked.

"Yes sir, I am," Ziba replied.

The king then asked him, "Is anyone still alive from Saul's family? If so, I want to show God's kindness to them."

Ziba replied, "Yes, one of Jonathan's sons is still alive. He is crippled in both feet."

"Where is he?" the king asked.

"In Lo-debar," Ziba told him, "at the home of Makir son of Ammiel."

So David sent for him and brought him from Makir's home. His name was Mephibosheth; he was Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson. When he came to David, he bowed low to the ground in deep respect. David said, "Greetings, Mephibosheth."

Mephibosheth replied, "I am your servant."

"Don't be afraid!" David said. "I intend to show kindness to you because of my promise to your father, Jonathan. I will give you all the property that once belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will eat here with me at the king's table!"

Mephibosheth bowed respectfully and exclaimed, "Who is your servant, that you should show such kindness to a dead dog like me?"

Then the king summoned Saul's servant Ziba and said, "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family." (II Samuel 9:1-9)

Illustration

What were Russell Crowe's words as Maximus (in the movie "Gladiator") just before the battle? Maximus says:

"Brothers, what we do in life echoes in eternity."

Question: How does God honor Jonathan (even after he dies?)

Answer: By David extending grace to his crippled son Mephibosheth!

(What a scene in II Samuel 9)

1. David wants to bless "anyone" in Saul's family line.
2. Ziba tells David about Jonathan's son.
3. Mephibosheth is summoned to appear before David.
4. David makes an authoritative declaration:

"I want to be kind to you because of my vow to your father." (II Samuel 9:7)

"I'm giving you all the land that once belonged to your grandfather Saul and you may live here with me at the palace." (v. 7b)

What a discovery...

- That what Jonathan gave up to advance the kingdom – his son receives later on!

In other words,

- Jonathan gave up his seat in the palace – and after his death his son is invited to a seat in the palace for life!

In other words,

- Jonathan sowed good seed while he was living (and reaped more than he sowed after he died).

In other words,

- Healthy leaders always look beyond the immediate and understand these truths:
 1. At times God's work is **invisible** but God is working even when you cannot see Him!
 2. Loving never empties the **heart** and giving never empties the **purse**!
 3. We shovel it out, God shovels it in and His shovel is **bigger** than our shovel!
 4. We make a living by what we **get**; we make a life by what we **give**!

(Sounds just like Jesus in I Cor. 15:20, 21))

"But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead."

In other words,

- Jesus sowed His life in death and rose from the dead as predicted (and)
- We may die an earthly death, but are assured of our resurrection one day!

Remember

- We will be rewarded in heaven for what we **gave** – not for what we **received** on earth!

Amen!
Bill Kirk