

David and Abigail

Text: I Samuel 25

Samuel's influence on David is inestimable. He was the one whom God chose to find David and anoint him the future king of Israel, even at his own peril. As long as Samuel lived, he was coaching and being used of God as David navigated the treacherous waters of his early trials. We see this in these words in I Samuel 19:18: "So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth." I Samuel 25 begins with these words, "And Samuel died...." Until now David had but one wife. By the time this chapter ends, he has obtained two more. I can imagine David was schooled by the great prophet Samuel on Israel's requirement for a king found in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. Deuteronomy 17:17a reads: "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away...." Until now David operated free from anger. David's previous watchword, no matter how he was treated, was Psalm 37:8: "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." The opening verse closes with these words, "...And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran" (I Samuel's 25:1b). Our hero, no longer under the tutorship of Samuel, moves away from his stronghold and goes south. In the Bible when someone begins to go away from God's way, they often geographically go down. Never underestimate the power of a godly mentor (Proverbs 13:20).

I.THE IGNORED SOURCE

I Samuel 25:2-9

You would think David would remember the danger zone he moved himself and his men into when he did not trust God for his bread. Even more devastating was the high cost in the loss of life for Ahimelech and his family of priests. David makes a request from a man whose name means "fool." David expects from a man what he should trust God for. He veers away from the words in Psalm 37:25: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

A. David seems more impressed with what Nabal has, rather than what God has already done.

I Samuel 25:3, 4. It is the custom to share your substance with others in the neighborhood during the time of sheep shearing. David, still with the shepherd's heart and knowing this custom, expected from a fellow Israelite and from the house of Caleb provision for himself and his men. Deuteronomy 4:9: "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons."

B. David leans on his reputation.

I Samuel 25:5. In so many words, David tells his men to tell Nabal who he is, "...greet him in my name." (I Samuel 25:5b). Men are not our source, nor are we our source. Philippians 2:7, speaking of our Lord: "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

Proverbs 16:19: "Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud." James 4:10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

C. David believes he has earned favor with men.

I Samuel 25:6-9. Lamentations 3:22: "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not."

II. THE INSULT

I Samuel 25:10-12

In I Samuel 25:3, the Bible defines Nabal as "churlish," which means cruel, grievous, hard-hearted, impudent, obstinate or rough. In his response to David's request, we can certainly see that he lives up to his name. There are times when answering a fool could be profitable (Proverbs 26:5), there are other times, such as in this case, where Proverbs 26:4 would come into play: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him." Psalm 119:165: "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."

III. THE INTENDED REVENGE

I Samuel 25:13-17

When Nabal's insult was delivered, David immediately begins to prepare for reciprocation, but much more severely than a mere answer of words, he intends to do physical harm. David takes up his sword and commands four hundred of his men to arm themselves while two hundred stay behind to guard their stuff.

Ecclesiastes 7:9: "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools."

Proverbs 14:29: "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." James 1:19, 20: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Proverbs 16:32: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

IV. A YOUNG MAN WITH WISDOM

I Samuel 25:14-17

The unnamed young man recognizes David's intent. He also recognizes that David and his men have extended kindness to the men of Nabal. And he knows to whom to take the problem, because Nabal is an idolatrous man and cannot be reasoned with. And the young man possesses the wisdom to know where wisdom resides, i.e., in the heart of Abigail.

Psalm 119:99: "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation."

V. THE POWER OF PHYSICAL REFRESHMENT

I Samuel 25:18-20

One of the beautiful aspects of expository preaching and teaching is that we are compelled to address subjects that we might otherwise leave out. In this case, it is the cornucopia of refreshments provided by Abigail. As a matter of fact, Abigail has the food

wagons go before her. Have you ever noticed how often business is taken care of over food? We discovered long ago, the deacon's meetings go better when we bring food. God made us body, soul and spirit: I Thessalonians 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Our Lord does not intend for us to neglect the needs of the body He has made us. He teaches us to pray Luke 11:3: "Give us day by day our daily bread." Psalm 127:2: "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep." If I may make a commentary of this verse, God is saying that we need a certain amount of sleep every day, therefore don't rob yourself of your much-needed rest. And he ties eating the bread of sorrows (worrying) with staying up late. So instead of worry, go to bed and get up early and pray. A Bible story that brings this to mind is found in I Kings 19:1-7, when Elijah is worried sick because of the threats of wicked Jezebel. So God allows him to sleep, wake up and eat, then sleep and wake up once more and eat. We see earlier that God directed Elijah to the Brook Cherith and God was so determined that his servant eat, that God sent ravens to feed him both morning and night. And God did not allow the brook to dry up until His servant drank thereof (I Kings 17:2-7).

VI. THE ABIGAIL ENCOUNTER

I Samuel 25:21-31

The name Abigail means "source of joy." And like her husband, except in the opposite direction, she lives up to her name.

A. David's plan to return evil for evil.

I Samuel 25:21

The response should have been Luke 6:35: "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

Compare: I Peter 3:9.

B. A humble explanation

I Samuel 25: 23-26

Abigail doesn't defend the wickedness of Nabal. She encourages David to not shed blood, but to realize the lifestyle of Nabal will call forth the Lord's punishment in time. Psalm 9:16b: "...the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." Proverbs 11:5: "The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness."

C. Fitly spoken words

I Samuel 25: 27-31

Proverbs 25:11: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

Proverbs 25:25: "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."

D. Hospitality wins the day.

I Samuel 25:32-33

VII. THE SURE JUDGEMENT OF GOD

I Samuel 25: 36-38

Numbers 32:23B: "...be sure your sin will find you out."

VIII. THE RESPONSE TO THE ABIGAIL EXPERIENCE

I Samuel 25:39-44

David is so impressed with how Abigail could change his mind from acting maliciously, that he takes her as his wife. It is important to keep in mind, God was David's source, not Abigail. It was God who saw to it that his needs were met; God simply used Abigail.

Conclusion:

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and so are his stops.

Psalm 37:23: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delighteth in his way."

-Pastor Pope-