

The Gospel According to David

Friendship Stronger than Ambition

1 Sam. 18:1-5, Ps. 133

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October 11th, 2026



1 Sam. 18:1-5 — Jonathan may not have known what this commitment would mean for him:

- **Self-Emptying** - Jonathan removes royal garments and gives them away. He voluntarily relinquishes privilege. This echoes the pattern later seen in Christ's humiliation.
- **Covenant Love** - Jonathan loves David despite personal cost. Christ loves His people at infinitely greater cost.
- **Mediation** - He absorbs hostility from Saul because of his loyalty to David. Jonathan repeatedly stands between Saul and David.
- **Preservation of the King** - Jonathan's covenant actions help preserve David's life. God uses covenant love to protect His anointed.

Q: What makes covenant community different from every other kind of community?

A: Where God's people lay down their ambitions to love around his anointed king, God commands blessing and life.

John 13:34-35 CSB, "I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. [35] By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Psalm 133:1-3 CSB How delightfully good when brothers live together in harmony! [2] It is like fine oil on the head, running down on the beard, running down Aaron's beard onto his robes. [3] It is like the dew of Hermon falling on the mountains of Zion. For there the LORD has appointed the blessing- life forevermore.

Biblical FRIENDSHIP is not:

- Personality COMPATIBILITY
- PREFERENCE agreement
- CONFLICT avoidance

Biblical friendship is: Shared covenant LOVE & LOYALTY to God's King.

Trust in Christ is the SAFE PLACE from which we can explore and enter trust in one another. Not all at once, and not blindly. But...

- Some of us look for SAFETY in PEOPLE. If they treat us well, we feel secure, and if they don't, we fall apart.
- Others of us look for safety in DISTANCE. We keep people far enough away that no one can hurt us.

Both are ways of finding safety somewhere other than Christ.

Two questions

1. Where is your safety resting? On how people treat you, on how far you keep them away, or on the faithfulness of Christ to you?
2. Where has the fear of being hurt again kept you from going first with someone God has put in your life?

Application: This week, take one small, safe step toward one person. Invite them to your "table." Give it time.

Date: Oct. 11th 2026

Series: The Gospel According to David

Title: Love Stronger than Ambition

Primary Passage: 1 Sam. 18:1-5

Secondary Passage: Ps. 133

Big Question: What makes covenant community different from every other kind of community?

Big Idea: Where God's people lay down their ambitions to love around his anointed king, God commands blessing and life.

Keywords: Enemies, Friends, Covenant, Relinquish, Loyalty, Anger, Fear, Trust, Kindness, Safety

GOING DEEPER

What did love restore for you this week? What did love cost you this week?

Think of a time fear of an enemy, a critic, or someone who hurt you changed how you treated your friends. What did it cost you?

Read 1 Samuel 18:1–4; 20:12–17, 30–34. What does Jonathan give up in 18:4, and what does he ask for in 20:14–15? Jonathan was the heir apparent. What does it show about what he believed about God that he yielded to David? Saul tells Jonathan that as long as David lives, his kingdom will not be established (20:31). Why do you think Jonathan keeps going anyway?

Read Psalm 133 and John 13:34–35. Our social economy gives friendship only as far as it is returned. How does Jonathan's love for David challenge that? The oil starts on the head and runs down. What does that suggest about where unity comes from? Unity is not compatibility, agreement, or avoiding conflict. Which of these do we most often mistake for unity? Jesus says our love for one another shows the world we are his disciples. What might your friendships say about Jesus to the people watching?

Read John 15:13–15 and Hebrews 13:5–6 Jesus lays down his life for his friends and calls us friends. How does knowing he is that kind of friend change what feels safe to you? Some of us look for safety in people, and others look for safety in distance. Which tends to be you, and what has it cost you? Where has the fear of being hurt again kept you from going first with someone God has put in your life? What is one small, safe step you could take this week, and who could help you follow through?

Read 2 Samuel 9:1–13 and Luke 22:14–20 How does David treat Mephibosheth, and why does he do it (verses 1 and 7)? Mephibosheth calls himself a dead dog, yet he is seated at the king's table. What does that show about how Christ welcomes us? Jesus shared a table with the people who would betray and deny him, and he gave himself to them too. What does that mean to you?

Pray through what you've received from this study. Ask God for the faith to engage or re-engage a friendship with expectation

Around a TABLE with friends this week ask...

Question: Where is it hardest for you to engage with someone right now, and what has made you cautious?

Passage: 2 Timothy 2:13 CSB, "if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself."

Promise: You do not have to protect yourself to be safe. Christ is faithful to you at your worst, and in him you can afford to go first.