

David and Goliath

by Ron Bailey

The sermon explores the biblical concept of covenant through the story of David and Goliath, highlighting faith and God's faithfulness.

Duration: 45:35

Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 16:24, Matthew 22:37-39, Luke 9:23, Hebrews 8:6

Topics: "Covenant"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of David and Goliath from 1 Samuel 17 as a picture of God's plan and preparation for His people. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding how God fulfilled His promises through Jesus Christ. The story of David and Goliath is used as an illustration of putting one's life into God's hands and having faith in Him. The speaker also mentions how David's character and faithfulness were tested when he fought against a lion and a bear to protect his sheep.

Transcript

I've got a little book here that was given to me a couple of months ago by someone from a church in Watford. This church used to be a Methodist church and we were sitting in between some of the meetings and we were talking about some of the things that the early Methodists used to do. And one of the things that the early Methodists used to do was at the end of the year they used to have what they called a covenant renewal service.

And people who had given themselves to the Lord and linked themselves to him consciously would take the opportunity of reminding themselves and repeating the terms of this covenant. And I'd often heard about it and he said, well, I can give you something. And he gave me this.

It's called the Shorter Book of Offices. And in here you have a series of little services. There's wedding services and burial services and there's this renewal of the covenant service.

And I was really sort of quite amazed to read it. And it's one of the things that has had me thinking about covenant for the last couple of months really, which is really where this morning's sharing came from. Let me read you a little bit.

I'm not going to take you through this, but at the end of this little service the person who was leading the meeting would say, And now, beloved, let us bind ourselves with willing bonds to our covenant with God

and take the yoke of Christ upon us. This taking of his yoke upon us means that we are heartily content that he appoint us our place and work and that he alone be our reward. Christ has many services to be done.

Some are easy. Others are difficult. Some bring honour.

Some bring reproach. Some are suitable to our natural inclinations and temporal interests. Others are contrary to both.

In some we may please Christ and please ourselves. In others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. Yet the power to do all these things is assuredly given us in Christ, who strengthens us.

Therefore let us make the covenant of God our own. Let us engage our heart to the Lord and resolve in his strength never to go back. Being thus prepared, let us now in sincere dependence on his grace and trusting in his promises yield ourselves anew to him, meekly kneeling upon our knees.

And then together they would pray this. All the people would pray this together. I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt. Rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing.

Put me to suffering. Let me be employed for thee, or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee, or brought low for thee. Let me be full.

Let me be empty. Let me have all things. Let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou art mine and I am thine. So be it.

Of the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. I think that's an amazing statement. Amazing statement.

I'll read it again perhaps a little bit later on. But the whole issue of covenant. We so often talk about our relationship with the Lord in, well evangelicals do anyway, in terms of decision and commitment and response and none of these of course are biblical phrases or ideas in fact.

But the way that we have expressed things. Well one of the Bible, the way the Bible speaks about relationships is in these terms of a covenant. And a covenant is a solemn, legally binding agreement that people enter into willingly and knowingly.

I suppose the covenant that most of us are most familiar with is marriage. That's the covenant. When people willingly, freely, consciously enter into a lifelong union with one another for better, for worse, for good or ill, for whatever.

It's an all-embracing covenant. It's not just a decision. It's not just I'm doing this that my sins may be forgiven or so that I can go to heaven.

It really is a commitment of person to person. It's not just terms and promises and prospects. It's a person giving themselves to a person and another person receiving them and giving them back again.

It's very powerful. God had to teach these ideas to his people over hundreds of years and the consequence is that we've got lots of illustrations in the scriptures of the ways in which covenant came about. And I love to do it this way, to open things up in the scriptures because then it means that you can take my notes with you.

All you have to do is read the same passage that I've been reading and hopefully everything should come back to you. I'd like you to turn with me to 1 Samuel. Let's turn to chapter 17.

1 Samuel chapter 17. This is the story of David and Goliath. And I'm going to use this story as a picture.

It really is a very amazing picture. It's a profound picture. And if we had the time to do it, we could develop it and hopefully I could show you just how rich this whole idea is.

In fact, it goes through several generations. It begins before Saul. It goes through Saul and Jonathan and Mephibosheth and it goes on and it keeps on.

The coincidences, which of course they're not, just build up one after another. I was talking to someone just the other day and saying of something that I was convinced that God had done for us as a family. And this person who isn't a believer kind of smiled at me in a patronizing way.

Poor folks. Yes, all right. And obviously regarded it as a coincidence.

And I said, well, you've probably heard this story that if you walk out of your house in the morning and someone happens to be walking past with a ladder on their shoulder and they hit you, that's an accident. If you walk out of your house on a different morning at a different time and someone just happens to be walking past with a ladder on their shoulder and hits you, that's a coincidence. If on the third morning you go out at an entirely different time and someone happens to walk past with a ladder on their shoulder and hits you, you think, this is a plan.

And there are so many things that link together in these stories that it can only be a plan. It can only be the amazing way in which God was preparing the mind and the mindset of his people down hundreds of years to prepare them so that when the reality of which these stories were pictures came in the person of Jesus Christ, they would understand how he fitted into all the promises. They would understand that all these things that God had hinted at found a wonderful fulfillment now in Christ himself.

Sadly, they didn't. He came to his own and his own received him not. That's what the scripture says.

But we have them here, and because we have the Spirit, and because we have the New Testament, which is the best possible introduction to the Old Testament... I was doing some studies, I mentioned this this morning, in the book of Romans, and someone asked me why I'd chosen Romans, and there were several different reasons. And I came across... if you've got Tyndale's translation of the Bible, you'll discover that he gave an introduction to each part of the Bible, each book of the New Testament. They're fairly simple, sometimes not so simple introductions, and the one that he does in the Romans, he says why this is such a wonderful letter, and why every Christian should know it by heart, and in the Greek if at all possible.

And he goes on to say several things, and then he says this, and he says one of the main reasons that the letter to the Romans is so foundational is that it provides a perfect introduction to the Old Testament. And you think, is it a spelling mistake? What is this? No, it's not. It's absolutely true.

To understand where all these things were heading, it is the perfect introduction to the Old Testament. And you begin to see how the whole thing shapes together. And it's not random, disorganized, chaotic.

It's all part of a steadily building plan in which God was preparing his people for those things that should come. So, I want to tell you probably one of the most familiar Bible stories of all, that the children, no doubt, in the Sunday school have heard dozens of times, and you've heard dozens of times. And I'm not going to have the time to go through every part of this, so let me, if I can, sort of give you the mood of it.

There was a man that ultimately God chose to be the leader of his people. He was the first legal king of Israel. If you really want to be tricky and ask the question, who was the first king of Israel, the answer is Abimelech.

But he made himself king. This was the first legal king, and his name was Saul. And to begin with, Saul was a man of extraordinary abilities and talents and nature.

He was a man of tremendous humility. He was a man who was faithful to his own father. And he comes across, really, if you read it, he comes across to me as a delightful character.

A man who, in temperament and in stature, was head and shoulders above anybody else here. I'm not sure which one. Gary.

Gary, come here a minute, please. I want to be head and shoulders taller than anybody else in the tribe. So if you have one person the size of Gary in the tribe, and in this particular tribe we've got this one, Saul, says the scripture, was head and shoulders above the tallest person in the tribe.

Thank you. Do you want to say it? No, no, no. He must have been a magnificent specimen of manhood.

He was grudgingly. People looked at him and they were just moved by this man. He was obviously a natural leader.

He was a kind of person that people would follow. He was obviously God's choice. There was a tremendous humility about him.

And in many ways he's very much like God's first man, Adam. I don't know how tall Adam was, but Adam was a noble being. Adam was a creature of tremendous power and versatility and ability that God had given.

And to begin with, no doubt, he lived in right fellowship for how long I don't know with God, and he did the things that pleased him. If you read the story of Saul, I'm not going Saul got involved in was a battle with a man whose name was the Serpent. And Saul's first battle was with the Serpent, and he won it.

Adam's first battle with the Serpent, he lost it. Saul was an amazing character. But there came a time when Saul, first of all, moved towards independence, when he couldn't wait God's time, and was impatient, and did a thing on his own bat, and consequently, a threat was put upon him.

He would lose part of that that God had given him, but ultimately his independence hardened into rebellion. And he became a man who was set against the purposes of God. And it's a tragedy, an absolute tragedy, because very shortly after this, the people of Israel were faced with one of their greatest tests.

They came into head-on confrontation with the people of the Philistines, and the people of the Philistines had a champion, and his name was Goliath of Gath. And I don't know how tall Goliath was, but probably the only man in Israel who stood any kind of chance with him would have been Saul. Naturally speaking, the only man who would have said any... And this is why they wanted somebody like Saul.

We want someone to fight our battles, they said. We want someone who will go out before us, who will lead us out and bring us back. But at this time of the confrontation, Saul was one of those who was hiding terrified in the tents of fear, because of the power of this man of Goliath.

So, so much for the first man. But God's confidence was always in the second man. And there was a second man who, he was not too tall, I guess.

He was so insignificant in his family, that once someone said bring all the sons, they brought all the sons and forgot him. They didn't even include him in the first count. He was just a lad, I guess he must have been.

It says he was ruddy, which I guess partly means I don't even know whether he's shaving. This is a ruddy-faced young man. He's probably somewhere in his early teens or something like that.

And he's a nobody. He's the last son of a family. And just about forgotten.

He looks after a few sheep in the wilderness. That's what his brothers said on one occasion. They said who have you left those few sheep with in the wilderness? So he wasn't really very highly regarded at all.

But God regarded him very highly. Because when no one else is watching, and it's easy to do things when people are watching, when your reputation is at stake. But when your character is at stake and no one is watching, that's when things really matter.

And there was an occasion when no one had been watching. Excuse me. Excuse me, I've got a sore throat and I've been talking since that time this morning.

David was looking after the sheep. And the lion came. And the bear.

And if I understand the story rightly, these two things carried off a lamb between them. I don't know what you would have done if you'd kind of had your little territory invaded by a lion and a bear at the same time. But David's reaction is not for his own safety but for the well-being of this lamb.

It's an instinct. He doesn't sit down and work this out. He certainly didn't consult the committee.

He gets on. There's something in him that wakes. He's got to do something.

And the Bible says that he goes there after this bear and the lion, and with his sling shot, the way he fires this missile stone, he kills both of them. Nobody saw it, except God. And on a certain occasion God said of this man, this man has a heart like mine.

It's an instinct to risk everything for the sake of the lambs. This man has a heart like mine, says God. And then some time passed and then you have this event with the armies of Israel and the Philistines faced across the valley.

And the people of Israel quaking in their tents. And David comes out on the scene. He's brought some food for his brothers.

And he's horrified. He's horrified by the whole spectacle of these people who have no relationship with God, who have the people of God in terror. And he's aghast.

And when King Saul says, well, what we need is a champion. Someone will go out and fight our battle for us. And if he wins, I'll give him my daughter's hand.

There are no volunteers. I don't know whether there are people there who had the right theology. And if you'd asked them, they would have said, oh yes, God is with us.

But when it came down to it, there were no volunteers. You ever heard the story of Blondel, who was a French tightrope walker? Brilliant man. And I guess this would be in the Victorian era.

They stretched a tightrope across the Niagara Falls from one, I suppose, from America to Canada. And then Blondel was doing his exploits across this tightrope. And he really was an extraordinary man.

He went across it walking. He went across it carrying things. He went across it on the bicycle with the tires taken off.

He went across it with a wheelbarrow. He actually, on one occasion, went into the middle of it and fried an omelet in the center of it. And then he went across a wheelbarrow that was full of sacks of potatoes.

He was an extraordinary acrobat. And he was a man. Same thing.

And he did all this. And the people were just absolutely amazed at him. And they cheered.

And they just kind of applauded. And he said, do you believe I could do this with a man and a wheelbarrow? And they said, yes! And he said, can I have a volunteer? He didn't get any volunteers. It's interesting.

You can get all your theology right. You can believe all the right things. But to put your life into somebody's hands, that's something different.

You can believe all the right things, but David just didn't believe them. He was going to put his life on the line. He would risk everything because he believed in the God of Israel.

And you have this, you know this story well. You have this extraordinary situation where Goliath comes out. And he's nine feet four, I think, isn't he, Goliath? About that.

So, he's tall. He's a big man. And here arrives, and he's got his body armor bearers with him, and they've got his spear and his armor and all the rest of it.

And David, in the red corner. David on the opposite side of this battle. And David runs at him.

I mean, this isn't tomorrow's dragging himself along because he's talked himself into a corner, he's got to go through with it now. David runs at him. And when they get within range, he takes a stone, you know it, he swings it around his head, he lets it fly, and it hits Goliath.

And Goliath goes down. That did not kill him. If you read the story carefully, you'll discover that did not kill him.

That stunned him. And what happened then is that David went and stood on Goliath, and took Goliath's own sword, and took off his head. That killed him.

There was no return from that. Even Goliath, that was the end of that. But it's an amazing picture if you see David, and you remember that our Lord Jesus was sometimes referred to as the son of David.

Not just because of his descent, but because of something in his character. People saw something in this man that reminded them of David. David was God's man.

David means beloved. He was the man loved of God. He was the man who did the thing that God had put in his heart.

And David stands with his foot on the neck of Goliath. He's now got the enemy under his foot. He's now going to bruise his head.

That's what he's going to do. But he doesn't use his own weapon, because he has none. He takes the sword, and with Goliath's own weapon, he breaks this power that held the people of Israel in bondage through fear of death.

Let me read to you a few verses from Hebrews. This is Hebrews chapter 2. I'll read from verse 14. Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 14.

For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death. That is, the devil. Can you see that Jesus destroyed the one who had the power of death with his own weapon? The one who had the power of death, Jesus broke his power with his own weapon.

To deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He came and did in the reality of the spirit what David did in the reality of the material, of the natural. And then you get an extraordinary scene if you go back to 1 Samuel chapter 17.

And I'll read from verse 50 so that we can... oh, verse 49. No, verse 48. First Samuel chapter 17, verse 48.

And it came to pass when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hasted and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. David put his hand in his bag and took thence a stone and slung it and smote the Philistine in his forehead. But the stone sunk into his forehead and he fell upon his face to the earth.

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone and smote the Philistine and flew him, but there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran and stood upon the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of the sheath thereof and flew him and cut off his head. And when the Philistine saw their champion was dead, they fled.

The men of Israel and of Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines until you come to the valley, to the gates of Ekron. The wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shearim, even to Gath and then to Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines and they spoiled their tents.

And David took the head of the and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent. And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of his host, Abner, whose son is this you? And Abner said, as I so live, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, inquire whose son the stripling is.

And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. It's a gory scene, isn't it? But it's a graphic one as well. David is inseparable from this head.

He goes nowhere without this head. Of course, I mean, this is proof absolute that their tormentor is dead. It's one thing to say it.

It's one thing to proclaim it. But when you've got the head of this thing in your hand, there's no longer any objections. He is dead.

The man who had terrified them is dead. There's no doubt about it. It was not an illusion David got his head in his hand.

No one would have been under any doubt he was dead. I wonder whether you have seen what the Lord Jesus Christ did upon the cross. Have you seen it beyond any shadow of doubt that he really did absolutely break the power of the enemy? Not as a theory, not as a possibility, not with something that has repercussions in the future at some point.

But right now, the power is broken. Have you seen it? If you've seen it, it's going to alter your reaction to everything. Before they'd seen it, these people were terrified, trembling in their tents.

They wouldn't even stick their nose out. As soon as they'd seen it, my, now they were brave. They'd up and they're out and they're running.

Have you seen it? Or are you still in fear? Are you still looking over your shoulder, afraid of the danger that might catch up with you again? Are you still thinking, well, I've got to keep going because I'm sort of free, but I don't know whether this thing that's in my past will come back again and haunt me or overpower me again? Or have you seen what he's done? Have you seen Goliath's head in David's hand? Do you understand what I'm saying? Have you really seen it? It's had a remarkable effect upon somebody in particular. Let's go on. Verse 58.

And Saul said to him, whose son art thou, thou young man? David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite. And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David. And Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

When he'd finished speaking with Saul, he didn't have much to say to Saul. But there was something about the way that David spoke that did something on the inside of Jonathan. Now, you've got to remember that Jonathan was a guerrilla leader.

If you read these stories, you'll find that Jonathan was a man of tremendous courage. He was a real warrior. And these people weren't the people you wanted to tangle with.

Jonathan was a man's man. But when he saw what David had done, and when he heard the way in which David spoke, there's something in Jonathan that reacts to him. There's something that draws him.

There's something, I don't suppose he could ever explain it, but his heart was knit for the heart of David, and he loved him as his own soul. All right, so you've seen, have you, what the Lord Jesus has done. You've seen the power of the enemy that he's broken by his death.

Have you heard his voice now? Have you heard him speak to you? What's that done to you? He has a way of speaking which is absolutely unmistakable. And it's not that they're kind of melodious tones, or the sound. There's just something about the way that Jesus speaks.

They marvel at the gracious words that proceeded from his lips, it says in the Gospels. There's something that's just so different about the way that Jesus speaks. And he always speaks directly, and he always speaks uniquely to individuals.

It may sound as though he's using the same word, but he's always speaking uniquely. And Jonathan hears this thing, and I want to say to you that before you can enter into genuine covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ, you will have to see what he's done clearly in your spirit. I mean, in your spirit, you will need to see by revelation what God was doing in Christ upon the cross.

And you'll need to hear his voice, and you'll need to feel these stirrings which make you want to be with him. And then you've got this extraordinary thing, and Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. And Jonathan and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul.

I remember our brother Mr. Moore saying many years ago that people come to the Lord for lots of different reasons. They come because they want deliverance or forgiveness. They come maybe because they don't want to go to hell, because they do want to go to heaven.

They come for all kinds of different reasons. And I remember him saying, if they come for any other reason than because they love him, they'll have to come again. I think he's absolutely right.

Now, those who come to him for whatever reason, he never sends them away. But God will have to get you off this, what we call cupboard love. You know that phrase? Where you love somebody for what you can get out of them.

And God doesn't despise that. He knows how self-centered we are. But ultimately, to enter into this covenant with him, you'll have to come on a different basis than that.

You'll have to come on the basis, not what can I get out of this? But here is my opportunity to give everything to him. And you'll see it down here in Jonathan. And understand that the motivation that made this possible was love.

Not fear, not admiration. None of those things. It was love.

Because Jonathan loved David as his own soul, this is now what follows. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him.

This may sound sort of strange and dramatic, but you need to remember that in ancient times, and not just in ancient times, but in simpler societies, the clothes that someone wears show the rank of that person. They show who that person is. If you read back in the Old Testament, you'll discover that when Joseph

was elevated to be Pharaoh's second man, they also gave Joseph unique clothes to wear.

It was the person of these things. It was the way you saw somebody, and you knew who they were because of the clothes that they wore. So this isn't just any old clothes that Jonathan is stripping off.

These are the clothes that set Jonathan apart as the heir apparent. Jonathan is the man who is going to be king after his father. He's the man with the heritage.

He's the man who is going to be king. He's the man whose destiny is assured, and he's going to be the person in charge, and everyone will do what he says. And the symbols of this, the symbols of his kingship, of his authority, of his power, of the fact that one day he would sit upon the throne, Jonathan strips them away from him.

If you're going to enter into genuine covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ, you have to deny yourself. There's no other way. Ultimately, you have to deny yourself.

You have to say, I surrender all my rights, all my privileges, all my prospects, all the things I've planned for, all the things I've expected, all these things that are all bundled up in who I am. You have to strip them all away. And you don't just strip them away.

Look what it says here. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David and his garments. So now we've got an extraordinary situation, because we've now got David wearing, I presume, the garments that mark him out as the next king.

Not only has Jonathan abdicated from any of his own throne rights, he's actually given his throne rights to David. He's not only said, I'm not going to be king, he's said to David, you are going to be king. You are going to be the one who will have the throne and reign over me.

And he's just seen something, and he's just heard something, and his heart has moved toward him. How is it possible for people to do this? What gives men and women the power to be able to do these tremendous acts of renunciation and yieldedness? Go on a little bit, and we'll ask the question again in a moment. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow and to his girdle.

I work for somebody who sometimes refers to himself as a control freak. That's someone who likes to be absolutely in control of every possible situation, and you know that anyone who wants to do that is doing it because they're afraid. They have to hold things in their own hands, because they can't trust anybody else.

So they maintain all that ability to defend themselves. They maintain all that ability to keep everybody else at arm's length. They keep all their weaponry, all their armament, so that ultimately, when it comes down to the bottom line, they can change their mind and fight their way out of it.

But not Jonathan. He gives up his weapons too. Not only his right to the king, but his ability to survive independently of David.

He's given up his ability to survive independently of this man that potentially is just enthroned as his master and lord. When Satan was testing Job and challenging God, when all kinds of things had happened and terrible calamities had hit the family of Job, and Job still hadn't betrayed God or

condemned him in any way, Satan said, yeah, but in the end the man will do anything for his own skin. There's a sort of a, there's a cruel truth in that.

When it comes down to it, you'll get people who can be very generous, can be very full-hearted, do all kinds of things, but when it comes down to the ultimate question of their own personal survival, they'll ride roughshod over anything else in order to survive. What Jonathan is doing here is he is surrendering that ability to survive when that kind of moment arrives. Can you see that this man is now absolutely at the mercy of David? If David did not rule benevolently, if David does not protect Jonathan, Jonathan's lost.

He's given away his future, he's given away his ability to preserve his presence. It's all gone. It's this old phrase, and it's a straight English phrase again, that I often refer to, because to me it's the perfect illustration, he's put all his eggs in one basket.

He has no contingency plans here. There's no plan B for Jonathan, it's all eggs in the one basket. If the trust that he has put in this man does not work, he has no alternatives, he has no options, it's all given to him.

How can this be? How can someone find the courage to make this kind of surrender? Well, the Methodists used to refer to what they called the expulsive power of a new affection. A lovely phrase. The expulsive power of a new affection.

It's if you've ever had kind of sons, and they get to a certain kind of stage, and they go through a period of time when you can't get them into the bathroom, and then sometimes they move into a stage when you can't get them out of the bathroom, and it's usually because they've come under the influence of an expulsive power of a new affection. There's someone else who's come into their life, and everything now is different. This really is so vital.

It is not strength of will that makes it possible for a person to enter into this kind of covenant with Jesus Christ. It's not resolution, it's not commitment, it's not decision. It's none of these things that evangelicals speak about.

It's utter yieldedness made possible because of a new affection that's risen in their hearts. And ultimately, it's the only safeguard. A little bit later on in this story, we won't have time to go to it, but a little bit later on in this story.

Saul comes to Jonathan to try to tempt Jonathan to undo what he's done, and tells Jonathan that Jonathan can still have the throne. He can take it all back. Now, what's Jonathan's defense against all that? Well, the Bible just simply says that Jonathan loved David as his own soul.

Jonathan's defense against the attack to take back his own rights to his own destiny was this love that he had for the one he surrendered to. Jonathan and David, David and Jonathan, have become almost a way of expressing this kind of utter, absolute commitment once whenever. But it's not here just because it's a wonderful story.

It's here because it illustrates to us some of the principles that are necessary in a genuine covenant for God. This is why it's only possible ultimately for those who are not ashamed because the love of God has been poured out in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. They're not afraid anymore.

They know all is well. They know they can rest their whole lives and everything in the hands of the one who has broken the power of their enemy. They know the sound of his voice.

They know they can trust him. It was the experience of lots of these methods in these early days. They were often people from very poor backgrounds.

I have another thing I'm fascinated with. The early beginnings of lots of things. They're not just a history, but the beginnings of genuine moves of God like the Methodists or the Salvation Army.

Read them, brothers and sisters. Read them and think as you read and understand how it makes some things possible that are not possible in other circumstances. I've got another little book which is John Wesley's *Advised Methodist*.

I won't read it to you now, but I've got a copy of it. It's an extraordinary statement about, first of all, he explains who it is he's referring to when he speaks of Methodists. And then you've got about a page and a half of his description of a Methodist, of someone who is, according to the light that they have, living their life totally, given to God, not presumptuous, seeking to do his will, not seeking any secondary benefit or blessing from it, but just wanting to be his person.

And he goes on to explain that in those days, many of them, it was almost to make this choice was to condemn yourself to poverty. Because not only would it probably limit the way that you could amass a fortune for yourself, but it would often cripple your business because people wouldn't go to you when they knew you'd become a Methodist. And he goes through all these things and he says, at the end of it, he says, and this is what I mean, he says, when I say a Methodist, and you kind of take a deep breath.

Let me read you these things again. I'm going to stop now. May our beloved let us bind ourselves with willing bonds to our covenant God, and take the yoke of Christ upon us.

The taking of his yoke upon us means that we are heartily content that he appoint us our place and our work, that he alone be our reward. Christ has ministered. We may please Christ and please ourselves.

In others, we cannot please Christ, except by denying ourselves. Yet the power to do all these things is assuredly given us in Christ, who strengthens us. Therefore, let us make the covenant of God our own.

Let us engage our hearts to the Lord and resolve in his strength never to go back. Being thus prepared, let us now, in sincere dependence upon his grace and trusting in his promises, yield ourselves anew to him. Let me read you these final words of the annual renewing of the covenant.

I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt. Rank me with whom thou wilt.

Put me to doing. Put me to suffering. Let me be employed for thee, or laid aside for thee.

Exhausted for thee, or brought low for thee. Let me be full. Let me be empty.

Let me have all things. Let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious, blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine, so be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Let's pray.

And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Let's pray.

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