

引言 INTRODUCTION

Friendship is a blessing from God. Friends will come to your assistance when you need help. They accept you, believe in you and care about you. Sometimes, we feel that friends are closer than siblings. That reminds me of a true story. A lady was pregnant with a pair of twin boys. The couple had decided to name one baby David. But they did not have any clue what name to give to his brother. The future mom asked her friends for suggestions. Without thinking for a moment, one lady proposed: “I know! You can call him Goliath. People think of Goliath when they think of David.” Of course, she was only kidding. What parent would want their children to treat each other as enemies? Then another person recommended: “You can name him Jonathan.” That became the name of the baby. Jonathan and David were good friends. Back in chapter 18 of 1 Samuel, the two men made a covenant when David returned from defeating Goliath. The passage says Jonathan loved David as himself. This relationship proved to be crucial to David in future stories. We can learn a few important lessons about friendship from the two men. Human relationship is a snapshot God’s relationship to us. God is our most loyal friend.

解釋 EXPLANATION

Last time we saw that David had to run for his life. Saul had decided to kill David out of jealousy. David managed to escape with the help of Jonathan and Michal, and also through God’s intervention. Although David was faithful to the king and his country, he was unfairly treated. To say the least, he must be confused. David went back and asked Jonathan what was going on in verse 1: ... “What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?” David declared his innocence. He did nothing to offend king Saul. Jonathan replied emphatically in the next verse that his father had no intent to hurt David: ... “Far from it! You shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me. And why should my father hide this from me? It is not so.” Was Jonathan being naïve or did he try to defend his father blindly? Saul tried to nail David to the wall with his spear. He also ordered his officials to take care of David. Jonathan was present when Saul gave that command. Later, Saul sent some men to David’s house to capture him. Jonathan might be in a denial mode. It was hard for him to accept that Saul had turned into a wicked person. We do not want anything bad to happen to our friends. We may react in the same way when a friend informs you that he contracts a terminal disease. You react: “No way! How can that be?” But rejection of the reality will not change the fact. Jonathan was torn between submitting to his father and king, and committing to his dear friend. He chose the latter because he knew that his father was wrong. Regardless, Jonathan wanted to cheer David up as much as he could. He promised David in verse 4: ... “Whatever you say, I will do for you.” Do we not want to have a true friend like that? They mean what they say when they assure you: “Contact me any time if you need anything.” From this, we can derive the first lesson about friends: **They provide help to their friends.** This is quite

straightforward. Most of us are eager to provide help to others. But we find it difficult to ask for help. We all have that pride issue. I am one of those men who seldom asks for instructions in a store or asks for directions at a gas station. However, I will do that when I am really desperate. We put our hope in the person we seek help from. We do not expect a response of “I don’t know” or even “I’m busy.” People may fail us, but God is always dependable. Psalm 46:1 says: **God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.** God is our faithful helper. He has all the resources we may need. You should not have any hesitation. Go to Him, pour out your heart and ask for help. He will show you the way. David accepted Jonathan’s offer. He came up with a plan. By coincidence, the next day would be a New Moon festival. According to the Old Testament Law, multiple sacrifices must be presented. David would skip the dinner. If Saul asked where David was, then Jonathan would make up an excuse that David went back to his father’s home for an offering. Jonathan would observe how Saul might respond. If Saul got mad about David, then it would be a sign of his hatred. David asked Jonathan to lie to his father. He relied on dishonesty to protect himself at the early stage of his escape. His fear overcame his faith in God. Later on, David developed a bigger trust in the Lord when he experienced God’s faithfulness. But just as Jonathan promised, he would do whatever David asked for. He guaranteed in verse 13: **“But should it please my father to do you harm, the Lord do so to Jonathan and more also if I do not disclose it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety...”** Jonathan was willing to receive a judgment from God if he failed to alert David for any imminent danger. Jonathan went along with David’s plan. He would keep an eye on Saul’s response to David’s absence. Then Jonathan would send David a secret signal. He would take a boy to the wilderness where David was hiding. He then shot three arrows as if he was practicing. David would then pay attention to where Jonathan asked the boy to pick up the arrows. If Jonathan said: “the arrows are on this side of you,” then it meant that David was safe. But if he said: “the arrows are beyond you,” that would indicate that Saul indeed wanted to kill David. He should flee immediately. From this, we can derive a second lesson about friends: **They protect their friends from harm.** Friends have their best interest for you. They will pray for you when you travel or when you have a surgery. But of course, even the most trustworthy friends may not be available all the time. The most comprehensive insurance policy cannot protect every situation either. But God always watches over us. Psalm 121:1-3 say: **1 I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? 2 My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.** Are you not grateful that God does not need to rest? He works 24/7 and He does not take vacation. He guides us and stands by us. Therefore, we should put our trust in Him. No harm can come to us without His permission. God uses our life circumstances to accomplish His will in us, just like He did for David. As arranged, David went to lay low, while Jonathan observed Saul’s behavior. The king said nothing on the first day when David was absent. He thought David must have contracted some uncleanness. Since it was a ritual meal on the New Moon festival, those who were ceremonially unclean could not participate. Saul was surprised that David was still missing on the following day. The festival was over and so there was no requirement for cleanness to eat. The king thus asked his son David’s whereabouts. Jonathan then recited the made-up script. We see Saul’s strong reaction in verse 30-31: **30 Then Saul’s anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, “You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own**

shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? 31 For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Therefore send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die." Saul was not shy to erupt in rage in front of everyone. He even insulted Jonathan and his queen mother! He also disrespected David by calling him "the son of Jesse." Saul considered David an obstacle to the continuation of his dynasty. His determination to remove David was evident. Jonathan tried to reason with his father, but Saul was too furious to listen. He even threw his spear at Jonathan, just like he did to David before. Jonathan dodged the scene feeling both mad and sad. Here we can learn the third lesson about friends: **They plead on behalf of their friends.** Jonathan understood that according to the custom he would succeed his father as the next king. However, Jonathan willingly rose up against his father. He cared about the welfare of his friend because he cared about the will of God. No one could be king unless God had appointed him. Jonathan surrendered his right to the Lord, even at the expense of disobeying his father. A good friend may plead on your behalf for your rights. But a godly friend will plead on your behalf so as to fulfill God's will. The Bible says we have the best middlemen pleading before God on our behalf. Here is a precious promise in Romans 8:27 – **And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.** Paul says in the context that we often do not even know how to pray in our weakness. But the Holy Spirit living in us understands our needs. He also knows the will of the Father perfectly. He will present our burdens to God. Not only will the Holy Spirit plead for us, even our Lord will do the same. Scroll down to verse 34: **Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.** Jesus has been doing an important ministry after He went back to heaven. He is pleading on our behalf. Paul says no one can condemn those Jesus has saved. If not even Jesus convicts His believers, then nobody can bring their sins up! How secure we are with both Jesus and the Holy Spirit pleading on our behalf! If God has accepted you, then you are eternally saved. As arranged, Jonathan conveyed the bad news to David. His father indeed had determined to get rid of David. After Jonathan asked the boy to pick up the arrows, he bid farewell to his good friend in verse 42: ... **"Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.'"** ... Jonathan recalled the oath he and David made when they first met in the wilderness. That covenant was not only between the two men, but also between the two families. Back then Jonathan says in verse 14-15: **14 "If I am still alive, show me the steadfast love of the Lord, that I may not die; 15 and do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever, when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth."** Jonathan asked David to make a vow to protect his family. He had faith that God's words would come true. David would be a future king. It was common for a new king to remove the members of the previous royal family. We see that in movies and history books. David kept his words. A few years later, Saul and Jonathan lost their lives in the same battle. David finally became king. He looked for the remaining members of Jonathan's family and took care of them. David demonstrated the fourth lesson about friends: **They promise grace to their friends.** Jonathan asked David to show "steadfast love" to his offspring. It is a common Hebrew word in the Old Testament that describes God's love due to His covenant. God does not need to make any agreement because He will never lie. He uses a way that we can understand to ensure His truthfulness.

Say I need to borrow twenty dollars from my son's piggy bank. He knows that I will repay the money. But just in case I may forget, I sign a loan statement with him. He can show me the paper to remind me. He can even charge me interest if I do not return the money soon enough. Today, we have the Bible to give us assurance. God has never changed. He treats us in the same ways He worked thousand years ago. Our hearts will be encouraged when we read God's promise. For example, He will never leave us nor forsake us and He will supply for all of our needs according to His will. We can claim those promises in our prayer and make it personal. We say to God: "Lord, I trust that You are my shepherd and I shall not be in want. I believe that you will not allow me to face any hardship that I cannot endure. You will give me sufficient grace to go through this difficult time." The Bible is no longer just an ancient history book. But it becomes a love letter God writes to His children.

結論 CONCLUSION

With that promise, David left. He began a new chapter in life as a fugitive. After David departed from Jonathan, he must rely on the resources he could find. But most importantly, he had to depend on God. This runaway journey turned out to be a faith-building process for David. Even when he was alone, God was always with him. Of all the friends we may have, God is our most loyal friend. Jesus came into the world to show us God's love. Our Lord determined to love us even when we did not know Him. Once a contest was held in England to find the best definition of a friend. Thousands of answers were received but the one that won the prize was this: "A friend is the one who comes in when the world has gone out." A story from the First World War illustrates that. Somewhere in Europe, a group of German soldiers and an American troop were exchanging fire. A young German soldier was shot when he tried to cross over to the American side. Worse still, he was entangled in the barbed wire. He cried out in pain. He desperately needed some help. An American soldier could not stand any longer. He crawled toward the wounded enemy. Seeing what was going on, the Americans stopped firing. Moments later, a German officer also asked his subordinates to cease fire. The American then helped the injured man disentangle. He stood up with the German, put one of his arms on his shoulder then walked toward the German side. Two enemies thus became friends! After he handed the man to the Germans, he turned and went back to his companions. Then someone pulled his shoulder. There stood a German officer who had won the Iron Cross, the highest honor in his country for bravery. He pulled the emblem from his uniform and gave it to the American. After both men reunited with their comrades, the two sides resumed the battle. We admire such courage. But Jesus did much more for us. He did not rescue innocent soldiers, He saved ungrateful sinners. Jesus did not only risk His life, He suffered much shame and pain, and died in the most horrible way on a cross. Today, Jesus invites you to be His friends. This Son of the Heavenly Father hopes to build an eternal friendship with you. All you have to do is confess your sins, and accept Jesus into your heart by faith. He promises to love you with an everlasting love.

引言 INTRODUCTION

友誼是神的祝福。當你需要幫助時，朋友會伸出援手。他們接納你，相信你，並關心你。有時候，我們覺得朋友比兄弟姐妹更親近。這就讓我想起了一個真實的故事。一位女士懷了一對雙胞胎男孩。那對夫婦決定給其中一個嬰兒取名大衛，但他們不知道給他兄弟起什麼名字。這位未來的媽媽向朋友徵求意見。一位女士連想都不用想便提議：「我知道！你可以叫他歌利亞。人們一想到大衛就會想到歌利亞。」當然，她只是開玩笑。有哪一個父母會希望自己的孩子成為仇人？然後另一個人建議：「你可以給他起名叫約拿單。」於是，那便成了嬰兒的名字。約拿單和大衛是好朋友。早在《撒母耳記上》第 18 章，當大衛打敗歌利亞歸來時，兩人立下盟約。經文說約拿單愛大衛如同愛自己。在以後的故事中，這段友誼對大衛非常重要。我們可以從這兩個人身上學到一些關於友誼的重要教訓。人際關係是神與我們關係的縮影。神是我們最忠誠的朋友。

解釋 EXPLANATION

上次我們看到大衛需要逃命。掃羅出於嫉妒而決定殺死大衛。大衛在約拿單和米甲的幫助下以及神的干預下成功逃脫。雖然大衛對他的王和國家忠心，但他卻受到不公平的對待。在這個時候，他的內心一定充滿困惑。在第 1 節，大衛回去問約拿單到底發生了什麼事：...「我做了甚麼？有甚麼罪孽呢？在你父親面前犯了甚麼罪，他竟尋索我的性命呢？」大衛表明自己是無辜的。他沒有得罪掃羅王。約拿單在下一節經文中強調他父親無意傷害大衛：...「斷然不是！你必不致死。我父做事，無論大小，沒有不叫我知道的。怎麼獨有這事隱瞞我呢？決不如此。」約拿單是過份天真還是只想盲目地為父親辯護？掃羅試圖用他的長矛將大衛釘在牆上。他還命令官員去殺大衛。當掃羅下命令時，約拿單也在場。後來，掃羅派人到大衛家裡去捉他。在這時候，約拿單可能還是拒絕接受事實。他很難理解掃羅已經變成了一個邪惡的人。我們都不希望壞事發生在好朋友身上。當朋友告訴你他患了絕症時，你可能會有的反應。你會驚訝地回應：「怎麼可能？」但拒絕接受事實並不能改變事實。約拿單左右為難，他必須選擇服從他的爸爸還是保護他的好朋友。他選擇了後者，因為他知道父親錯了。不管如何，約拿單希望盡量鼓勵大衛。他在第 4 節中答應大衛：...「你心裏所求的，我必為你成就。」你希望擁有這樣的朋友嗎？當他跟你說：「如果你需要任何幫助，請隨時聯繫我。」你知道他是言出必行的。從這裡，我們可以得出關於朋友的第一個功課：他們給朋友提供幫助。這一點很簡單直

接。我們大多數人都樂意幫助別人。但是我們都覺得很難開口尋求幫助。我們都有面子的問題。我就是那種很少在商店裡找店員幫忙或是在加油站問路的人。但是，當我真的很無助時，也只好勉為其難地開口。我們把希望寄託在別人的身上。我們不預期對方說：「我不知道」甚至「我沒有空」。別人也許會令我們失望，但神總是可靠的。詩篇 46:1 說：**神是我們的避難所，是我們的力量，是我們在患難中隨時的幫助。**神是我們忠實的幫手。祂擁有一切我們需要的資源。因此你不用猶豫。投靠神，傾訴你的心意，請求祂的幫助。神會給你指引方向。大衛接受了約拿單的提議。他想出一個計劃。巧合的是，第二天是新一個月的初一。根據舊約律法，必須獻祭。大衛不會去吃晚餐。如果掃羅問大衛在哪裡，約拿單便編藉口說大衛回他父親家去獻祭。約拿單會觀察掃羅的反應。如果掃羅對大衛發怒，那麼便顯示出他的仇恨。大衛要求約拿單向父親撒謊。他在逃亡初期依靠欺騙來保護自己。他的恐懼勝過了他對神的信心。後來，當大衛經歷了神的信實之後，他對神的信心便增長了。但正如約拿單所承諾的那樣，他會按照大衛的要求去做。他在第 13 節保證說：**「我父親若有意害你，我不告訴你使你平平安安地走，願耶和華重重地降罰與我。...」**約拿單甘願接受神的審判，如果他沒有提醒大衛任何危險。約拿單採納了大衛的計劃。他會留意掃羅的反應，然後給大衛一個暗號。他會帶一個男孩去大衛藏身的曠野，然後他會像在練習一樣射出三支箭。大衛便注意約拿單叫男孩去那裡撿起箭。如果約拿單說：「箭在你後頭」，那就表示大衛安全了。但如果他說：「箭在你前頭」，那就表明掃羅確實想要殺死大衛。他應該立刻逃跑。在這裡，我們可以找到關於朋友的第二個功課：**他們使朋友免受危險**。朋友最關心你的利益。當你出門或需要做手術時，他們會為你禱告。但當然，就算是最值得信賴的朋友也不一定隨時都有空。最全面的保險計劃也不能保護所有情況。但是神總是看顧我們。詩篇 121:1-3 說：**1 我要向山舉目；我的幫助從何而來？2 我的幫助從造天地的耶和華而來。3 他必不叫你的腳搖動；保護你的必不打盹！**感謝神！祂從來不用休息嗎。祂在任何時候都在工作，也從不休假。祂引導我們並扶持我們。因此，我們應該信靠祂。沒有神的允許，任何危險都不會臨到我們。神透過我們的遭遇完成祂的旨意，就像祂在大衛身上成就的一樣。按照安排，大衛躲起來，而約拿單則觀察掃羅的反應。大衛不在的第一天，王什麼也沒說。他以為大衛一定沾染了不潔淨的東西。因為月朔的晚餐和禮儀相關，不潔淨的人便無法享用。掃羅很驚訝第二天大衛仍然缺席。節期過了，不需要保持潔淨也能吃飯。王就問他兒子大衛去哪裡。約拿單便按照劇本回答。我們在 30-31 節看到掃羅的強烈反應：**30 掃羅向約拿單發怒，對他說：「你這頑梗背逆之婦人所生的，我豈不知道你喜悅耶西的兒子，自取羞辱，以致你母親露體蒙羞嗎？31 耶西的兒子若在世間活着，你和你的國位必站立不住。現在你要打發人去，將他捉拿交給我；他是該死的。」**掃羅毫不留情當眾大發雷霆。他甚至

羞辱約拿單和他的母親！他也不尊重大衛，稱他為「耶西的兒子」。掃羅認為大衛會妨礙他王朝的延續。他除掉大衛的決心顯而易見。約拿單想跟他父親講道理，但掃羅根本聽不進去。他甚至把矛丟向約拿單，就像他之前對大衛所做的那樣。約拿單閃開，既生氣又難過地離席。在這裡我們可以學到關於朋友的第三個功課：**他們為朋友挺身辯護**。約拿單明白，按照規矩，他會接替父親成為下一任的王。然而，約拿單願意起來反對他的父親。他關心朋友的利益，因為他關心神的旨意。如果沒有神的任命，沒有人能夠成為王。約拿單在神面前放棄了他的權利，甚至與他的父親對抗。一個好朋友可能會為你的權利辯護。但是敬虔的朋友會為你懇求，願神的旨意成就。聖經說我們有最好的中間人為我們在神面前代求。羅馬書 8:27 有一個寶貴的應許：**鑒察人心的，曉得聖靈的意思，因為聖靈照着神的旨意替聖徒祈求**。保羅在上下文中說，我們常常在軟弱中甚至不知道如何禱告。但住在我們裡面的聖靈明白我們的需要。祂也完全知道天父的旨意。祂會把我們的重擔交給神。不僅聖靈會為我們懇求，甚至我們的主也會那樣做。向下看第 34 節：**誰能定他們的罪呢？有基督耶穌已經死了，而且從死裏復活，現今在神的右邊，也替我們祈求**。耶穌回到天堂後一直在做一項重要的事工。祂為我們祈求。保羅說耶穌已經拯救的人，沒有人能定他們的罪。如果連耶穌都不定罪，那麼就沒有人能追究！有耶穌和聖靈為我們代求，我們是多麼穩妥啊！如果神已經接納了你，那麼你就是永遠得救了。按照安排，約拿單把壞消息告訴大衛。他的父親下定決心要除掉大衛。約拿單讓男孩撿起箭之後，他在第 42 節向他的好朋友告別：**... 「我們二人曾指着耶和華的名起誓說：『願耶和華在你我中間，並你我後裔中間為證，直到永遠。』如今你平平安安地去吧！」**... 約拿單回憶起他和大衛在曠野初次見面時的承諾。那個盟約不僅是兩個人之間的，也是兩個家族之間的。約拿單在第 14-15 節說：**14 你要照耶和華的慈愛恩待我，不但我活着的時候免我死亡，15 就是我死後，耶和華從地上剪除你仇敵的時候，你也永不可向我家絕了恩惠。**」約拿單要求大衛發誓保護他的家人。他相信神的話一定會實現。大衛將成為未來的君王。新的王清除先王的家族成員是很常見的。我們在電影和歷史書中都看到這一點。大衛遵守了他的話。幾年後，掃羅和約拿單戰死沙場。大衛終於成為王。他尋找約拿單剩下的家庭成員，並照顧他們。大衛展示了關於朋友的第四個功課：**他們向朋友保證恩慈**。約拿單要求大衛向他的後代顯出「慈愛」。這個字是舊約中常見的希伯來用詞，它描述神因祂的約而表達的愛。神不需要定任何協議，因為祂不能說謊。祂是用我們可以理解的方式來作保證。假設我需要向兒子借二十美元。他知道我會還錢的。但為了以防萬一我忘記了，我和他簽了一份合約。他可以用那張紙來提醒我。如果我不趕快還錢，他甚至可以向我收取利息。今天，我們有聖經給我們作保證。神從來不會改變。祂對待我們的方式與祂幾千年前的工作方式相同。當我們閱讀神的應許時，我們的心會受到激

勵。例如，祂永遠不會撇下我們，也不會丟棄我們，祂會按照祂的旨意供應我們所有的需要。我們可以在禱告中抓住這些應許。我們可以向神說：「主啊，我相信祢是我的牧者，我必不至缺乏。我相信祢不會讓我面對任何我無法承擔的困難。祢會給我足夠的恩典來度過這個艱難的時期。」聖經不再只是一本古老的歷史書，它變成了神寫給祂兒女的一封愛的書信。

結論 CONCLUSION

帶著那個承諾，大衛離開了。他開始了逃亡的生涯。大衛與約拿單分別之後，他必須依靠自己能找到的資源。但更重要的是，他必須倚靠神。事實證明，這次逃亡的旅程是建立大衛信心的過程。縱使他孤單一人，神一直與他同在。在我們眾多的朋友中，神是我們最忠心的朋友。耶穌來到世上向我們展示神的愛。當我們還不認識祂的時候，主早已決定愛我們。曾經在英國有一個比賽，徵求對朋友最恰當的定義。有成千上萬的人投稿，得到冠軍的答案是：「朋友是當整個世界都在撤退但仍然靠近前來的人。」第一次世界大戰中一個故事說明了這一點。在歐洲的某個地方，一群德國士兵和一支美軍正在交戰。一名年輕的德國士兵嘗試走到美軍那邊時中槍了。更慘的是，他被鐵絲網纏住了。他痛得叫了起來。他迫切地需要有人救他。一名美軍再也受不了了。他爬向受傷的敵人。當他的同伴看到這個情形，他們馬上停火。然後一名德國軍官也要求他的下屬停火。那個美國人幫助受傷的人解開鐵絲網。他把德國人扶起來，把他的一隻手臂搭在自己的肩膀上，然後走向德軍那邊。於是兩個敵人變成了朋友！他把那個傷者交給德軍之後，便轉身回到他的同伴那邊。忽然有人拉住他的肩膀。他看到一位德國軍官站在他面前，他的胸口掛了一個鐵十字勳章，那是國家對勇敢士兵的最高榮譽。他從制服上拿下徽章，送給那個美國人。當兩個人與戰友重逢後，雙方便恢復戰爭。我們敬佩這樣的勇氣。耶穌為我們付出了更多。祂不是幫助無辜的士兵，祂拯救了忘恩負義的罪人。耶穌不僅冒著生命危險，還遭受了許多羞辱和痛苦，並以最可怕的方式死在十字架上。今天耶穌邀請你成為祂的朋友。這位天父的兒子希望和你建立永恆的友誼。你所要做的就是承認你的罪，並憑信心接受耶穌進入你的心。祂應許以永遠的愛來愛你。