

Sunday School 11 July 2021: 1 Samuel 18 – 20: Who are you like?

Saul thought he had so many problems that he couldn't wait for Samuel to ask God to solve them, so he just tried to solve them on his own. But when he went ahead without God, things got worse.

The people had wanted a warrior-king and Saul had led his people well. Imagine his shock then when the women came out to welcome the soldiers home after a battle one day singing one day: "*Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands*". Saul was furious and, from that day on, kept an eye on David. Saul knew he was a rival and he was afraid that David would grab his kingdom.

First he tried to kill David while David was playing the lute to calm him. In his mad mood, Saul threw his spear at David, trying to pin him to the wall! God saved David who managed to dodge.

Then Saul tried to embarrass David so people wouldn't respect him. He had promised that the man who killed Goliath could marry his daughter, and so he promised that David could marry his elder daughter. But just before the wedding, Saul sent her to be the wife of someone else! He pretended to be sorry! Saul knew that David loved another daughter, Michal, but couldn't afford the bride-price. So Saul pretended to be kind, telling him that instead of giving a present David should just kill 100 of Saul's enemies. Saul thought David would be killed! But David beat the challenge.

So Saul began to try to use others to kill David. There came a day when David knew that he must run away immediately to escape death. His wife, Michal, lowered him down through the palace window, made a dummy mound in his bed and told people David was sick. By the time her trick was discovered, David was far away. God had used her to protect David and Saul was furious.

However Saul hoped to catch David when he came to the next celebration meal. But Jonathan, Saul's son and David's best friend, warned David not to come, promising to make excuses for him. Saul was furious that his plan had not worked. To warn David, Jonathan went to do some target shooting the next day. But actually he had worked out a secret code with David. If it was safe for him to come home, Jonathan would send his young servant to look for the arrows nearby. If it was unsafe, he would send the servant *further away*. So David got to know that Saul was still furious. He said a sad goodbye to Jonathan and became an outlaw never able to rest for long.

It doesn't seem as though the friends ever met again because Saul chased David all over the country for years. Those were tough times for David, and lots of his psalm-poems complain to God that he is tired and sad. But he always knew that God was in control and that somehow God would help him. God was teaching him to trust, even when things were bad.

We shall hear some of these stories next week, but meanwhile we have to decide: Are we like Saul trying to solve our problems on our own or like David trusting God?

Readings - all from the first book of Samuel

Monday: 18:6-9

Tuesday: 19:1-10

Wednesday: 19:11-17

Thursday: 20:12-17

Friday: 20:35-42