

Provision of the Covenant - Part 2

by Bill Stafford

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding covenant relationship with God, where God's life becomes man's life, and man is identified in God's life, leading to holiness and godliness.

Duration: 51:16

Scripture: 1 Samuel 18:3

Topics: "Covenant"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding God's covenant with His people. He explains that through the covenant, believers become one with Christ and it is His life that they live. The preacher also challenges the idea that prayer is about informing God of our needs, stating that true prayer begins with praising God for who He is. He references the story of Saul and David to illustrate the faithfulness and sovereignty of God in dealing with His people.

Transcript

Live Jesus. Amen. And by the way, let me say this, all this worldwide ministry has opened up after obedience.

Because when we gave our farm away, God promised me He would give me my greatest ministry in my whole day. I'm a hangin', buddy. I hope you are.

Amen. But I want to tell you, when we gave away that farm and God gave me that promise, and I was 50 years old, I'm 54 now, and you can't believe in four years what a covenant-keeping God has done with a promise. I literally am shocked.

God is a covenant-keeping God. Amen? And I want you to know I'm having a time just living out what all He said. And while most preachers are looking forward to retiring, I'm wondering how I'm going to get enough energy to make it to 100.

It'll take 100 to live out all I've got to do. Amen. All right.

All right. Just those things I thought I'd share with you today. And I'm like Brother David, if you give me 45 minutes, I'll be through in an hour and 15 minutes.

Amen. I started to tell Brother Ralph, now, if you give David 15, he's going to take 30. If you give him 30, he's going to take an hour.

Watch his wife. Shake her head. She's agreeing.

Amen. I mean, she has to listen to him all the time. Amen.

But David Ring is God's chosen servant. I love that man. I think now you know what a relationship we have in Jesus, because he is one special friend to me.

In 1 Samuel, chapter 18, I'm going back there this morning, because I'm going to have to go into 1 Samuel, chapter 20, and pick up a second covenant that Jonathan and David cut, that not only included their covenant between themselves, but in this second covenant, it included the whole seed land of the house of Jonathan. And then you're going to find out what all that meant to some descendants later on down the line. Boy, when I got into this and got to studying the covenant and what God meant in the covenant, what he said in the covenant, and that he is a covenant-keeping God.

And that's when we talk about the blood covenant. 1 Samuel, chapter 18, and let's read again. And I'll reread it, because I found out this.

Repetition. Keep saying it until people hear it. Because God is a covenant-keeping God.

The word covenant comes from the word bereave. And here's what it means. It means to make an agreement by passing through sacrifice, flesh that's been slain and cut down the middle, laid apart, and you pass through sacrifice and make an agreement where two becomes one, sharing each other's life.

No longer are you your own. You are identified in another's life. You begin to live for somebody else.

That is cutting covenant. And it's all right here in 1 Samuel 18. And let's read it.

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit, knit. That word means tied, locked, become one. Hey, buddy, they got locked to each other.

All right, with the soul of David. And Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Oh, what a truth.

Now, and Saul took him that day and would let him go no more to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made, and the word made comes from the word karath, which means cut, to cut, to cut. So actually you're talking about cutting a sacrifice down the middle, laying it aside on both sides, and in that sacrifice you covenant to each other that God do to you what you deserve if you break that covenant, because you deserve what happened to the sacrifice.

We're talking about a binding agreement. We're not talking about a flippant running down the aisle and getting saved and then saying, well, I'll do as I please. We're talking about salvation is walking into a death covenant to where you agree with God that you will obey Him and you're bound to that covenant till death.

That's why I'm telling you you're preaching on Sunday morning to a lot of lost people who have never known covenant relationship. They want a salvation to do their own thing, live like I please, give what I want to. I go to church when I get ready.

I live my life, but I want to go to heaven. It isn't that way. And any salvation that's preached that way is a perverted salvation.

And that's why we're in trouble. We are sounding from the pulpits a message that is an unsound message. We are not telling people when you get saved, you lose your identity and you find it in Jesus.

He becomes your identity. While man's not real till he gets to Jesus, you don't even know who you are till you get to Jesus. The real you is not you.

You don't know nothing about anything till you get to Jesus. You don't know baloney till you get to Jesus. I became real when I met the real real.

Now I can be what I want to be and not worry what you think about it. But it don't matter what you think. It's what God said that matters.

Amen? Well, when you get that way, you get free. You're free. And if the truth makes you free, you're most bad to send bondage.

They got inferiority complexes, hung up on things, don't know how to walk in victory, running around in a judgmental and opinionated spirit, and cannot have victory because their environment rules them. And every time they see something wrong in somebody, they become judgmental. Ladies and gentlemen, it's not my job to do but one thing, and that's to awaken a man to a fact that he's in covenant relationship to God.

It's not his life, it's God's life. And if he don't understand that, then he gets locked into rules and regulations which will put you in such bondage you'll never be free. Amen? I get off airplanes and fellows used to ask me, they didn't ask me if I loved Jesus and was a soul winner and full of God, they asked me which version of the Bible did I use.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I use the King James. But I know some godly men full of Jesus that use the new American standard that love God as much as you do. Amen? You say, well, bless God.

I don't care what you bless God. I've got news for you. We're not the standard.

God is the standard. Amen? Boy, I'm tough. Praise God, I like to be tough.

Amen. I want you free. I want you free.

Amen? Jonathan cut covenant, made sacrifice, made agreement with David because he loved him as his own soul. And then here we found, yes, Steve? In verse 4, to make covenant means they traded or transferred robes. The Bible said Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David, even to his garments, even to his sword, even to his bow, even to his girdle, or to his belt is the word that binds up.

And we found out that the robe is a type of the imputed life of Jesus Christ who not only comes to live in me, but he put himself on me in imputed righteousness when I got saved. I have no righteousness. He is my righteousness.

I have no wisdom. He is my wisdom. I have no rights.

He is my rights. Amen? Now, robe means that not only have I put on Jesus Christ, but in order to keep him on, I've got to daily put off the old man. In order to keep putting on, you've got to put off.

If you don't keep putting off, then the old man will take over you and Jesus will no longer rule your life, and you'll be putting on the old man, and you'll act like the old man, and everybody will know you're ruled by the old man, by your actions and reactions and attitudes and dispositions. I'm what I am under pressure. What's in me comes out in trials and pressure and persecutions and situations.

I used to think, bless God, I'm really not that way because it's what happened to me that caused me to blow my lid. But come to find out, what I blew my lid over was I had an unconfessed temper that I was excusing from my genealogy where if I got right with God, temper is as rotten as drunkenness. Amen? I put on Christ.

How do you put on Christ? I do not let the old man dominate. Anything that comes from the flesh, anything man can produce is not of God. So I've got to find out what the book says about God, what God says about me, what God says about sin, what God says about Satan, what God says about self, and start agreeing with that because that's what's right.

Well, here's my opinion. You don't have one. The Bible is final authority.

Amen? You know why we got so many rules? People don't know their Bibles. They just follow somebody that's got a rule. And the one that's got the best rules is the one they follow.

They get in bondage to a rule maker, somebody that puts them under rigor and puts them into bondage. They got saved by grace and now they're under somebody's regulation. Amen? God didn't call me to tell you what to put on, what to take off, and how to wear your hair or what to wear.

You know what he called me to do? Get you so full of Jesus, putting on the new man, that you can't wear anything that's repulsive to the name of Jesus Christ. That way you're not bound to my regulation. Amen? Put on the robe.

Put on the robe. Well, how do you put on Jesus? Every day, dealing with your temper, dealing with your jealousy, dealing with your lust, dealing with impure thoughts, dealing with judgmental spirit, self-pity, self-glory, self-adulation, bitterness, resentment, temptation. How do you put on Jesus? I do not let those things come in.

You say, Brother Bill, why are they there? Because the victorious life is not the eradication of the old man. It's being overcome with the new man. When you're getting overcome with Jesus, the old man don't stand a chance.

You see, when I fly on an airplane, I have not overcome gravity. I mean, I have not eradicated gravity. I've overcome it.

But I'm only an overcomer as long as I stay in the airplane. You say, well, how come I lost my victory? You're not living from the cross. You've made up your own mind, laid down your own opinion, and you've chosen that you deserve better than that.

You've got to be treated better than that. I don't. I deserve more.

Bless God, I know I shouldn't have all this happening to me. You know what you've done? You're off the cross, and you're making your own lifestyle, and you're going to go down. Amen? He put on the robe.

Then the Bible said, no, they exchanged robes, but they exchanged their swords, which means when I trusted Jesus, I took on a new defender. He is my defense. I don't have any battles to fight except what He fights through me.

And the only time I'm ever in trouble is when I start fighting my own battles and defending my own self. Then I've got to fight my own battles, and I'm in trouble. I've got all the defense I need in Jesus Christ.

He is my defender. Well, what's that got to do with you? Well, His enemies are my enemies. I don't have enemies because I like it.

I've got enemies because I belong to Jesus. That's why when somebody brags on me and says, that's a great sermon, I can't get the big head, because if they hadn't loved Jesus, they wouldn't have liked it. So it's not my sermon, it's a Jesus issue.

Because if it hadn't been for Jesus, I wouldn't even be preaching, so I can't take any glory. And then if somebody comes up and says, I don't like you, I don't take that personally either, because it's Jesus, it's not me. But if it had been for Jesus, they wouldn't even hurt me.

Hey, it takes all the fuss, temper. It takes all the competitive spirit. You wake up to who you are in Christ.

You wake up to what He wants to do through you. That you're not worth defending. The only defense you're to give is for the gospel.

And you're to weep over what God weeps over. You're to love what God loves. Hate what God hates.

Say no to what God says no to. Say yes to what God says yes to. That's the simplicity of the Christian life.

The Christian life is so simple. Us complex people can't get it down. Why? All you got to do is look inside and say, Jesus, what do you think about this? Because He lives right there.

Sunday night, Lord, should I go to church or just sit here? Very simple. Your decision is made for you by the indwelling presence of a living Christ. Because it's His life, not yours.

It's not a question of whether you ought to go to church or not. It's whose life are you living. Jesus didn't save you to change you.

He saved you to live through you Himself. You can't change a dead man. You have to resurrect him.

That's what's wrong with so many of you. You're trying to change the old carcass. Hey, it's gone.

Dead. That's why Jesus put it to the cross. You can't change it.

You have to put somebody in it to live through it and make it a vehicle. Oh, well, I didn't think it. But anyway, I don't have to fight.

And then they even swapped belts, which is a type of strength, because the belt is what they carried many of their weapons on. Plus, it pulled everything that they were wearing together and is a picture of strength. Strength.

That's why the Bible says, Gird up your minds. Strengthen your minds. It means to pull that belt out.

Let me tell you something, friends. When I started studying this and saw that God's a covenant-keeping God, listen to me, two becomes one. That the life that I live is not my life.

It's the Christ life. You see, Bill Stafford, the world's sick of Bill Stafford. The world's looking for Christians.

But don't look at me. They're sick of you too. Huh? They're looking for people who Christ lives through.

Amen? Now, I just wanted to rehash that because it's so good. Now, in chapter 20, Jonathan and David, 1 Samuel 20, make another covenant. And I want you to look at it in verse 3. And David swore him over and said, Thy father certain knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes, and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.

But truly, as the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death. And then come on down to verse 8. Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant, Jonathan talking now, for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee, notwithstanding if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself, for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father? And Jonathan went on down. Now look at verse 11.

And Jonathan said unto David, Come and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field. Now, look at verse 16.

So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the Lord even require it at the hands of David's enemies. And Jonathan called David to swear again, because he loved him, for he loved him as his own soul. Now look at verse 42.

And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn, both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and listen, and between thy seed, my seed and thy seed forever. And he arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city. You say, what's happened here? Now he's made a covenant to where the seed that is to follow after Jonathan will have to be spared in blood covenant.

Can't kill him. And no matter how bad David wants to take over the kingship, he can never ever kill one that he's covenanted with, because a covenant is so binding that you dare not ever break it by even killing the descendants of the one you made covenant with. And so here we go.

And something begins to happen. Let's go to the last chapter of 1 Samuel. And let's look at 1 Samuel.

Boy, listen, this got so glorious yesterday afternoon. Maybe that's why hell attacked me about 4 o'clock. I was having a spell just getting into this truth.

Now look at 1 Samuel chapter 31. And here we have the story of the death of Saul and the death of Jonathan. Look at verse 2. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons, and the Philistines slew Jonathan.

Here is Jonathan coming to death. What Jonathan really longed for was the day that he could be a part of the kingdom of David. But now he's dead, but now.

Read a little further. And the battle went sore against Saul. In verse 4, Saul told his armor-bearer, Draw thy sword and thrust me through.

He's already wounded, and he said, Thrust me through. Don't let anybody kill me except you. I don't want to be under the shame of some uncircumcised fellow killing me.

And that man took the sword and killed Saul. Now, watch this. In 2 Samuel, it opens up with a story, and I haven't got time to read it.

When you get home, will you please read it? Maybe I can just bring out the verses that are necessary. Listen. In 2 Samuel, it opens like this.

A man came that had killed Saul. Now watch it now. And he comes to David, and he said unto him, David said, Whence comest thou? And he said, I'm out of the camp of Israel.

I escaped. And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And then he answered and said that the people fled, that Saul and Jonathan are dead, and David won't know how he did it.

Verse 10, the man said, I took it upon him and slew him, because the man asked him to. He took the sword, and he put Saul to death. But wait a minute.

He put Saul and the people of Saul to death. You say, well, Brother Bill, what is so bad about that? Because the Word of God says, Touch not mine anointing. Jonathan and David in a covenant relationship, two become one, life shared with each other, and here's what he is saying.

Why did you kill Saul? He is part of the covenant. And you know what David did? The man thought he was doing David a favor, but because he entered in and slew a man that was under the blood covenant between Jonathan and Saul, amen, you know what David did to the man that killed Saul? Slew him, even though he was his friend. Are you seeing the binding truth of covenant? When I'm talking about covenant, I mean a holy God made covenant with me when I got saved in such a binding relationship that he brought me back into such a relationship with him that what he intended in Genesis 126 was that man be an extension of the life of God, that he be an expression of the character of God, an exhibit of the dominion of God.

And God didn't save you to get you out of hell. He saved you to bring you back to the original relationship with God. We're not talking about getting saved and running around doing your own thing.

Getting saved is getting into a relationship with a holy God to where his life becomes your life too becomes one. That's why I'm telling you folks, if what I'm believing about covenant relationship is so, we've got lost church members by the drove sitting on our pews that don't know a blooming thing I'm not going to hell, praise God. We're baloney for you.

What about your greed? What about your gossip? What about your unchrist-like spirit? What about your lifestyle? What about holiness? What about godliness? What about character? What about not lying anymore? Amen? What about not critical? What about unity? What about body life? What about when you preach you want to raise and you gripe about it? Where is that relationship that we so belong to Jesus Christ that ladies and gentlemen, David believed the covenant so greatly that because a man slew Saul, Saul, Saul, a covenant relationship and because that Jonathan made covenant with David, Saul was protected by that covenant and when that man, even though he was David's friend, slew Saul, he had to

pay with his life because he broke covenant. Hey, that's not all. In chapter 2, in chapter 2. All right, now then, David is to be king, Saul is gone, is that right? But Ishubeth, in chapter 2, in chapter 2 of Samuel and verse 8, here is where Ish-bosheth becomes the king of Israel.

He's not supposed to be, but he does. David becomes king of Judah and the thing is separated. Now, watch this.

Here is Ish-bosheth, who becomes king of Israel and if you read the story very closely, in verse 17, and that was a very sore battle that day and Abner was beaten and the men of Israel before the servants of David and there were three sons of Uriah, there, Joab and Abishai and Ashiel and then he went on to talk about it. But if you read the story very carefully, you will find that the same people, some people did the same thing to Ish-bosheth and Ish-bosheth is the son of Saul and the son of Jonathan and they are now under covenant relationship. You know why? Because David and Jonathan cut covenant for their following seed.

Man, what I see in this thing, I'm so saved it's pitiful. When I get in the relationship, when I get saved, I'm not just saved out of a place, I'm placed in the relationship with the Holy God. Amen.

That's why most people don't even know what salvation is. They think of getting saved, going to church, singing in the choir and doing a few things and they'll lay down a bunch of things. Well, I'm doing this and doing that.

Hey, nothing that you can do for God unless God originates what you're doing and if God don't initiate what you're doing, He can't accept it because anything that man originates, God hates. Let me get down here. Some of y'all about to pass out on me.

Amen. You know, I get amazed sometimes, but anyway, here a man just preaching the Word. Amen.

But anyway, Amen. Now listen, whenever we come to salvation, it is not something for you. It is something God did that included you for His glory.

We've got this thing man centered. Everything is, what can I get out of it? What will I have to give up? What will it cost me for crying out loud in the morning? Cost? Me gave up something to meet the Lord of glory. I can't believe y'all.

You mean I'm running around saying, what did it cost me to walk into the presence of a holy God, a sovereign God, a self-sufficient God, an amazing God, a grace God? You mean running around saying, boy, thank God, I gave up a job making 40,000 a year to be a Christian. I get sick of these preachers running around talking about what all they gave up to get in the ministry. For crying out loud, ladies and gentlemen, I've got far more in the ministry than I'd ever had in this ungodly world.

Man, I get, Amen. I've got the best of relationships. I belong to the best of people.

I live with the best of folks. I've got, I've traveled where I'd have never traveled. Amen.

I've had a blast. My Lord. I've had some preachers running around saying, I'm discouraged.

You know why? Well, people don't love me. They ain't making much. That's what you get for letting the church be your supply.

They'll starve you. Amen. Boy, you're not my supply.

I want you all to know that. Amen. Jesus is my supply.

When I walked into covenant relationship, I walked into oneness with Him, which means I've shared His life. He is my life, which means if He's my life, then I'm His responsibility, and all of His is mine. Well, I'll tell you one thing.

Some of these boys got it made. They got insurance companies supporting them. They got some big shot.

I mean, there ain't nobody that can stop sending me any money and hurt me. That's why I don't bow to big shots. Wealthy people don't impress me.

Most of them are tightwads, skinflints, and thieves. Because they're not giving in relationship to what they're worth. They're giving a little bit to tip God and keeping a whole lot more than they deserve and will not share it with anybody else.

One fellow that had plenty of money said to me, not only do I hate to give it, but I hate to think of somebody else having it after I leave here. One man said, what does it take to make a millionaire happy? He said, another million. A man walked out of a finance meeting one day and said, I'm sorry, fellas.

I can't give part of the \$500,000 you all need. He's a very, very multi-multi-millionaire because I've already given all I can deduct. What a stupid concept of giving.

If all you give is what you can deduct, you haven't given me a thing. You gave Uncle Sam's money. Because you would have had to give it to him if you hadn't given it to the church.

And a man don't give until he gets past Uncle Sam. Amen! Talk about 10%. Whoever has that, you said that's the New Testament.

Well, tell the truth about it. If you're going to bring it over from the Old Testament, it was 23%. The Jewish tithe was threefold.

We don't, we lie. You know why? Well, you know, people have got to make ends meet. They ain't ever going to make ends meet as long as their employer's their supply.

Because he's going to keep them on the minimum. Churches are not my supply. If they had been, I'd have 15 ulcers.

If you knew what I had to believe God for, I'm honest before God. Living is not my problem. I live great.

Giving is my problem. I've got to keep, I've got to keep believing God so I can keep my giving going. I can't stop increasing.

Because when I quit giving, I quit living. Oh, well, how'd I get on that? It was good anyhow, wasn't it? Well, to some of you it was. Some of you, some of you get all you can and count all you get and sit on the lid and pour it on the rest.

Whenever David and Jonathan made covenant, including generations to follow, the seed of Saul, the seed of Jonathan, and when they killed Ish-bosheth, they killed a man who was under covenant protection. And you know what David did to the men that killed Ish-bosheth, even though they were his friends and

thought they were doing David a favor? He killed them. Why? You're dealing with covenant.

We're dealing with something that's radical, binding, true, relationship, oneness. You don't do as you please under covenant. It's not you, not your own.

Amen? You say, well, brother, where does all this lead you? Well, whenever Ish-bosheth died, a runner undoubtedly went running through the country telling all of the seed and descendants of Saul that they better head out. David's coming to the throne, and one thing David said, if I can find that scripture, I didn't mark that down, I don't think I even underlined it, I can find it real quickly, and when David comes to the throne, one thing David said is that he didn't want any lame or cripples. David, you'd be in trouble, son.

Amen. In 2 Samuel 5, verse 6, And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites. Then Hamzah the Lamb was speaking unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither, thinking, David cannot come in hither.

And David went on down. Listen, David did not want any cripples or lame people in his kingdom. And here's David come to the place of kingship, and he doesn't want any lame people in his kingdom.

Boy, the word has gone out that Saul is gone, and that Jonathan is dead, and Ishboseth has been killed, and the word goes out, and Mephibosheth hears about it, and somebody hollered, You'd better get out of here. David's going to kill you. And when Mephibosheth heard about the news, the nurse picked him up to run off with him and carry him away, and in the pursuit, or in the flight, in David's pursuit, scared, trembling Mephibosheth was dropped by the nurse and became lame on both feet.

David said, I don't want anybody in my kingdom that's lame. And yet he's in covenant relationship to Jonathan, and Mephibosheth is the grandson of Jonathan, and David's got to deal with lame people on a covenant basis. Boy, this is exciting.

Are y'all seeing where I'm going? Are y'all seeing what this is all about? Are y'all seeing the grace of God, the sovereignty of God, the faithfulness of God, the glory of God? If you ever see it, listen, listen, when you see what I'm saying, your prayer life will not be getting on your knees telling God what you need. Your prayer life begins with praising Him for who He is. Listen, the average Baptist can't pray over five minutes.

You know why? He don't even know who God is. If he did, he could pray an hour just telling God what all He is and what He means to him for just being in covenant relationship to a holy God. Amen? All right.

How did they start the prayer in Matthew 6? Yeah, Matthew 6. I knew Bob Gardner didn't know. Amen. In Matthew chapter 6, it's not the Lord's prayer, it's the model prayer of how to pray.

And if you'd read it, you'd find out how to pray. Well, how does it start? Praising the Father. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. That's starting to pray right. Most people's prayer life is initiated from a problem or a trouble or a bad deacon or a mean wife or bratty children.

And they run into the bedroom and say, Oh, God, I hadn't been here lately, but oh, I got a problem. Hey, He knows you got a problem because He knows you started it because you hit. Did you know most people's prayer life is informing God of two things? Number one, why He didn't do what He should have done a little sooner or why He didn't move somebody out of their life so they could be more spiritual.

Inform. Most of our praying is trying to inform God whenever God's the one that lets you get in the mess you're in so you can say you're the mess. I would if God people could hear me.

I would if God you'd hear what God's saying this morning, not me. But I hope that God you hear God. It'll change your prayer life.

Oh, Lord, I ain't got time to get on that. What time is it? Listen just a dab faster. Will you just pick it up just a little bit and I'll preach a little harder, okay? Amen.

Boy, y'all won't laugh at nothing. I'm hardly with you. All right.

Here's Mephibosheth, lame on both feet. And suddenly 2 Samuel 9 opens up like this. David turned to Ziba and said, Is there any left of the house of Saul that I can show kindness to? Why, Saul's your enemy.

Saul was jealous of you. Saul tried to kill you. And David, I don't remember the time, and by the way, let me show you something else about David.

Do you remember one time when he found Saul asleep in the cave and walked in and even the David's servant looked at him and said, Kill him. David said, How shall I kill somebody who's under the anointing of God? Touch not mine anointing. You know what he did? He just cut off a piece of his garment and took it off and then went back later and showed Saul that he could have killed him if he wanted to.

But he's in covenant relationship and since Saul is in covenant with Jonathan and David, he can't kill him. He's anointed of God. You don't touch one that's in covenant relationship.

And I'm going to tell you something. When you find out that you belong to Jesus and that we belong to each other, you'll watch how you treat people who are in covenant relationship to a holy God. Watch how you talk about a preacher who's faithful to the Word of God.

Most churches run off preachers not because they're not preaching the Word but because they got on their cigarettes or got on their worldliness and they get a little committee and run them off. I don't care how great a preacher he is, he'll go down as one that we ran off. I know, I know.

I've been preaching in churches all over America. People have killed you over one disagreement because they don't know covenant relationship. You better watch what you do to put your hands on a covenant related person.

I've got God's protection because I'm in covenant with a holy God. When I went to Calvary, God had already made covenant with His Son. He rent His body as the veil.

The Bible said Hebrews that at the cross, the body of Jesus was the veil that was rent at the cross and Jesus Christ was literally cut asunder and God walked down through Calvary and made agreement with everybody on the blood of Jesus and as long as the blood prevails, I'm saved. You say, how saved are you? As saved as the one that agreed with me in covenant relationship. A holy God stands behind the covenant.

Boy, if we ever get this thing God centered, we'll have a running fit. I've been trying to say this for years. I got so sick and tired of these invitations.

Some big old football player comes in the church and we say, boy, get that old boy Jesus. He ain't going to be worth a flip if you don't get into covenant. You say, but boy, couldn't he do something for God? God don't need football players.

David Ring doing all right. He can't even center one. What are you saying? We in America have so geared to this Dale Carnegie stuff.

Learn self-confidence. Build self-esteem. Show people that you are an individual that's got it all together.

Well, I tried that and God blew it apart. You know what David Ring said a while ago? Brokenness is the key to wholeness. And that's what shook me.

Because I remember when I was at the end of my ministry and sick of it and would have gladly quit. Shattered. Sick.

Sick of myself and sick of all others who I'd seen put on fronts and would not get honest in their gossip and greed and jealousy. Sit on church pews and sing like a mockingbird full of the devil. It'll slay you.

Oh, they can get up and say, I'm saved by the blood, but they can walk out and cut you apart for six days because they don't like you. Why? They don't know covenant. I lost my ministry and I became his ministry.

I don't even have any ministry. Just Jesus. And now all I do is just run around telling people, God's it.

I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for him. I'd quit. How could I come before you and pray to front as if I'm something whenever I would not even be here had it not been a holy God who walked in the hospital room on a Tuesday evening when I said, I'm through.

God said, good. I tell you what I'll do now. I'll handle it.

And you'll have to admit from the time I was 32 years old until right now, it has been one glorious journey. Changing, repenting, converting, going on with God, waking up to my awful failures and inconsistencies and inferiority complexes, but then coming more alive to a superior. Holy God who is my superior who will take an inferior and be superior through him.

Whooh! Amen. Is there anybody in the house of Saul? House of Saul, that bunch hatin' Saul, tried to kill you, David. He said, yeah, but I'm in covenant with Jonathan.

And I've got to not only love Jonathan, I've got to take care of his following seed. And he's already killed two as a result of breaking covenant. And David said, is there anybody... You see, Mephibosheth is sitting down there laying on his feet, scared to death, shaking in his boots, afraid that David's gonna find him.

Isn't that a picture of a sinner? Afraid if you get saved you're gonna lose something? Afraid if you get saved, God's gonna take your money, take your house, send you to Africa? Amen? Isn't that right? Listen, most people sit on church pew. I'm afraid to surrender to the Lord. I've got news for you.

When you got saved, you surrendered. And you better get back to it. Well, brethren, I'm just afraid.

I'm just afraid. I'm afraid to take one of my kids. My God, folks, the devil's gonna take them.

If you keep living unsundered lives, David goes looking for Mephibosheth. What for? And I imagine when that old chariot drove up in front of Mephibosheth's house, Mephibosheth said, he didn't know about

covenant. He didn't know the good news.

He's just an old blinded sinner sitting down there, lost, belonged to the wrong side of the tribe, belonged to the wrong seed line. Because David should kill all of Saul's descendants. He should kill them all, but he can't because covenant relationship that he made in 2 Samuel 20 protected Mephibosheth.

And I imagine when old Zeba pulled up down there, and by the way, he was down in Lodabar. That's where he's living. That's bondage.

Amen? That's where he's hiding out. Lord, I hope David don't find me. Oh, God.

I hope David don't find me. I'm gone if he does. He's gone if he don't.

And that old chariot rolled up outside of Mephibosheth's house. He must have shook. He said, I guess this is it.

Scared and trembling, Zeba walks in and says, Would you come? You have an appointment with a king. And since he can't walk to his chariot, I imagine Zeba carried him and put him in the king's chariot and drove him to the king's house. And Mephibosheth walked in.

What do you want? With me. David said, I've been looking for somebody to bestow kindness on. As a result, as a result of the relationship that Jonathan, your grandfather, and I became one, we walked through a sacrifice, laid apart, we became one, his life is my life, we exchanged robes, we exchanged swords, we exchanged belts, we've lost our identity, and I promised him I would take care of his seed line.

And the best news, the best news that Mephibosheth ever heard was, I'm going to show you some grace. Glory! And you know what? David looked over to Zeba and said, You take him, and you and all your descendants take care of it. And there were 36 of them, Captain Zeba.

Did you know when you walk into God, you get servants, provision, and not only that, he said, he's going to set it at my table, at the King's table. By the way, let me go here a second. I know I preach different from anybody else.

I guess I do. But I just get people to the truth. But let me show you something in verse 8. And he said, and he bowed himself.

This is Mephibosheth, verse 8 of 2 Samuel 9. And he bowed himself and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? In other words, how can you even fool with me? Only one way. He's got a covenant made, and he's bound to it. And if he breaks it, the same thing that happened to the sacrifice will happen to David.

Amen? Now look at this. Then the king called the zebra Saul's servant and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertain to Saul and to all his house. Boy, here he's just laying, he's laying the blessings on him.

Thou therefore and thy sons and thy servants shall till the land for him. And thou shalt bring in the fruits that thy master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat bread always at my table.

Now listen. Now Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants. That's 35.

And Ziba makes 36. And they all got to wait on Mephibosheth. Lord.

Hey, what time is it? Good night, I've got to quit. Lord, listen folks, I'm not through, but I'm going to quit. And listen, listen.

And I like verse 13. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he did eat continually at the king's table, lame on both feet. David hated cripples.

And now he's got one eating at his table. Why? To remind him, grace, grace, God's grace. Amen? Oh my God, folks, if we ever wake up to what a God, what a Savior, and what He did at the cross, when He rent that veil of the body of the Son of God, and made blood covenant with His Son.

And when Jesus saw it in Hebrews, the Bible says, for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despised the shame, but He sat down at the right hand of God. What joy did Jesus see, that through covenant, He was going to get a bride back, saved by the grace of God. And ladies and gentlemen, I am one of them.

And I am in covenant relationship, and the devil better watch what he does to me. And so had you. And so had I better watch what I do to you.

Are you lame on both feet? Have you ever come into grace, covenant? Agreeing with God? And you see, tonight I'm going to deal with a personal covenant, and I didn't want to do that at night, but I've got to, Brother Ralph. And then in the morning, I'm going to deal with the permanency of the covenant. Now listen to me.

Listen to me. Listen to this, and I'm through. Whenever God cut covenant with His Son at the cross, Hebrews calls it a better covenant.

Why? Because the old one has passed away, and the new one has superseded. The better way is Jesus. And when I got saved, I became a share of His life.

As He is, so am I. And that's not to get me to heaven. That's to get heaven and me on the way to heaven. So I can live in this world full of Jesus.

Amen? God bless you. That's all.

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