

Sermon 22: David's Impulsive Response and God's Grace: 1 Samuel 25:1-13

Text: 1 Samuel 25:1-13 "And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran. And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb. And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep. And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name: And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased. And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be? So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.

Summary: 1 Samuel 25 teaches that though David was a great man, he was still fallible and at times stumbled miserably directing us to the need for the Messiah.

Part 1: A Pivotal Moment in David's Assent to the Throne:

- **David's restraint: 1 Samuel 24**

- He did not give into the pressure to take Saul's life or to turn his head while others did it.
- He promised to spare Saul's descendants, which he took very seriously.

- **Samuel's death: 1 Samuel 25:1** "And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran..."
- **Nabal's reputation: 25:2-3** "There was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings..."
- **David's kindness: 25:4-9**
 - **In the words of Nabal's men: 25:15-16** "The men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing...They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep..."
- **Nabal's arrogance: 25:10-11** "And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?"
- **David's impulsive response: 25:12-13** "And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.
- **Abigail's timely intervention: 25:14-31**
 - **A young man's timely alert: 25:14-17** "But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them. But the men were very good unto us...¹⁷ Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him..."
 - **She responded immediately and discretely: 25:18-19** "Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs...But she told not her husband Nabal..."
 - **She humbled herself on behalf of the entire household: 25:23-26** "When Abigail saw David, she hastened...fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground...upon me let

this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid..."

- **She spoke honestly about her husband's arrogant behavior: 25:25** "Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he..."
- **She acknowledged David's difficult situation and God's kindness toward him: 25:26** "Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.
- **She asked him to receive her gift to satisfy the men's anger: 25:27** "Now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.
- **She asked him to forgive the household and acknowledged David's future: 25:28-30** "I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days...It shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel..."
- **She appealed to his conscience and asked him to show her kindness when the LORD established him: 25:31** "That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid..."
- **David's gratitude: 25:32-35** "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand. For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee..."
- **God's justice: 25:36-38** "And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light. But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died..."

Part 2: Some important truths:

- Sometimes we unwisely gloss over the tragic flaws of people God has used in mighty ways.
- These events were a pivotal season in David's life and his ascent to the throne.
- Had God not intervened for David's good, this event would have been one of the greatest injustices David inflicted in his life.
- Abigail's timely intervention was an example of human wisdom but also of God's gracious providence.
- This passage points us to the greatest King who would not fail as this great king failed.

Part 3: Applying what we have read:

- **We need to be extremely vigilant during transitional periods of life.**
- **We cannot allow our strengths or past successes to become areas of overconfidence.**
- **God's meticulous care for our good comes through practical decisive means.**
- **We should learn from Abigail's timely humble response:**
 - She was proactive.
 - She acknowledged the wrong specifically.
 - She attempted to make the matter right as much as possible.
 - She asked for forgiveness and grace.
- **We should learn from David's response:**
 - His response was violent and inappropriate.
 - He listened when he was confronted.
 - He humbled himself in his anger.
 - He acknowledged God's right rather than his right to be the judge.
 - He changed course and was grateful for God's merciful intervention.
- **Our lives are testimonies of His mercy and should always be viewed that way.**
- **We cannot allow ourselves to take our eyes off Christ.**