

BLOOD COVENANT #3

Exchange of Weapons - In our last lesson we saw how King Saul's son Jonathan gave David his robe, tunic, sword, bow and belt. The last three items were weapons. It was a sign that Jonathan was willing to fight for David if necessary. We do not know what David gave to Jonathan, but both of them would have made a commitment to defend each other and even look after their family if something happened to them. We see examples of this being practiced in several instances.

'Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan was very fond of David and warned him, "My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I will speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out". - 1 Samuel 19:1-3

We see more interaction between them in 1 Samuel 20. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, 'May the LORD call David's enemies to account'. - 20:16 They expressed great honor and loving friendship to one another which extended to their ancestors. - 20:41-42

While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.....the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. - 22:15-18

Saul listened to his son and made an oath not to kill him. However, his oath was shortlived and he tried to kill David in the royal palace. The following years were difficult and dangerous for David. Saul's hatred only grew for David and he had him hunted down like a wild animal. David hid in the caves and forests as a fugitive, but God protected him physically and also spiritually, as David did not seek revenge against Saul. David remained faithful to his covenant brother Jonathan. All those surrounding Saul's court and family were likely infected with Saul's disdain for David and even a fear of what he might do if he retaliated.

However, Jonathan remained loyal to his berith (covenant) partner David as he continued to raise his family in the royal palace. One child born to Jonathan was Mepibosheth. After this time the Philistines were causing trouble as they made raids into the farming communities from the coastland areas. In an ensuing battle, both Saul and Jonathan were killed. Mass panic broke out in the king's palace when the news reached them. They were not only afraid of the Philistines but also of what might happen if David returned, so they went into hiding. One nurse remembered five year old Mephibosheth (for writing purposes we will refer to him as M.), and fled with him in her arms. In her haste, she dropped him and he became crippled in both feet (2 Sam.4:4). He was taken to live in a wilderness area called Lo Debar.

David would become a great king of Israel and would be victorious over its enemies such as the Philistines.

One day he asked, ***'Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?'*** A servant of Saul's household named Ziba came forward and answered the king.

'There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet.' M. was summoned from Lo Debar and brought into David's presence. David addressed him by name.

'Mephibosheth!' He replied to the king, ***"Your servant."*** There must have been fear in the voice and expressions of M. Undoubtedly he had been brought up in Saul's household with a negative view of David. Now he may have thought David would sentence him to punishment or possibly even death. It was not to be, for King David had made a blood covenant with Jonathan which was binding in all circumstances. David's next words to M. were these:

'Don't be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table'. - 2 Sam. 9:7

We can feel the astonishment that M. must have felt when he heard those words from king.

'M. bowed down and said, What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?'

M. had been dragging his legs around for years in the dirty, dusty desert lands of Lo Debar. Now he had been invited to live in the king's palace and even eat at the king's table! He was to be treated as if he was one of the king's sons! Wow! All of this happened because of one thing, the power of the blood covenant!

The previous incidents are very relevant for us. We were crippled by our sin and living in a state of helplessness. Despite our condition, Jesus has invited us to eat at the Father's table. In Bible days and even today in Eastern culture, to eat with one is to express friendship and fellowship. M. did not expect to eat with the king as he thought of David as his enemy. We are no different. The apostle Paul reminds us of this in a letter to the believers in Colossae.

'Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation - if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.' - Colossians 1:21-23 NIV

The devil gets us to sin and become spiritual cripples, then he turns around and accuses us of limping. Then he gets us to believe the lie that God is our enemy and wants nothing to do with us. Satan always lies about the goodness of God and his desire to reconcile us to himself.

If two human beings can make a covenant to stick up for one another and keep it, how much more will Almighty God do so for us? Throughout the Bible and in other history, we see how God fights on behalf of his people. David was willing to honor his blood covenant by looking after a cripple whom he could easily have ignored and left to live in the desert.

Since we have entered into a blood covenant through Jesus Christ, this means that every other true believer is our blood covenant family member. How could we possibly not want their best interests? **If all Christians understood blood covenant commitment, there would be no more petty fighting, grudges, unforgiveness etc.**

A final pertinent question. How would we feel if God was committed to us in proportion to how much we are committed to Him? God is patient, kindhearted and loving, but He must be grieved at times when He sees the lukewarm attitudes in his church. How many of us would be willing to die for another Christian brother or sister? That is the depth of commitment we find in a blood covenant relationship. Jesus gave us the greatest example of this.

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