



Lethbridge  
First Baptist  
Church

# God's Story in 1 Samuel

A Devotional Guide through 1 Samuel

September 2026

This daily devotional guide is meant to help you explore the Scriptures in our sermon series on 1 Samuel. Each week, we will explore the passage that will be preached on the upcoming Sunday.

Each day, a portion of the passage is provided to you to read or listen to. You may do this individually or with your household. Feel free to do this in whatever version you find most helpful. A key verse from each portion will be given. The default Bible version used in this devotional guide is the New International Version (NIV). If a different version is used, it will be indicated. If you're feeling extra ambitious, you might consider spending an additional 5–10 minutes meditating on this key verse, or maybe even memorize one of the key verses of the week.

A short devotional is provided for you with questions to consider for application, prayer, or discussion. Finally, a short prayer may be provided in italics. These prayers are meant to assist you in finding words for your personal prayers with God.

It is our prayer that these daily devotionals will help your walk with God so that you may encounter him daily and grow in faith and love.

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Tuesday, September 1

**Read or listen to 1 Sam 16:15–18.**

Key verse: “The Lord is with him.” (1 Sam 16:18)

David’s reputation precedes him. He is known for many things: he is a talented harp player, a brave warrior, has good judgment, and is handsome to boot! But most of all, the Lord is with him.

You may have had success in academics, sports, your career, or in your relationships. You might be known as a kind and generous person, or a smart person, or someone who gets things done. All of these things are good, but if they have been elevated above the place of God, they have become gods themselves.

God desires your heart. He desires *all of you*. What are you known for? What does your reputation say about you and what is most important to you?

*Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in Your will, and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your Name. Amen.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Book of Common Prayer

Wednesday, September 2

**Read or listen to 1 Sam 16:19–23.**

Key verse: Whenever the tormenting spirit from God troubled Saul, David would play the harp. Then Saul would feel better and the tormenting spirit would go away. (1 Sam 16:23, NLT)

Even though Saul had rejected and disobeyed God, he still wanted something of God close to him. He recognized the power of God in David and wanted David near to chase away his demons.

The power of God is enough to push away the forces of evil in our world. Have you ever experienced someone wanting to be your friend just because they noticed something *different*, something *positive*, about you? The Spirit of God in you makes a difference—in your own life, but also in the lives of those you touch. How is the Spirit alive and moving in you today?

*Breathe into me, Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Move in me, Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Attract my heart, Holy Spirit, that I may love only what is holy. Strengthen me, Holy Spirit, that I may defend all that is holy. Protect me, Holy Spirit, that I may always be holy.*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> St. Augustine

Thursday, September 3

**Read or listen to Prov 1:1–7.**

Key verse: Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. (Prov 1:7, NLT)

David is wise: he has a relationship with God that places God squarely at the top of all his priorities. We can observe this in God's identification of David's pure heart and also in others clearly seeing that God is with him.

Saul is foolish: he has despised God's wisdom and discipline. He didn't learn from his mistakes. He insisted that *his way* is better than *God's way*.

The Bible likes to paint its characters as contrasts to one another. We know that life isn't that simple; people are complicated beings. However, the choice to follow God's way is that simple—how can you choose God today?

*"I took the one less traveled by, / And that has made all the difference."*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Frost, *The Road Not Taken*.

Friday, September 4

**Read or listen to Ps 1:1–6.**

Today, we will be practicing an ancient form of Scripture reading called *lectio divina*, which simply means “sacred reading.”

First, read the passage slowly all the way through.

Now, read it again and notice which phrase or word stands out to you. Mull it over for a while.

Read it a third time and consider: What is God inviting you to from this passage? It may be a fresh way of viewing his character or it might be a conviction or challenge to you for today. Remember: conviction leads to hope. This is the Spirit’s way of inviting you into transformation. Guilt leads to self-loathing and condemnation, and it is *not* from the Spirit of God.

*God is inviting me to* \_\_\_\_\_.

Lastly, read through the passage a fourth time and rest in the presence of God. How are you being moved to respond?

When you are ready, close with a prayer of gratitude to God for meeting you here in Scripture.

Saturday, September 5

**Read or listen to Ps 150:1–6.**

Key verse: Let everything that breathes sing praises to the Lord! Praise the Lord! (Ps 150:6, NLT)

Music is a wonderful way of worshipping God. Saul finds out quickly that music banishes his anxieties, worries, and tormenting thoughts. The Spirit of God moves through music.

At First B, we have a Spotify playlist that is updated weekly with the worship music that we sing on Sundays. You can find it under “Lethbridge First Baptist” on Spotify or scan the QR code.<sup>4</sup>



Which worship songs lead you into worship? Take a few minutes to listen to worship music today and let your heart be turned to God in praise.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7xeERoZqkjCJ4sABqn6iv>

Sunday, September 6

**If you have the time, read or listen to 1 Sam 16:14–23.**

What stands out to you from the passage this week? What do you still have questions about?

What does this passage show you about the character of God? Where was he present or absent?

Pray these words in surrender and in the knowledge that God's Spirit is with you in love.

*Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me.<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> St. Ignatius of Loyola, <https://hallow.com/blog/prayers-for-anxiety/>



## **Sunday Sermon Notes**

Monday, September 7

**Read or listen to Lev 23:23–24.**

Key verse: “On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of Sabbath rest.” (Lev 23:23)

We have entered September, and kids are back to school. In many ways, September is more the beginning of a new year than January. Everything is fresh and new for those starting or returning to school. Beginnings are exciting—there is anticipation for what the next year will bring! Beginnings are also a good time to reflect on the past year and set goals for the coming year.

This week, we are taking a break from 1 Samuel to reflect on new beginnings. Our passage in Leviticus highlights the importance of the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship. Scan the QR code to learn more about the fourth commandment to practice a weekly day of rest.



As you enter this season of autumn, consider your own Sabbath practices. How have you been practicing Sabbath over the last year? Does it change through the seasons—does it look different from winter to summer? What do you want your Sabbath practice to look like this year?

Tuesday, September 8

**Read or listen to Lev 23:25–32.**

Key verse: “It is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the Lord your God.” (Lev 23:28)

The Day of Atonement was the day where Israel offered many sacrifices for the sins they committed through the year. They killed one goat for their ritual impurities and laid their hands on a second goat which was sent into the wilderness, symbolically carrying their sins away.

Some authors have described atonement as “at-one-ment,” a cheesy but simple way of remembering that the goal of atonement is to make us one with God again. The reality of our human existence is that we once lived in harmony with God in the garden that he created for us but we chose to rebel against him and have been living in brokenness ever since. The Law attempted to bring oneness between humanity and God, but it was ultimately flawed. The author of Hebrews says, “It is impossible for the blood of animals to take away our sins.” Jesus’ sacrifice was able to do what the Law could not do—forgive our sins entirely.

Scan this QR code for a podcast on The Day of Atonement.<sup>6</sup> Talk to God about what being *one with him* means to you.



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<sup>6</sup> <https://bibleproject.com/podcasts/what-day-atonement/>

Wednesday, September 9

**Read or listen to Lev 23:26–38.**

Key verse: “These offerings are in addition to those for the Lord’s Sabbaths and in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to the Lord.” (Lev 23:38)

In the ancient world, people gave many gifts. They did so freely and generously. They knew that giving gifts to God was a sign of their devotion and worship. I’m afraid that we have become rather stingy with our gift-giving today in comparison.

Don’t get me wrong—there are certainly many generous people among us! They give their time and resources away like it is water, sometimes to their own harm because they give *too much* away. But there are just as many who hoard their resources, as if they will be snatched away at any time. We call it “preparing for the future” or “making a nest egg” for the future generations. Really, we’re just scared of what might happen if our security in our resources no longer exists. We put our trust in *things* rather than *God*.

How is God calling you to be generous with your resources and time today? Generosity is an act of trust and a response of gratitude in God’s provision.

*God, teach me to have open hands. May you multiply my gifts beyond what I can imagine. I trust you to take care of me. Amen.*

Thursday, September 10

**Read or listen to John 19:14-30.**

Key verse: Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. (Jn 19:19)

N. T. Wright says, “Jesus saw his own work, his own public career, his own very person, as the reality to which Temple, sabbath, and creation itself were pointing.”<sup>7</sup> Jesus is the culmination of the entire biblical story; he is the one that fulfills *everything* in the Old Testament. He is the atonement sacrifice, the scapegoat who takes our sins away, the high priest who intercedes for us, and the king who sits on the throne over all of creation. He brings God’s goodness to earth in a way that only God can; Saul could not, and David could not either. Only Jesus can.

Take a moment today and reflect on the person and work of Jesus. Who is Jesus to you? What does his enthronement as a king on a cross tell you about God’s love for you and the entire world?

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<sup>7</sup> Wright, *Simply Jesus*, 148.

Friday, September 11

**Read or listen to Heb 9:11–14.**

Key verse: Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. (Heb 9:14, NLT)

The blood of Christ covers all sins. He is the one who makes us completely right with God. He is able to do so because he is *God* and he is also fully *human*. As the perfect human, he suffered as we have suffered yet he was not broken by it. As God, he was able to take on the weight of all our brokenness, absorb it onto himself, and defeat it entirely.

Thus, we are cleansed. Salvation was done for us at the cross and in Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The Spirit was poured out on all believers at the Pentecost. Now, we can all live with the power of the Spirit within us because God lives within us. We are made one with him—not only each one of us individually, but also the entire church of believers across the globe. This means that we can live as free people. We throw off the weight of the sin that entangles us and run freely.

What sins do you feel like are too much for Christ's forgiveness? What might it look like for you to embrace his loving presence within you right now? May you look at God, who looks at you, in love.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Paraphrased from John Mark Comer, *Practicing the Way*.

Saturday, September 12

**Read or listen to 1 John 3:1–6.**

Key verse: See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 Jn 3:1)

The beginning and end of God is love. He is only love. Love is the answer to the story of our human brokenness; love is the only way we can escape the bonds of our sin; love is the conclusion of our story and the foundation of oneness with God. You want to know who God is? Then learn love. Selfless, kind, generous, wild, free love.

Christian writers have tried for millennia to explain the love of God. But I don't think it can be explained—it can only be experienced. We can't learn God's love by reading more or doing the right thing. We learn it by *feeling it*, by *accepting it in the deepest, darkest places in our souls*. God's love is more than you can imagine.

Have you experienced God's love? Set a timer for ten minutes and meditate on God's love for you. If you find yourself getting distracted, return to the image of God's love, whatever that looks like for you. Or maybe use a phrase, like "God loves me," or simply, "love," to anchor your prayer.

Sunday, September 13

**Read or listen to Rev 5:6–14.**

Key verse: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” (Rev 5:12)

This week, we have explored the ancient practices of Sabbath and atonement, and how Jesus fulfills these in his great love for the entire world. He has done the work; it is finished. What is left for the believers now?

Christ’s finishing work in his death and resurrection paved the way for us to be free people—people who live in the rest of Sabbath from week to week, who are one with God in our souls and communities, and who live from a sure foundation of love.

What can our response be but to worship? To give our gifts freely to him? To welcome all people into this amazing space of God’s abundant love?

How are you invited to respond to our readings from this week? You can’t change your entire life in an instant, but what small thing *can* you change this fall? Are you invited to start a Sabbath practice? Or to spend time meditating on the love of Christ each morning? Or to give your time in volunteering in our youth group or other ministry?

These changes are called *spiritual practices*, and they help us to continue growing in faith and love as we follow Jesus together.



## **Sunday Sermon Notes**

Monday, September 14

**Read or listen to 1 Sam 17:1–24.**

Key verse: “I defy the armies of Israel today! Send me a man who will fight me!” When Saul and the Israelites heard this, they were terrified and deeply shaken. (1 Sam 17:10–11, NLT)

Terror in battle is nothing new to Saul or the Israelites. The Philistines have proved to be a formidable enemy, and their champion, Goliath, is fearsome in his scale-like armour and enormous weapons. The descriptions of Goliath’s armour intentionally invoke images of a serpent, or dragon—a frequent biblical symbol of evil, chaos, and death. This dragon spews words of hate against Israel. Who can stand before him? The warriors at the frontlines are terrified of Goliath and run away from him in fear.

Is there anything in your life that causes you to tremble in fear or makes you want to run away? What “dragons” are you facing today? What is God’s invitation to you in the midst of your fear?

Pray the words of Psalm 56: *But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me? Amen.*

Tuesday, September 15

**Read or listen to 1 Sam 17:25–37.**

Key verse: “The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!” (1 Sam 17:37, NLT)

We are introduced again to David, the youngest and least powerful of his brothers. He brings his brothers provisions and overhears the rantings of Goliath. He’s puzzled; why are the Israelites so afraid? He offers to fight Goliath and is mocked for it.

But he knows something that Israel has forgotten—God is bigger than the dragons of this world. David has experienced God’s provision and strength in his care for his father’s sheep. God has protected David from lions and bears. Therefore, David has a sure faith that God can slay this dragon, too. He is confident in God’s power. Goliath’s fearsome appearance and taunts slide off David like water.

Can you remember a time when God’s power and presence slayed a dragon in your life? Perhaps it was (or is still) a dragon of health anxiety, job loss, illness, grief, or trauma. Imagine God slaying each of your dragons today. What does that look like?

*Valiant champion of the Faith, assist me in the combat against evil, that I may win the crown promised to them that persevere unto the end.*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> St. George’s prayer of intercession, <https://aleteia.org/2019/04/24/pray-this-prayer-to-invoke-st-georges-powerful-intercession-against-temptations/>

Wednesday, September 16

**Read or listen to Ps 23:1–6.**

Key verse: The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.  
(Ps 23:1, NLT)

David is deeply familiar with God’s character as a loving good shepherd. He relates to this image of God, of course, since he is a shepherd himself. He uses familiar (to him) metaphors to describe who God is to him—kind, just, and unfailing in his love.

What images and metaphors of God are most familiar to you? We often lean on pictures from Scripture to picture God in our minds—a good shepherd, a righteous judge, a just king, a clucking mother hen. These are excellent metaphors! However, most of these metaphors are far removed from our twenty-first-century world. What sorts of everyday, familiar metaphors from your daily life might show you part of God’s character?

For example, God may be in a child’s laugh, a ripe harvest, a medical team working for the good of a patient, a patient’s long-suffering, or a teacher’s wisdom.

Take a few minutes to meditate on Psalm 23 today.  
Consider: In what ways is God revealing himself to you through the things of *your* world?

Thursday, September 17

**Read or listen to 1 Sam 17:38–58.**

Key verse: “The whole world will know that there is a God in Israel!” (1 Sam 17:46)

Against all odds, David defeats Goliath. Rather, “the battle is the Lord’s,” and *God* defeats Goliath. It is a triumphal victory—for David and for Israel, but also for the whole world, because through David’s victory, God’s power is made known.

This is a repeated theme in the Bible. God frequently does the miraculous *so that all may know that he is the Lord* (see Exod 8:10, 9:29, 10:2, 14:4). Today, we have a harder time identifying the miraculous, though you may have had a personal experience of a miracle. What sorts of things might be considered miracles or supernatural victories of God today? How can these things make God’s name known to the whole world?

*Hallowed be your name Lord, in our world, and our country, and our communities, in our church, in our homes, in our hearts. May your name be revealed and referenced and understood and worshipped in every tribe, tongue and nation.*<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.mid-way.com/post/pray-for-god-s-name-to-be-hallowed-4-16-21>

Friday, September 18

**Read or listen to Ps 46:1–11.**

Key verse: God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea. (Ps 46:1–2, NLT)

Some people have the gift of faith. I don't mean that they somehow have a better faith than others, but that there are those who hold a supernatural confidence in the faithfulness of God. No matter what life throws their way, they are unshakeable. This also doesn't mean that they are naïve or ignorant of life's hardships. No, usually they have intimately experienced suffering and know how to lament and grieve, but at the end of the day, they still profess a deep faith in God—sometimes through tears. It's not blind optimism; it's a bone-deep assurance of God's goodness even when life is difficult.

Do you know someone like this? How has their faith encouraged you, or perhaps humbled you? Call them up or write a note to them to tell them what their faith has meant to you.

Saturday, Sept 19

**Read or listen to Ps 27:1–12.**

Key verse: Though a mighty army surrounds me, my heart will not be afraid. Even if I am attacked, I will remain confident. (Ps 27:3, NLT)

We place our confidence in all kinds of things: jobs, family, friends, health, intellect, talents, abilities, stocks, investments, weather forecasts, and political polls. We rely on these things for stability in our lives. Only. . . none of these are permanent. Any one of them might be removed from our lives, as if they'd never been there in the first place.

The “mighty armies” of our day might, in fact, be physical armies. The politics of the 2020s have been anything but stable. But more likely, the “armies” that we face are the everyday things that threaten our stability. In response to what we see as an attack on our most valuable possessions, we might get angry and attack others. We might become bitter, resentful, and downright cranky.

The psalmist, however, is calm and unafraid. His confidence is in someone who is permanent and unchanging—God. He has no reason to be afraid, because no one can take God's presence from him.

Talk to God about the things that make you afraid. How is he inviting you to place your confidence in him today?

Sunday, September 20

**If you have the time, read or listen to 1 Sam 17.**

What stands out to you from this passage? Do you have any lingering questions about it?

What does this passage show you about the character of God? Where was he present or absent?



Scan this QR code to listen to Phil Wickham's song, "Battle Belongs."

Take a few minutes today to pray, write, or sing in worship and thanks for how God continues to fight our battles every day.



## **Sunday Sermon Notes**

Monday, September 21

**Read or listen to 1 Sam 18:1–16.**

Key verse: Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with David but had departed from Saul. (1 Sam 18:12)

We're all afraid of something. Last week, we talked about the "dragons" in our lives—the things or circumstances that terrify us. This week, Saul is afraid of something less sinister, but no less scary. He's afraid of David's popularity and that David clearly has God's presence with him, whereas God's Spirit has left Saul due to his disobedience.

When our relationship with God is not right, we are susceptible to being afraid of what God is doing in someone else's life. We might envy that person's faith, even as our own hearts feel miles away from God.

How is your relationship with God? Are you afraid of what he might do in your life, or how he seems to be speaking to others but not to you? All too often, God's apparent silence is a result of our own hardheartedness; we are unable to hear him when something in our lives or hearts is blocking him.

If you are experiencing distance or silence from God, consider this an invitation to talk to him about it. What's stopping you from embracing his loving presence?

Tuesday, September 22

**Read or listen to 1 Sam 18:17–30.**

Key verse: Saul became even more afraid of him, and he remained David's enemy for the rest of his life. (1 Sam 18:29, NLT)

Fear or faith. Faith. . . or fear. You've probably heard it said that courage is not the absence of fear, but the ability to face the fear and take action anyway.

Saul's fear of David (and of God) takes the upper hand in his life. Ever since he offered sacrifices in haste, Saul has allowed fear to rule his kingdom and his heart. By contrast, David acts in faith, refusing to allow fear of death to stop him from obeying the king's foolish order. He honours Saul, even as Saul seeks to have him killed.

Faith is not the absence of fear, either. Faith decides to trust in God's goodness no matter the circumstances. It honours others even when the circumstances are less than ideal. It is steady, calm, and is downright attractive to others, because our world is startled when it sees someone who *doesn't* allow fear to rule their lives.

I don't know about you, but I want faith, not fear, to have the upper hand in my life. What might a conscious choice to allow faith to rule your life look like today?

*I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. (Ps 130:5)*

Wednesday, September 23

**Read or listen to 1 Sam 19:1–18.**

Key verse: Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father.  
(1 Sam 19:4)

Jonathan is a true friend to David. He intercedes for David, advocating for him to his father. He reminds Saul that David has really done nothing wrong; in fact, David has done nothing but honour Saul and bring glory to Israel and to God. Despite Saul's promises to not harm David, his jealousy is too strong. He tries to kill David, and David flees for his life with the help of his wife, Saul's daughter, Michal.

We, too, need good friends to support us and advocate for us. And, as my mom used to tell me, "In order to have good friends, you need to be a good friend." How can you be a good friend to someone today? What does friendship look like to you?

Consider how you can advocate for, intercede for, or support a friend today.

*God, grant my friends the strength to face each day with courage and resilience. Help them to find their strength in you.*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.thewarcry.org/articles/30-meaningful-ways-to-pray-for-your-friends/>

Thursday, September 24

**Read or listen to 1 Sam 19:19–24.**

Key verse: The Spirit of God came even on [Saul] and he walked along prophesying. (1 Sam 19:23)

In the earlier part of this chapter, we read that an evil spirit from the Lord comes on Saul. When Saul rejects God, God's Spirit leaves him, and a spirit of distress, anxiety, and misery comes on him. This spirit dominates his life as he becomes more paranoid and afraid.

But God's power is not diminished by Saul's fear. God sends his Spirit on Saul and his men again—to protect David and to demonstrate *God's* sovereignty over the rule of Israel's king. This parallels God's earlier pouring out of his Spirit on Saul prior to his anointing (1 Sam 10:9–12). In both instances, there are three signs from God that show us that God is intimately involved in the events. In both cases, the people ask, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" The first time, Saul's prophecies are seen as positive—*here is their king!*—but now they are seen as negative—Saul strips off his robe, symbolic of his reign, and is supernaturally stopped from pursuing David.

Which "spirit" rules your life? How is God involved in your life right now, and how can you take time to notice what he is up to today? Talk to God about it.

Friday, September 25

**Read or listen to 1 Sam 20:1–17.**

Key verse: Show me unfailing kindness like the Lord's kindness as long as I live. (1 Sam 20:14)

Our passage this week is a study in relationships: Saul and David, David and Jonathan, Jonathan and Saul. Relationships are hard, especially when complicated by family dynamics or longstanding loyalties.

Jonathan has realized David's holy anointing as the next king; David will take Jonathan's place. As the son of the currently reigning king, Jonathan is very aware of the consequences of a political coup—usurping kings would normally kill the entire royal family so that there would be no lingering confusion over who controls the throne. But this does not change Jonathan's loyalty. Unlike Saul, Jonathan is selfless, giving up every hint of royal claim to David. He asks only that David treat him and his family with kindness, that they might not be killed when David assumes the throne—which David grants.

The point is this: relationships are challenging, but kindness is always possible. Which of your relationships are coming to your mind? How can you show them unfailing kindness like the Lord's kindness?

*Lord, I pray for my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_. Help me to listen with compassion, speak with kindness, and act with love. Amen.*

Saturday, September 26

**Read or listen to 1 Sam 20:18–42.**

Key verse: “Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord.” (1 Sam 20:42)

Tensions have worsened between Saul and David, and Jonathan is caught in the middle. He’s a loyal son and a good prince, and he is also a dear friend to David. He’s a little blind to his father’s hatred of David, believing the best of Saul despite Saul’s recent pursuit of David. But when finally confronted with Saul’s bloodthirstiness, Jonathan does not hesitate to warn David of the danger, at great personal risk. Saul tries to kill Jonathan too for speaking too positively of David.

Things have really deteriorated between Saul and David. Can you think of a time when you have been caught in the middle of a conflict? How did you respond? Is there anything to be learned from Jonathan’s response to a rapidly deteriorating relationship? Talk to God about it.

Sunday, September 27

**If you have the time, read or listen to 1 Sam 18–20.**

What stands out to you from this passage? Do you have any lingering questions about it?

What does this passage show you about the character of God? Where was he present or absent?

This week, we considered the relationships in our lives and the ways in which God's Spirit moves us. Take a moment to confess where you have wronged someone in your life. Pray this prayer, and then take one step toward forgiveness or reconciliation, whatever that looks like in your situation.

*O Lord, the house of my soul is narrow; enlarge it that you may enter. It is ruined, O repair it! It displeases your sight; I confess it, I know. But who shall cleanse it, or to whom shall I cry out but to you? Cleanse me from my secret faults, O Lord, and spare your servant from sin.*<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> St. Augustine



## **Sunday Sermon Notes**

Monday, September 28

**Read or listen to 1 Sam 21:1–9.**

Key verse: “I don’t have ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here.” (1 Sam 21:4)

When David is in trouble, he turns to God for help. He first went to Samuel in 1 Sam 19:18–19, and now he turns to the priests of Yahweh. He’s sneaky about it; he lies to Ahimelek, who senses something fishy about the whole scheme. Despite David’s dishonesty, Ahimelek provides sacred bread and refuge to David, if David and his men are ritually pure. He also gives David Goliath’s sword. Human need overrides ceremonial law.<sup>13</sup>

Who do you turn to for help? When someone in need comes to you, how willingly do you help them? I don’t know about you, but when the request is an inconvenience to my schedule or plans, I think twice about helping (to my shame). Ahimelek, on the other hand, gives the sacred bread generously. How can you give generously today, even if it inconveniences you?

*Lord, there are times I don’t want to give, times I don’t want to stretch myself again, times I just want to curl up and leave the needs of the world alone. Give me grace to give generously—because you gave yourself generously for me. Amen.*

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<sup>13</sup> *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, 728.

Tuesday, September 29

**Read or listen to Lev 24:1–9.**

Key verse: “The bread is to be set out before the Lord regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, on behalf of the Israelites, as a lasting covenant.” (1 Sam 24:8)

The bread of the tabernacle is sacred bread. It was meant only for the priests to eat. By taking the bread, David bridges the gap between king and priest—currently, he is neither, but he begins to symbolically embody the priest who intercedes on behalf of the people and the king who leads the people toward God.

The bread symbolizes God’s presence and provision for Israel as a whole, and David in particular. It is a weekly reminder of God’s covenant with his people: he will take care of them. Though David’s explanation is dishonest, God still provides for him.

This is a great reassurance—I do not have to get all my ducks in a row for God to take care of me! This is not permission to behave in sin, but instead it shows me that God’s grace is always large enough to cover my sins. He loves me—and *you*—enough to take care of us even when we blunder our way through life.

Take a moment to express your gratitude for God’s grace in your life. How can you pay attention to God’s presence in your life today?

Wednesday, September 30

**Read or listen to Matt 12:1–8.**

Key verse: “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” (Matt 12:7)

Jesus is confronted by the Pharisees about picking grain on the Sabbath. In response, he refers to the story of David receiving bread from the priests as an example where the bread performed more than a ceremonial duty. The fact that David was not a priest did not deter Ahimelek from offering the sacred bread to him. David does what Saul did not—he leans on God for provision rather than seizing control of the situation in impatience and fear—and Jesus commends him for it.

Therefore, Jesus says, Sabbath is not for ritual, but for rest. The Pharisees have misunderstood the Law entirely if they think it is just about following the rules. God is all about the *heart*, not outward acts of holiness. The practice of Sabbath sets aside time for us to lean on God’s provision and allows us to lay down our striving.

Scan this QR code to watch a video about the Sabbath.<sup>14</sup> We discussed the Sabbath earlier this month. What does a regular practice of Sabbath look like for you?



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<sup>14</sup> <https://bibleproject.com/videos/sabbath-video/>

