

Lesson 17: The Enemy in My Hand, pt 2 (First Samuel 25)

Last week we left David and his men strapping on swords and setting off to take some vengeance against Nabal for having rebuked them when they asked for a share in his profits. And we discussed Proverbs 26:4-5 and the paradox of answering back to a fool.

1. What are the pros and cons of answering back to a fool?
2. How has David become like Nabal?

11 Section 3: Abigail Prepares a Gift (v14-20)

3. What news does the young man bring to Abigail?
4. How does the servant describe Nabal?

Different English versions render the servant's description of Nabal as scoundrel, a wicked man, a worthless man, or ill-tempered. The phrase in the Hebrew is a "**son of Belial.**"

Children/sons/daughters of Belial crop up a number of times in Scripture. They are:

- People who deny the LORD and go after other gods (Deut 13:13)
- People who deny others help or a share in profit (Deut 15:9, 1 Samuel 25 & 30)
- People who are given over to their lusts (Judges 19, Eli's sons in 1 Samuel 2)
- People who refuse allegiance to God's king (rebellious men in 1 Samuel 10:27, 2 Samuel 20, 2 Chronicles 13:7)
- People who bear false witness (1 Kings 21)

The children of Belial crop up a number of times in First Samuel.

- In 1 Samuel 1, Hannah rebukes Eli for having thought her a daughter of Belial for being drunk, whereas Eli's own sons are called the sons of Belial for their licentiousness and their deliberate scorning of the LORD and His sacrifices.
- In 1 Samuel 30, the term describes those of David's men who refuse to share the spoil of battle with their fellow servants. David comes down very hard on his men for this.
- In 1 Samuel 10:27, some unnamed children of Belial denied Saul's rulership over them, just like Nabal now denies David.

Picture comparison between Saul and David:

In First Samuel 10:27, Saul has been proclaimed king, but not yet crowned. And there is this group of rebellious men referred to as sons of Belial who say *“How can this man save us?”* They despised him and brought him no presents. But Saul held his peace and didn’t answer back. After he had proven himself in battle, these same men are brought back to him, and the people cried out that they should be put to death for not acknowledging the anointed king-to-be (First Samuel 11:12-13). Saul has not been a man known for his magnanimity to his enemies, but, in this first instance, he is. He refuses to have them killed, despite their earlier rebuke.

As the new anointed king-to-be, David experiences the same treatment at the hands of Nabal, whom the shepherd calls a son of Belial. Does David hold his peace? He takes issue with Nabal over not giving him a gift befitting a magnanimous king, and orders Nabal and all his house killed. So, where Saul acted righteously, David takes the opposite tact and acts unrighteously. Isn’t that a flip? And doesn’t that make him look foolish, that his actions should be more churlish than even a bad example like Saul.

David is clearly in need of some intercession. Enter Abigail.

5. How do you make peace with an offended king when he has purposed in his heart to kill you?

6. Why didn’t Abigail tell Nabal?

7. What does Abigail stand to gain in being loyal to Nabal?

8. What does Abigail stand to gain in being loyal to David?

Picking the right king with whom to align yourself means facing the backlash from the other master. **This is the cost that must be weighed:** whether to lose her life while trying to keep peace with her husband, or make a lasting peace with David, suffer the abuse for a while, but live with the hope of a better reward.

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever

loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.” - Matthew 16:24–27

11 Section 4: Abigail Confronts David (v21-35)

9. What are David’s thoughts at this point? (v21-22)

10. What does Abigail do to turn David’s wrath?

(v23-24)

(v24-25)

(v26-31)

11. How does Abigail build her case?

“Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, since the LORD has held you back from coming to bloodshed and avenging yourself with your own hand, now then, let your enemies and those who seek harm for my lord be as Nabal.” (v26)

“And now this present which your maidservant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant.” (v27-28a)

“For the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord fights the battles of the LORD.” (v28)

“Yet a man has risen to pursue you and seek your life, but the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God; and the lives of your enemies He shall sling out, as from the pocket of a sling.” (v29)

“And it shall come to pass, when the LORD has done for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you ruler over Israel, that this will be no grief to you, nor offense of heart to my lord, either that you have shed blood without cause, or that my lord has avenged himself.” (v30-31a)

“But when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your maidservant.” (v31b)

12. What is David’s response to Abigail’s tactful rebuke? (v32-35)

11 Section 4: God Rewards David (v36-39)

13. What did Abigail find when she got home?

14. What happened to Nabal?

15. How does David react to the news of Nabal's death?

Application

Nabal's fate was already sealed before David even entered the scene. He was a nabal and he would have died for his foolishness, whether by David's hand or God's hand. What was gained by letting God deal with Nabal instead David?

Abigail turned back wrath with a soft answer, and yet her soft answer has some teeth to it. How does Abigail model an intercessor for us?

What other aspects of Christian behavior does she model for us? (2 Timothy 2:24-26, Colossians 4:2, 5-6; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15; Romans 12:9-21)