

BECAUSE THE LORD WAS WITH HIM

1 Samuel 18:1- 19:24 (Key verse 18:14)

In everything he did he had great success, because the Lord was with him.

In today's passage we are going to learn about David's journey as he is introduced as the king of Israel post his victory against the champion Goliath. Through the passage we will witness David who encounters different kinds of responses from those around him. First, we will witness Jonathan who reacted with love towards David, the people of Israel who also respond with love for David and lastly, we will encounter Saul who grew jealous of David to a point where he wanted to kill him. Throughout these events, the key verse says: *"In everything David did he had great success, because the Lord was with him."* We are therefore going to learn what it means that David had great success and that the Lord was with him. And what that means to us today? I therefore pray that we may all humbly allow the holy spirit to work in us to receive one word, as we go through the passage.

The passage begins with Jonathan's reaction towards David after his great victory against the champion Goliath. In **verse 18:1** it says: *"After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself."* Jonathan became one in spirit with David, what does this mean? In the NLT Bible version it says: *"There was an immediate bond between them, for Jonathan loved David."* What brought this immediate bond between David and Jonathan? This immediate bond and love were because of their faith in God, their attitude towards God. Jonathan was very attracted to David, because he could relate to him, they both loved, obeyed, and honoured God. In **verse 14:6** – it says: *"Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, 'Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised men. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.'"* And this is exactly what David said about the champion Goliath, this is the words he uttered when he took him down. Both Jonathan and David referred to the Philistines as uncircumcised men, meaning David and Jonathan had a strong identity as the chosen nation of God. Again they were both very certain that the Lord will grant the people of Israel victory. When David took down Goliath he said: *"All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands."*

And so when Jonathan saw the courageous young David come out from battle having taken down the champion Goliath, he was strongly bonded to him and loved him as himself. Furthermore in **verse 18:3-4** it says: *"And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt."* Jonathan was Saul's first-born Son, he was a Prince, and somehow the expectation was that he would be next in line as Israel's king after his father. But today, we see him doing something unexpected. He took off his royal attire and gave it to David, his very sentimental and precious attire, and weapons. David was young, but when Jonathan saw his spirit and courage, he was very moved by David and gave him his royal attire. Jonathan did not consider David as a threat but honoured him as great servant of God who saved Israel from their enemy. Again Jonathan handing over his royal attire became a symbolic representation of his acknowledgement and willingness to surrender to David as his king, for David to take over the reigns as king after his father Saul. Later in **verse 23:17a** Jonathan said to David: *"Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you."*

Post the victory against the champion Goliath, David continued to serve Saul humbly, he did everything that Saul asked him to do and went on all the missions that Saul assigned him and he was successful. This pleased Saul very much that he even gave him a high rank in the army, Saul's troops and officers also loved David and were happy when Saul gave him a high rank. At the time word about David spread throughout Israel and all people loved him. In **verse 6-7** it says: *"When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres. As they danced, they sang: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.'"* The people loved David, they sang great songs acknowledging the victory that David brought to the land of Israel, through the songs and dancing by the women both David and their king Saul were praised. But when Saul heard the women giving more credit to David by saying: *"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands..."* he became terribly angry and displeased, he thought: *"They have credited David with tens of thousands, but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?"* Before Saul was very happy with David, he was happy David won battles for Israel and he even gave him a high rank in

the army. But now when he heard the woman giving David more credit he was grieved. He was grieved because he saw David as a threat to his kingdom and he was not willing to give up the kingdom to David.

In **verse 13:14** Samuel said to Saul: *“But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the Lord’s command.”* The Lord had rejected the kingdom of Saul, he had begun establishing a new kingdom through a man after his own heart. Unlike Jonathan, David did not want to accept that David could be the king and so he became angry, displeased, and jealous of David. Saul became in this way because he did not want to surrender himself to another king, just as he rejected God as his king, he rejected David as his potential king. Saul wanted to be his own king, he wanted to be praised and honoured by the people. In his anger and unpleasant state, something much worse happened to him, an evil spirit came upon him forcefully and he began prophesying in the house. When David humbly served him by playing the lyre for him to get better, he attempted to kill him twice with a spear saying *“I’ll pin David to the wall”* David managed to escape from him.

After David had escaped from Saul, Saul became afraid of David because the Lord was with David and he had departed from Saul. Even though Saul saw that the Lord was with David, he did not repent and surrender to God and accept David as the King that God had chosen but continued in his attempts to kill David.

In the **key verse 18:14** it says: *“In everything he did he had great success, because the Lord was with him.”* In everything David did he had great success. How exactly was David successful? David was successful for Saul never stopped in his attempts to kill him, and David could escape all of them. Furthermore David brought victory to the people of Israel and they loved him more. How exactly did Saul attempt to kill David, and how was David successful in this?

First Saul wanted to get David killed by the Philistines, to do this he used his daughters Merab and Michal. In **verse 18:17** it says: *“Saul said to David, “Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the Lord.” For Saul said to himself, “I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!”* Saul wanted to give Merab to David as his wife, but he gave him a condition that **he must only serve him bravely and fight the battles of the Lord**. Saul wanted to control David and have him only focus on fighting battles for him. Saul’s hope was that eventually David would die in battle with the Philistines. David in his humility did not take the king’s offer saying: *“Who am I, and what is my family or my clan in Israel, that I should become the king’s son-in-law?”* And the king’s daughter Merab was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah.

When David escaped this trap, Saul went further and used her other daughter Michal when he heard word that she has some liking on David. This time Saul was excited that her daughter Michal will be a snare to David through her idol worship ways and drive David away from faith, weaken him and eventually get him destroyed by the Philistines in battle. Saul also attempted to catch and eliminate David as quickly as possible, and so he said for David to have Michal he must bring a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies. Saul’s plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines, and he sent his servants to persuade David. David was pleased with this request, and when he went ahead with this difficult mission, something amazing happened. David took his men with him and went out, they killed two hundred Philistines and brought back their foreskins. David was victorious and brought back 200 foreskins, he was successful because the Lord was with him. David went to even more battles, and he was met with more success than the rest of Saul’s officers, and his name became well known. David was successful, he escaped Saul’s plans to kill him through the Philistines, he brought Israel victory in battle against the philistines. He was successful because the Lord was with him.

When Saul saw David’s success, how the Lord was with him and how his daughter Michal loved David, he became even more afraid of David. But this did not stop him in his evil ways, still he did not surrender and accept David as the king that God had chosen for the people of Israel. He still did not surrender and repent from the idea of being his own king. But rather he went further to plot on ways to kill David. This time he did not attempt to use the Philistines to kill David, he did not hide his intentions. But rather he went out publicly with determination, and in **verse 19:1a** it says: *“Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David.”* This time Saul took the game much far, the evil spirit really pushed him, he just became crazy and so desperate to kill David. But as we learnt earlier, Jonathan had taken a great liking of

David, he was moved by David's faith and the work of God in his life and so he spoke some sense into his father Saul saying:

"Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. /He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The Lord won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?"

Because the Lord was with David, Saul's plans to harm him did not prosper, he came to his senses and made an oath saying: *"As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death"*. David remained successful through his friend Jonathan. Shortly after that war broke out in Israel and David went out and fought the Philistines. He struck them with such force that they fled before him. Once again David was successful in this war, the Lord was with him. We can imagine how David's name became even more popular, probably the people went back to their singing saying David who slain his 10 thousands, maybe this time they said his 100 thousands. Just like before, this displeased Saul, it made him angry, an evil spirit came upon him while sitting in his house with his spear in his hand, and when David was humbly playing a lyre for him, he tried to pin him on the wall. It was like *"de javu."* Just like before, David escaped him, the Lord was with David and he was successful.

Saul continued further with his attempts to get David killed, he sent his men to David's house to kill him and still they failed. Michal whom Saul thought will destroy David's life by being a snare to him, was instrumental in helping David escape from Saul's men. When David escaped, he went to Samuel and when Saul's men followed him something miraculous happened. David and Samuel went to Naioth at Ramah and were prophesying, when Saul's men saw them, they too began prophesying. When Saul followed in the pursuit for David, he too joined in the prophesying, all his attempts to kill David failed. In everything David was successful, in all attempts Saul could not kill David, against all odds David brought victory to the people Israel and his name became even more popular in Israel. David was successful because the Lord was with him.

Now what can we make of this events? David's success, and that the Lord who was with him? The Lord was with David because he is the anointed one, the king that God had appointed for his people Israel. David could take down Goliath because he is the anointed one. Because of his heart God anointed David as the king of Israel and the spirit of God came upon him. Jonathan saw this about David, his faith and his spirit, and he was greatly moved and loved David. He took off his royal attire and gave it to David, surrendering to David's rule as the king. David was successful in Israel; he brought the people many victories and they loved him and sang praises to, the people surrendered to him as the king. Saul on the other hand, rejected David just as he rejected God, he became angry and jealous of him and wanted to kill him. He had sleepless nights and wondered around tormented by the sin of wanting to take David's life.

Like Saul, the Pharisees rejected Jesus when he came preaching the gospel of God to the people. Because of Jesus many people could be restored from sickness, the blind could see, the lepers healed, the lame could walk, he rose the dead. Jesus rescued many people from the torment of their sins. Just like David, Jesus was successful, evidence was there that the Lord was with him. But the Pharisees rejected him, because of their evil ambitions and jealousy they rejected Jesus and plotted to kill him. In all their attempts to kill him, Jesus was successful, he was successful because the Lord was with him. When the Pharisees thought they were done with him, God granted Jesus more victory. Through his death Jesus saved the world from the power of sin and death, he rose conquering the power of sin and death. Jesus was successful, because the Lord was with him, he is the anointed one, the one and only son of God.

Like Jonathan, let us surrender our lives to Jesus, let us take off our own man-made royal attire, and surrender our lives to Jesus to rule us as our king. Let us make friends with Jesus (As Bro Rapelang always says: *"I am a friend of Jesus"*), live by faith in God, honour God, obey his word and preach the gospel. The evidence is there, Jesus rose from the dead, he defeated the champion called sin. When the people of Israel accepted David, they were filled with joy and praises, they sang songs in joy. When Jonathan surrendered and handed his royal attire to David, he was filled with joy, he found a friend in Jesus. Saul on the other hand was left tormented by the evil spirit, he wondered around filled with rage, anger and sinful desires to murder David. Let us not be like Saul, let us come to Jesus and be restored from the torment of sin that roams around in this world. I pray that God may help us to truly repent and accept Jesus as our king.