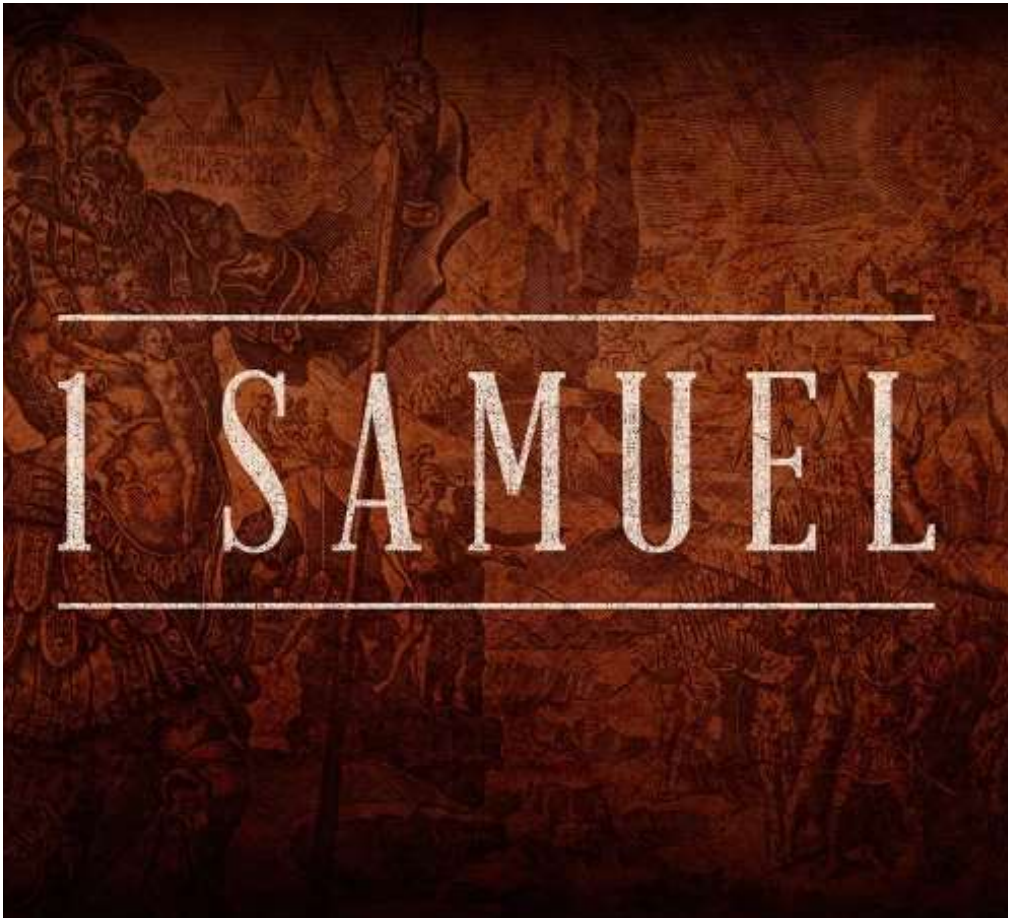


Let's Worship God

7th-12th September 2020

1 Samuel



1 SAMUEL

Monday - 1 Samuel 20:1-17 - Covenant Commitment

How does the word 'covenant' make you feel? Does it fill you with fear? Maybe you've seen it on legal documents and had no idea what this piece of legalese meant. Perhaps it scares you because you know it's an important concept in the Bible, but you're a bit fuzzy on it. Or it might scare you because you've never heard it before! Whatever impact this word has on us, chapter 20 is a great way to get a handle on this important concept. Here we see a covenant being made and its implications.

It might sound scary, but it's simple really, and a concept we're all familiar with. The most common type of covenant is marriage, and at the heart of marriage, and at the heart of covenant, is relationship. Covenants have two aspects. First there is the agreement or commitment, each party bound by requirements and responsibilities, like a contract. Though it is more than a contract or business deal - the second aspect is love. Think of marriage: there are responsibilities like "for better for worse"; but try telling your wife that you're only bound to her by duty! There must be delight as well as duty. There is a legal bond, but it is a bond of love.

A covenant like this is at the heart of chapter 20. Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as his own soul (18:3). This covenant is only mentioned twice (verses 8 and 16), yet it underlies all that happens. In an ancient covenant two parties made an agreement before witnesses, with blessings and incentives for keeping the deal, and curses and sanctions for breaking it. David and Jonathan have made a covenant (verses 8a and 16). The blessings are that they will deal kindly with each other in steadfast love (verses 8 and 14-15). The sanction for breaking the covenant is death (verses 8b and 13). The witness is God (verse 12). This covenant commitment drives the actions of these two men in this chapter.

Questions

1. How would you explain to a child what a covenant is?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks to God for his covenant-committed love for us.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Luke 18:29-30

Praise: Psalm 33:1-3, 11-13 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Tuesday - 1 Samuel 20:1-17 - Covenant Security

David started out as court favourite and, after Saul makes 7 attempts to kill him, each progressively more blatant, we come to a final breach. David will never again be in Saul's court nor lead out his army. He will spend around ten years on the run. This chapter is suitably tense, with fits of rage, tearful farewells, and secret signals. Emotions run high, speeches are full of trulys, earnestlys, surelys, and oaths. These are days that define lives and kingdoms.

David's life is in flux. His job is not safe; soldiers he had commanded now hunt him. His home is not safe (19:11). We can almost imagine the Wild-West-style wanted posters offering a reward. Yet, it is all without reason (verse 1). Where does he turn in all this? To Jonathan, his covenant friend. Jonathan can't believe what he hears (verse 2). To get to the bottom of Saul's rage David proposes a fair, unbiased, and objective test (verses 5-7). Saul's response to the reasonable excuse Jonathan gives will reveal all to Jonathan. And to what does David appeal as his life disintegrates? Verse 8 - covenant is David's one human resting place of safety and certainty.

Who is the one who can be trusted? Who is the one who will be honest? Who will say to him, "Whatever you say, I will do" (verse 5)? Who can be trusted to deal kindly (verse 8)? Who will accept David's word over Saul's? (See the change in Jonathan over verses 2-4. Jonathan believes David's word over his own 'facts'.) David finds safety and certainty, even from Saul's son, because of covenant.

If you are a member of a church you are in covenant with God and his people. That covenant gives us certainty and security. We promise to trust God and repent of our sins; he promises to save us. We also promise each other that we are bound together to the same God, living out our faith with each other, serving the same Saviour, and "dealing kindly" (verse 8) with each other. And this gives us security and certainty. If you were skydiving, would you rather have a companion who tells you the parachute can't fail, or one who straps himself into the tandem suit and jumps with you?

Questions

1. How have you been a source of safety and security recently towards those you are in the covenant of church membership with?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God to help you be a source of safety and security to your fellow church members.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life." Luke 18:29-30

Praise: Psalm 15A:all - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Wednesday - 1 Samuel 20:1-17 - Covenant Salvation

In this time of crisis David looks for security and safety in his covenant with Jonathan. It's an important lesson for us - look to the covenant for safety and salvation. God's salvation is not just salvation; it is covenant salvation. God has bound himself to us with a covenant in Jesus' blood. His love for us is covenant love - steadfast, loyal, unwavering, binding. As one children's Bible describes it: "never stopping, never giving up on, never ending, always and forever love." His love is certain. Christian friend: his love for you is certain. No matter what circumstances you are in, even if your whole world is falling apart like David's, everything in flux and chaos - his covenant with you means he is always your place to go to. In times like this you need to, like David, go to covenant.

You don't wander into covenant. You enter into it by making solemn promises. You enter into covenant with God by making solemn promises to repent of your sin and trust his Word when he promised to save all who believe in his Son. We commit ourselves to Jesus, the Messiah, and our commitment is covenant commitment.

Jonathan embodies covenant commitment to the Messiah, in his case, David: "Show me the steadfast love of the LORD, that I may not die" (verse 14). He speaks to God's messiah, casting himself on the messiah's mercy, knowing that he is ultimately in his hands (normally new kings killed rival heirs). He pleads covenant love. This must be our prayer to the true and final Messiah, Jesus - casting ourselves on his mercy for protection and blessing. "Show me the steadfast love of the LORD that I may not die." This is how we express our covenant commitment. This is how we enjoy certainty, security, and safety in the covenant love of Jesus. Make this your daily prayer.

Questions

1. What does covenant commitment to Jesus look like?

Prayer Points

1. "Show me the steadfast love of the LORD that I may not die."
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Luke 18:29-30

Praise: Psalm 25:1-8 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Thursday - 1 Samuel 20:18-42 - Costly Covenant Commitment (Part 1)

So far we have focused on the security covenant brings. There is another important aspect that goes hand in hand with certainty: covenant commitment to a person or a cause is costly. Just as a contract has both responsibilities you must perform and penalties for not fulfilling those duties. The covenant of marriage requires commitment in sickness and in health, for better and for worse, for richer and poorer. Cost was etched into the heart of ancient covenants. The covenant-making ritual involved cutting up animals and walking between them. Symbolically you were saying, "Let me be like these animals if I break this covenant." In this chapter Jonathan faces the cost of his covenant commitment to David.

We watch the drama unfold in this section as Jonathan and David hatch a plan, complete with secret signals, to expose Saul's intentions. On the first day Saul notes David's empty seat at the feast but remains silent. On the second day Saul asks an innocuous question, Jonathan answers as agreed with David, and it all kicks off (verse 30). You wonder what Saul's Queen and Jonathan's mother thinks! It's ironic, because actually Jonathan is the son of a rebellious and perverse man, who not long ago had shamed himself by exposing his own nakedness.

Saul is right though (verse 31). Jonathan will not be king while David lives. It is one or the other: David's family or Saul's family, Jonathan's kingdom or David's kingdom. Jonathan's commitment to messiah-king David comes at the cost of his own right to rule. So it is for us, Messiah-King Jesus must reign, and we must give up our own lives, handing them over to him. We must give up doing things the way we want and commit to doing what he wants. Our prayer must be, "Your Kingdom come", not "My kingdom come". Covenant commitment is costly - it costs us our rights and our rule.

Questions

1. Where are you laying down the rules instead of Jesus?
2. Where are you serving yourself instead of him?

Prayer Points

1. "YOUR Kingdom come"
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Luke 18:29-30

Praise: Psalm 17:1-4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Friday - 1 Samuel 20:18-42 - Costly Covenant Commitment (Part 2)

What is the most striking thing about these events? Surely it is the father-son struggle that develops. We could easily side with Saul. Surely Jonathan should be on his side. We would be gutted if our child sided with our enemy. Is this betrayal? Is Jonathan not honouring his father and mother? It is not betrayal when the father is clearly in the wrong. David is God's chosen king; Jonathan owes him allegiance, as does Saul. Jonathan is showing Saul how he should respond, and at the end of the day, commitment to God's messiah-king trumps family bonds. Look at the extent of devotion in verse 16. Who are the enemies of David that Jonathan acknowledges must be cut off - Jonathan's own father. You see, commitment to the Messiah may cost you even your family, if your family are an enemy of God.

The Messiah-King calls us to the same thing - read Matthew 10:34-39. Jesus is saying that love for the Messiah must trump family bonds, if necessary. We must be willing to lose even family over commitment to Christ.

For some a call to follow Jesus will make them enemies of their family. Like Jonathan, you are called to love the Messiah your family hate. You may be kicked out of the house and cut off. Even if it's not that overt, there can be an estrangement and a distance because they are wary of your new found 'fanaticism'. No-one divides opinion like Jesus Christ, yet he must mean more to us even than family.

For others a call to follow Jesus is a call to keep our children in the right place. Our children should be the most important thing to us, apart from the Lord Jesus. But they are not all important, nor of first importance - only Jesus is. It's possible to make an idol of our children, where all our thinking is driven by what is best for them. But what is best for Jesus should be the thing that drives our thinking. In the final reckoning, what is best for our children and what is best for Christ's kingdom will overlap, since Jesus is more concerned for our children than even you are. But we must love our children by loving Jesus first, especially when it doesn't look like serving our children and serving Jesus overlap - Matthew 10:37.

Questions

1. Why is Jesus worth more love than even our parents or children?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would have our family held in the right place - our top earthly priority, but under Christ.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life." Luke 18:29-30

Praise: Psalm 27:4-5, 12-13- See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

I SAMUEL

Saturday - 1 Samuel 20:18-42 - Rewarding Covenant Commitment

Perhaps yesterday's lesson about covenant commitment to Jesus trumping even family ties was hard to stomach. We love and cherish our family, and they rightly have first place in our earthly affections. We need to see the fruit of Jonathan's costly commitment.

There's a bitter parting for David and Jonathan (verses 41-42), yet covenant love stands between them and their families forever. These words in verse 42 are potent, as are verses 14-15. It was standard political policy that, when a new dynasty took the throne, they wiped out all remaining heirs and potential rivals from the previous dynasty. It's just the way it was; as one author says, "Everyone knew it, everyone believed in it and everyone practised it." Jonathan's family are at risk from David.

However, it is Jonathan's costly covenant commitment to David that ultimately protects his family and secures the safety of the line of Saul. In 2 Samuel 9 we read of David bringing Jonathan's disabled son, Saul's grandson, from the wilderness and seating him at the royal table. If we were to take time we could trace how, in terms of how the story is told, it is portrayed as the high point of David's reign. Mephibosheth is treated as one of the king's own sons (2 Samuel 9:11); he is provided for and protected. Jonathan, by serving the messiah above his family, ensures his family's blessing.

Yes, commitment to the Messiah is costly, but it is an investment. Giving up your rights, your will, even your family into Jesus' hands is ultimately for your preservation, protection, and blessing. For the covenant that binds us to him, also binds him to us. Luke 18:29-30, 'And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."'

Questions

1. How have you experienced the "many times more in this time" that Jesus promises? (Luke 18:30)

Prayer Points

1. Pray for faith that costly commitment to the Messiah will reap a large harvest.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Luke 18:29-30

Praise: Psalm 61 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

Let's Worship God is produced
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