

SERMON NOTES: FEB. 9TH
LIFE'S FUN COURSE: FRIENDSHIP
SCRIPTURE READINGS: 1 Samuel 18" 1-9, Mark 3: 13-19

A FUN COURSE...we are enrolled in the SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS, learning AS WE GO, trying to GAIN WISDOM in life, not JUST AGE. We glean LESSONS from our experience and some LESSONS from the EXPERIENCE OF OTHERS We now consider a course WE WISH NEVER ENDED: friendship, life's fun course, a KIND/NEEDED TEACHER. In its class we learn that WE HAVE WORTH that we don't have to earn.

BIBLE'S GREAT FRIENDSHIP...on paper, the friendship between David and Jonathan should've been doomed from the start: they were RIVALS. Jonathan was Saul's son, the heir apparent to throne; David was a Shepherd who gained his fame by killing Goliath. They met when David became Saul's MUSICAN. Jonathan had a right to be suspicious of this promising young man, yet he had no jealousy. How 2 people become friends is a mystery, and not the result of planning. There was a spark between them. They brought out the best in each other. Friends are hard to find, even harder to keep. How many true friends do we have?

WORTH THE RISK...friendship has risks. This friendship complicated Jonathan's life. He risked losing Saul's favor. The quality of his bond was so unspoiled that Jonathan sacrificed his own dreams, and put his life in peril, but David was worth it. How their friendship survived is a miracle: 6 times Saul tried to kill David, but Jonathan didn't hold Saul's actions against his friend. As a gesture, he gives David HIS UNIFORM-a sign of his birthright/leadership-setting aside the trappings of SUCCESS and AMBITION. It won't cost us a THRONE, but friendship will cost us the TIME/ENERGY we could spend other ways.

WHAT FRIENDSHIP TEACHES US...their friendship served God's purpose in David, but Jonathan got little emotional reward. Friendship trains us how to give without expecting in return, how to become less self-centered, putting the needs of others ahead of our needs. Only special people can weep when we weep and rejoice when we rejoice. David wouldn't have become the man he became-with a capacity for love-if it weren't for Jonathan. Friendship is an underestimated part of faith; it is as crucial as prayer/fasting. Like the sacramental BREAD/WINE, friendship takes WHAT IS COMMON and turns it into SOMETHING HOLY. That's why Jesus Invested himself in his friends, why he told them...

I no longer call you servants; I now call you...MY FRIENDS