

## **Nabal's Death & David's Marriages**

### **1 Samuel 25:36–44** ESV

<sup>36</sup> And Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until the morning light. <sup>37</sup> In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. <sup>38</sup> And about ten days later the Lord struck Nabal, and he died.

<sup>39</sup> When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the Lord who has avenged the insult I received at the hand of Nabal, and has kept back his servant from wrongdoing. The Lord has returned the evil of Nabal on his own head." Then David sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her as his wife. <sup>40</sup> When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her, "David has sent us to you to take you to him as his wife." <sup>41</sup> And she rose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, "Behold, your handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." <sup>42</sup> And Abigail hurried and rose and mounted a donkey, and her five young women attended her. She followed the messengers of David and became his wife.

<sup>43</sup> David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and both of them became his wives. <sup>44</sup> Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was of Gallim.

This is the Word of the Lord.

### **Thanks be to God.**

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Let us pray,

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for your Word this morning.

Would you grant us us your people this morning the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ.

That by your Holy Spirit, we would have the eyes of our hearts enlightened that we might know the hope to which you have called us and the immeasurable greatness of Christ's power toward us who believe.

I pray now that the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts would be pleasing in your sight O Lord our rock and our redeemer.

I pray this all in the name of Christ our King.

AMEN!

## **Introduction**

This morning we return to our series through 1 Samuel.

This sermon is the third that has come from [1 Samuel 25](#).

[1 Samuel 25](#) serves as a “microcosm” of David’s conflict with King Saul.

What that means is that David’s short confrontation with Nabal serves as a small-scale representation of David’s larger and longer conflict with Saul.

Nabal, like Saul, dishonored David and, like Saul, David spared his life.

What’s more, God avenges David by striking down Nabal in this chapter which prefigures what God will do to Saul at the end of 1 Samuel.

However, in the concluding verses of this chapter there is a different focus.

In our verses this morning, David and Nabal are compared with one another.

Specifically, each man undergoes “a fall”.

And it is these two falls that I will follow to outline my sermon this morning:

1. First, we will consider Nabal’s fall in verses 36-38.
2. Second, we will consider David’s fall in verses 39-44.

## Nabal’s Fall (vv. 36-38)

When Abigail returns to Nabal’s house after saving him from David’s wrath, verse 36 shows the extent of Nabal’s festivities and folly.

### Drunken Nabal

While our passage draws a link between Nabal and David, these verses do continue the comparisons between Nabal and Saul.

Verse 36 states that Nabal’s feast was like the feast of a king and Saul is the king.

The verse goes on to reveal Nabal’s drunkenness, “**his heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk.**”

You do well to learn from Nabal’s folly here.

Over the last 25 years many reformed Christians have recovered the Bible’s teaching of the goodness of God’s gifts, including alcohol.

And yet, the Bible is still filled with warnings against using alcohol like a fool, like a Nabal.

As you enjoy God’s gifts of good drink and good food always be reminded that drunkenness is a sin and self-control is a fruit of the Spirit.

It is also good to note that wine is related to kingship in the Bible.

It is something that requires wisdom and sound judgement to enjoy, just as being a king requires wisdom and sound judgement to rule.

Nabal here throws a feast like a king, but he is not a king; he is a fool!

### Dead Nabal

Due to Nabal's drunkenness, Abigail chose not to reveal how she had saved him from David until the next morning.

Which is what she does in verse 37 on the following morning "*when the wine had gone out of Nabal*".

And after Abigail tells Nabal what happened we are told that his "*heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And about ten days later the LORD struck Nabal, and he died.*"

When Abigail confronted David earlier in the chapter she pleaded with David to let God avenge David and for David to not avenge himself.

But the language she used was significant.

Abigail said that God would take David's enemies and sling them out "as from the hollow of a sling."

At some level this is a reference to the fact that David killed Goliath with a stone flung from a sling.

But there is also a connection here to Nabal.

Nabal is David's enemy, and God has turned him into a stone, ready to be slung out from the hollow of a sling.

## Nabal's Fall

Well, as I mentioned in my introduction, this morning's passage is a passage about two falls: Nabal's and David's.

Nabal's fall is a fairly straight forward.

He is a fool and a wicked man and he falls as a result of his folly and wickedness.

But we shouldn't let its straightforward nature keep us from learning from it.

Remember, [1 Samuel 25](#) is a microcosm of the struggle between David and Saul.

In Nabal's fall we see another parallel between him and Saul.

But it is a parallel that happens quickly and dramatically.

The parallel is the the fact that there is a delay between the pronouncement of judgement the final consequence of the judgement.

Abigail pronounces what happened, but Nabal doesn't die for 10 more days.

This is what we've seen with Saul already in 1 Samuel.

Saul was told by Samuel that the Lord would take the kingdom from him and give it to another.

Samuel pronounced judgement.

But, the judgement has yet to fall on Saul.

There has been a delay.

But why? Why has God delayed his judgement on Saul?

This is something the Bible speaks about regularly? Why does God delay his judgements on his people or individuals?

Consider [Romans 2:4](#), “do you presume on the riches of [God’s] kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?”

The fact that God has delayed his judgement on Saul means that Saul has time to repent!

This of course is one of the great tragedies of Saul’s story, he never repents.

This is also one of the main differences between Saul and David; David repents.

And this is where the comparison between Nabal and Saul becomes so informative; it sheds light on why Saul and Nabal don’t repent.

Nabal can’t repent because his heart has died within him and he is like a stone.

Nabal is a picture of sinful man before God.

Without God’s grace we, like Nabal are as though dead and with hearts of stone.

What we need is for God to not only be patient with us so that we might have an opportunity to repent, we also need God to grant us new hearts of repentance.

The glorious promises of the Bible is that this is exactly what God does!

Because of Christ, God is in the business of heart transplants, removing our hearts of stone and giving us new and living hearts that are willing to repent.

## David’s Fall (vv. 39-44)

I said a few moments ago that Nabal’s fall is more straightforward than David’s.

That doesn’t mean that David’s fall isn’t clear.

I simply mean that David’s fall is described in more complexity.

Verse 39 relates that after Nabal dies David hears the news and rejoices and praises God.

This begins our complexity.

David’s fall narrative begins well, it begins with him praising God for avenging him and keeping him from sin.

## Pride Goes Before a Fall

But perhaps there is something to learn even from this:

The nature of David’s fall is his multiplying of wives, but before we look to that, we can consider that this happens directly after a deliverance and victory.

Indeed, we have seen two deliverances for David in back to back chapters.

Chapter 24 ended with Saul acknowledging David’s righteousness and promising to leave David alone.

Now here, in chapter 25, God has avenged David by striking down Nabal.

It is after these great blessings that David falls into the temptation of multiplying wives.

There is actually a biblical pattern in play here:

This is the idea of becoming complacent with God's blessing and not watching out for sin.

In the Bible sin and Satan are described, among other things, as deceitful forces crouching at the door waiting for an unsuspecting victim.

So I think a practical takeaway here is to not cease in your vigilance against sin when you are in a season of victory and blessing.

This is often when sin rears its ugly head.

## Multiplying Wives

But let us now consider directly the nature of David's fall in multiplying wives.

After Nabal dies David seeks to take Abigail as his wife.

But verses 43 and 44 reveal that David took another wife as well, Ahinoam of Jezreel.

And this of course is after the fact that David already had another wife, Michal (even though Saul took her from David and gave her to another).

Indeed, by the time David becomes king of Judah, he has six wives who have each born him a son ([2 Sam 3:2-5](#)).

The Law condemns this.

[Leviticus 18:18](#) & [Deuteronomy 17:17](#) both tell man not to take more than one wife.

This said, [Exodus 21:10](#) commands a man to care for multiple wives if he does take multiple wives.

The basic idea here is that if a man does sin in this way, he is still responsible for his wives.

## Wives & Kings

While there are obvious carnal reasons why a man might be interested in multiplying wives, that is not primarily what is in view here with David.

When it comes to kings or rulers, the temptation to multiply wives was a matter of political policy.

The more wives you had often corresponded to the number of political alliances you had.

Through his marriages to Abigail and Ahinoam, David is gaining a greater degree of political strength in the southern region of Judah.

This will continue until David becomes king over Judah.

## At What Cost?

But the question is, at what cost?

This sin of David does not simply stay with him, but rather it ends up plaguing his entire reign.

We have here in seed form what comes to full fruition in David's sin with Bathsheeba.

Here, God puts a wicked man to death and David takes his widow as a bride.

In his sin with Bathsheeba, David puts a righteous man (Uriah) to death in order to cover up his adultery with that man's wife.

Moreover, this sin of multiplying wives ends up extending itself into the the next generation.

David has many sons from his many wives and it leads to chaos in his kingdom.

Amnon, David's son by Jezreel, forces himself on his half-sister Tamar.

This eventually leads to Absalom, David's Son by Maacah, rebelling against his father David as he seeks vengeance against Amnon for violating his sister.

But it doesn't stop there.

David's son Solomon will carry on his father's practice of multiplying wives and have over 700 wives.

It is ultimately Solomon's sin of multiplying wives, gold, and chariots (the three sins that [Deuteronomy 17](#) warns kings from committing) that leads to the tearing apart of the kingdom of Israel into two kingdoms.

## A New Garden, a New Fall, & a New Original Sin

David, like Adam before him found himself in a garden of rest.

Nabal lived in Carmel which literally means Orchard and Saul had left off pursuing him.

Indeed, Nabal, the serpent-like figure tormenting that garden had been struck down by God.

But David, like his father Adam, took forbidden fruit.

Verse 39 states that David sent to Abigail to take her as his wife.

Verse 43 says that David also took Ahinoam.

This is the same Hebrew verb used in [Genesis 3](#) to describe the action of taking from the tree in the Garden.

But as we've seen, David's sin, like Adam's sin, carried on to his children.

Just as the fall of Adam spread to all of his children so too does David's fall spread to his.

The same rebellion and weakness of David is found in his own sons and family.

## A Second Adam

Of course it is these accounts from the Old Testament that so clearly demonstrate our need for Christ.

As I've tried to reiterate over and over again throughout 1 Samuel, David is truly a great man!

The Bible presents him as a great man of faith; a man after God's own heart.

That is why it is so amazing that Jesus is a greater David!

David is a great man, but he was also incapable of bringing the fulness of God's salvation to the world because of his own sin.

David offers us a glimpse of Christ, but anointed though he was, he was not the true messiah of God.

The true messiah of God is the Lord Jesus.

Jesus was not tempted in a garden but in a desert.

But when Satan offered Christ all the kingdoms of the earth Jesus did not reach out to take them as Adam took the forbidden fruit and as David took multiple wives.

Rather, Jesus gave.

He gave all of himself for you and for your salvation.

He offered himself up to death, even death on the cross, in order that his righteousness might be passed to you, breaking the sin of Adam that has reigned over humanity since the Fall!

And because of his shed blood, he invites you to his table this morning, the true kingly feast.

So come in faith, trusting that Christ is the greater David and the greater Adam, who took the sting of death so that you might once more take from the Tree of Life!

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN!

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Let us pray,

Father in heaven,

We thank you for the salvation you have provided for us in Christ!

May you build us up in the power of your Spirit to always live before the death and resurrection of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ.

I pray this all in the name of Christ our King.

AMEN!