

MAY 17

1 Samuel 20-21

Tales of woe in the history of redemption.

1 Samuel 20

Vs. 1-11 I think David came back to Jonathan because Jonathan had helped in the past, and also because David hoped, like we all would have, that this broken situation could be fixed. This is something that we all need to learn, and the quicker the better. The kind of objectivity to think clearly only comes from being absolutely secure in the Lord. Also, sometimes the Lord allows broken relationships to stay broken to separate us from harm (Joseph from his brothers and Canaan) and to work in our hearts in hard circumstances and isolation (again, Joseph at Potiphar's and in prison). David's curriculum had already begun, but it would still be years of suffering and running before he would graduate.

Vs. 12-17 The very powerful thing that comes out of this event is the covenant they make. Jonathan initiates this and that is significant. He realized that God was exalting David. It was common in kingdoms to kill all the heirs of the throne from the previous ruler. Jonathan realized that God would make David the king and therefore wanted to hear David say that he would promise to protect his family.

V. 14 This seems to be Jonathan saying that if he is still alive when David becomes king, that David would not harm him.

V. 16 Jonathan blessed David before the Lord. What an awesome spiritual man and model of a disciple.

V. 17 These were two spiritual men who had a deep love and loyalty to one another.

Vs. 18-23 The reason for the boy and the arrows, I think, was that if Saul was really mad enough to kill David, he would have had Jonathan followed, assuming that Jonathan was going to David. Going out for target practice would be close to home and apparently it was something Jonathan did often, so, no need to follow him.

Vs. 24-29 Apparently everything looked good for the first day.

Vs. 30-34 Saul lost his mind, and a mind is a terrible thing to lose. He actually tried to kill Jonathan. It is interesting that Saul knew that God wanted to make David king. What an awful way to live, fighting against God.

Vs. 35-42 Jonathan and David renewed their covenant and parted. We'll see Jonathan again, being an encouragement to David. What a contrast between father and son. Saul had the irrational hatred and Jonathan had the supernatural love of God.

1 Samuel 21

Vs. 1-6 This is actually a famous situation in the NT. Jesus uses this story to show that mercy and saving life are allowable reasons to "break" the Sabbath.

V. 2 I see this as a very unfortunate "hole" in David's character. I know he was afraid, but he lied and didn't need to. David will continue to lie like a trooper. Without realizing it (God knew) he was putting Ahimelech's entire family / clan in danger. Remember God's curse on Eli and his branch of the priestly family? That branch is this family and it's about to get broken.

V. 3 This doesn't mean anything, but I find it interesting that when Jesus fed the 5000, he had five loaves.

V. 5 This appears to be another lie. It might have been David's practice to get his men focused for a coming expedition, but this flight from fear was no ordinary or planned mission.

V. 6 These loaves had already been replaced for the day with new loaves. Normally only the priests could eat these. Also, this means that the tabernacle and the Holy Place were at Nob. The ark was still in Kiriath-jearim.

Vs. 7-9 So why does it say that Doeg was there? Never trust a guy named Doeg.

V. 8 Another lie, and one that made no sense.

V. 9 It's interesting that the ephod was there and David didn't think to use the Urim and Thummim. David will learn to seek the Lord.

Vs. 10-15 Apparently David had the right idea, but the wrong timing. Later he would live among the Philistines and this king will be his good buddy, but at this point it was a bad idea. Just think: He had this "killer" reputation and he was carrying the sword of Goliath, who was from Gath; and he was standing before the king of Gath and surrounded by Philistines. What made him think this was a good idea?

Notice in v. 11 that they refer to David as a king, because he was given more honor in the song than Saul. Even the Philistines understood the rebuke to Saul and the exalting of David. Remember, David had been given honor for slaying Philistines.

This was a funny way to get himself out of this jam and Achish lands a great line in v. 15. This not only shows David's desperation, but it shows his lack of closeness to the Lord. He'll need time in the wilderness. We all need time in the wilderness to become the kinds of disciples who seek only God and follow Christ in the harvest through trials and suffering, making disciples who will do the same.

John 9

Jesus is still in Jerusalem for the week of the Feast of Tabernacles, which followed the week after the Day of Atonement. These symbols are rich in what has happened here. During the feast, as the cleansing water was being brought into the temple, Jesus had stopped the ceremony by crying out that He was the living water. During the lighting of the great lanterns in the treasury / Court of Women, Jesus had disrupted this ceremony saying He was the Light of the world. Six months before His crucifixion, Jesus was making His claim to be Messiah.

Now, to prove that Jesus is the Light of the world, the Father leads Jesus and the disciples to notice a man. The disciples ask a question and Jesus realizes that the Father has put this man there to give proof that Jesus is literally the light that gives light to men. And to boot, it was the Sabbath. What was the Father thinking?

Vs. 1-7 In order for this man to have been punished for his own sin, he would have had to have sinned in the womb since he was born blind. The people were very confused about sin and the Pharisees helped the people feel sinful. Jesus said this disability had been given in order to give God glory. That ought to make us think too.

Notice what Jesus says about works and light. I think this applies to us too. While it is still light in the harvest, we need to make hay.

So, why did Jesus make the clay? I think there were two reasons. First, it was to challenge the leaders. This was a class "A" miracle and an obvious sign that Jesus was the Christ, but making clay was forbidden on the Sabbath and it was probably some violation of something to use spit. Second, it was for the faith of the blind man. Jesus often tested faith in people He met. Going to the pool and washing this off made the blind man have to show that he believed Jesus.

Vs. 8-17 This is the first round of testimony given by the formerly blind man. This all played out so naturally and innocently that it is actually profound. The people didn't want to believe it, but they couldn't argue with the man. I like what he said, "I am the man."

The point of what Jesus did is shown in the conflict among the Pharisees in v. 16. The work that the Father had given Jesus to do was amazing and they knew it. Some of them couldn't deny it.

Vs. 18-23 This is the testimony of the parents. Their fear is understandable, but later John will mention this same threat of being put out of the synagogue and fearing to confess Jesus by saying, "for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Vs. 24-34 Even the blind man could see the blindness of the Pharisees. What he says here is totally honest and inspired by the Spirit. Could anything be more out of the mouth of God? This is sort of like what Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 10, when He sent them out, *When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.*

Vs. 35-38 Finally, Jesus sought out this man to comfort him; the man, desiring to see Jesus, worshiped Him.

Vs. 39-41 The Pharisees apparently didn't know the old saying, "Never miss a good chance to shut up." Jesus declared judgment and they stepped right into it.

As Jesus said to His disciples, if He was treated like this, and we disciples are no better than He, we should expect the same treatment. Yet when we acknowledge His name before men, He also acknowledges us before the Father and sends the comfort we need. Also, this situation reminds us that we can't neglect the harvest because of Pharisees or others who resist. Somewhere, there is someone waiting in the darkness for the Word of light. And they will respond to the light and follow.

Psalms 113

I know, you're wondering what to get out of The Psalms, if all The Psalms are beginning to sound the same.

First, you have to gird up the loins of your mind; because believe it or not, you'll finish The Psalms in June and begin again in July.

Second, just observe repetitions and find the heart of the psalm; the reason for the praise.

V. 1 This is calling the servants of the Lord to praise Him. Every person was to see himself as a servant living for the glory of the Lord on earth. This was the purpose of Israel.

Vs. 2-3 God's praise is for all of time and for all of the earth, all generations and all peoples.

Vs. 4-6 God is over all of the nations and looks over every person.

Vs. 7-8 He has His eye on the poor.

V. 9 He also has His eye on those without hope, symbolized by a barren woman. He cheers their hearts.

Get this stuff under your belt and you'll always have something for a devotional. Not only that, as a disciple making disciples, if this stuff lights a fire in you, you'll light a fire in those you are discipling. Discipleship is more often "caught," than taught. And, you'll praise the Lord.

Psalms 114

Vs. 1-2 This summarized God's plan in bringing up Israel from Egypt. God ruled over Israel through Judah. Not only did the king come from Judah, but the ark and the temple were in Jerusalem.

Vs. 3-4 This is what happened as God came into the land.

Vs. 5-8 This is the call to the earth to submit to God's power.

If God can control all that and cause all powers to bend to Him, how much more can we depend on God for all the cares and challenges of our lives as we follow Christ in the harvest?

Proverbs 15:15-17

Can you think of three verses that hang together so well, that say so much?

For us as disciples, what I think of when I read these is, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied* (Matt. 5:6). *For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you* (Luke 12:30-31).