

lr-ot-23
The Lord Be Between Thee and Me For Ever
(1 Samuel 18-24)
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[This material builds on the words of Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who said: “David, ...mighty, mighty David, the one king above all others to whom ancient Israel for a thousand long years looked as symbol of Israelite triumph and glory... [was a] similitude for the very Messiah himself” (*The Millennial Messiah*, p. 602).]

I. Through the relationship between David and Jonathan we learn of precious covenants, and see how the people of the Lord, as in Christ’s time, should be “knit together in love.”

A. Jonathan’s relationship with David is a witness of those who love the Lord and each other in the covenant.

1. In fact, the relationship between Jonathan and David was meant to signify a covenant. “Then Jonathan and **David made a covenant** because he loved him as his own soul” (1 Samuel 18:1, 3).
2. This foreshadowed the relationship between Jesus and His followers, which was to be a loving covenant. **Note that the true name of the New Testament is The New Covenant.**
3. John chapter 15 develops the concept of a loving and covenanting relationship between Jesus and His disciples, particularly v. 13-15, where he calls His apostles “friends.”
4. The great Intercessory Prayer which Jesus makes at the Last Supper, praying that His disciples [which includes us as His future disciples] will become One with Him and with His Father, is further witness of the choice and real covenant we all should make to be knit together in love with the Father and with each other. “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us;” (John 17:21).

B. One early Christian writer, Clement, wrote this touching portrayal of just how much the earliest Christians did love Jesus the Christ.

“What praise, then, or what reward shall we give him in return for what we received? We were maimed in our understanding, worshipping stone, and wood, ... the works of men, and our whole life was nothing else than death. We were covered with darkness, and our eyes were full of mist; but we have received our sight, and by his will we have cast off the cloud which covered us. For he had pity on us, and saved us in his mercy, and regarded the great error and destruction which was in us, and our hopelessness of salvation save from him; for he called us when we were not, and it was his will that out of nothing we should come to being.” (From *Apostolic Fathers*, Vol 1, Translated by Kirsopp Lake, pp. 129-131). (Emphasis added).

C. A modern example is the close relationship felt between Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball. Heber C. Kimball’s biographer, Orson F. Whitney, actually described their relationship with the scriptural phrase, “knit together in love,” and wrote that Heber loved Brigham as deeply as he did members of his own family, and quickly transferred his whole hearted support to Brigham after Joseph’s martyrdom.

II. In contrast, note how Saul came to feel about David, out of jealousy, when David entered Jerusalem and great throngs greeted him.

A. “And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Phillistines, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, ..., with tabarets, with joy, and with instruments of musick.

“And the women answered one another as they played, and said, ‘Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

“And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said,... and what shall he have more than the kingdom?” (1 Samuel 18:6-8).

III. In these things, Saul’s jealousies and anger foreshadowed how Jesus would be received by the leaders of *His* days.

A. It was after Jesus had raised Lazarus, and the people similarly thronged together to greet and praise Him when He came up and entered Jerusalem, that the Jewish leaders of that time “heard the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David;” and “they were sore displeased” (Matthew 21:15).

B. The scriptures say that from that time they took counsel to see Him crucified. For they knew that according to the scriptures, “he that is hanged is accursed of God” (Deut. 21:23). They felt by crucifying him, they would bring upon him that curse, and prove that He could not be the Son of God.

C. Clement also pointed out, **how envy and jealousy poisoned many after Christ’s death**, causing persecution of the early apostles and Saint as well, undermining Christ’s work. “Through jealousy and envy the greatest and most righteous pillars of the Church were persecuted and contended unto death. Let us set before our eyes the good apostles: Peter, who because of unrighteous jealousy suffered not one or two but many trials, and having thus given his testimony went to the glorious place which was his due. Through jealousy and strife Paul showed the way to the prize of endurance; seven times he was in bonds, he was exiled, he was stoned,...” (Ibid., p. 17). (Emphasis added).

D. Nevertheless, like Jonathan for David, others who had loved Christ and His apostles and had made covenants, loved so deeply they willingly sacrificed their lives for them and the gospel. Clement again relates, “To these men [apostles] with their holy lives was gathered a great multitude of the chosen, who were [also] the victims of jealousy ...Through jealousy women were persecuted...suffering terrible and unholy indignities; they steadfastly finished the course of faith, and received a noble reward.” (Ibid. p. 19).

E. Clement thus gives a great contrast of those who loved out of great friendship, like Jonathan, willingly even sacrificing their lives from this love, and those who were consumed by the poisons of jealousy, like Saul, who then persecuted and killed those who loved truth. He concludes his statements by saying, “Jealousy and strife have overthrown great cities, and rooted up mighty nations” (Ibid.).

IV. Unfortunately, **envy may be the most common sin carried by active members of the Church**, for it is more difficult to gauge. And, while seldom spoken of, is destructive to personal character as well as to the Church itself.

- A. Alma gave strong warning against both pride and envy to his people. [For envy usually comes out of pride]. And his warnings, and the timing of his warnings [which were not too far from the time of Christ's coming among them] are warnings to which we should all hearken.

“Behold, are ye stripped of pride? I say unto you, if ye are not ye are not prepared to meet God. Behold ye must prepare quickly; for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand, and such an one hath not eternal life.

“Behold, I say, is there one among you who is not stripped of envy? I say unto you that such an one is not prepared: and I would that he should prepare quickly, for the hour is close at hand, and he knoweth not when the time shall come, for such an one is not found guiltless.”

“And again I say unto you, is there one among you that doth make a mock of his brother, or that heapeth upon him persecution?” (Alma 5:27-29).

B. Acknowledging that envy is far too common among even active members, how can we recognize it in ourselves?

1. One of the big symptoms is faultfinding. If we find ourselves continually looking for and finding fault with someone else, the chances are pretty good that envy may be at the root.
2. Another symptom is treating individuals differently --- finding fault with some but not others; giving favors to some but not others.
3. Another symptom is not rejoicing when another succeeds. If we are free of envy, we will wholeheartedly rejoice when another does well.

Personal Challenge: Because jealousy is a sin of which these scriptures and Alma warn so strongly, it is important that we seek to “strip” ourselves of any vestige of it. We should earnestly seek to overcome faultfinding, which is divisive; and let genuine friendship underlie relationships between ourselves and others, particularly other servants of the Lord with whom we share precious covenants.

One thing I try to remember is that when we seek to demean or deny any other person their unique gifts or talents, **we are actually denying Glory to the Lord Himself. For the gifts of all, unfettered, will eventually glorify our Father who is in Heaven.**