

## Faithful Friends Sunday School Lesson

Today's HOPE (main point): Jesus is our faithful friend.

Our theme for the month of September is friendship, and today we are going to look at what is probably the best known story of friendship in the Bible. It's the story of David and Jonathan. This story can be found in the book of 1 Samuel, in the Old Testament.

Jonathan was the son of Israel's first king, King Saul. Now, spoiler alert, David will replace Saul as king, but who can tell me about David's youth? He wasn't royalty. What was his story? What do we usually remember about him? *(take answers...David and Goliath, David was the youngest son of Jesse, he looked after the family's sheep....)*

Well just before David killed Goliath, he had gone into the service of King Saul because he was good at playing the lyre- which is a stringed instrument sort of like a lap-sized harp. Saul was kind of nuts, and David's music soothed him. David gained quite a bit of favor from Saul, becoming his armor bearer and defeating Goliath.

Let's read 1 Samuel 18: 1-5:

After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. 2 From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. 3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt. 5 Whatever mission Saul sent him on, David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the troops, and Saul's officers as well.



Jonathan loved David as himself. That's a pretty special friendship, isn't it? It reminds me of something Jesus said when He was asked what was the greatest commandment. Mark 12:30-31 says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Now, of course Jesus is saying we should treat others the way we would want to be treated. Sometimes it's hard to love people like that. But sometimes God gives us a very special friend that we just feel especially connected to, like how the scripture says Jonathan was one in spirit with David...like a kindred spirit we sometimes say. Did you ever have a friend that you loved that much? *(take answers)*

Jonathan made a covenant with David. What's a covenant? *(take answers)*

In the Bible, we see covenant between people and we see covenants between God and people. And unlike how we tend to use the word today, in the Bible, covenant always means something greater than just a contract or a promise- it's a promise that comes with a hefty price for breaking it. You see, covenants were meant to be kept until death, and they were a way of saying, "may death come to me if I ever break our covenant."

Notice that Jonathan gave David his robe and his weapons. Jonathan was the son of the king. His robe was symbolic of his royalty! David was not from a kingly family. He was a shepherd! And Jonathan's weapons were likely very special and they certainly symbolized his power and protection. These were very costly and sacrificial gifts to give to David.

Then Jonathan went the extra mile for David. His father, King Saul, had become very jealous of David because David was gaining lots of popularity among the people because of his great military victories.



Women were even singing in the streets about David! So when Jonathan discovered that his father planned to kill David, he put a plan in place to save David at great cost to himself.

1 Samuel 20:12-13 says, "12 Then Jonathan said to David, "I swear by the Lord, the God of Israel, that I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know? 13 But if my father intends to harm you, may the Lord deal with Jonathan, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away in peace. May the Lord be with you as he has been with my father.

Jonathan sent David away so he could gauge Saul's intentions toward David. When David did not show up to dinner two nights in a row, Saul asked where David was. Jonathan told his father that he allowed David to go to a feast. Saul responded by insulting his son and calling for David to be put to death. Jonathan asked his father why he wanted to kill David and Saul responded by throwing a spear at him!

The next morning Jonathan went out into the field and was able to tell David about his father's murderous plans. The two shared an emotional farewell.

1 Samuel 20:42 says, "Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.'" Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town."

Jonathan's care for David shows us something of the sacrifice involved in friendship. He was loyal to his covenant to protect David even though it meant he would not get to be king. He did this at great cost and danger to himself. His father cursed him and threw a spear at him. He could have died as a result of his father's rage, but he stayed the course because he made a promise to his friend.



I think friendships like that are rare because we find it hard to love like that. If you're friends with someone long enough, they will eventually hurt your feelings or let you down. They may even abandon you. Because we are all sinners, once we have seen the uglier parts of someone's life, it's sometimes harder to love them.

The root of all genuine friendship is God's love toward us. God does not let us down or abandon us. He sees all our rough edges, all our ugly and all our sin, and He still loves us. In fact, Romans 5:8 tells us, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

See, this story about David and Jonathan isn't just a story about friendship. Nearly every story in the Old Testament is really a story about Jesus. Jesus is the true and better friend. Like Jonathan, Jesus demonstrated sacrificial love when He died on the cross for our sins. John 15:13 says, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

When we were choosing a name for our ministry, we thought about a lot of names. We finally decided on Faithful Friends because that's what we want to be for each of you- a friend you can count on. And we want you to know about the most faithful friend of all, Jesus Christ. Proverbs 18:24 says, "One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."

Remember the last time we were here, I told you that we might not see you again for a while because of the virus spreading again in the community. And I don't know if I'll get to see you again next week. I sure hope so! But covid can't lock out Jesus. He's always here with you.

I'm going to read this prayer, and then if you agree you can read with me the second time.



Prayer: Father, I'm so glad you give us earthly friends, but I'm even more glad you sent Jesus to be our most faithful friend. Help me to feel your presence when I'm lonely, and help me to be a friend to those around me. Amen.



# Faithful Friends

## Sunday school lesson: Friendship



→ Today's HOPE (main point): Jesus is our faithful friend.

**1 Samuel 18: 1-5** After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. 2 From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. 3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt. 5 Whatever mission Saul sent him on, David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the troops, and Saul's officers as well.

**1 Samuel 20:12-13** 12 Then Jonathan said to David, "I swear by the Lord, the God of Israel, that I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know? 13 But if my father intends to harm you, may the Lord deal with Jonathan, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away in peace. May the Lord be with you as he has been with my father.

**1 Samuel 20:42** Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, "The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.'" Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.

**Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**John 15:13** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

**Proverbs 18:24** One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

**Prayer:** Father, I'm so glad you give us earthly friends, but I'm even more glad you sent Jesus to be our most faithful friend. Help me to feel your presence when I'm lonely, and help me to be a friend to those around me. Amen.

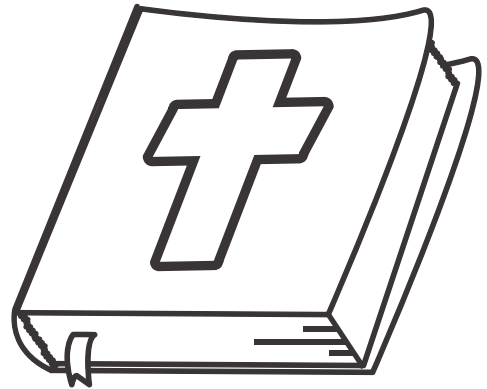
IF YOU GO LOOKING FOR A FRIEND, YOU'RE GOING TO FIND  
THEY'RE VERY SCARCE. IF YOU GO OUT TO BE A FRIEND,  
YOU'LL FIND THEM EVERYWHERE. – ZIG ZIGLAR



## 'Tis so Sweet to Trust in Jesus

1. 'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,  
Just to take him at his word,  
Just to rest upon his promise,  
And to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him  
How I've proved him o'er and o'er  
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus  
O for grace to trust him more.



2. I'm so glad I learned to trust him,  
Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend;  
And I know that he is with me,  
Will be with me to the end.

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him  
How I've proved him o'er and o'er  
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus  
O for grace to trust him more.



## Be Still My Soul

1. Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side;  
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;  
Leave to thy God to order and provide;  
In every change he faithful will remain.  
Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend  
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

2. Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on  
When we shall be forever with the Lord,  
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,  
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.  
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,  
All safe and bless-ed we shall meet at last.

## I Need Thee Every Hour

1. I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord;  
No tender voice like thine, can peace afford.

I need thee, O I need thee,  
Every hour I need thee;  
O bless me now, my Savior,  
I come to thee.

2. I need thee every hour, in joy or in pain  
Come quickly and abide, or life is vain.

I need thee, O I need thee,  
Every hour I need thee;  
O bless me now, my Savior,  
I come to thee.

3. I need thee every hour, most Holy One;  
O make me thine indeed, thou blessed Son.

I need thee, O I need thee,  
Every hour I need thee;  
O bless me now, my Savior,  
I come to thee.



## What a Friend We Have in Jesus

1. What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer!

Oh, what peace we often forfeit,  
Oh, what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer.

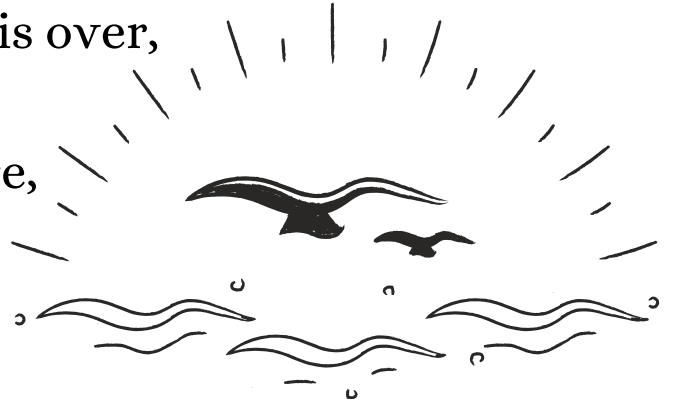
2. Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged;  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness;  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.



## I'll Fly Away

1. Some glad morning when this life is over,  
I'll fly away;  
To that home on God's celestial shore,  
I'll fly away.



I'll fly away, oh glory, I'll fly away  
When I die, hallelujah, by and by, I'll fly away.

2. When the shadows of this life have gone,  
I'll fly away;  
Like a bird from prison bars has flown,  
I'll fly away.

I'll fly away, oh glory, I'll fly away (in the morning)  
When I die, hallelujah, by and by, I'll fly away.

3. Just a few more weary days and then, I'll fly away;  
To a land where joys shall never end, I'll fly away.

I'll fly away, oh glory, I'll fly away (in the morning)  
When I die, hallelujah, by and by, I'll fly away.

# Friendship

I C T P X Y F I Y V E Z P J Z B I T N C  
 A O P S V N E O H I W M A J W K G G Q G  
 Y V N A D K N B C Y N W E S M E E I K T  
 F E V S B B B Y T U F U B P A M B Q T B  
 B N A H T A N O J S L U F H T I A F F A  
 D A I R N I U N H M X P J L P N L G M L  
 U N N Z R K C M G D V N L I F S V R A O  
 W T F H C R I K E B O R O Y Y A B Y M D  
 N O B R G B T W S S U S E J Y Y O K L G  
 M L T I I N Z A K Z C M L U Q L U T R M  
 P F F Z H E T U Q O O H I U R V S G V Q  
 D Y E F I L N J H E S Z T M H T E P I Q  
 V S Y K J R O D F H O X W I K E Y L X A  
 Y C J F G U A P L Z V Q B E B U R U M Z  
 C D T C D R O W S O U C F A Q C Y I P Z  
 B S U S L T S R O Z O C F E D O U J M D  
 V K L K W C D R G I J T K K A L J E W G  
 L O V E R D A V I D K P D Y Y A S V K Y  
 O S S H V H N C E J I C F T S M C R N U  
 X Z W K J P A U K B V M Y G P C R W N I

COVENANT  
 JESUS  
 ROBE  
 STICKS  
 LIFE

FRIEND  
 DAVID  
 SWORD  
 LOVE

FAITHFUL  
 JONATHAN  
 TRUE  
 LOYAL

