

Metaphysical Bible: Friendship

When we did the survey in June to see what topics people were interested in, Metaphysical Bible Interpretation got quite a bit of interest. So I decided that instead of doing classes, which we might still do, I'd do a sermon series using Metaphysical Bible Interpretation. So what exactly **is** metaphysical Bible interpretation? It is looking for meaning beneath and beyond the surface level of the words and story. In Unity, it is also understanding that the events of the Bible are also telling a story about what happens in our consciousness. So in any given story, we are **all** the characters and what is happening is a message for us about what happens in our mind and in the minds of race consciousness. Then, for me, it is also a process of discerning what this means in my life right now. I can interpret the same story a dozen times and depending on what is going on in my life, it can speak something very different each time. The other thing that really came up for me working on this sermon is how much bible interpretation is like reading the news. The deeper I dig and the more of the story I look at, the more my interpretation of the story shifts and changes. Which can be inconvenient when you think you have a handle on the story but is so important when it informs me how I tend to watch the news. How many of us form an opinion reading the topic sentence or just based on the evening news, or Trevor Noah, or CNN? We may find other articles but we don't bother to dig into the story because we already know what we think based on the line or two we were exposed to.

The Friendship we're talking about today is between David and Jonathan. And maybe you never even heard of that story. If you have, the line we commonly quote is the very beginning of I Samuel 18: *When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.* The soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David. And Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Well that sounds lovely! What a perfect story about friendship. Or is it? Or is the story limited to David and Jonathan? Part of me wishes I could just go back to just sharing a lesson on this soul bonding because it fits more easily with the direction I thought this sermon would take. Like I'd just like to know the part of the news that aligns with my values and beliefs. And then we see our spirituality through a narrow slit and we see our world through a narrow slit and we limit ourselves to the narrowest view possible. How helpful do you think that is?

How many of you have done bible interpretation on your own?

You read a story or heard a story, read the language in the bible and then looked up words, names, places in the bible dictionary, considered the context and tried to discern a way this was speaking about a process in consciousness? Did you pick a favorite character to identify with or did you discern you and parts of your consciousness were **all** the characters? It's trickier when you don't get to pick a favorite and acknowledge all the parts are in us.

So who are the characters in the story of Jonathan and David? Well, those two. And Saul. And someone you may have never heard of: Michal. See what happens, you dig a little deeper and suddenly there is another character!

There are two different story lines that developed when I went digging around. I'm going to cover both. Let's start with what Charles Fillmore says about each of the characters.

Saul, is the father of Jonathan and Michal. He is the king, anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the first king of Israel. According to the metaphysical dictionary he represents the action of **will** attaining its desires but in the limitations of personality. I had to chuckle because Fillmore says that had Saul lived in our country in the early 1900's he would have been a cowboy. That insight also tells us something important about using the metaphysical dictionary, which was published in 1931—it is language in Fillmore's understanding at that time. So things may sound awkward or stiff or maybe not even true in our thinking. So be present to those thoughts as you do interpretation and see what unfolds. Fillmore says Saul also represents some of the complexity and paradox of will: stubborn and impulsive, yet brave under stress. Humble at first, catching the attention of the prophet.

So what about David? Most of us are first introduced to David as a young boy in the story of David and Goliath, a Philistine giant soldier. Later we might hear the more grownup story of David and Bathsheba. David and Jonathan's story unfolds in between those two stories and David succeeds Saul as the second King of Israel. Metaphysically Fillmore says David represents divine love individualized in human consciousness. However he goes on to point out that while David maintained daily communion with God in his youth and demonstrated that power, as a king with control over men, he manifested more of the limitations of his human personality.

Now Jonathan Fillmore characterizes as “the soul substance that tries to unite will and love”. Fillmore also says “[Jonathan] may be human affection and desire set upon spiritual things while David is divine love.”

OK, so who is Michal? She is Saul’s youngest daughter and Jonathan’s sister. She also becomes David’s wife because she loves him. Two of Saul’s offspring are in love with David. Fillmore says Michal metaphysically represents an intuitive quality active in the human soul which can be a **cleansing** and inspiring stream of *pure thoughts and emotions* in the individual, preserving the love thought (David) when that has not yet attained ruling power in the face of adverse activity of personal will (Saul).

So one story line reveals that Saul (personal will) becomes jealous of the innate abilities and success of David (divine love) and seeks to kill him (have personal will rule—ego is king of consciousness). Both Jonathan and Michal loved David and sought to protect him from their father’s efforts to kill him. Michal provided an escape when Saul was coming for him and Jonathan warned him to flee, having learned his father’s intentions. Our will can have thoughts that align and unite with our power of love (Saul’s children) **and** the tension between the absolute rule of personal will and the rule of will aligned with love can create conflicts in our consciousness. Anyone ever have this kind of challenge? Ego wants something and becomes willing to do anything to get it. Unethical short-cuts, unkind interactions and the delusion that getting what we want at any price will make us happy. Then another part of us starts longing for peace and begins to negotiate with ego to find more loving and compassionate paths forward. It isn’t easy up there in my head.

So how many of you knew about the story of David and Jonathan? How many of you knew that David was married to Jonathan’s sister? How many of you knew the story of David slaying Goliath? How many of you knew the story of a young Jonathan slaying a group of Philistines and scattering the camp? Why am I asking all these questions? I guess because, for me, the details I didn’t know before shifted how I looked at the metaphysics.

If we only look at a simple statement that Jonathan’s soul was bonded to David’s and Jonathan loved his soul as his own, we easily look to this as a demonstration of oneness. This is a manifestation of loving your neighbor as yourself. What greater example of love and friendship is there than to risk your life to save another? In I Samuel 18, after this bond of love, Jonathan strips off all he has in clothing and armor and swords and gives them to David. Generous giving! Or is it?

Jonathan has his own story of power and vanquishing the enemy, relying on God. What bothers me about this giving away of everything he had is the issue of healthy boundaries. Have you ever been in a relationship in which you saw your souls united yet from a human perspective you have lost your own identity? Do you think that the ideal friendship or oneness asks us to give up our own identity **for another**?

As we talk about Jonathan's love for David, on this day of Lehigh Valley Pride, does it matter if Jonathan's love was the same kind of love that his sister had for David? The human, "I just want to be with him" kind of love? This is hinted at with the men kissing at their time of parting and also Saul's disparaging comments about Jonathan's affection for David. For me, although it introduces a tricky love triangle for David, engaging both siblings at the same time, it doesn't really impact my metaphysical interpretation. One interpretation would say that Jonathan stripped away the outer trappings of success and personal identity and surrendered them to a higher, spiritual ideal. A different interpretation and one I find more cautionary in today's world is that Jonathan gave up his personal identity to further David's success. The original stories of both David and Jonathan prevailing over the Philistines happen when they are young—more fully aligned with their spiritual nature and less identified with their humanity. They stand in their own power, aligned with the Divine. David says "You come to me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts. . . This very day the Lord will deliver you into my hand." Jonathan says to the armor carrying boy with him, "Come up after me; for the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel." In an empowering ministry, I find it a bit baffling that Jonathan would give away or fail to live into his spiritual power. Have you ever admired someone so much you wanted to be like them, ignoring the special gifts you have? I feel like this happens in our consciousness when we begin to identify with human appearances and align our personal will with the personal will of another, rather than truly with the will of God. I feel like this happens with gurus and religious leaders and political leaders and gang leaders when we lose sight of our own power through divine connection. True friendship, for me, is between equals who honor and support the spiritual power of one another. Lifting up David metaphysically represents lifting up that higher ideal of love in our consciousness. Yet for me, a part of the message that came through was a healthy boundary so that I am really surrendering personal will to God and not to another personal will.

Fillmore admits that becoming King sort of scrambled David's priorities and he was ultimately a less than perfect pre-cursor to the Christ consciousness. Was he already sliding into this decline in his conflict with Saul? Was David's ego sort of liking all the attention and making Saul jealous? Does that happen in our consciousness—we have some success using our spiritual principles and our power of divine love and suddenly we get a little cocky. I'm better than personal will! And then, there we are—strutting our personal will and ego. It's a tricky balance and at times we are Jonathan, surrendering our personal identity believing we are aligning with the divine and at times we are David, striving to manifest our divine power and getting tangled in the desires of humanity. To the extent we continue to try to lead with divine love, we are moving in the right direction. Let me repeat that part. When we try to lead with divine love, not personal desire, we are moving in the right direction.

From a consciousness perspective, it is perhaps more important what is said in I Samuel 20 between Jonathan and David in parting: "Go in peace, since both of us have sworn in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants, forever.'" This represents to me acknowledging that it is our Christ Consciousness or our Divine Consciousness that unifies love and will and gives us peace.

Interpretation is an inexact practice and it reveals, hopefully, what is important for you. Next week we'll be talking about Transformation and our couple will be Abram to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah. Babies at 90! That will be something to talk about!