

“The Woman Who Saved Her Husband’s Neck!”**I. INTRO:**

- A. **Prayer:** The first duty of every soul is to find not its freedom **but** its Master.
- B. The rays of each sunrise bring **new opportunities** to take & **new choices** to make. Each day carries w/it a certain aura of adventure & growth & the possibility of **success**. But it also brings the painful possibility of **failure**. Though God’s *mercies* are new every morning, so are Satan’s *schemes*.¹
 1. You can’t live today on yesterday’s obedience.
 2. Let’s take a look at **David** in one of the most *human moments*...& at a **woman** God used to turn his hostile heart back to Himself.

II. THE WOMAN WHO SAVED HER HUSBANDS NECK!

- A. **SAMUEL DIES!** (1)
 - B. This chapter opens & closes with tremendous loss for David.
 - C. **Samuel** - a spiritual mentor & counselor to David.
 1. The people didn’t always obey Samuel when he was alive, but sure were careful to honor him when he died. **Such is human nature.**
 2. Samuel put the concerns of God ahead of the politics of the hour.
 3. **Saul** prepared a public monument for himself at Carmel(15:12); **Samuel**, who truly deserved recognition, humbly asked to be laid to rest at his own home.
 4. And so goes the spiritual conscience of the nation; the spokesman for God; the anointer of kings!
 - D. **NABAL, RETURNS EVIL FOR GOOD!** (2-11)
 - E. **Nabal** - very rich, had a great business...**but what was he lacking?** (generosity)
 1. He refused to share his food, *not even a crumb from his table* with David’s men & insulted them. [esp. during a feast? 8]
 2. Prov.17:13 **If anyone returns evil for good, evil will not depart from his house.**
 - F. **David** - his request was just & polite.
 1. The bad guys would show up at shearing time (each spring & early fall).
 2. He protected the *well-to-do Judahite* from Philistine raids & predatory animals.

¹ Charles Swindoll: David; pg.69.

- 3. Anyone w/3000 sheep & 1000 goats could ***spare a few animals*** for his men who helped guard them.
- 4. He reviled them(hurled insults at them) - Literal Hebrew, ***the shrieking of a bird of prey as it swoops down to tear its victim.***

- G. (11) Note all the personal pronouns in vs.11 - my bread, my water, my meat, my shearers.
 - 1. Pretty easy to recognize his pride & self-importance.
 - 2. **He didn't even give God credit for making him wealthy!**
 - a) Deut.8:17,18 **Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.'** You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth.

H. **DAVID, TRIES TO RETURN EVIL FOR EVIL!** (12,13)

- I. David was planning on returning ***evil for evil***...& sometimes nothing seems better than getting even, *a.k.a.* sweet revenge! :)

 - 1. It was **impulsive anger** & was willing to **take out** all the males of Nabal's clan.
 - 2. Our ***hurt feelings*** cry out for revenge. And besides...most the world lives this way, so its very ***natural***.
 - 3. **And yet** David had just shown **mercy** to Saul who had treated him far worse than Nabal had!
 - a) How easy it is to lose perspective in the heat of anger.
 - 4. Had David **succeeded**, he would have committed a terrible sin & done great damage to his character & his career, but the Lord mercifully stopped him.
 - a) God's servants need to be on guard ***at all times***.
 - b) 1 Pet.5:8 **Be sober, be vigilant;** because **your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.**
 - 5. Of course God isn't just interested in knocking the gun out of David's hand, but desires to take the poison out of his heart! (*i.e.* ***murder*** vs. ***hate***)

J. **ABIGAIL, RETURNS EVIL WITH GOOD!** (14-44)

- K. **What a brave & wise wife** - what a contrasting character to her husband.
 - 1. She was generous, kind, & lovely...the opposite of her husband.
 - a) Abigail managed to retain her dignity in spite of her grumpy/sour husband!
 - b) **Are you married to someone harsh & evil?** I guess having a rotten spouse is ***no excuse*** for bad behavior of your own!
 - (1) She remains true to ***her husband, her Lord, & herself.***

- (2) Whenever you realize there's nothing you can do, wait for God's power!
 - (a) Your story may not resolve as suddenly & dramatically as Abigail's, but what does remain consistent in all human stories is God!
- 2. She learns of David's **troop movements**, and in violation of **normal rules of conduct** for a woman in the ancient Near East, she **confronts** David & plead for her husband's life.
- 3. She was the mistress of the house & could dispose of the family provisions as she saw fit. **She wasn't stealing** from her husband; **she was paying a debt** that he refused to pay. In order to save a little money, Nabal was foolishly jeopardizing the lives of everybody in his household, especially his own.²
- L. God uses Abigail to prevent David from becoming a murderer.
 1. **She** humbles herself before David & acknowledge him as her lord & king(23,24)
 - a) She uses *lord* 14 x's.
 2. **She** told David of *Nabal's true nature* (23-25).
 - a) In her pre-arranged marriage, were her parents just happy she was marrying a rich guy? No matter that he was a fool?
 - b) Of course marrying a fool can happen today w/o the help of parents! :)
 3. **She** then reminded David of *his efforts to do God's work* (26-29).
 - a) One of my favorite word pictures. Being *bound in the bundle of life*; vs. *Hurled out* like a stone, like David used against Goliath.
 - b) Message - Know this: Your God-honored life is tightly bound in the bundle of God-protected life;
 - c) NLT - Even when you are chased by those who seek to kill you, your life is safe in the care of the Lord your God, secure in his treasure pouch! But the lives of your enemies will disappear like stones shot from a sling!
 - d) In the 2nd part, she's saying, "David, what was taking you, plus 600 men; God could do w/just 1 little pebble." [Then David remembers that *giant* problems can be dealt w/1 stone!]
 4. **She** then spared him future guilt & remorse for doing something he would end up regretting (30,31).
 - a) This is good counsel for all of us next time we want to take revenge on someone.³
 - b) Prov.20:22 Do not say, I will repay evil; wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you.
 - c) Prov.24:29 Do not say, "I will do to him as he has done to me; I will pay the man back for what he has done." [opp. of golden rule!]

² Warren Wiersbe: Be Successful; 1st Samuel 25; pg.138

³ Warren Wiersbe: With The Word; 1st Samuel 25; pg.176

5. **She** doesn't join David's band or set up her husband for a fall. **Tact, faith, & loyalty - 3 qualities of a peacemaker.**
- M. (32) David was so impressed with Abigail's actions, words, & accompanying gift of food, he returned to his camp & didn't take revenge, dismissing his *hot-headed vow!*
1. He was smart to listen to reproof wisely given. **Are you?**
 2. David wrote in Ps.141:5 **Let the righteous strike me; It shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; It shall be as excellent oil;** Let my head not refuse it.
 3. Wow Abigail! Such gracious & tender words as she was "*letting someone have it*"!
 - a) **And David melted!** - If only we could be as sensitive to the H.S. when it comes time to "let someone have it!"
 - b) As F.B.Meyer said, "**She was a cool hand upon a hot head!**"
- N. (36-38) Meanwhile *back at the ranch...* Nabal was getting drunk at a great feast he was hosting.
1. Next morning as he's sipping his **Mr/Mrs T's Bloody Mary Mix** trying to sober up & fight off last night's headache...**she tells him...**& he has a stroke & goes into a comma [sin is only fun for a season, but the bible guarantees that season has an end!]
 - a) Nabal is feasting when judgment is just around the corner!
 - b) Nabal's idea of happiness **wasn't to praise God or feed the hungry, but to eat to the full & get drunk.**
 - c) Sounds like Lk.12:19,20 **I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."** "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with **anyone** who stores up things for **himself** but is not rich toward **God.**"
 - d) God takes his life 10 days later. Sad to say, **he died as he had lived...a fool!**
 - e) Ironically, the one who **had a heart of stone, became as a stone, & died!**
- O. (39-44) David soon learned that **God** can be trusted in the matter of **righting wrongs through vengeance.**
1. What an incredible reminder on the value of **leaving vengeance to God!**
- P. Then out of the goodness of his heart he offers to take care of this widow. :)
1. He had previously married Ahinoam of Jezreel & had lost custody of Michal
 2. He actually ended up with 8 wives. (yes, brought many problems)

a) **Monogamy** was Gods ideal for man from the beginning:⁴

- (1) God made 1 wife for Adam, thus setting the ideal precedent for the race
- (2) Polygamy is 1st mentioned as part of the wicked Cainite civilization.
- (3) God clearly forbid the kings of Israel to multiply wives(only leaders did this)
- (4) The saints who became polygamists paid for their sins.
- (5) Polygamy is usually situated in the context of sin in the O.T.
- (6) He polygamist relation was less than ideal (jealousy among the wives).

3. **Abigail** was the greatest influence for good & helped David to remember that he was God's anointed into whose keeping the kingdom of Israel had been entrusted.⁵

- a) He was so impressed w/her character & wisdom & *being beautiful didn't hurt.*
 - (1) She submits to her king & even offered to **wash his feet**(41). *Oh yah!*
- b) After just his *first meeting* with Abigail his life seems to take on **higher meaning & stronger purpose**.
 - (1) He is no longer a fugitive & outlaw **but** destined to become the great king of Judah & of all Israel.

Q. Yesterday's victories may become today's temptations;
 The sin we shunned yesterday, we may embrace today.
 Sunday's unconditional love can turn to Monday's selfishness.
 A tender, forgiving heart can become punitive & tough.
 And a refusal to retaliate can turn to cold-blooded revenge.⁶

1. You can't live today on yesterday's obedience!

⁴ Norman Geisler in Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties(Gleason Archer); pg.123,124

⁵ Edith Deen; All The Women In The Bible pg; 101

⁶ Charles Swindoll: David; pg.69.