

Examples of love manifested in the Scriptures.

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Last week I spoke about joy and discussed the various Scriptures that described people who were filled with joy. Today I want to talk about “love” and what it means to love one another as the Scriptures command us in the New Testament.

I would like to look at the story of David, the shepherd boy in 1 Samuel chapter 16. David was the son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite. The family was not upper class among their tribes; in fact David considered his family the least among the tribes and he was the least honored among his family. He had not even been considered when the family welcomed the prophet Samuel to the sacrifice that Samuel had invited Jesse and his sons to attend. Samuel had asked Jesse to have all of his sons present and David was not even included in that group. Only after Samuel asked Jesse if all his sons were there, did Jesse acknowledge that he had one son who was tending the flocks of sheep. Samuel insisted that David attend the ceremony and he was the one that God appointed to replace King Saul because of his rebellion and disobedience to God’s commandments. In chapter 17, young David was sent by his father to the war zone to take food and supplies to his sons who were soldiers in Israel’s army. We all know the story of David killing Goliath and the captain of the host brought him to the king with the head of the giant in hand. In chapter 18, David stood before the king and spoke about the victory that God had given to him that day in delivering Israel from the hands of their enemies. Jonathan, Saul’s son, was nearby and as David ended his speaking Jonathan’s heart was knit with the soul of David and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan, the prince, had been raised in a palace and has enjoyed the privileges of royalty. Yet he doesn’t look upon David with disdain or think himself above this lad. He stripped himself of his royal robe, his garments, and his sword, his bow and his girdle. He didn’t envy David; he willingly promoted him by dressing him in royal garments and giving him weapons that he had in his own possession. He loved David and protected him when his father seethed with jealousy because of David’s popularity among the people. Saul was afraid of David; Jonathan trusted David with everything he had including the right to Saul’s throne. (1 Samuel 18:4) You will have the kingdom and I will be next to you. Saul tried to persuade Jonathan to kill David, but Jonathan delighted in David (chap 19:2) and he warned David to hide out in a secret place until he could figure out what Saul’s true intent was and he promised to report back to David. Jonathan reminded Saul of all the good things that David had done to help Israel and the king. Jonathan reminded Saul that David was loyal to the king and spoke highly of him. He put his life on the line to kill the Philistine and the Lord brought victory to Israel through David. He convinced Saul that he would be killing an innocent man if he carried out his threat to kill David for there was no cause. He interceded for David hoping to bring a peaceful resolution to the situation.

It wasn't long before David had to flee from the presence of Saul as he tried time and time again to kill David because of jealousy. Jonathan (God has given) made a covenant with David and he promised to warn him if Saul was still determined to kill David. When David didn't show up at the king's table two days in a row, the king asked Jonathan where David was. Jonathan said he had asked to go to Bethlehem to be with his family and Jonathan had told him to go. In verse 30, Saul's anger was directed at Jonathan and he verbally attacked him because he protected David from death. He warned Jonathan that as long as David was alive, Jonathan's kingdom would never be established. He commanded Jonathan to go and bring David to him. Jonathan stood firm and Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him. Jonathan realized that Saul was serious about killing David. Jonathan was angry and left the table without eating for his heart was grieved because of his love for his friend, David. The friendship was closer than blood. (1 Samuel 19:2) In Proverbs 18:24, it says that there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. In John 15:13, we find that the greatest love is one who is willing to lay down his life for his friend. He went to the field and warned David not to return to the palace for his father was intent on destroying him. Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord saying, the Lord be between me and you and between my seed and your seed forever." They made a covenant to die for each other and to help each other's relatives. Jonathan proved his sincerity in the manner that he tried over and over again to make peace between Saul and David. Jonathan was willing to be second and to promote David to be first. He wanted to exalt David and he would stay in the shadows. He would rejoice in David's success. Jonathan expressed his love to David every time they were together. He was devoted to David and protected him from harm.

After Jonathan died, David continued to love his friend. Samuel 9:1, we find that David asked about Jonathan's relatives. Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son was brought to the palace and he sat at the table with David and his sons. He gave land and possessions that had been in Saul's family to this man whose suffered physical disabilities. The friendship that had been displayed to David through Jonathan was now passed on to his son.

1 Corinthians 13 is a wonderful chapter on love. However, these chapters in Samuel play out the words with actions. God knit the hearts of these two young men together. David needed a friend; Jonathan was used by God to display his love to David. He put David's interest above his own. He wasn't jealous or envious and didn't seek his own interests. He put his own life on the line and risked his relationship with his father for David's sake. He was willing to be second to David and stay in the shadows for he realized that it was God's will for David to be the King over Israel. He promoted David whenever he had an opportunity and never once put him in a negative light. Love causes a person to give willingly, abundantly and unreservedly. There is a story of a mother's love that I want to share with you in closing.

Little Johnny was in second grade and the teacher had just announced that the class was going to have a class skit and parents would be invited to come. A knot formed in Johnny's stomach as he dreaded the fact that his mother would be coming to school. Johnny loved his mother, but there was something that bothered him and he didn't want anyone in his class to see his mother. How could he avoid the embarrassment of having his mother come to school and risk disclosing the secret?

There was no way that he could hide his secret because his mother would know about the invitation even if he didn't take it home and give it to her. She was friends with a couple ladies whose children were in his class and he really didn't want to hurt her by avoiding telling her about the class skit.

The day of the skit came and sure enough, Johnny's mother came. Johnny felt uneasy about his feelings concerning his mother, but he didn't really know what to do about it. You see, his mother had a long scar down her face and it made her look odd. Johnny had never been told how it came to be there; he just figured she was born with it. He didn't want to have children ask him about it or make fun of his mother. He stayed off by himself the best that he could and then he saw his mother head for the teacher's desk after most of the class and their parents had left the building. Johnny stood within ear shot and he heard his teacher ask the dreaded question, "How did you get the scar on your face?" The mother replied, "When Johnny was a baby, a room that he was in caught on fire. Everyone was too afraid to enter the room because the fire was out of control, but I ran in to rescue him from the crib. I saw a beam coming down and I placed myself over him trying to shield him. I was knocked unconscious, but fortunately a fireman came in and rescued both of us. This scar on my face is permanent but I will never regret what I did to save my baby's life.

Tears began to trickle down Johnny's face and he ran to his mother and hugged her tight. The sense of the sacrifice that she made to save his life overwhelmed him and he held her hand tight as they walked out of the school together. He would never again be ashamed to have his mother walk beside him. Her love for him surpassed her concern for her own well being. Johnny would never forget and he would always see his mother as beautiful.