

Fight of Your Life | Fight for Your Friends

Aaron Brockett | 1 Samuel 18-20

Alright, I want to welcome each and every one of our campuses right now. This morning I want to greet those of you here at our Northwest campus and I want to say hello to Downtown, North, and West. Anybody who is tuning in online, it's so great to have all of you regardless of where you are tuning in from around the world.

If you are a guest, maybe this is your first time to be with us, let me just catch you up to speed as to where we've been. We are in a four-part series of messages, this is part three, called the *Fight of Your Life*.

And the big idea behind this is that when it comes to the relationships that mean the most in our lives, a disagreement or an argument of some kind is inevitable, right? And in those moments we're going to have to choose, "Am I going to take all of my passion, effort, and energy and am I going to fight against this person or am I going to redirect it and fight for this person? Am I going to fight to keep the relationship together?"

And that's most definitely true when it comes to the marriage relationship—what we talked about on week one. It's true to what we talked about last week with parenting. You know parents' relationships with kids, kids' relationships with parents. And it's true with this relationship that we want to dive into together this weekend and talk about friendship.

Wouldn't you agree that one of the greatest things about life is good friends? When you have somebody who can relate to you, somebody who gets you and your sense of humor, somebody who encourages you when you're down and when you're up to keep your feet on the ground.

I was thinking this last week about some of the classic friendships that we know in our culture. You know, going way back like Cheech and Chong (some of you don't know those names, that's alright) Sonny and Cher, Forest Gump and Jenny—that's a good friendship—Batman and Robin, Ben Affleck and Matt Damon, Bono and the Edge. And then the standard for all of us: Ross, Rachel, Chandler, Monica, Joey, and Phoebe, alright? Maybe not.

So think about some of these statements when it comes to friendship:

"We've been friends so long I can't remember which one of us is the bad influence."

"Good friends don't let you do stupid things...alone."

I really resonate with this next one:

“We’ll be friends forever because you already know too much.”

And then this last one:

“As your best friend, remember that if you fall, I will pick you up...after I finish laughing.”

I love this guy named C. S. Lewis who said this about friends. I really resonate with this. He said, “Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, ‘What! You too? I thought I was the only one.’”

Man, when you have that moment with another individual there’s this bond that ends up forming. I hope that you have a friend. I hope that you have several friends you could say that about.

When I was four years old, I became friends with a guy who I’ve continued to remain friends with now throughout life. He’s been a life-long friend. We’ve been friends for the last 38 years, if you can believe that. I can’t even believe that I’m old enough to say that.

But I remember when we were in the 5th grade we were out riding bikes in our neighborhood together and I ended getting into a bike wreck. I’ve actually shared this story before. I flew over my handle bars and my shorts got snagged on a bolt and it ripped them off of me completely.

My bike was wrecked, I couldn’t ride it and I was like three miles away from home. So I had to walk my bike back and he walked his perfectly fine bike right next to me just so I wouldn’t be alone. And he blocked me so that the girls in the neighborhood wouldn’t see me in my tidy whites. That is a good friend right there.

In fact in the sixth grade he was a better athlete than me so on track and field day he goes out and cleans house—gets all of the first place blue ribbons. I was not as great of an athlete and so I got the third and fourth place ribbons, which at that time were like mustard yellow and off-white. Remember those? And I was not happy about it. I complained about it.

I went to the bathroom and then came back to my desk. He had actually given me half of his first place, blue ribbons just to make me feel better. That’s a good friend right there. We’ve been friends ever since, even into adulthood today. He’s a pastor of a church as well in Louisville, Kentucky.

The Bible says that we need friends. It says that it’s really, really important in our life to have them. In Ecclesiastes, chapter 4, verse 9 through 10 says, “Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can **reach out** and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.”

We see this when we look at the life of Jesus. Jesus had friends as well. I mean the Son of God needed friends. And he actually had friends at different levels, alright? He had 120 close

followers—these people kind of followed him around. He wasn't close with all of them but he would call them friends. And then there were 12 people who he was especially close with, the disciples.

But even out of the 12 there were three—Peter, James, and John—whom Jesus brought in and he actually shared some things with them that he didn't necessarily share with just anyone. He shared his heart with them and his dreams and his aspirations. He just brought these guys into his life.

This tells me something. If Jesus needed friends then so do we. And yet even though he had friends, it's just like all of us, those friendships would be tested in a variety of ways, mainly at the end of Jesus' life and ministry.

When he was in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before his arrest and crucifixion Jesus is in anguish about what is getting ready to happen to him so he just needs some friends. And he's gathered these guys around him and he's like: Man, guys could you stay awake with me, could you pray with me, could you hang out with me? I really, really need some friends right now.

And Jesus would be praying and he would turn around and he would see that all of his friends were asleep and he felt alone. And he was actually irritated. He woke them up and said: Guys, can't you stay awake with me?

Oh, yeah, Jesus we're with you. We're with you.

He turned around again and they were asleep again. The next morning comes. The Roman soldiers come and they arrest Jesus, and right then all of his friends bail on him, including his inner three. In fact, Peter would deny that he even knew Jesus, which had to hurt. I mean, that's just below the belt.

That shows this next thing: Eventually, every friendship you and I have will be **tested**.

I want you to think about the friends in your life. Is there anybody right now that maybe you were close to at one time but now you're not anymore and maybe your paths have kind of gone separate ways? Maybe you've developed different interests. Maybe this other person changed or maybe it was you who changed. Maybe it was a change for the worse or for the better. Maybe there was a betrayal of some kind.

Maybe there was nothing negative that happened it's just that life took you in two different directions. You got married. You started a career. You had kids.

Here's what I find for many of us. It's that when we were in high school and college we had good friends. Maybe we invested in those friendships but maybe as we grew into adult life and responsibilities were heaped upon us—friendships and the maintenance of those friendships have a tendency to sort of take a back seat, don't they?

It's not that we mean to do this. It's just that we get really busy doing all of these other things. There are all of these other demands and pressures and responsibilities and if you're not careful you can wake up one day and go, "Man, I'm all alone. I'm actually in a room full of people and I've got crowds of people around me but I don't really have anybody. Right now, if I found myself in a crisis—if I found my marriage was falling apart, if I didn't know where to turn next, if I was having a crisis of faith—who would I reach out to?"

We see an example in the Scriptures of a friendship that went through its ups and its downs and we actually find some principles out of this friendship that we can apply to our own. It's the friendship of David and this guy named Jonathan. And it's all recorded in 1 Samuel.

Now we've been talking about this guy named David quite a bit over the course of the last few weeks but I want to give you a little bit of background information on Jonathan so that way you know who he is. Jonathan was the son of King Saul, which came with its privileges and its opportunities—I mean he's a prince, right?

And we see, actually, an example of the kind of privileges that Jonathan had in 1 Samuel, chapter 13, verse 22: "So on the day of the battle none of the people of Israel had a sword or spear, **except for Saul and Jonathan.**"

At this particular time in history there was a shortage of swords, maybe they have been confiscated. Whatever it was, having a sword was a pretty rare thing, especially in the first century when you settled most things with battles. And it said that there were only two in the land. The only two people who had them were Saul, the king, which you would expect, and his son, Jonathan, which tells us Jonathan was next in line to be king; he had a lot of opportunities due to his heritage.

We've often heard the story of the King's son who is corrupt and entitled and has a lack of integrity—Wakeen Phoenix in *Gladiator* kind of comes to my mind—that whole kind of role. But that's not Jonathan. Jonathan is a man of integrity, he's gifted, he loves God. And not only did Jonathan deserve the kingship that would one day eventually come to him but he was capable of handling it.

And that's when David seems to sort of come out of nowhere and he actually robs some of the spotlight away from Jonathan. And it could have actually become a real rift between the two of them.

Now David and Jonathan, in many ways, at first glance they just seem like they couldn't have had more differences. They didn't seem like they had that much in common.

They likely met when they were teenagers. David was the eighth son of a sheep rancher who worked out in the pasture. Jonathan was the first son of a king who grew up with all kinds of

privileges. David was a country boy, Jonathan was a city boy. David was comfortable in the pasture. Jonathan liked kicking it in the palace.

How their two worlds initially intersected was that David was a musician. The Bible says that he played a harp, which actually wasn't probably more like a harp it was probably more like what we would know as a guitar today. And I'm sure that he had his cover tunes. I'm sure he'd cover Jimmy Hendricks and Led Zeppelin in his off times, but David also wrote original music. In fact you can just turn to the book of Psalms and this is just a whole collection of David's original music.

David gets hired on as part of the palace staff to play his instrument and sing his songs for King Saul because he was a stressed out guy. And Saul needed somebody to kind of lift his spirits and to calm his nerves. So I'm sure that Jonathan probably saw David in the palace and he probably thought nothing of it. It's just like: That's the hired musician who has been brought in to play pretty songs for my dad.

In chapter 17 of 1 Samuel everything changes. David comes out from obscurity. He sets down his guitar and he picks up his slingshot and he steps into the octagon of his day and he takes down this giant named Goliath. He actually frees up the Israelite people from the threat of the Philistines and immediately David becomes a national celebrity overnight.

David isn't singing cover tunes anymore and all of a sudden they started writing songs about David. And the tune went like this: Saul has killed his thousands and David has killed his tens of thousands. Paparazzi are following him around. David immediately gets one of those blue check marked certified things on Instagram, you know? It's like all of a sudden he gets thrust into the spotlight. All anybody is talking about is David and that's actually when David and Jonathan's friendship begins.

1 Samuel, chapter 18, verses 1 through 4 says, "After David had finished talking with Saul, he met Jonathan, the king's son. There was an **immediate bond** between them, for Jonathan **loved** David. From that day on Saul kept David with him and wouldn't let him return home." That would become a problem and we'll talk about that later.

"And Jonathan made a solemn **pact** with David, because he loved him **as he loved himself**. Jonathan sealed the pact by taking off his robe and giving it to David, together with his tunic," check this out, his sword—there were only two of them in the land and Jonathan gives his to David, his "bow, and belt," and so for all of their differences, they also had a lot in common. It says that immediately, as soon as these two guys meet, there was an immediate bond between them and it says that Jonathan loved David.

As I was studying this last week I asked myself: What was it about David that caused Jonathan to immediately have this connection with him? It's almost like they start this bromance, right? Just out of the gate. And I think I know what it was. I think that Jonathan recognized a warrior spirit in David because Jonathan had that same kind of warrior spirit.

Now David has the whole Goliath thing. He was in the spotlight and everybody sought him but Jonathan actually had something that he had done that was equally as courageous but it was just done behind the scenes.

We read about it back in chapter 14. Jonathan takes his armor bearer—and an armor bearer is sort of like a caddy but they are not playing golf, alright? So instead of handing him a nine iron the armor bearer would hand him the weapon of his choice. So Jonathan takes his armor bearer, goes behind enemy lines, and they see 20 Philistines who are totally unsuspecting and Jonathan turns to his armor bearer—it's one of my favorite passages of Scripture—and he says: I think the two of us can take those guys.

And he goes: Are you in? Are you with me? And the armor bearer says—I love this: I'm with you heart and soul. And the two of them go in and they take down 20 Philistines. It's just as courageous as what David does when he takes down Goliath. That's the kind of guy Jonathan was.

So I think when Jonathan saw what David did immediately he's going: That's a guy I can roll with. That's a guy who will push me. That's a guy—I see his love for the Lord, I see his integrity, I see his strength I want to hang out with that guy.

This leads us to the first principle of friendship and that's just simply this: True friends push each other rather than settle for mutual **mediocrity**.

Here's the principle behind it. When it comes to picking your friends and developing friendships, pick friends who don't just make you feel better about yourself or who hold you back but actually find somebody that you admire, find somebody whose faith is actually ahead of where you are currently. Find somebody who is more gifted than you that you can learn from. Find somebody who you respect the decisions that they've made and you're like, "You know what? I'm going to foster a friendship with that person because I know that they'll push me to be better than I really am."

I don't know who said it originally. Maybe you've heard this before. It's a statement that simply goes like this: "Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future." Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future. The kind of people you're choosing to be around, that's the person that you're going to become one day.

And you know that bit of wisdom comes right out of Scripture. Proverbs 27: 17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so a friend **sharpens** a friend."

So as I'm thinking about the application of this principle this last week, I thought to myself, "I think maybe one very clear application is what my mom and dad and what my youth pastor and what other adults used to say to me when I was growing up—maybe it's been said to you as well. They said, "Pick your friends wisely." That's good counsel. That's good advice.

But as I'm thinking about it I'm thinking, "You know, with technology that's advancing and the rise of social media and all of these devices we have in our hands it's like I need to say, "Yes, pick your friends wisely," and I think I need to add something else to it, "Make sure you pick friends." Right? Make sure that you pick real friends not just virtual ones. Not just Facebook friends, not just social media friends but actually a real life, face to face friend.

Have you ever been out somewhere at an airport or a park or a mall and you see a group of people sitting around a table but they're not talking to each other. All of their faces are aglow and it's not the Shekinah Glory of God. It's their devices.

Listen. I'm not down on technology or social media or devices. I'm in on all of that. And they've presented some incredible opportunities today. But I do think that it is safe to say that as technology has been on the rise, our friendships are actually suffering for it.

Studies actually back this up. There was a study done in 2015 that compiled data on 3.4 million people across 70 studies. They found that the absence of social connections carries the same health risk as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Loneliness is increasingly contending with obesity as a health risk.

According to one survey that started back in 1984 people said that, on average, they had about three friends that they felt like they could confide in. By 2005, that number had dropped to just two friends. When this long-term study concluded just a few years ago, 25 percent of the respondents said that they didn't have anybody who they could truly trust.

Another survey came out. It surveyed like 3,300 people. I think the University of Oxford did this study. They said that out of those 3,300 people they had an average of 155 Facebook friends each and each one of them said that they didn't feel like there was anybody who they could truly confide in.

So we need friendships. Here's what the enemy will do. The enemy is like playing chess with us and one of the ways in which he will take us down is by first getting us isolated. He will pull us out of community. He'll pull us out of relationships with other people where nobody is really speaking into our lives.

And I don't know that everybody needs to hear this, but I'm confident that somebody needs to hear it. Maybe today you feel kind of isolated and alone and maybe you're sitting there waiting for friendships to come to you. And maybe they will. But maybe today it's a matter of prayer and a priority and to actually say, "You know what? I'm going to take the first step to investing into the kind of friendships that I know that I need because I'm finding myself in isolation."

I think for many of us we have those friendships, maybe at one time in college we had some really, really good buddies in college, but we just haven't tended to those relationships anymore or the relationship fell apart and we didn't fight for it.

Here's the thing. As soon as David and Jonathan get together and they build this friendship, they've got all of this comradery it gets tested. Look what it says in verse 5.

"Whatever Saul asked David to do, David did it **successfully**." So he's getting promoted, "So Saul made him a **commander** over the men of war, an appointment that was welcomed by the people and Saul's officers alike."

So I want you to get the picture. Here you've got David and Jonathan: similar in age, similar in gifting. David is an outsider. Jonathan is an insider. Jonathan is in line to become king next, David is kind of outside of the family heritage, but David is the one who is getting all of the attention. He's getting promoted right over Jonathan.

That leads us to this next principle: True friends celebrate each other's victories rather than making petty **comparisons**.

It would have been really easy for Jonathan to start comparing himself to David and actually to let envy seep into their relationship and to then begin to undercut David and to push him away, but Jonathan—to his credit—never does that.

Any of you have a friend who is just extremely gifted and talented to the point of it being annoying to you? Anybody have that friend? Yeah, I do too. The friend that I just told you about earlier, Kyle, actually he is that friend, alright? He's a great friend, lifelong friend, but man he has been and he continues to be a really gifted guy.

I go back to our childhood days and he's a better athlete than me. He was better in school than me. More popular with the ladies and he's taller than me for crying out loud—just add insult to injury.

As we got into adult life that didn't really stop. I mean God's hands are really on him. He's a gifted communicator. He's a great author. He's a pastor of a church down in Louisville, Kentucky. The church has just exploded.

Many of you might even recognize his name if you've read his books. His last name is Idleman, Kyle Idleman. His book *Not a Fan* has sold like a gazillion copies and I'm tired of hearing about it.

People come up to me all of the time and ask, "Have you read his book? It's so good. I heard you were friends with him. Wow! Can you get it signed for me?"

No!

And they are like, "When are you going to write a book, Aaron?"

“I’ve read a book—once. Get off my back, alright?”

I’ll go to our home town, visit our home church, thinking that’s a safe place. People walk up to me, “Oh, Aaron. How are you doing? Hey, how’s Kyle? You guys still stay in touch? You talk to Kyle lately? Wow, his book is so good.”

Shut up! I don’t want to talk about it anymore.

See, here’s the thing. At times, and I’ve even said this to him, “Man it’s hard... It’s one of the best things in my life is being friends with you. One of the hardest things in my life is being friends with you,” because God’s actually used him to sharpen me, to push me, to challenge me, to convict me, and yet in my darker moments I wanted to compare myself to him, like, “Ah, man. I don’t know if I can live up to that.”

Any of you have that friend in your life? You’ve got to pick a friend who is going to push you into that but don’t let envy seep into that. That’s kind of what pastor Craig Groeschel says about this. He says, “The fastest way to kill something special is to compare it to something else.”

I think Jonathan probably felt that deep down in his heart. He didn’t necessarily let David know it but I think he was human. He probably felt it.

Here’s the thing that I think that God probably would have said to Jonathan: Jonathan, whatever I do with David, what is that to you? I’m going to use David the way that I’ve gifted him. I’m using him to further my kingdom and to further my name and I’m going to use you too, but I’m going to use you in different ways.

I think there have been plenty of times when I’ve had to remind myself of that. Maybe you need to hear that word for yourself as well. Man, don’t compare yourself to your friends. Especially don’t compare yourself to your friends on social media because that’s everybody’s highlight reel. Recognize that God is doing something unique with you. And he’ll use friends to push you and challenge you. But God created you, not to be them. God created you to be you.

And to Jonathan’s credit he never really seems to compare himself to David. In fact, I would say that David’s influence for God and everything that David was able to accomplish wouldn’t have been possible without his friendship with Jonathan, because Jonathan had his back and Jonathan was willing to fight for their friendship.

Ironically, it wasn’t Jonathan who got jealous of David. It was Jonathan’s father, Saul, who did. Saul sees how David is rising in popularity and fame and gets really insecure. So in 1 Samuel, chapter 19 it says, “Saul now urged his servants and his son Jonathan to **assassinate** David.” That escalated quickly, alright? So he’s given him all of these promotions, now he wants to get rid of him.

“But Jonathan, because of his **strong affection** for David, told him what his father was planning. ‘Tomorrow morning,’ he warned him, ‘you must find a hiding place out in the fields. I’ll ask my father to go out there with me, and I’ll talk to him about you. Then I’ll tell you everything I can find out.’ The next morning Jonathan spoke with his father about David, saying **many good things** about him. ‘The king must not sin against his servant David,’ Jonathan said. ‘He’s never done anything to harm you. He has always helped you in any way he could.’”

We see here that Jonathan has got David’s back when it would have been difficult to do so. We see this next principle: True friends have each other’s backs, even when it requires great **personal sacrifice**.

Imagine how hard it would have been for Jonathan to do this. How easy it would have been for Jonathan to just step back and sort of passively say, “Yeah, have at it. If David get’s taken out of the picture then I’ll get his job. I’ll get his glory. I’ll get his fame.” But Jonathan doesn’t do that. Jonathan stays in the pocket and he has David’s back even when it would have required a lot from him and he’s got this immense pressure that is building from his dad, which is why I think what happens next might have been a real kick in the gut for Jonathan because Jonathan clearly has David’s back but David doesn’t necessarily think so.

Look at what it says in chapter 20, verses 1 through 2. It says, “David now fled from Naioth in Ramah and found Jonathan. ‘What have I done?’ he exclaimed. ‘What is my crime? How have I offended your father that he is so determined to kill me?’” And notice Jonathan comes back at him and he says, **“That’s not true!”**

“You’re not going to die. He always tells me everything he’s going to do, even the little things. I know my father wouldn’t hide something like this from me. **It just isn’t so!**”

And so we see that David and Jonathan get into a fight. And Jonathan comes to him and David says: Man, your dad is coming down my throat. You need to get him off of me. And Jonathan is like: No, I really don’t think so. I think you’ve misread the situation.

I want to kind of back up at a 30,000 foot level and show you that their friendship was strong enough for them to be this honest with each other. And we see this principle right here: True friends tell you what you **need to know**, even though what you need to know is really **hard to hear**.

Jonathan had no idea what his father was truly intending for David but David did. So David comes to him and it causes this disagreement between the two of them.

Acquaintances in life will never be fully honest with you. We’re posturing for position. Maybe we are people pleasers. We want everybody to like us. But a true, godly friend will speak the truth to you even though it hurts.

Proverbs says this in chapter 27, verse 6, “Wounds from a friend can be trusted...” which means sometimes friends will wound you but it’s for your own good. And what wound means is just simply something that is spoken that maybe hurts your pride, something that is spoken that is really hard to hear because maybe they are speaking truth and you’re not necessarily willing to hear it, maybe you don’t see it and it hurts a little bit.

I’m not saying that everybody needs to speak into your life in this way. I mean Jesus certainly didn’t have that. Jesus had three really, really close friends who I think he allowed to do this in his life.

But friends will actually say things—get this—before your life is in the ditch, not after. Friends will say, “Hey, man. I’ve noticed that you’re actually flirting with that married man or that married woman in the office. I’m not saying that you’ve done anything wrong. I’m just telling you to be careful.

You know what? That takes a lot of courage to say something like that. And it actually takes a lot of humility to receive something like that.

Man, if you get defensive and you get angry because you haven’t done anything wrong or you haven’t crossed the line then you’re actually saying to your friend, “Butt out of my life. Don’t you ever say anything like that to me again.” And then maybe if one day there is something to it and you don’t have a guard rail there and your life ends up in the ditch you’ll wish that your friend had been there to speak into your life.

Or maybe your friend said, “You know, I just really noticed that there is some bitterness in you, there just seems to be this cynicism or you just seem to be down lately—man, how is your heart? Is there anything I can do to help?” Man, in those moments—those are not fun moments but they are a gift. They are a gift from somebody who loves you enough to actually speak the truth to you.

We see this between David and Jonathan. David kind of realizes what is going on. David receives this in humility as well because he realizes that Jonathan just doesn’t see his father’s intentions and he realizes that Saul is actually using Jonathan’s affection for David against the two of them.

So it says in chapter 20, verse 3, “Then David took an oath before Jonathan and said, ‘Your father knows perfectly well about our friendship, so he has said to himself, “I won’t tell Jonathan—why should I hurt him?” But I swear to you that I am only a step away from death! I swear it by the Lord and by your own soul!’” And Jonathan received it and he says, “**Tell me what I can do to help you.**” Tell me what I can do.

So David develops this strategy. He says: The new moon festival is beginning here in a few days and your father has invited me to this party. I think he’s going to take me out there. So here’s

what I'm going to do. I'm going to actually hide out in that field we used to play in a few years ago and I'm going to stay there and you can tell your dad that I asked you for a little bit of vacation time to go back to Bethlehem to visit my family.

And if your dad flies off of the handle and if he gets upset then we'll know that he's up to something. If he's cool with it, then we'll know that I'm safe and I can actually come back. And Jonathan says: You know what? I'm going to get to the bottom of this. I'm with you.

So it says in verse 16, "So Jonathan made a solemn pact with David, saying, 'May the Lord destroy all your enemies!' And Jonathan made David **reaffirm his vow of friendship again**, for Jonathan loved David as he loved himself."

So this is exactly what they do and, sure enough, Saul loses it and not only that but he finds out that David and Jonathan had developed this little plan and Saul says some incredibly ugly things to his son. In fact it says that he picked up his spear and throws it at his son.

And Jonathan knows that David isn't safe and he knows that David has to get out of there. So he says to David: Man, you better take off. You better get out of here. It is not safe. And we find that in chapter 20, verse 41 one of their final interactions.

Check this out. It says: "Both of them were in tears as they embraced each other and said good-bye, **especially David.**" because I think David knew that he was losing a friend. Like: There is nobody in this life who is going to be as loyal to me as Jonathan has been.

"At last Jonathan said to David, 'Go in peace, for we have sworn loyalty to each other in the Lord's name. The Lord is the witness of a bond between us and our children forever.' Then David left, and Jonathan returned to the town."

Right after this David, for the next several years takes off as a fugitive. He's like Harrison Ford in those movies where Tommy Lee Jones is chasing after him. He becomes that kind of guy. He's hiding out in caves and he's trying to do everything he can to stay under the radar so that Saul does not find him.

One day he wakes up and he gets a message that he didn't want to hear. His good friend, Jonathan, had died in battle. Saul had died as well so the two of them are out of the picture. And David ends up becoming the king just as Jonathan said that he would.

And one of the things that was very common in the first century is that a brand new king would actually issue an order to have the previous king's family members all killed so that way nobody would challenge the throne of the new king.

But David doesn't do this. Instead David hires a private investigator and he says: I want you to find out if Jonathan has any living children, because of the pact that they had made. And the

private investigator goes out, he finds one. He says: Jonathan has one living son. His name is Mephibosheth. He's disabled.

And instead of ignoring him, marginalizing him, or having him killed, David reaches out in compassion and brings Mephibosheth in and he protects him and he provides for him.

That leads us to the fifth and final principle: True friends **lay down their lives** for the other.

True friends will make sacrifices for the other. And this is exactly what Jesus has done for you and for me. See, what friendship is—it's sort of like marriage. Marriage is a model for us of how God has designed the relationships between us. Friendship is also an extension of what God desires to have with us as well. Jesus has a number of names and a number of descriptions of what he is called throughout the Scriptures and one of my favorite ones is simply this: Jesus is called a friend of sinners. Did you know that?

Not the friend of perfect people, not the friend of religious people, not the friend of people who have it all together but the friend of people like you and me who are broken, we don't have all of the answers, we are messed up, we are filled with pride and Jesus says: I'm your friend.

In fact, Jesus is God's extension of friendship to you and to me in the sense that God says: I want to create a relationship with you, I want to reconcile with you, I want to redeem you. My answer to that is Jesus.

In fact Jesus is all of these things that we have talked about. Jesus pushes you and me to grow. Jesus celebrates our victories. Jesus sacrifices for us. Jesus confronts us in our sin and Jesus lays down his life for us.

In fact, Jesus would say this in John, chapter 15, verse 13. He would say, "There is no **greater love** than to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Who is he talking about? In the very next verse he tells us. He says this, "You are my friends..." You are my friends.

So here's one of the things that I just want to leave you with today and maybe there are some here today who have been visiting for a while or maybe you are totally fine with attending you've enjoyed the teaching and all of that but you're like, "You know what? I'm not quite sure about this whole Lord and Savior of my life thing. Like that seems a little too serious. I don't know that I'm ready for that kind of commitment. I've still got tons and tons of questions."

And if that's you, man, I am really, really glad that you are here. Could I maybe just offer this to you? Maybe you're not ready to make Jesus Lord and Savior of your life; maybe you're just ready to be friends with him. And I know that sounds kind of strange but maybe that's the first step.

When Lindsay and I moved to California several years ago, we were really, really lonely. We started a church. There was a young couple who came to the grand opening of the church and immediately I liked this guy. He was an athlete, I felt like I had a lot in common with him and I went up and was talking to him afterward. He said, “Yeah, we’re from upstate New York. We’re out here together as well. I’m in school and we feel really lonely. We don’t have a lot of friends.”

And I was like, “Man, that’s great. Are you going to come back next week?” He goes, “No.” I’m like, “Is it me? I don’t really understand.” And he said, “Well, because we’re so far away from home we feel like we need more of an established church.”

At that time our church was meeting in a movie theater. He’s like, “We just feel like we need an established church to kind of have relationships around us and we just feel kind of lonely.” And I said, “Well, you know what? I do too.” I said, “How about this? Will you be my friend?” And he goes, “Sure, dude.”

So like the next week—it was during the MBA finals—we just went over to their apartment, Lindsay and I—it was before kids—and we just hung out with them. We watched the MBA playoffs and it just started there. We just developed a friendship. And then it actually led to where they came to the church and started serving. And then when I felt God calling me on from that church, God actually called him to be the pastor of that church. See, that’s where it started.

I’m just simply saying this. Maybe you are not ready to say, “Yeah, I’m a card-carrying Christian.” Maybe what you need to do is just get in proximity with other Jesus followers, maybe those that you would find here at any one of our campuses, and just begin a friendship with Jesus and see if he can be trusted.

We see this in John’s gospel. There were these two buddies, Philip and Nathaniel. Philip goes up to Nathaniel and he’s like: Hey, man. Come see a guy who told me everything I ever did. He was talking about Jesus. And Nathaniel immediately asked skeptical questions. And he is like: You know what? What good comes out of Nazareth? How do you know this guy is who he says he is? How do you know that Jesus is the Son of God?

I love Philip’s response. Philip was not an intellect. Philip just goes: I don’t know. I don’t have any idea. I cannot answer your questions. Then he says this. This is brilliant: Just come and see. Why don’t you just come and hang out with Jesus and see if he can be trusted?

I would just simply offer you that same invitation. You are welcome here no matter what you believe, no matter what your life may look like, just simply come and maybe you might begin a friendship with Jesus and see if one day that might lead to Lordship.

Father, we come to you right now and I thank you so much for the example that David and Jonathan are to each one of us regardless of where we are right now.

And, God, I want to lift up all of the people in the room at each one of our campuses who might be feeling really lonely right now. And maybe this message was really hard to hear because they are trying to wrack their brains as to who that person would be that they would go and confide in. They are trying to figure out, "Who is my David? Who's my Jonathan?"

Maybe they were coming up blank or maybe they were coming up with an old college buddy or an old girlfriend from a long, long time ago but nobody here recently.

God, I want to lift those people up to you right now. I pray that you would give them the courage and the conviction and the opportunity to make friendship a matter of priority right now because we all need it.

God, I pray that you would strengthen the friendships and the bonds that exist already, that you would help us to fight for the friendship rather than envying each other.

And most importantly, God, I pray that there would be some here today who would begin a friendship with you through Jesus. May they just begin that whole process and see if you can really be trusted. And I pray that one day that friendship will turn into Lordship. We ask this right now in Jesus' name. Meet us in this place. Amen.