

Covenant Seriously

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Sermon Audio file

Sermon Notes: "Covenant... Seriously"

Text: 1 Samuel 18:1-11

Opening Context

Sermon based on a book the congregation is reading together, addressing timely issues that "aren't going away soon" — trust God to turn the tide.

Title: "Covenant... Seriously"

The Story (1 Samuel 18:1-11)

After David defeats Goliath (one Philistine), Jonathan's soul is bound to David's in love; they make a covenant. Jonathan gives David his robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt.

David succeeds in everything Saul sends him to do, and is promoted in the army.

Women come out singing, crediting David with "ten thousands" and Saul with only "thousands" — an exaggeration (David had only slain one Philistine).

Saul is angry and offended; from that day he watches David with suspicion.

An evil spirit comes on Saul; he prophesies while David plays the harp, then twice hurls a spear at David.

Key Application 1: Gossip and Exaggeration

Saul's downfall began with entertaining exaggeration, gossip, and unverified "tales" — this opened him to a wrong spirit.

As Christians, we must not be a "dumping ground" for gossip and bad talk about others.

Two questions to ask anyone bringing gossip:

"Have you discussed this with the person you're talking about?"

"Are you happy for me to discuss what you've told me with them?"

Pray for strength to turn gossip away.

What Is a Covenant?

Definition: A binding agreement between parties based on solemn promises.

Illustrated by marriage vows — "till death do us part" changes everything; it's renewed daily.

Psalm 50:5 — "Gather together to me, my saints... those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

Two Covenants Every Christian Has

With God — Every child of God is in covenant with Him (a "covenant person," an heir of salvation, viewed differently by Heaven — referencing 2 Corinthians 5:17).

With the Body of Christ — We are our "brother's keeper," called to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), rejoice and mourn together, regardless of race or denomination (Galatians 3:28).

Illustration: The Restored Young Woman

A young Christian leader fell into sin, was abandoned by her church, and left the faith.

The speaker and a friend prayed, fasted, and visited her — she said no one had checked on her like that before.

She was restored to Christ. Lesson: look out for one another; don't gossip about a struggling brother/sister — pray for and strengthen them.

Foundations and Requirements of Covenant

Foundation: Love — John 3:16 — everything Jesus did was founded on love.

Three requirements to sustain a covenant:

Faithfulness

Commitment

Sacrifice

Benefits of Covenant

Intimacy — true vulnerability without fear of shame or judgment; sexual intimacy belongs only within the marriage covenant — outside it, it is destructive.

Safety — freedom to grow and make mistakes without constant self-defense; if you feel you must always defend yourself in a relationship, that conversation needs to happen.

Mutual Forgiveness — "A righteous man falls seven times and rises again" — covenant creates room to restore the fallen, not trample them.

Unconditional commitment — not "terms-and-conditions" dependent. Romans 5:8 — Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Forgiveness shouldn't depend on receiving an apology — we forgive because of who we are in Christ.

Caution: don't bind yourself in covenant relationships with people who will exploit your forgiveness.

Hope — Jonathan believed in David's future. We must not blacklist or write people off permanently — with God, "the worst of us can become the best" (example: Barnabas and Paul/Saul).

Closing Reflection Questions

How have you lived out your covenant — with your spouse, with God, with the body of Christ?

Have you set it aside with bitterness?

Is there someone in the faith community you've "cancelled" or written off due to hurt?