

## “Honey & Vinegar!”

### I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Story:** A South African man surprised 9 men robbing his home. 7 of the robbers ran away, but the homeowner managed to shove 2 into his backyard pool. After realizing that one of the robbers couldn't swim, the homeowner jumped in to **save** him. The Cape Times reports that once out of the pool, the wet thief called to his friends to come back. Then he pulled a knife and threatened the man who had just **rescued** him. The homeowner said, “We were still standing near the pool, & when I saw the knife **I just threw him back in**. But he was gasping for air and was drowning. **So I rescued him again!**” Daily Bread 6/30/10
1. Saul seems to be just like *1 of these robbers!* - God, pushing him in & saving him, time after time!
- B. Would you be willing to kill your son because he ate some honey? Is it right to break a foolish Vow? Does God ever give us victory(s)...despite us?
- C. Ben Franklin said, “*A spoonful of **honey** will catch more flies than a gallon of **vinegar**.*”<sup>1</sup>
1. It actually started with, “**Tart words** make no friends: A spoonful of honey...”
    - a) I'll ramp it up, “**Tart lives** make no friends...especially w/God!”
  2. In our story this morning **Jonathan** will be our **honey** & his father **King Saul**, the **vinegar!**

### II. **HONEY & VINEGAR!**

- A. **VINEGAR!** (King Saul)
- B. *Vinegar* = from 2 latin words which mean *sour* + *wine*.
- C. Prov.25:19,20 **Confidence** in an **unfaithful man** in time of trouble is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint. Like one who takes away a garment in cold weather, And like **vinegar on soda**(it's useless & causes a violent reaction), is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.
1. **Vinegar on soda** = the acetic acid (what makes vinegar sour) reacts with sodium bicarbonate (compound in baking soda) to form carbonic acid.
    - a) Carbonic acid is *unstable*, and it immediately *falls apart* into carbon dioxide & water (it's a *decomposition* reaction).
  2. **Saul**, our *Vinegar*, “unstable & falling apart”.

<sup>1</sup> 1744 B. Franklin *Poor Richard's Almanack* (Mar.)

- D. **Ostentatious Oath** (24a) - (*Ostentatious* = designed to impress or attract notice)
1. *Religion* always seems like it's *trying to impress* (either God or man, or both!)
    - a) This command was only more evidence of Saul's **confused & superstitious** faith.
  2. **Really this was *Impatience* at it's finest.** Which always seems to lead us to **hasty & wrong** decisions.
    - a) This is the reaction produced by our *fleshly impulses*!
  3. It also was **Vengeance**...as is stated.
    - a) Saul's **rational** was that he wanted everyone to devote themselves **unreservedly** to the destruction of the enemy.
  4. No longer being led by the **Spirit**, he uses **his authority**!
    - a) **What's your management style?** You have the *power to bless* or the *ability to curse*!
    - b) Pronouncing a curse on his men was designed to put them in **fear** of *himself* not **God**.
  5. It's a sad truth that **terror & selfishness** has been at the foundation of a great deal of that which passes as **religion**!
- E. **Foolish Fast** (24b,25,28b,31b) - Jesus speaks to the right & wrong time to fast.
1. Mat.9:14,15 **Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?"** And Jesus said to them, **"Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.**
    - a) (i.e.) There is a time to **feast & a time to fast** and it's not wise to mix them up.
      - (1) Now, **if** the Lord commanded a fast, **then** he would give the strength needed, **but** God gave no such commission. [confidence vs. presumption]
    - b) **Soldiers in antiquity had to provide their own food which came from the spoils of war.**
    - c) Where **Saul weakened** the army, **Jonathan strengthened** the army & challenged it to new victories.
  2. (33) Saul, quick to acknowledge *the people's sin*. - This might have been a good time to **repent** of his own sin, **instead of** speaking harshly to his soldiers.
    - a) **And really it was Saul's unnatural regulation that led them into this sin to begin w/!**
    - b) **A truly spiritual vow** brings out the best in people, but Saul's **carnal vow** brought out the worst!
- F. **Artificial Altar** (35) - 1st & only altar he ever built.
1. **Maybe if I become more religious?** Yah that's it! (**No, how about more obedient?**)
  2. Hey maybe I can make this **gastronomical feeding frenzy** into a **worship service**!

- G. **Another Oath** (39) - Now he ramps up his oath, instead of saying it was foolish.
- To give the impression that no favoritism would be shown.
  - So he **despotically doomed** some unhappy victim to death!
- H. **Master your Master?** (41) - Telling God what to do?
- How could Saul presume that the Almighty would now condescend to reveal His will by lot? But it seems like God wants to push this to expose his foolishness.
    - So God goes along with Saul's plan! (Doesn't that phrase just sound scary?)
    - Here's a good prayer: *Lord, please never go along with MY plan!*
- I. **Dead Right** (44) - How far will you take your pride?
- Would you be willing to kill your son because he ate some honey?
- J. **Vow** = a voluntary promises which, when once made, were to be kept **if** the thing vowed was right! (And obviously it wasn't!)
- K. **HONEY IN A BEAR SHAPED CONTAINER!** (Jonathan)
- L. Especially vs. 43 - Jonathan is literally **honey** in a **bear shaped container**.
- Jonathan, brave, courageous, showing true man hood, yet courteous...**but did not allow himself to be intimidated** by his father.
  - He **didn't excuse** himself, **nor** remind the king that such offenses could be **atoned** for, he simply said, "**So now I must die!**"
    - Proving the ol' proverb correct, "*Honey is sweet...but the bee stings!*"
  - His dad cuts loose with his 3rd oath(vs.33).
    - No true piety nor natural affection, **simply** formalism & pride.
- M. I think **Jonathan** held to what the great philosopher **Winnie the Pooh** once said, "The only reason for being a **bee** that I know of is to **make honey**.... **And** the only reason for **making honey**, is so as **I can eat it.**"
- His countenance was brightened -
    - Akin to today's *Power Bar; Fuel Gel's; or Monster Energy Drinks.*
- N. Pope John XXIII, *Men are like wine: some turn to vinegar, but the best improve with age.*
- Jonathan** will continue to **improve w/age**...while **dad** keeps getting **more sour!**
- O. **Your choice each day...Honey or Vinegar?** (sweet or sour)
- P. **Democritus** (contemporary of *Hippocrates*, who lived to the ripe age of 109) said, "The secret of my health is applying **honey** inside and **oil** outside."