

**Then Jonathan said to David: “By the LORD, the God of Israel, I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know? <sup>13</sup> But if my father is inclined to harm you, may the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away safely. May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father. <sup>14</sup> But show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, <sup>15</sup> and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David’s enemies from the face of the earth.”**

**<sup>16</sup> So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the LORD call David’s enemies to account.” <sup>17</sup> And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself. (NIV84)**

Theme: God’s Love Motivates us.

1. God loved us by sending his Son.
2. This love leads us to love others.

The word, “love” gets thrown around a lot in our society. Teenagers who have been dating for a few months say to each other, “I love you.” Someone says, “I just absolutely love this song.” Or, “I love working out.” People use the word love to describe a number of different emotions or feelings in many different situations. But what exactly is love? Love to God is not exactly a feeling or emotion. It is not some warm fuzzy feeling that swells up inside someone. As we see from our second lesson for today—love is an action. Love is patient, kind, it does not envy or boast. Love is about behavior.

We can certainly see, then, how easily we fail to love to each other. So we look toward God and his love. It is his love that motivates us. For God loved us by sending his Son. And his love for us leads us to love others.

Our text for today is one that requires a good amount of background information to understand what is going on. David was a young boy when he bravely stood before Goliath. He slung a rock into the forehead of the giant and killed him. King Saul was there that day and

saw what happened. He was pleased that little boy. But soon his love for David diminished. When they got back from war the people were singing the praises of David—even more than Saul. **Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.** Ever since then, Saul was jealous of David. The next day, As David was playing a harp for Saul, Saul hurled a spear at him, trying to kill him. Years later Saul sold his daughter in marriage to David for the price of 100 dead Philistines. Saul hoped that David would be killed by the Philistines. But his plan didn’t work. David killed 100 of his enemies and married Michal, Saul’s daughter. From then on we are told that Saul became David’s enemy.

So Saul told his son, Jonathan to kill David. Jonathan warned David what his Father wanted to do. Then he convinced his Father from going through with it. And so for awhile, David served Saul. But that didn’t last long, in a fit of rage Saul again threw spears at David, trying to kill him. Then he sent men to David’s house, hoping to kill him in his sleep. But Saul’s daughter and David’s wife, Michal warned David and he escaped. By now David was certain that Saul wasn’t going to rest until he was dead.

So he got together with Jonathan—his friend and Saul’s son. And together they came up with a plan. David was to eat with Saul and other officials during a festival. David wouldn’t attend to see what Saul’s reaction was. If Saul seemed indifferent than he wasn’t going to kill David. But if he became angry, than he wanted David dead. So Jonathan chose to let David know what his Father, the king intended to do. Jonathan chose to betray his father and saved his friend. It was a bold thing for Jonathan to do. He chose David over his Father. He rejected the king for the Lord’s anointed. Saul was trying to kill the next King, and Jonathon knew it was wrong. So he chose what was right against what was wrong. He decided to show love to his friend, instead of defending his Father. He chose God’s will instead of the things of this world. Jonathan chose love instead of hate.

Can the same be said about us? Far too often we choose the world. Far too often we choose to go against God’s will. And we do what is wrong. We know full well what God’s Word says. And we intend to

do what is right. But when it comes down to it we choose what the world wants us to do. We sin and rebel against God. We often choose what is the most convenient thing for us, what is going to be fun for us, what would cause us the least of amount of trouble or persecution. So at times we may choose family over God. We may back up a family member even though we know that he is wrong. We may at times be blinded by those we are close to that we can't see them for what they really are. So we'll defend them. We perhaps will even join together with them. Instead of helping out someone in need we mistreat them. Instead of showing love to others we follow along with those close to us. At times we are tempted to do this even if we know it's against God's Word. We'll often choose love for a family member over true love.

And so we end up mistreating others. We do to them what we shouldn't. Or maybe its simply something like not helping others out. It is not showing love to those who you know are in need. By our actions or lack of actions we show who we truly are. As John says in his first epistle, **"If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.**

And so God sent his Son. That is a true act of love. Paul talks about this love in Romans 5. **God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** That is true love. Showing mercy and compassion to those who mistreat you.

Showing love to your enemies. Giving up your own son to suffer and die for sinners. God sent Jesus for us, who rebel against him and fail to do his will day after day. No grudges were held. God didn't mistreat us because of who we were or what we did. Rather he graciously, out of his love, sent his Son to save us.

Jesus too, showed his gracious love for us. He was betrayed and arrested. He was treated shamefully, physically abused, and crucified. Upon the cross Jesus took all our sins upon the cross. He became guilty of everything we have done wrong. And so he was forsaken by his heavenly Father. He suffered through the pain and agony of hell—in our place. Jesus knew full well that all of this was going to happen. He understood what he would suffer through and who he would suffer for. Yet Jesus didn't back away, he went through with it. He chose to show love to us.

And it was this love that led him to rise from the dead. Not long ago we celebrated the victory that is Easter. Jesus rose from the dead and crushed Satan's head. He defeated death. And he gives that victory to us. So now, because of Christ's love we have eternal life. This love Christ has for sinners and his enemies. This undeserved love is graciously and freely given to us.

This love that Christ has for us is what leads us to show love to others.

We treat others with love and respect no matter what our relationship is with them. Whether they are our best friends, rivals, bitter enemies, or complete strangers—we show love to all, at all times, and in all places. We don't think about our differences. We don't worry about what someone has done to us. We don't try to get even, doing to them as they have done to us, or talking bad about them behind their back. Instead, we treat them as we want to be treated, we talk well of them. We don't hold someone's sin against them. We are kind and compassionate—slow to anger. We love them as we love ourselves—no matter what they have done. As Christ loved us, so we love one another. As John says in his first epistle, **We love because he first loved us.**

Our love for others mimics the love that Christ has shown to us. The same stood for David and Jonathan. Their love for each other was the love of the Lord. Even though one was a bitter enemy of his Father, and the other was the son of one who was unjustly trying to kill him. There was no hostility toward each other, no going behind each others' back. No one picked revenge or family over the other. Just love, which led them to make promises to each other—that they would never hurt or harm each other or their descendants. This is what Jonathan asked David to do in verses 14 and 15. **Show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth.**

That's exactly what would happen. As it turns out Saul did want to kill David. Jonathan risked his life by letting David know. So David fled from Saul. For years—possibly up to eight years, Saul pursued David. He spent countless hours and manpower simply hoping to kill

David. This even led David to live among the Philistines, for some time. Twice during this time David had the opportunity to kill Saul, but he didn't. He would not kill the king of Israel. Even if he was trying to kill him, David showed love to him.

Then in a battle against the Philistines both Saul and Jonathan died. You would think that David would rejoice that Saul was dead—some of his companions did. Instead David mourned. And he lamented over the death of his King and Saul's son, Jonathan. **Saul and Jonathan—in life they were loved and gracious, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. “O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold. How the mighty have fallen in battle!** No grudges, no hatred. Just love.

Soon David would make good on his promise to Jonathan. He would treat his descendants with love and respect. He asked, **Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?** Jonathan had one son who was still alive, Mephibosheth, a cripple. David showed kindness to him and his family. For the rest of his life he was given the privilege of eating with the king. Mephibosheth asked, **What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?** There was no reason. Just love that led David to do what he did. Love led him to keep his promise. The same stands for God. It was love that led him to suffer, die, and rise for us. It was love that led him to show love to dead dogs like us. It was nothing good in us. It was nothing we have done or would ever do. It was grace—his undeserved love for us that caused him to keep his promise. The promise to send a Savior was fulfilled in Christ. And just as God fulfilled that promise in love, it will be in love that he fulfills his promise to send Jesus again. And so take us to live with him forever.

It is this love that motivates us. God loved us despite our sins. And so we show love to others despite their sins. We forgive them as Christ has forgiven us. We do this with one goal explicitly in mind. To lead others to Christ. We hope and pray that by our actions—through our loving words and deeds, others may see the love of Christ. We pray that we may be given the opportunity to share the message of Christ

with others. That they may hear about Christ's love for them and be brought to faith. We show love to others in hopes that it may lead us to see them in heaven forever.

The word love gets thrown around a lot. It has many different uses in our society. But God's love always results in action. It is love that led him suffer, die, and rise for us. And it is a love that motivates us to show love to others with the selfless love of Christ. Amen.