

Jonathan Saves David

I Samuel 19:1-6, August 9, 2015

Trinity Sunday X

Sermon Text, I Samuel 19:1-6 (KJV):

“And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee. And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good: For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.”

Beloved of the Lord.....It is the holy will of God that we protect innocent life, both by word and deed. In our lesson today that is exactly what Jonathan did. He protected the innocent life of David by words to his father, and by deed also Jonathan protected innocent life, helping David to hide.

A good passage to memorize on this subject is Proverbs 31:8-9. It says “Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.” There are some people in this world whose mouths cannot defend themselves. David, for example, was not present when Saul told his servants to murder David, but Jonathan was present. In a similar manner, who in our world today opens their mouth for the unborn child who is “appointed to destruction” by a mother who is willing to have an abortion? This week there was some talk in the news about pro-life and pro-choice and the subject of rape and incest came up. If either of these horrible sins takes place and a child is conceived, who is to speak for that unborn child in the womb? All of us in this congregation are surely pro-life, but if it were the result of rape or incest, would we grant an exception and allow an abortion in such a situation? Should a mother who has endured such a horror, have to carry the child of such a man?

Yet it is written “Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.” Isn't the unborn child the innocent who cannot speak for themselves? And are we a society which holds the child responsible for the sins of the father? What great evil has that unborn child done? Yet there are many people in office today.....governors, legislatures, presidents, etc., who are pro-choice, pro-murder. And just as bad, many Americans vote to keep these murderers in power, so there is blood on their hands as well. This is similar to Saul who kept the coats of the Jews who stoned Stephen. We are our brother's keeper. Life is sacred. Even the lives of our enemies.

Today's lesson is about defending the innocent, the preservation of life, and the sinful hatred and anger of our own heart. Jesus alone can save us. And even now before God's throne above us in heaven, though we are not innocent but guilty, His blood pleads our innocence before our Father who art in heaven. Let us now begin with the understanding that.....

I. By way of jealousy, Saul breaks the fifth commandment, and by faith and love Jonathan fulfills it. The fifth commandment says “Thou shalt not kill” and this means “We should fear and love God that we may not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.” The fifth commandment is not just about murder, but it is about hatred and the anger of heart. Even if we do not physically hurt or harm our neighbor's body, but by abusive words we hurt them, such can shorten or embitter their life. Angry words are like the cutting of a sword. Will you cut and wound your neighbor though Jesus teaches you to be good and kind? So it is written “He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.” If you carry anger in your heart from day to day, instead of repenting of it, you will never see one day in heaven. James writes, “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.” (5)

We are thus warned of sinful anger in Ephesians 4, “Be ye angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” King Saul continually broke this commandment by his hatred and anger against David, so eventually the devil took possession of Saul's heart. But let it also be said not all anger is sinful. When your neighbor sins against

you, you have the right to be angry because of their sin just as they have the right to be angry about your sins: *however* God forbids you to hold any personal resentment against that neighbor. Their sins do not justify your hatred. Whatever their sin may be, if we harbor bad feelings and can't speak peaceably to them we are allowing hatred to live within. Edward Koehler writes "Anger that is nursed develops into hatred, which is not a momentary outburst of temper, but a settled intense dislike and enmity." When such anger is allowed to live within, it destroys faith just as it did with Cain who slew Abel. Hatred is the opposite of love, but Jesus wants us to love and not hate. "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." Lk. 6:27-28

When King Saul told his servants to go out and murder David, Jonathan sets a fine example of a believer who defended the innocent life of David. It took a lot of courage and love for Jonathan to do so, yet Jonathan was only doing what God commands all of us to do: "Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction." The good God would have us do concerning the fifth commandment is protect innocent life by words and deeds. So our catechism says (Question 60), "We should help and befriend our neighbor in every bodily need" and "We should be merciful, kind, and forgiving towards our neighbor." In like manner, "Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good." If our neighbor today is falsely accused by someone, we ought to be like a human shield which protects those who are too weak to defend themselves from false accusations. "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil. And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." I Peter 3 If then you do the right thing, you will never be troubled about doing wrong. Therefore.....

II. Instead of being jealous, let us rejoice in the success of others. Saul committed a great sin also in that he was jealous of David. Remember the song of the people, "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands." Jealousy is a form of hatred, where we dislike or envy someone because of their success. We want what they have, perhaps their money or wealth or house, or even their wife or their good family, or we are jealous because they are honored and respected by others but we are not. In the workplace we become jealous because a co-worker is promoted but we are passed by. If then you search your heart and find such sinful jealousy, repent of this sin at once, lest the devil gain a foothold into your soul as he did with Judas. Again remember that same warning which God gave jealous Cain, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." God cannot bless or prosper you if you cannot be happy for your neighbor and their success. If you are like Saul and you resent that David is more honored than yourself, the root of the problem is you think you deserve better than they, yet God is your judge. Your jealousy then is all the more reason for God to afflict you and make life harder because you are such a self-centered child. Whatever we have in life, even if it is only a little, God is still able to take away if we complain that our neighbor has more. Yet if we are content and thankful for the little we have, God may in His mercy bless and give more for Jesus' sake.

Instead of being jealous, we should be happy when our neighbor is blessed. If they work hard and are rewarded, or if they diligently use their gifts to God's glory, we should congratulate them, be happy for them, and encourage them further in sanctification. Christian love can do no less. Jonathan for example was not jealous of David though he could have been, but Saul stumbled and fell by way of jealousy. Our life thus is not about our own honor or glory, but God's. Do not be jealous, but do as Jesus said, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice...."

III. The protecting love of Christ is a good jealousy. Now, turning away from Jonathan, David, and Saul, let our thoughts meditate upon Jesus. Having thoughts of mercy alone in His heart, Jesus came to this earth to save us from our own sinful jealousy, anger, and hatred of heart. He came with love alone to redeem us so we would be angry no longer. When you inwardly see your lack of love for your neighbor, or your struggle to forgive, or you let the sun go down upon your wrath, these are all sins which Jesus had to greatly suffer for. He suffered the pangs of hell for your sins, but He did so willingly so you would be forgiven of all. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Note then we are saved from God's wrath, through Jesus, so that we have God's peace and forgiveness for all sins. But woe to the man

who despises Jesus peace by unbelief and prefers to live in wrath! Such a man by his own unbelief places himself back under the wrath of God again.

But this is not so for you dear believer, assuming you are sorry for your wrath and you want only Jesus' peace. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved! God forgives you for Jesus sake, and God has no more wrath against you, but grace to cover all sin. Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound. God then has what we can call a "good jealousy", in that His love is not only a forgiving love, but a protecting love. Though the devil seeks to lead us back into his bondage and he wants us to hate and always be angry, Jesus protects us and helps us to repent of our anger by forgiving all our sins. He sends us His Spirit also so we are reminded that we shouldn't live in anger but believe Jesus is our peace, and God's Spirit also helps us to pray "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." And though in many ways we are like a helpless and weak woman who can't defend herself from the savages of the world, our jealous Christ like a good Husband puts His loving arms around us, so in spite of our lack of love, His love preserves us. And when the devil or this world assaults us seeking to destroy our faith and do us harm, again like a jealous husband Jesus places Himself between us and the world, so neither the devil or the world can do us any harm. That is the meaning of Psalm 91... "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." In this way then Christ with a holy zeal protects His Church, for she is His own Bride. Finally let us understand.....

IV. Jesus is not only our Good Friend or Faithful Husband, but also our Advocate, in that He defends us from the devil's accusations. He is like Jonathan who interceded for David against Saul, yet Christ is far better in that by the Gospel He declares us innocent before the devil, so our faith is not slain. When you thus are afraid of the devil or hell, or you fear falling away, or the sins of your past haunt you, or you struggle with your sins and fail to get the upper hand, Jesus is your shield and defense, your Advocate who takes your side, for His Gospel takes away all sins and His Gospel declares you just and righteous in God's sight. The devil's accusations, like Saul, are all false, for God through Jesus counts us righteous and even holy. Jesus is by our side upon the plain. And when Christ steps onto the battlefield, all the devil's hosts must run away in terror, for they know the power of His resurrection, and you know it too. Neither death, the devil nor hell has any claim upon the most simple believer who trusts in Jesus' blood. "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Amen.

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