

**MEMBERSHIP CLASS** March 5. 12-2p. [fathomchurch.org/members](http://fathomchurch.org/members)

## INTRODUCE

Well, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to 1 Samuel chapter 18.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to 1 Samuel 18,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
  - under every single chair.
  - You'll find 1 Samuel 18 on page **241**.

## INTRODUCTION: FROZEN

When my daughter was 3, now she's 7, but when she was 3...

- her entire world revolved around the movie Frozen.
- She loved it!

In fact, our entire family used to be enlisted to play Frozen, and she assigned us all characters.

- My daughter was Anna.
- My wife was Elsa.
- I was Christoph, of course.
- Our dog was Olaf.
- And for some reason, Grammy was Oaken.
  - The huge, "Yoo Hoo," guy in the trading post.
  - Unfortunate.

But here's the thing: she only liked parts of it.

- It's not one of those movies that you can put on...
- to babysit your kid while you do something else...
  - not that we EVER did such a thing!
- Cause it's got some scary scenes in it...

Now, there were parts of it that she loved!

- Like, she really liked when they wanna build a snowman.
- And she loved Olaf the talking snowman.
- And she loved Elsa letting it go and building her ice castle.

But then there are some parts of that movie that she didn't like at all.

- Like when Elsa creates the terrifying snow-monster...
- to attempt to kill her sister.
  - I mean, how is that appropriate?
  - Disney is sketchy, yo!
- But she was scared of that.

Some of you are not with me at all...and God bless your ministry!

- But she didn't like the scenes where Hans was mean.
- And she didn't like when Elsa fought with ice.
  - It scared her.
  - It unnerved her.
  - She didn't like to look at it.
- She just liked the pretty part.

But here's the thing, **because the only thing she saw was the pretty part, she didn't understand the story.**

- She didn't get that these girls were orphaned...
  - when their parents were lost at sea...
- and she didn't get that Elsa cared so much...
  - about her own self-identity and self-expression...
  - that she was willing to put her entire town at risk...
  - and almost killed her sister...

I almost feel sorry for myself right now. Like, I shouldn't know this!

- She just thought it was a story about beautiful princesses...
- and a talking snowman.

Cause we would fast forward through the parts that scared her...

- She wanted none of the hard parts.

## TRANSITION

And I think this is how we can sometimes be as Christians.

I mean, we love the happy parts.

- We love that God is gracious and loving,
  - and He's about restoration,
  - and He's about hope,
- and we love to hear these things about God.

We don't, however, like hearing about the harder parts of following him...

that might be a little scarier for us.

But listen,

- if you don't know the hard parts,
- you don't know the whole story.

And because we preach through books here at Fathom,

- we can't fast forward and only preach the fun stuff...

Like, if you don't know the hard parts...

- then it's just a girl...in a pretty dress...making a snowman.

So, I'm calling today's sermon **SLIDE THE HARD PARTS**

And now that you're beaming with anticipation and excitement,

let's set the context for our text today...

## CONTEXT

We find ourselves in this moment in David's life...

where there's this juxtaposition between David and Saul.

They're two men who are going in completely different directions.

- King Saul has been rejected by God...
  - his life is on a downward trajectory.
- And David's life has been blessed by God,
  - and he's been successful in all he does,
  - and the hearts of Israel are with him
  - and they rejoice in all the victories God is giving him.
- But this makes Saul angry...
  - he's discouraged...
  - and he's becoming more and more obsessed...
  - with destroying David's life.

Look back at 1 Samuel 18:12 to find a summary of where we're at today.

## **SLIDE 1 SAMUEL 18:12**

[12] Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul.

There it is. That's the context for our passage today.

Now, what I'd like to do today:

- is work through the rest of this chapter,
- we'll study the passage,
- and then in the second half of this sermon I want to apply it.

That's where we'll talk about THE HARD PARTS

- Is that ok?
- Too bad if it's not!

Let's jump into our text.

1 Samuel chapter 18, starting in verse 17: **BLANK SLIDE**

## **1 SAMUEL 18:17-19**

[17] Then Saul said to David, "Here is my elder daughter Merab. I will give her to you for a wife. Only be valiant for me and fight the LORD's battles." For Saul thought, "Let not my hand be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him." [18] And David said to Saul, "Who am I, and who are my relatives, my father's clan in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" [19] But at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite for a wife.

## EXPLAIN: UNDERHANDED

- So, this is Saul's second attempt
- to kill David underhandedly.

Remember last week with me for just a minute.

- Once Saul recognizes that David is destined...
- by God to become the next king,
- he attempts to murder David by throwing his spear at him.
  - But David is like a shepherd ninja,
  - dodges that thing,
  - and evades!
- And David likely chalks up Saul's behavior...
  - to his disorder with this evil spirit.

But after that first attempt on David's life, Saul wises up.

He moves to try to rid himself of David in a more underhanded way.

- He gives this teenage kid a command of 1000 soldiers,
- and sends him out into battle.

But back in verse 14 the text tells us that **David had success in all of his undertakings, for the LORD was with him.**

## EXPLAIN: MARRIAGE

And so, now Saul thinks that...

- by giving David Merab,
  - his eldest daughter,

- in return for David's prolonged service in the military,
- he would eventually be taken out
- by the hand of the Philistines.
  - Decent plan!

Now, David doesn't see himself as worthy to be part of the King's family.

- He is a nobody from nowhere...
- and now the King wants to make him a part of his family.

But just as it would seem that David is going to move upward

- by marrying the king's eldest daughter,
- Saul reneges and marries her off to someone else.

Saul didn't actually want his daughter Merab to marry David.

- He made the offer before he knew David would kill Goliath.
- And he now hates David.
  - And he wants to make good on his pledge.
- But ultimately gives her to another man.

Verse 20:

### **1 SAMUEL 18:20-22**

[20] Now Saul's daughter Michal loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. [21] Saul thought, "Let me give her to him, that she may be a snare for him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David a second time, "You shall now be my son-in-law." [22] And Saul commanded his servants, "Speak to

David in private and say, ‘Behold, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you. Now then become the king’s son-in-law.’”

## EXPLAIN

So, with his eldest daughter out of the picture, Saul now decides to trap David by his other daughter’s genuine love.

- Michal loved David!
- And Saul thinks,
  - *“I’ve got another chance here,*
  - *not only to make good on my promise,*
  - *but to take David out!”*

Now, just notice that it is nothing for him to utilize another’s goodness for his evil purpose.

- He’s willing to use his youngest daughter’s
- genuine love for David
- to meet his ends.

Remember what we said last week?

- Fear will cause you to do some things...
- you wouldn’t otherwise be capable of!

So, the king’s servants tell David the plan, but check his response in verse 23:



## 1 SAMUEL 18:23-25

[23] And Saul's servants spoke those words in the ears of David. And David said, "Does it seem to you a little thing to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man and have no reputation?" [24] And the servants of Saul told him, "Thus and so did David speak." [25] Then Saul said, "Thus shall you say to David, 'The king desires no bride-price except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, that he may be avenged of the king's enemies.'" Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

### EXPLAIN: BRIDE PRICE

So, David, once again, in humility,

- realizes that he is a poor man...
- without familial reputation...
- and is probably worried about the tradition of the bride price.

Now, a bride price was an ancient custom

- where money was paid to the father of a woman
- whom a man intended to marry.

And because David was a poor man from a poor family...

- in order to marry a girl,
  - let alone a rich girl,
- he would be expected to pay a hefty bride price.

So, on the surface,

- Saul is graciously willing to accept a poor,
  - but valiant, sutor for his daughter,
- and setting the price he does
- respects the honor of the people involved
- better than just letting him have his daughter for free.

But we know better as to Saul's motives.

He wants David to perish at the hand of the Philistines.

### **EXPLAIN: FORESKINS**

So, Saul sets the bride price at 100 Philistine foreskins.

And this is why I didn't have the scripture readers read that verse...

no need to say foreskin over and over...

- And some of you ask, what's a foreskin?
- Well, the Philistines were not circumcised.
  - Need I say more?

So, Saul says,

- *I want you to go fight my enemies,*
- *kill 100 of them,*
  - *do a little post-mortem surgery,*
- *and bring me back 100 foreskins.*

Some of you thought scalps were creepy, so there you go.

But this is completely normal in the ancient Near East.

- Usually heads or hands
- were cut off from the slain victims
- and counted in order to prove
- that the enemies were slain.

But for the Hebrews and the uncircumcised Philistines, he wants foreskins.

Verse 26:

### **1 SAMUEL 18:26-27**

[26] And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law. Before the time had expired, [27] David arose and went, along with his men, and killed two hundred of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, which were given in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter Michal for a wife.

### **EXPLAIN**

So, David goes out and does it!

- Saul is trying to get David killed, and what happens?
- David brings back 200!

The text says the 200 foreskins were given in full number to the king.

- Can you imagine that scene?
- Just shelling those things out!?!?

You know, the Old Testament is not boring reading!

Did any of you think it was boring?

So, David marries Michal, and becomes the son-on-law to the king!

Verse 28:

### **1 SAMUEL 18:28-30**

[28] But when Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, [29] Saul was even more afraid of David. So Saul was David's enemy continually.

[30] Then the commanders of the Philistines came out to battle, and as often as they came out David had more success than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was highly esteemed.

### **EXPLAIN**

- So, Saul knows that the Lord is with David.
- And he knows that all of Israel loves David.
- And his son Jonathan loves David.
- And NOW his youngest daughter, Michal, loves David.

Once again, Saul's strategy has backfired.

- Instead of killing David,
  - his attempt has given David honor...
- and now in the eyes of all the people...
  - David is the king's son-in-law.

David has been strengthened in his claim as Saul's successor.

But what I want to focus on are the words: **the LORD was with David.**

We've seen these words a few times in this chapter.

- Verse 12: **Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him...**
- Verse 14: **And David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him.**
- And then what we just saw in verse 28: **Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David.**

And so, here's what I want to work through for the rest of our time...

- This is the anointed future king of Israel.
- This is a man blessed by God.
  - The LORD was with him...
  - The LORD was with him...
  - The LORD was with him...
- This is a man who had been given great success!

How, then, do we make sense out of this story?

- Why would God allow such trouble into the life of this man?
- Why did David have to deal with Saul?
- Why would he have his heart played with in this way?

Why would a good God bring hardship into the life of this good man?

How do we explain **SLIDE THE HARD PARTS**

## TRANSITION

So, with the rest of our time I want us to talk about:

- THE HARD PARTS in the life of a believer.
- THE HARD PARTS in the life of one of God's children.

Why would God allow hard things to enter the life of one of his children?

- Isn't he a God of love?
- Isn't he a God of grace?
- Doesn't he promise us blessing?
- What in the world is going on?

## POINT 1: TRIUMPH

Well, let's just stop for a minute.

- And consider one aspect of David's life...
  - and the life of a Christian...
- which is undeniable.

And that is **SLIDE TRIUMPH**

Life does get better when you start following God!

And men and women of faith will have triumphs in this life.

- This is good and right and encouraging.
- David is a man of character,
  - and even with the evil plotting of Saul,
- the Lord protects him and preserves him...
  - the LORD was with him!

TRIUMPH is a part of the Christian life!

BUT if there were nothing more in David's story...

- if it was all TRIUMPH...
- and we never saw David have anything hard at all...
  - then the Bible cannot be trusted,
  - and all of this is a lie.

If there was just, the LORD was with him...period.

Listen...

- then we would be forced to fake it...
- for the rest of our lives as Christians.

If the Bible says this to us about the life of faith:

- *Jesus makes everything happy.*
- *Jesus makes everything better.*
- *If you have Jesus,*
  - *you won't struggle.*
  - *You won't hurt.*
  - *You won't lose.*
  - *You won't cry.*
- *All there is with Jesus are rainbows and Skittles.*
- *You give your life to Jesus.*
  - *And there are no more tears*
    - *and no more sadness.*
    - *There is no more loss.*
    - *There is no more perplexity or confusion.*
    - *There is no more anger and despair.*

- *Depression and anxiety are gone,*
  - *and you will skip with gladness*
  - *through the rest of your days.*

If that were the message of the Bible...

then what happens when our lives don't look like that?

- Well, we would have to PRETEND we were ok,
- or we'd have to conclude we didn't have enough faith.

Wouldn't we?

And God help us, that's what some of us are doing.

But that's not how David's story goes.

- The text doesn't stop with "The LORD was with him."

Yes, God can give you TRIUMPH.

- But there's more.

## TRANSITION

It made me think of Hebrews chapter 11.

- Here the writer of Hebrews
- is listing the TRIUMPHS of some Old Testament heroes.

In fact, our boy David is mentioned.

I'll put this up on the screen:



## SLIDE HEBREWS 11:32–35a

[32] And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—[33] who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, [34] quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. [35] Women received back their dead by resurrection.

- So that's the TRIUMPH part...
- that's *do you wanna build a snowman!*
  - *Conquering kingdoms...*
  - *Stopping the mouths of lions...*
  - *Escaping the sword...*
  - *Receiving their dead back...*

So, yes, God can give you TRIUMPH.

- But there's more.

And man, there isn't even a transition sentence here.

- It just flips a U-turn...

Verse 35:

## **SLIDE HEBREWS 11:35b-38**

Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. [36] Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. [37] They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— [38] of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

### **POINT 2: TROUBLE**

Praise God for that messy paragraph!

Yes, there can be TRIUMPH.

But there is also **SLIDE TROUBLE**

Cause here's what I know.

- This is what life actually looks like.
- This is the way life actually works.
  - It's not all rainbows and Skittles.
  - It's not all happy.
  - It's not all Instagram on a date night with a filter on.

That's not the way life works, and we know it!

And any version of Christianity that has been so scrubbed up...

- as to make it this clean,
  - and happy,
  - and clappy,
  - and skip through the rest of your days...
- **should never be trusted!**

It's not how life works!

And listen, it's not how the Bible says life works.

- In fact, what we just saw is,
- *"Follow Jesus. It could end really badly."*

But this is why so many of us are prone to despair and give up on faith.

- **Giving our hearts to Jesus**
- **does not mean**
- **that the rest of our days**
- **will have no struggle.**

In fact, Jesus himself says as much in John 16:33

### **SLIDE JOHN 16:33**

[33] I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have troubles. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

### **APPLICATION**

Those are Jesus' words.

- So, let me give you two seemingly opposite truths
- that I think you can take to the bank:

## **SLIDE LIFE IS HARD & GOD IS GOOD**

LIFE IS HARD.

- We see this in David's story...
- we see this in the lives mentioned in Hebrews 11...
- we see this in our own stories.

LIFE IS HARD...

- and there's no way to get away from that.
- **In this life you will have troubles.**
- No one is exempt.

So, LIFE IS HARD

**AND GOD IS GOOD.**

- Now, I'm going to plead with you,
- and I know that a lot of you will not believe this,
- but for some, you'll hear me.

**God is more about your good than you are.**

Did you hear me on this?

**God is more about your good than you are.**

You are about your good, right? Yes, you are.

But let's be real...

- no one has been more horrible to you...
  - than you have!
- No one's hurt you more than you have.
- No one's lied to you more than you have.
  - In fact, if I were counseling you...
  - about your relationship with you...
  - I'd say you should dump you.

### The TROUBLES

- that you bring on you...
- lead to guilt and shame and regret.

But the TROUBLES that God allows in our lives are always for our good!

- There's something that occurs in those TROUBLES...
  - that grow us into holiness...
  - that are "for" our good.
- There's something about TROUBLES...
  - that detach our love from the things of this world,
  - and make us more and more like Jesus.

Author J.I. Packer says this,

**SLIDE** *"Still He seeks the fellowship of His people, and sends them both sorrows and joys in order to detach their love from other things and attach it to Himself."*

Church, did you know that

- sometimes God will break your arm,
  - to get you to let go of what will kill you?
- He'll sometimes break your leg,
  - rather than let you wander away from him.

How many of us can testify to that happening in our lives?

These are **SLIDE W/PADS THE HARD PARTS** of following Christ.

## CONCLUSION

Church, we have a good Father who gives good gifts to His children.

- BUT one of those good gifts is the gift of pain...
  - of suffering...
  - of TROUBLES.

We're going to see this more and more in David's life.

- And y'all, this is the hard and scary part of the movie,
  - but without it,
- you would understand the whole story!

And David is gonna need it...cause things don't get better from here...

- And frankly, I don't know any really godly people...
- who have had a really easy life.

But Christian, the good news is...

There is purpose in our pain.

- And God never wastes a hurt.
- Your troubles are NOT meaningless.
  - Even and ESPECIALLY when...
  - we don't have the perspective...
  - in that moment to understand.

And the cross itself...

- is the most complete example...
- of God purposing pain...
- for His own glory and plan.

The most painful and gruesome tragedy in history is seen at Calvary.

- God sends His one and only Son to save the world...
- and we murder Him on a cross.

It seemed like God had completely lost control...

- when Jesus died on a cross.

It seemed that the enemy had won.

But the cross fully and finally teaches us:

- that God is good
- that God is in control
- and that God loves us.

So, let me close with one of my favorite quotes from C.S. Lewis in his book *The Problem of Pain*:

**SLIDE** *"We can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our*

*conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”*

Church, may you know...

- in the TRIUMPHS
  - AND in the TROUBLES of faith,
- that you have a good Father in heaven who is faithful.

And that he is enough for you.

Let's pray.



## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

## RESOURCES CONSULTED:

- Davis, Dale Ralph. Focus on the Bible. 1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. *Under the Shadow of the Almighty*.
- Keller, Timothy. *Spiritual Self Destruction*.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. The First Book of Samuel.