

Theme: In the incident with Nabal and Abigail, David acts foolishly, but God rescues Him through the wise and godly actions of Abigail.

I. Intro - Walking Dead

- A. Fascinating show - not really about zombies
- B. How do people react in hard situations over time?
- C. Every character is up and down over time
- D. The same is true of David - good and bad
- E. Today we see David take a turn for the worse

II. The Background of This Story

- A. Saul has (temporarily) stopped persecuting David
 - 1. David has spared Saul's life - Saul was remorseful
 - 2. Saul acknowledged David would be king [24:20-21]
 - 3. Saul (temporarily) stops pursuing David
 - 4. For the first time, David can settle in a single area
- B. Samuel the great prophet dies

Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. 1 Samuel 25:1

 - 1. He was the unquestioned spiritual leader of Israel
 - 2. He had prophesied the end of Saul's reign
 - 3. He had anointed David as the new king
 - 4. David found protection with him [1 Sam. 18:19-24]
 - 5. A source of spiritual strength & guidance is gone

- 6. But it appears that his ministry was successful - Saul had admitted David would be king

- C. Overall, David is in a place of newfound security - will this change how he behaves?

III. The Story of David, Nabal, and Abigail

- A. The main 'characters'

Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon. ² A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. ³ His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings. 1 Samuel 25:1-3

 - 1. We know David - the anointed one; 'beloved'
 - 2. Nabal
 - a. We are told he is rich - before we know his name!
 - b. 3,000 sheep - about 3 tons of wool at shearing
 - c. Man of wealth may be a source of help for David!
 - d. Nabal - means 'fool' - possibly a nickname
 - e. He is surly and 'mean' - literally 'evil' (רע)
 - f. This word will occur 8x in chapter 25 - key idea
 - g. Will this rich, powerful, evil man be like Saul?
 - 3. Abigail
 - a. The wife of Nabal, the evil fool
 - b. Abigail - means 'my father rejoices'

- c. She is beautiful
- d. More important - intelligent - 'of good understanding'
- e. Good - טוב - will appear 6x in the chapter - key word

4. What will happen in the interaction between these three?

B. David sends blessings of peace to Nabal

David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep. ⁵ So David sent ten young men. And David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal and **greet** him in my name. ⁶ And thus you shall greet him: '**Peace** be to you, and **peace** be to your house, and **peace** be to all that you have. 25:4–6 (ESV)

1. David sends young men with a greeting of peace
2. The greeting is a threefold blessing of peace
3. David also sends a request

'Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. ⁸ Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a **festive** time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.'" 1 Samuel 25:7–8

- a. We took care of your men and sheep for months
- b. We come at a 'festive' time - 'good' - that key word
- c. Out of your abundance please share some with us
- d. David is humble - 'your son' - and counting on the culture of hospitality

C. Nabal answers with a shameful insult

Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. ¹¹ Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?" 1 Samuel 25:10–11

1. No response of blessing and peace - just scorn
2. He accuses David of being a runaway slave
3. He will not share his bounty with them
4. This is a huge insult and great source of shame in the culture of the Ancient Near East
5. Nabal is like Saul - not recognizing who David is nor what he has done for him
6. How will David respond to this insult & shame?

D. David responds with anger, pride, and vengeance

David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word. ¹³ David said to his men, "Put on your swords!" So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies. 1 Samuel 25:12–13

1. There is no mention of David seeking God
2. David's responds on impulse of anger and shame
3. David will have vengeance on the one insulting him
4. David the beloved anointed one is acting like a fool
5. Will David slaughter everyone - like an evil fool?

E. The servants go to Abigail to see if she can help

One of the servants told Nabal's wife Abigail: "David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. ¹⁵ Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. ¹⁶ Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them. ¹⁷ Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him." 1 Samuel 25:14–17

1. The servants realize their great peril
2. David had blessed, but Nabal had insulted
3. They confirm how much 'good' David had done
4. They now fear 'disaster' - 'evil' - will fall on them
5. There is no point in going to Nabal the fool

F. Abigail's wise actions of peace & righteousness (Part 1)

Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. ¹⁹ Then she told her servants, "Go on ahead; I'll follow you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal. 1 Samuel 25:18–19

1. She wasted no time - she knew their peril
2. She took a huge gift for David & his men
3. She does not tell Nabal - he will only stop her
4. Abigail is the only character keeping her wits

G. David's growing anger and lust for vengeance

As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. ²¹ David had just said, "It's been useless—all my watching over this fellow's property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. ²² May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!" 1 Samuel 25:20–22

1. David is becoming more foolish - angry & vengeful
2. He seethes as he thinks of all he did for Nabal
3. He is angry that he did good and Nabal returned evil
4. He is going to kill every male in the household
5. David sounds like the godfather - or Saul!
6. Will David really commit this great sin of bloodshed?

H. Abigail's wise actions of peace & righteousness (Part 2)

When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. ²⁴ She fell at his feet and said: "My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. ²⁵ May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent. 1 Samuel 25:23–25

1. Abigail assumes a position of great humility
2. Abigail takes the blame for Nabal's great sin
3. Abigail reverses Nabal's actions, bringing gifts and acting in humility rather than arrogance

4. She begs David to ignore Nabal the fool
5. Like Christ, Abigail the righteous reverses the evil actions of another and successfully intercedes for the lives of others

Now since the Lord has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to **harm** my master be like Nabal. ²⁷ And let this **gift**, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you. ²⁸ Please forgive your servant's offense, for the Lord will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the Lord's battles. Let no **wrongdoing** be found in you as long as you live. ¹ Samuel 25:26–28

1. Abigail says God has kept David from vengeance
2. God will take care of those who do '**evil**' to you
3. Abigail brought a '**gift**' - literally '**blessing**' to David
4. David - let no 'evil be found in you
5. Don't repay evil for evil - leave it in God's hands!

Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. ³⁰ When the Lord has done for my master every **good** thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel, ³¹ my master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the Lord has brought my master success, remember your servant." ¹ Samuel 25:29–31

1. God will protect you David - from everyone
2. God will fling your enemies away - like the stone you flung at Goliath! Remember that day!!!
3. God will keep His '**good**' promise - you will be king!
4. So don't avenge yourself and kill others

I. David's repentant and righteous response

And David said to Abigail, "**Blessed** be the Lord, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! ³³**Blessed** be your discretion, and **blessed** be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand! ³⁴ For as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has restrained me from **hurting** you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male." ¹ Samuel 25:32–34 ESV

1. David blesses God (NIV has Praise be)
2. David speaks a double blessing on Abigail
3. David blesses God who restrained him from doing '**evil**' (ESV - hurting; NIV - harming)
4. Unlike Saul who refused to repent when God was trying to restrain him, David sees God's hand of restraint and halts his rush into sin.
5. Unlike Saul who refused to hear the voice of Jonathan to leave his sin, David's heeds the voice of Abigail and looks to Yahweh for deliverance.

Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, "Go home in **peace**. I have heard your words and granted your request." ¹ Samuel 25:35

1. Abigail's wise words and actions worked

2. David sends her in 'peace' - first time since vv5-6 (where it occurred 4x)

J. The aftermath - God deals with Nabal and his sin

When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in **high** spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until daybreak. ³⁷ Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. ³⁸ About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died. ¹ Samuel 25:36–38

1. Nabal's heart was 'good' - he was drunk! He corrupts even the word 'good'
2. When Abigail tells him next day, he does not repent - he heart stops within him!
3. His physical reaction is an outward sign of his spiritual state - good news hardens his heart like a stone
4. God finally strikes evil, foolish Nabal and he dies
5. God dealt with Nabal's sin; David did not need to

K. The lesson - leave vengeance to God

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise be to the Lord, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. **He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head.**" ¹ Samuel 25:39

1. God has dealt with Nabal's sin - David did not need to take vengeance himself
2. God kept David from 'evil' & punished Nabal's 'evil'

IV. Applying the Word

A. How do I act when others sin against me?

1. Do I mount up to destroy them like David did?
2. Do I feel the thirst to take vengeance?
3. Do I feel the need to repay evil for evil?
4. If they speak evil of me, do I do the same of them?
5. Today often done by words of slander, gossip, etc.
6. Am I willing to leave it in the hands of God?
7. This is a major teaching in Scripture!

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Genesis 12:2–3

Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you. Proverbs 20:22

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.... ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:18–19, 21

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matthew 5:43–45

B. The Table of justice and mercy

1. Consider the justice and mercy of God at this table
2. Jesus did not exact revenge on we sinners
3. Rather, like Abigail he interceded for peace
4. Here we see how we have been forgiven
5. Here we learn to forgive and love our enemies

The Fugitive's Folly

1 Samuel 25 (1 Samuel 25:32-35)

May 29, 2016

Communion

Genesis 12:2-3

Teaching keywords: biblical characters; anger; correction; sovereignty of God; suffering; wisdom and knowledge

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³² David said to Abigail, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. ³³ May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. ³⁴ Otherwise, as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak.”

³⁵ Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, “Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request.” 1 Samuel 25:32–35