

21. Aftermath of a giant-killing

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Somehow we expect a happy story to follow after a victory. We don't expect grinding and stormy weathers after that wonderful experience. However, the real life is not always like that. As a matter of fact, for Christians, it is the time to watch out. Because God allows the trials and tests that He sends to come upon us to build our characters like Jesus.

Likewise, we expected a happy story of David, but after killing the giant Goliath the Bible tells differently. While the giant-killing was David's greatest achievement up to this time, it swept him out to a sea not of blissful kingship but of tumultuous testing-and he was adrift on that sea for many years.

A. INSTANT POPULARITY

1 Sam 18:1-2 Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore.

"David, the son of Jesse"-overnight that name was on the lips of every person in Palestine.

1 Sam 18:3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

Jonathan was a lot like David. They were approximately the same age, though Jonathan was probably at least five years older. They both were bold, they both were men of great faith in God, and they both were men of action. Most of all, they both were men who had a real relationship with God, not like Saul.

At the same time, Jonathan and David were different. Jonathan was the first-born son of a king, and David was the last-born son of a farmer. This made Jonathan more than a prince, he was the crown prince. Jonathan would, by everyone's expectation, be the next king of Israel. But David was the king anointed by God.

We find these two young men made a covenant between them. According to their Hebrew custom, they cut animals in two and place them on the each side of a path. Then they walk on that path and realizing that anyone who doesn't keep the covenant would be like these animals. We find the same ritual in Gen 15:9-11, the covenant between God and Abram.

Gen 15:9-11 So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

1 Sam 18:4 And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

These were treasured items that would not have been casually surrendered. With these gifts Jonathan ratified his covenant with David. In retrospect, Jonathan's action was symbolic of a transfer of royal power from Saul's family to David.

It would be some 20 years until David took the throne of Israel and replaced Saul. If Jonathan was ready to recognize David as God's choice for the next king, David was willing to let God put him on the throne, and in God's timing. Both of these men were thoroughly submitted to the Lord.

David couldn't use Saul's armor. It didn't fit him physically, but more importantly it didn't fit him spiritually. He and Saul lived for, and were trusting in, different things. But David received Jonathan's armor, not only because they were more similar in size, more importantly, they shared the same heart for God.

Let's be careful whom we are going to associate with. I am not saying that we as Christians cannot have non-believers as friends. But sharing our hearts and souls with non-believers can be extremely dangerous.

2 Cor 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

This is not only apply to marriage and dating, but also it applies in business and close friendship.

Some people read a homosexual relationship into the love between David and Jonathan. They suppose that two men can not love each other without it being what the Bible clearly says is immoral and abomination. But the relationship between David and Jonathan shows that the Bible doesn't condemn real godly love between men, only a sexual relationship between men.

B. BEHAVING WISELY

1 Sam 18:5 So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

How would young David handle this sudden success? Most people lose their sense of balance and perspective in the thin air of their rapid rise to the top. David, however, kept a level head. Saul, in contrast, lost his head, and the Holy Spirit's absence in his life became even more evident.

Scripture says that David "behaved wisely" in his new role as a captain of Saul's army by knowing his position, knowing others' positions, working together in corporation with those people instead of barking orders. It appears four times in this chapter.

The Hebrew word is 'sakal.' Sakal can be defined: "wisdom which brings success." According to Proverbs, people who display this sort of wisdom restrain their speech and are teachable (10:19; 21:11). That was David. He wore his success with class and wisdom for the short time he had it.

C. NO. 1 SONG ON TOP TWENTY COUNTDOWN

1 Sam 18:6-7 Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."

Whenever the No. 1 song of Dick Clark's Jewish Bandstand came on, everybody got excited except Saul. While they were shaking their bodies and doing song and dance, Saul was grinding his teeth. Why? Because it was about David, not Saul.

David became popular because he was a man after God's own heart and people could see the love, the wisdom, and the peace of God in him.

1 Sam 18:8-9 Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" So Saul eyed David from that day forward.

Saul's insecurity led him down a four-step staircase to self-destroying hatred:

- 1) It was a slow-burning displeasure
- 2) It followed by stomach-tightening anger
- 3) It led to anxiety about losing his kingdom.
- 4) According to verse 9, it finally gave way to full-blown attempt to murder David.

Saul was very busy making himself known among his people with his own monument in Carmel. But now he sees David as his competitor who happened to be the one saved his neck from the battle against Goliath.

When we are praised and popular, it isn't wise to let it go to our heads. This was a test, one that the devil wanted to use to bring us down, and one that the Lord wanted to use to build our characters up. Many people who could handle adversity well enough fall under the challenge of success.

Jealousy and Envy - both of these blind people's eyes from seeing the truth. People with jealousy twist facts to accommodate their own irrational thoughts and justify their own twisted conclusions in their hearts.

Jealousy can lead people to murder. I am not making a farfetched story. We see it often, especially in "Days of our lives," "All My Children," "Young and Restless" and "General Hospital." Not only dumb daytime soap operas, but also in real life, jealousy drives people to do something they wouldn't do, if they think through properly.

You might ask, "Doesn't the Bible say that God is a jealous God. How are you going to explain that?" Yes, that phrase appears throughout the entire Bible. However, the Hebrew word for this particular "jealous" is "qanna." Unlike other word "jealous" to one another human, this only applies to God. The actual root word comes from 'zeal for the Lord.'

D. UNQUESTIONABLE SUBMISSION

1 Sam 18:10 And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand.

What does this mean that distressing spirit came upon Saul and he was prophesying? Do demons help people know the future? Is Psychic real with bad Jamaican accents? Saul wasn't speaking from the Lord at all, and actually "prophesied" is a bad translation here. The Hebrew grammar used here can be used of idle ravings as well as of prophecy from the Lord. Saul was simply babbling like a man not in his right mind. He was in the la la land.

In the hands of David, he had a lyre, a musical instrument that brings edification and encouragement to Saul. But in the hands of Saul, he had a spear, a hurting instrument that brings destruction and death. David is on the way up, Saul is on the way down. How can we tell whether we are on the way up or down? By looking at what we have in our physical and spiritual hands. Do we have something to bring people up or do we have something to tear down and destroy?

1 Sam 18:11 And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice.

David didn't pick up the spear. He didn't throw it back. He simply escaped Saul's presence. No one could blame David if he struck back, it could easily be called self-defense. Even though he knew that he was appointed to be a king someday, he didn't take it into his own hands.

The more songs were sung for us, the more spears are going to be thrown to us. It is one of the way for God is allowing them to be thrown to us, so that we may depend on Him.

1 Sam 18:12 Now Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, but had departed from Saul.

Saul knew he was outmatched. All the spears in the world couldn't defeat David, because the Lord was with him. It was also that the Lord had departed from Saul. This made Saul uncomfortable with David, and made it hard for Saul to have David around. You know what I am talking about. It could be at your home or work place, you come in they stop talking about something and glare at you even though you didn't say anything. It is not because of you, but the presence of the Holy Spirit who lives in you. That is what they don't like about.

E. SETTING A TRAP FOR DAVID

1 Sam 18:13-16 Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him. Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

Saul's desire was not to bless David, but to set him up for harm. Saul's jealousy has made him manipulative, working a hidden, secret agenda on David. In the latter days, this was the very method David used to kill Bathsheba's husband Uriah. Wonder where did David learn that?

The key to David's success was not from his accurate sling shot, nor his wise behaviors, nor his good look. It is solely based on the presence of God in his life. How can we have God's presence in our lives?

- 1) Dwelling in His Word everyday**
- 2) Constant communion with Him through prayers**
- 3) Keeping short account with Him through asking His forgiveness of our sins**
- 4) Practicing what we learn from His Word, the Bible**

1 Sam 18:17-19 Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife. Only be valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles." For Saul thought, "Let my hand not be against him, but let the hand

of the Philistines be against him.” So David said to Saul, “Who am I, and what is my life or my father’s family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?” But it happened at the time when Merab, Saul’s daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife.

The question “Who am I?” shows David’s humble heart. He was nationally famous. All Israel loved him. All Saul’s staff loved him. The crown prince Jonathan loved him. All over Israel, women sang and danced in his honor. Yet when the hand of Merab is offered to David, he doesn’t think, “Well, this is about time. I’m glad someone noticed.”

1 Sam 18:20-21 Now Michal, Saul’s daughter, loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. So Saul said, “I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.” Therefore Saul said to David a second time, “You shall be my son-in-law today.”

Michal must have been quite a daughter to Saul. He was glad that she wants to marry to David, because she would be a snare to him.

1 Sam 18:22-25 And Saul commanded his servants, “Communicate with David secretly, and say, ‘Look, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you. Now therefore, become the king’s son-in-law.’” So Saul’s servants spoke those words in the hearing of David. And David said, “Does it seem to you a light thing to be a king’s son-in-law, seeing I am a poor and lightly esteemed man?” And the servants of Saul told him, saying, “In this manner David spoke.” Then Saul said, “Thus you shall say to David: ‘The king does not desire any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king’s enemies.’” But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

In that day, a dowry was required whenever a man married. The dowry would be paid to the bride’s father, and the more important and prestigious the bride and her family, the higher the dowry price would be. The purpose of the dowry was twofold. First, it compensated the bride’s family for the loss of a family “worker.” Second, the father held a dowry as life insurance or “alimony in advance.” That is, if the husband died or divorced his wife, and she had to go back to her father’s household, there would be something to support her. All the dads who have daughters say, “Amen!”

Getting Philistines’ foreskins was designed to be difficult, because the Philistines would obviously have to be dead. And it was designed to make the Philistines completely outraged at David, because from their perspective, not only were their men killed, but their dead bodies were desecrated.

To Saul, this is a perfect way to go against David. If he gets killed by Philistines, that is great. If he comes back with the foreskins of Philistines, David would have a wife who would be a snare to him.

1 Sam 18:26-30 So when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king’s son-in-law. Now the days had not expired; therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king’s son-in-law. Then Saul gave

him Michal his daughter as a wife. Thus Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him; and Saul was still more afraid of David. So Saul became David's enemy continually. Then the princes of the Philistines went out to war. And so it was, whenever they went out, that David behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed.

How tragic! So Saul became David's enemy continually. He knew that the Lord was with David, yet because Saul was making himself the enemy of the Lord, he was also the enemy of David. It didn't have to be like this, but Saul's heart was set on this destructive course.

F. APPLICATIONS

1) Not knowing the future forces us to live one day at a time.

As David had no idea that the giant-killing would bring such intense opposition from Saul and he had to depend on God for each day, we also have to live one day at a time, taking things as they came and trusting God to prove Himself faithful.

2) Having a friend helps us face whatever comes our way.

Someone once said, "After you die, if you have six friends who want to carry your casket, you are a rich man." The encouragement of a close friend makes the valleys of our lives seem less vast, less threatening, and less lonely.

3) A godly attitude and wisdom are the best defenses against an enemy.

When we see our opposition coming, it's easy to start rolling up our mental sleeves, thinking about where to throw our first punch. But the best response to opposition is to keep our cool and let God fight our battles for us.

4) We cannot have jealousy among Christians.

By His sovereign knowledge, God chooses whom He is going to exalt or put down. He can choose anyone to do His will and He doesn't need our opinions or votes.