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1 SAMUEL 20

1 Samuel Series

It's during this time of our worship service that we dig into God's word and look for truths that we can apply to our lives. It's our objective that God's word speak to us so that we can learn and apply those things.

My goal, if you're a young person here, is to provide you with some truths that you'll be able to apply to your lives. So I don't want you to think if you're a young person that this is not for you. Young people, this is for you. There are some applications that are great for you, as well as the rest of us, younger or older, whatever you call yourself. But the goal here is to dig into God's word and understand more about who He is, who we are, and what His plan is for us.

Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Now Lord, we open your word with an attitude of reverence because we know that this is your word that you're speaking to us. We also open this book with this feeling of anticipation, knowing that the thing that you share with us today may be that new mercy that you give to us today because your mercies are new every morning. So we're asking, Lord, that you would reveal something new. Impress upon our hearts something important. Give us an understanding of what that looks like to serve you in a greater way today through this passage. In Jesus' name, amen.

Friends – we all need them. Whether you're poor or rich, whether you are old or young, whether you're famous or not famous, we all need friends. Our life is made more rich by those friends. If I were to ask you how many friends do you have, some people would say, "I have hundreds," based on their Facebook profile. Others if they think about those people that they know and interact with, they might say, "I have fifty different people or fifty friends," they might call them. And then there's some who would say, "Well I only have a handful of friends because those are the people I care about and who care for me."

It's interesting when you go through trials, or a problem, or suffering, or failure in your life, or something, you really find out who your friends are. Many of us think that we have friends, but they turn out to be just acquaintances when life gets tough. Friendships are very important.

I think, to quote Ed, we live in a world where there's so much ability to connect with people today, but we are so disconnected in relationships that we must figure out how to connect better. We need those relationships because they do something for us. God has done something in the

midst of community. In community we have relationships and those relationships are significant. But how do you get those kinds of friends that you can connect with?

Of course we've heard it said that if you want to have a friend, you need to be a friend, which is good application. We'll take that truth and apply it today. As we look at 1 Samuel 20, what we're going to find in this chapter is that David and Jonathan were friends. I'm going to read through the whole passage, 1 Samuel 20, break it up as we go, and I'm looking for something. I'm looking for traits of good friendships so that we can be good friends to other people and we can move forward in these relationships that God has designed us to have.

God wants us to have significant relationships. It's within those significant relationships amazing and good things happen. We also know it's where a lot of pain can take place. So we must be willing to face the fact that we may experience rejection, we may experience hurt and pain in order to reach the benefits that we have from those relationships that we can possibly enjoy.

Now the relationship that we're going to look at is one that is centered around the person of David because God has a plan for David and He's moving him through. In this particular chapter we see emphasized the relationship between David and Jonathan.

Look at 1 Samuel 20:1. *Then David fled from Naioth at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to kill me?"*

I'm going to give you seven different principles I've identified about friendship in this passage. As you go through you might add some more. In fact I'm kind of thinking as I was going over it again this morning, there's probably some more stuff in here about what makes a good friend.

But I like this first thing that David does when he goes to Jonathan and then he says, "Alright. Tell me. What have I done?" There's a sense that one thing that makes a good friend is humility. To be humble. To come into that situation and be able to say, "Are there mistakes that I made?" In fact I would suggest this is the first question we always need to ask when we're in conflict with someone else. Is there something I've done or that I didn't do that contributed to this conflict? We always ask that question first because there's a tendency in our minds to think that we've got it together and everybody else is the problem. That's what we tend to think if we are not humble. So we must be humble as we come to this question.

Imagine this scenario. One person comes and says, "I just try to have friends, but when I try to relate to people, I'm just being persecuted for my faith. Nobody wants to be my friend." Well are there any things that people are telling you about why they don't want to be your friend? "Well, one girl told me that I talk too much and that I have an attitude and that people don't want to be around me." Well then I want to tell you something really clearly here. This isn't about being persecuted for your faith. You're just being irritating.

I think we need to look at ourselves first, not look at other people and start imagining these things that we're being persecuted because of our faith or our race or our color or something else. We need to be humble and ask the question, "Is there something I'm doing here that I could do

differently, that I could change?” Very important question, I think, that could lead us to have good friendships. Have a humility inside of our hearts.

Well Jonathan in verse 2 replies – *“Never!” Jonathan replied. “You are not going to die! Look, my father doesn’t do anything, great or small, without letting me know. Why would he hide this from me? It isn’t so!”*

So Jonathan says, “Why would he hide this?” This is what I like about Jonathan. He had this other trait, maybe it fits under humility, but there’s this sense of the benefit of the doubt. The same thing that Jonathan is able to believe that David is a good guy and doesn’t compete with him for the kingdom is the same trait that prevents him from seeing that his father is paranoid. So he has this trait about him that he thinks the best of people. I really like that.

Verse 3 – *But David took an oath and said, “Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said to himself, ‘Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.’ Yet as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death.”*

Now David is determined that Saul is out to get him and he’s determined to help Jonathan understand that there’s this problem. In fact he wants Jonathan to understand that he’s not paranoid and delusional, but that Jonathan’s father actually has this problem. He wants to communicate this.

I like this statement that he makes, notice at the end of verse 3 – *“Yet as surely as the Lord lives, there is one step between me and death.”* Here’s this shortness and brevity of life. When you come in contact with the brevity of life, when you recognize that life is very short. It might be a health concern that you have, it might be that you attend a funeral or whatever, you realize life is short. When you recognize that, then a lot of those trivial things aren’t that important anymore. It’s not that important that we disagree about them. What are the most important things in the relationship.

So this is what David says later in his life that illustrates this brevity of life: *Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered – how fleeting my life is.* Why? Because it helps us understand something more powerful in our own lives that we can understand. There are things that are important. There are sometimes you’ve got to admit the day-to-day things we get upset with and mad at people about really aren’t that important. Humility is important in our relationship with each other and that’s strategic.

Look at verse 4 because now we’re going to come to a second trait. *Jonathan said to David, “Whatever you want me to do, I’ll do for you.”* I would say the second trait that we see in this passage is that he’s available. Whatever you need, I’ll be there to help you. He’s willing to do whatever needs to be done. He’s willing to put David’s welfare above his own. Are you an available person or are you too busy? Committing to be there for his friend.

Now Ed’s got some plans that he’s going to share with us next month about how those of us who are seniors can get more involved with young people in their lives. How are you going to get connected with a young person? Here’s how Ed does it. I’ll just tell you. He shows up at their

baseball game or goes to their play at school, goes to the wrestling match, and he gets involved in their lives. He's available and that availability is what makes friends work. It's strategic. Available and dependable to the point of being sacrificial in our relationship with others.

Here's an interesting quote. It usually comes as a shock to discover that not everyone accepts us just the way we are. There's something about each of us that causes others to reject us. But we hope others will like us. After all, we think we're likeable. The fear of rejection is what causes us to resist rejection. Several years ago John Powell wrote a book entitled *Why am I Afraid to Tell You Who I am?* The reason is you might reject me. When we reach out to others, they don't always reach back. So why risk trying to be someone's friend when it hurts too much to be rejected? Interesting. There's the ability to move past that in order to develop these friendships.

There was a group of fourth graders who asked the question, "What's the most important thing in a friendship?" So I'm going to share with you a study not from a scientific journal, but this is from a group of fourth graders. There were 198 responses from their family, friends, and even from people that they put it out on the internet and got some responses. Here are the responses to their question. What's the most important thing in friendship? Look at the responses on the slide. I'm going to run through these quickly.

Friends can trust each other.
 Friends help each other.
 Friends do things together.
 Friends are loyal to each other.
 Friends are honest with each other.
 Friends talk and listen to each other.
 Friends share with each other.
 Friends are there in good and bad.
 Friends accept you.
 Friends have fun together.

I was just interested to know that "friends have fun together" is at the bottom at the list, where I would have thought it might be higher on the list. Notice some of the things that are up there at the top. I just find that really interesting what makes friends. Some of those things are in this passage as we see the relationship between David and Jonathan develop.

Now they have this predicament in their relationship. It's complicated. David is going to be the next king. Jonathan could be heir to the throne. David's hated by Saul and Jonathan's father is Saul. So it's really complicated. There are emotions, there are desires, there's friendship, there's danger all wrapped up in this messy little package here.

David now comes in the passage in verse 5 and says, "I have an idea." They're going to develop this mission impossible plan. So look at verse 5. *So David said, "Look, tomorrow is the New Moon feast, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow. If your father misses me at all, tell him, 'David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because an annual sacrifice is being made there for his whole clan.' If he says, 'Very well,' then your servant is safe. But if he loses*

his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me. As for you, show kindness to your servant, for you have brought him into a covenant with you before the Lord.”

The word *covenant* is important. I’m going to draw that out a little bit further, but just remember that it’s back here in verse 8.

“If I am guilty, then kill me yourself! Why hand me over to your father?” Let’s just pause there because that’s going to bring us to a third trait of friendship – to be accountable. Let me just show you what this looks like in the passage. David says, *“If I am guilty, then kill me yourself! Why hand me over to your father?”* What he’s saying is if I deserve death, if I’m wrong, then I want you to address it right now. There’s an accountability built in there. I’m willing to listen.

Now accountability isn’t what we would normally consider fun, but it’s a blessing in a relationship because it helps us live better. It helps us live the way we are to live. That’s why in Proverbs it says – *Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.* Those *wounds of a friend* help us to be better people. That’s the goal here.

I would suggest that a lot of times the friends that we have are really kind of fair-weather friends that hang around. They’re not the ones that are really going to help us. They often say things we like to hear instead of the things that are the most important.

David is accountable to Jonathan. He says, *“If I’m guilty, then kill me yourself! Why hand me over to your father?”*

Verse 9 – *“Never!” Jonathan said. “If I had the least inkling that my father was determined to harm you, wouldn’t I tell you?”* Leading me to the next point that seems to be right here in the passage that there is honesty happening between them. Jonathan says, *“Wouldn’t I tell you? I would be honest you. I wouldn’t hide it from you. I would tell you what you need to know.”* Now that doesn’t mean that friends intentionally hurt people with the truth. It’s important for us to speak the truth in love. Those two things must go together.

There are some people who say, “I speak whatever I’m thinking, so everybody knows what I think.” That’s like they’re giving us some kind of a gift. “People know me because I just say whatever I’m thinking.” I just want to make something really clear here. We don’t want to know everything you’re thinking. There needs to be a filter. The filter has to do with is it edifying? If it’s not edifying, we don’t need to hear it. You can save it or throw it away or something like that. We don’t want to know what everybody is thinking, but the honesty, speaking the truth in love, is what occurs in friendship that is strategic. Honest for our good.

Verse 10 – *David asked, “Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?”*

“Come,” Jonathan said, “let’s go out into the field.” So they went there together. Now they’re going to make this commitment. I want you to see this next trait. I’ll just show it to you first. The next trait is to be God-centered. The strongest relationships are the ones that are God-centered. Notice in the passage there are three times just in these next verses where God is brought into their relationship.

Verse 12 – *Then Jonathan said to David, “I swear by the Lord, the God of Israel, that I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! (In other words, God is a part of this plan that we’re having. It’s not just something you and I are developing.) If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know? But if my father intends to harm you, may the Lord deal with Jonathan, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away in peace. May the Lord be with you as he has been with my father.*

Faith is not a private thing. It’s a shared thing. And when it’s shared, it’s beautiful. The church is a place where built-in relationships can take place. Here’s what I mean by that. Because you are a Christian, you have something inside of you that is an automatic magnet and connecting point with other people who are Christians. We can connect to people who are very different than we are in a lot of different ways because of that common thing that we share because we are believers. It’s something very powerful in relationships and it drives us forward. So having that God-centered perspective in your life certainly, but also in the way that you’re finding friends, is very important and can draw us together.

Does that mean that everybody can make a good friend in the church? No. I just want to tell you, the church is full of people who are weird. There are weird people inside the church and outside the church. So I’m not saying that just because someone’s a Christian they’re not weird. All I’m saying is that the relationship we do find with people within the church can be very much treasured and appreciated.

Alright. Let’s go to another one. I put this one in the center because it seemed to me that it’s the central idea in the passage. Maybe not the central idea in the whole idea of friendship. Maybe God-centered needs to be that. But being committed is so central here.

Look at the verses in verse 14. I’m going to read them and then explain them to you. Verse 14 says – *“But show me unfailing kindness like the Lord’s kindness as long as I live (your version might be a little different, but it’s the same idea; we’re coming back to that in a minute), so that I may not be killed, and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the Lord has cut off every one of David’s enemies from the face of the earth.”*

Now this commitment, this kindness is a very important word that draws them together. It’s the Hebrew word *chesed*. I’d write it down. If I were you, I’d save that Hebrew word. You want to know it because it’s used throughout the Hebrew Bible. The word *chesed* is the foundation for God’s commitment to us. He calls it covenant faithfulness. It’s most often translated ‘loving kindness.’ But it’s a loving kindness that’s built on some foundation. That foundation is a commitment that God has for us.

So Jonathan is taking this theological concept of God’s commitment to us and he’s saying let’s have this relationship together. May the loving kindness that God has toward us be something that we share. I’ll read verse 14. *But show me unfailing kindness like the Lord’s kindness as long I live.* That’s the commitment. This commitment is what their relationship is based on. It’s this strategic element that they have.

Verse 16 continues – *So Jonathan made a covenant.* There we have that word *covenant* again, which implies commitment. There’s this agreement, whether you have a written covenant or you have an oath like they have here, whatever, there’s this sense of I’m committing myself to you in thick and thin, challenges or not, and that becomes very important. *So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the Lord call David’s enemies to account.” And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.*

Let me just talk about men for a minute because us men need relationships with other men. We have a problem in our society that our society is very sexually saturated. There’s a lot of sexual messages continually. So we long to have those good relationships with guys. But the world has this kind of thing: If you’re a guy and you have a relationship with a guy, there must be this kind of sexual attraction. I just want you to know guys can have good, healthy, mature, close, loving relationships without a sexual component. It’s really valuable when we do. When we get together as men and we enjoy something, that’s really powerful. That’s what David and Jonathan are experiencing here.

Well let me read more about their plan as we go through starting in verse 18. *Then Jonathan said to David, “Tomorrow is the New Moon feast. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty. The day after tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where you hid when this trouble began, and wait by the stone Ezel. I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I were shooting at a target. Then I will send a boy and say, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to him, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them here,’ then come, because, as surely as the Lord lives, you are safe; there is no danger. But if I say to the boy, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you,’ then you must go, because the Lord has sent you away. And about the matter you and I discussed—remember, the Lord is witness between you and me forever.”*

So David hid in the field, and when the New Moon feast came, the king sat down to eat. He sat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan, and Abner sat next to Saul, but David’s place was empty. Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, “Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean—surely he is unclean.” But the next day, the second day of the month, David’s place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, “Why hasn’t the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?”

Jonathan answered, “David earnestly asked me for permission to go to Bethlehem. He said, ‘Let me go, because our family is observing a sacrifice in the town and my brother has ordered me to be there. If I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away to see my brothers.’ That is why he has not come to the king’s table.”

Now Saul’s response. Verse 30 – *Saul’s anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, “You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don’t I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send someone to bring him to me, for he must die!”*

“Why should he be put to death? What has he done?” Jonathan asked his father. But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David. Jonathan

got up from the table in fierce anger; on that second day of the feast he did not eat, because he was grieved at his father's shameful treatment of David. Jonathan is now convinced that Saul is guilty.

Verse 35 – *In the morning Jonathan went out to the field for his meeting with David. He had a small boy with him, and he said to the boy, "Run and find the arrows I shoot." As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. When the boy came to the place where Jonathan's arrow had fallen, Jonathan called out after him, "Isn't the arrow beyond you?" Then he shouted, "Hurry! Go quickly! Don't stop!" The boy picked up the arrow and returned to his master. (The boy knew nothing about all this; only Jonathan and David knew.) Then Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy and said, "Go, carry them back to town."*

After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most.

I'm just going to fill in the chart here with this other thing that I see. They have mutual respect. I just see this because he bowed down three times to him. The bowing down is this statement of respect. Especially in Asian cultures when someone bows down, it's a statement of value toward the other person. That mutual respect is important in a relationship.

We go back to the family. When a parent and a child are growing up and a child is getting older, then the relationship needs to change from a parent-child relationship to an adult-adult relationship. The key component to making that happen is mutual respect. The young person respects the parent and the parent respects the young person and it turns into this adult-adult relationship, this mutual respect relationship. Mutual respect is one of the important things about friendship and it's obvious in this passage that it exists.

Let's go on to verse 42 and finish the passage out. *Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.'" Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.*

I think these are valuable truths for friendship. I'll let you run with the applications about your personal life. Remember being a friend is how you're going to get friends. So you want to be the kind of person that's involved in all of these.

The greatest friend that any of us could have is Jesus. Now Jesus introduced this idea of friendship to us in the gospel of John. In John 15:15 He says these words – *I no longer call you servants, because a servant do not know what their master is doing. But now I call you friends because I have told you everything that my Father has told me.*

The greatest thing that you can do to practice your friendship is to have a close relationship with Jesus Christ because He changes you. He isn't the one who's going to reject you. He's right here building and strengthening His relationship, empowering you in new ways. He's the one you can come to at anytime. You can go back through the chart and just imagine thinking about Jesus in

those ways. He's the one who's committed to you. He's the one that respects you. He's the one who's available to you. It goes right through that whole thing and you see that Jesus is the one who is the ultimate friend for any of us. In the previous two verses He says in John – *Greater love has no one than this: than he lay down his life for his friends*. The point Jesus is making is I want to be your friend.

The way that you become the friend of Jesus is to have a personal relationship with Him. That means you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and your Savior. If you've not made that commitment today, you want to do it today. You want to ask Jesus to come into your heart and accept Him as your Lord and your Savior. He will then be your friend, that person who's connected to you, and you're able to enjoy that relationship in a powerful way.

This week I had the privilege of overseeing the funeral for Judy Rotundo who passed away eight days ago. At the funeral, as I always do when I give a funeral, I give a personal invitation to receive Jesus. In fact it wasn't hard in this case because Judy told me (we had met six to eight weeks before), "Invite them to come to Jesus at the funeral."

So I said to them, "Folks, we all know Judy. She was a really nice lady, but she wanted me to extend this invitation to you – to know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior." That's what drove her. And everybody knew because she was just driven by the Lord continually in her life. So as I do, at the end of the funeral I say, "I'd like you to bow your heads and close your eyes. While your heads are bowed, if there's anybody who would like me to pray for them in regards to accepting Jesus into their life, would you just put your hand up and down."

One lady said, "Oh!" not quietly, "Pray for me! Pray for me!" Right in the middle of the funeral that's what she says. I said, "Okay, I'll pray for you. Anybody else?" Three people raised their hands. I went through the sinner's prayer at the funeral and at least four people who raised their hand prayed to receive Jesus Christ at the funeral this week. Why? Because they want to have Jesus Christ as their friend.

It's not about some righteous acts that we do or are going to church. It's about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That friendship is something that we can all share and enjoy. So Judy even in her funeral is sharing Jesus with other people and people are coming to know Jesus as a result not only of her life, but even in her passing. I would suggest we all need that in our lives. We need Jesus Christ to be that person that we need in our hearts as our friend.

So if you would, bow your heads with me now. If you'd like for me to remember you in my prayer, not by name, but you'd like to accept Jesus Christ into your life, would you just put your hand up and then you can put it down. I'll pray for you this morning.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we come before you now and we thank you for dying on the cross for us. That's the greatest form of love, that sacrificial love that you did for us so that we could be your friends. Lord, we want to know more about what that looks like. We want to serve you. We want you to be the first and most important thing in our lives. We thank you that we can enjoy the church where friendships can be built and developed and that you give us that witness with each other that draws us deeper and closer in relationships. So thank you so much for that as

well. Lord, I pray for my brothers and sisters here, that all of us would be giving our lives to you more and more and enjoying the depth of relationship you designed for us to enjoy. I pray for special relationships for each of us that we can rely on and go to. Thank you, Lord, for what you're doing. Thank you for being our friend. We appreciate so much that we have a friend in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.