

Picture having a new neighbor move next door. And you get along and start doing things for them. You have them over for dinner and feed them. You watch their kids a couple of times whenever they need a few minutes. You let them borrow some flour and sugar. You keep an eye on the house when they are out of town and water their plants. Sometimes you have even let them borrow some of your tools, which they haven't returned yet but hopefully they will. Then the day comes when you need a favor. You are in a bind and just need someone to watch the kids for an hour. So you walk over to the neighbor's house and ask and they look at you like you are insane. They say they definitely can't do that, it's so rude of you to ask, and they don't even know who you are.

How would you feel in that moment? And what would you want to do to get even?

That is similar to the situation David finds himself in.
Turn with me to 1 Samuel 25.

I. Don't return evil for good (v. 1-13).

This is what we are going to see Nabal do.

David will be blessing him, and then he will respond with greed.

And this is how we can be tempted to act.

And this is certainly how we will see others act.

Verse 1, **"Now Samuel died."**

This marks a significant transition in the book.

Samuel has already retired and largely disappeared from the focus of the story.

But now he is totally gone.

David is more on his own.

And we will have to see how he responds.

David leaves the funeral and heads back into the wilderness.

And that is where he encounters Nabal.

And we hear about him in verse 2, **"There was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. The man was very rich; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He was shearing his sheep in Carmel."**

This man is unbelievably rich.

He has more cattle than one man could possibly need.

And he is in Carmel.

Which we last saw in chapter 15 where Saul spared the Amalekites and then built a monument to himself.

So, we should already expect self-centered behavior.

And verse 3 tells us more about the character of this man.

"Now the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife was Abigail. The woman was discerning and beautiful, but the man was harsh and badly behaved; he was a Calebite."

This man is unrighteous.

He is from a righteous man named Caleb, but he does not act like him.

And they are shearing the sheep.

This would be a big time of celebration and feasting.

Because the sheep are ready to have their wool taken.

This would be similar to harvest time.

And so David sends some young men to Nabal.

They are to greet him in peace.

And they are to ask for some food from the feast.

And they are not just freeloaders.

They aren't random people who want an invite to the party.

David reminds Nabal of what he has done for him.

Verse 7, **"I hear that you have shearers. Now your shepherds have been with us, and we did them no harm, and they missed nothing all the time they were in Carmel."**

Remember contextually where David is.

He and his army of men are wandering in the wilderness.

They don't have farms or a city or cattle of their own.

How would an army normally feed itself?
Especially how would a rogue army of wanted criminals feed themselves?
They would raid and attack shepherds and steal their things.
But David has said they have not done that.
In fact, David has done the opposite.
David and his men have protected the flocks, cattle and shepherds.

And David has done it for free.
They did not protect them and then take some as payment for their protection like the mafia.
They have just protected freely.
And he tells him to check and hear their testimony in verse eight.
And he does not demand payment for the services he has rendered.
Instead, he just asks for whatever they have on hand.

Really David is appealing to Nabal's honor.
He is appealing to his hospitality.
The cultural expectation is that obviously Nabal should feed and house these men.
But David does not demand it as his right.
He shows politeness.

But Nabal answers wrongly.
Verse 10, **"who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters."**
He diminishes and insults David.
He acts like he does not even know who David is.
As if he has not even heard of him.
Which is dishonest and makes no sense.
Nabal is from Judah, which is David's tribe.
He has heard of everything that has been happening.

Verse 11, **"Shall I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers and give it to men who come from I do not know where?"**

Do you think Nabal is doing any work?

Does he seem like a man who gets his hands dirty shearing sheep and getting blood on his hands?

But he refuses to give any food or water.

He will give David nothing.

He acts as if they are just freeloaders.

And what he does is wrong.

It is actually shockingly wrong.

Because hospitality and the culture at this time would expect him to give.

Especially on a feast day.

Especially someone traveling with no home.

Especially someone who has protected him.

David has been sacrificing his time and effort to enrich Nabal.

And he will not give David anything.

Abigail knows it's wrong, the servants know its wrong.

And God declares it is wrong enough for Nabal to die.

We get more details in verses 14 to 17.

Where the servants are telling Abigail about how David's men have acted.

Which seems to imply that Nabal did not ask them.

He didn't care to hear it.

But we see that David's men were very good to the shepherds.

And the shepherds didn't miss anything as long as they were with David's men.

Which does not just imply that David's protected them.

It also seems to say if they ever went without Davis men then they were in trouble.

Not from David's men, but from wild animals and raiders and other others.

They go on to say that David's men were a wall day and night.
They continually protected them.
And all of Nabal servants know that these men deserve to feast with them.
They deserve to share in the fruit of their laborers.

And Nabal has plenty.
He is beyond wealthy and does not need this many sheep or goats.
He is like Ebenezer Scrooge.
He refuses to give to those in need.
Even when he should.
Even when it is expected.
Because he would rather pinch pennies.

And when David finds out, he is ready to fix it.
Verse 13, **"And David said to his men, 'Every man strap on his sword!'
And every man of them strapped on his sword. David also strapped on
his sword. And about four hundred men went up after David, while
two hundred remained with the baggage.'"**

David is ready to kill him.
He is ready to go and take it by force.
We are going to unpack why this is not the right response in a little bit.
But I do want you to see that this is David's immediate response.
It is almost like he is surprised.
He is certainly upset.
And he is ready to make Nabal do the right thing.

There's a couple things I want us to take from this as we apply it to our lives.
First, we obviously should not be like Nabal.
He refuses to give when he has more than enough.
He is rich and yet does not share.
This is exactly why Jesus says it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle and a rich man to enter heaven.
Because when we have riches, we don't want to share it.

And the more that we have the less we want to share.
This is wrong in an ungodly attitude.
It is especially ungodly to return evil to those who have blessed us.

Yet this is what we do to Jesus.
He has richly blessed us.
He has made us rich in all that He has blessed us with.
He has forgiven our debts.
And then He asks for us to give what He has entrusted to us to others.
And we repay his good for evil.
Or we rebel against what God commands.
Far too often, we act just like Nabal.
Maybe not always towards others, but certainly towards the Lord.

II. Forgive those who return evil for good (v. 14-35).

Here is where Abigail enters the story.
And she is not just better than Nabal.
She is righteous.
And she really is the Christ figure in the story.
So much of what she does and how she behaves models Jesus for us.

She hears the report in verses 14-17.
She hears that her husband is **"such a worthless man that no one can speak to him."**

His heart is hard and he refuses to listen.
He will not heed anyone's advice.
He will not do what is right.
And the entire house is in danger.
They are in danger because of their sin and foolishness.

What is Abigail going to do?
She quickly goes to get provisions.
We get details about how much she takes in verse 18.
And it is a ton of food and drink.

And this is just what she quickly threw together.
Which should tell us again how much Nabal has.

And she has a plan already.

She tells the servants **"Go on before me; behold, I come after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.**

She doesn't tell her husband, which is good because he is a fool.

But she sends the gifts ahead of her.

Then she will come after to speak to David.

This reminds me of what Jacob does to Esau.

When he is afraid Esau will kill him, he continually sends gifts ahead.

Except in our story, David is acting like Esau.

And even after the gifts, David is not satisfied.

He is still angry.

Verse 21, **"Now David had said, 'Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good. 22 God do so to the enemies of David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him.'**

He is going to kill everyone.

What Nabal did was wrong. It should be punished.

But this is overkill.

But this is his plan.

He has murder in his heart.

His men are hungry and ready to spill plenty of blood.

But Abigail will stop him.

When she sees David, she humbles herself.

Verse 23, **"When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground."**

She physically humbles herself before him.

The wife of a rich noble man who doesn't have to bow to anyone.

She chooses to bow before the outlaw.
And she gives a long speech.
It is the longest one in the chapter.
And it is worth heeding.
Not just for DAvid, but for us.

She begins in verse 25 by basically saying her husband is an idiot just ignore him.
Then she goes on.

We are to forgive those who do evil because this is what Jesus has done for us.
Abigail models Christ.
Almost everything that she does is what Jesus does for us.
And if that is how God behaves towards us, then we must behave that way towards others.

Verse 26

David has been kept and restrained by God from killing Nabal.
Sometimes God has to hold us back.
And sometimes he puts people in our lives so that they can hold us back.
That's what Abigail does for David here.
27. She gives the present and asked for it to be given to all of the young men who were with him.

And then she goes on and this is where she really acts like Jesus.

Verse 28, **"Please forgive the trespass of your servant. For the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live."**

She calls David to forgiveness.
Instead of bringing justice.
Instead of getting his vengeance, she asked for him to forgive.
And she really asked for forgiveness for herself.

Even though she is not the one who has sinned.

And she gives the reason why David should forgive.

He should forgive because of God's promises.

God is gonna take care of David.

David is going to be the next king.

His household is going to be secure. He doesn't have to worry if somebody slides him or doesn't feed him in his men.

Because God is on his side.

God is watching over him.

And she says because he is doing the Lord's work, he needs to be careful that evil is not found in him.

He does not want to be a king who has this skeleton in his closet.

And then she gives more reasons in verse 29, **"if men rise up to pursue you, and to seek your life, the life of my Lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living in the care of the LORD your God. And the lives of your enemies, he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling."**

There's a whole lot in there.

But she is reminding David of God's promises.

Anyone who seeks David's life will fail.

Which David has seen again and again with Saul.

David's life is bound in God's hands.

His life is in God's care.

God is keeping him for his purposes.

He has nothing to fear from small evil men like Saul and Nabal.

And she reminds David that God will punish.

David's enemies will be thrown from slings.

This should remind us of Goliath.

But also to know that just like Goliath was killed by God, so will David's enemies.

God will avenge him.

God has dealt with David's enemies before, and he will again.

Verse 30, **"And when the LORD has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel, my lord shall have no cause of grief or pangs of conscience for having shed blood without cause or for my lord working salvation himself. And when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant."**

David can forgive even men who do not deserve it.

Because God will keep his promises.

David's future is secure.

And he does not have to work it himself.

He can simply wait for God.

And when that day comes, he does not want to look back with regret.

He does not want to wish that he had been more patient.

Or to wish that he had just trusted the Lord.

He does not want to bloody his hands.

And we need to do the same thing.

Our future is secure as coheirs in the kingdom to come.

We do not have to do things on our own.

We do not have to cause our own salvation.

We can trust Christ.

So relax.

Sit back and be willing to forgive others who do not deserve it.

Because this is the gospel.

We did not deserve forgiveness, yet Christ gave it to us.

We are the fool Nabal.

We see all the goodness that God has done.

How He has protected us and never harmed us.

And then we refuse to do as He asks.

People refuse to give their lives to Him.

And Jesus steps in when we deserve death.
He died on our behalf.
He accepts the blame for the punishment we deserve.
And because we have been forgiven this way, we too should forgive.

III. Wait for God to deal with those who return evil for good (v. 36-44).

We can forgive without worrying about the outcome.
Often we don't want to forgive people, because we want them punished.
We want them to suffer and we do not want to let them off the hook.
But, David needs to remember that punishment is not our job.
That is up to God.

And we will see that God does take care of it.
David responds by accepting Abigail's words and praising her.
"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 woking salvation with my own hand!"

He acknowledges that he needed to trust God.
To trust that God will kill his enemies.
He does not need to worry about it.

And he praises her in verse 34, because without her he would have killed every male in Nabal's household.
Which would have been acting just like Saul had been.

And he tells her to **"go in peeace."**
He will obey and he will grant her petition.
She has been a successful mediator.

Then we see what God will do.
And we do not have to wait long.
Verse 36, **"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."

Nabal is drunk.

He has no idea that he has been saved from judgment.

He would have been like those in Babylon who were drunk at the feast when their judgment and death came in Daniel.

He doesn't realize how close to judgement he was.

And he is just foolishly drunk.

It illustrates more his sinfulness.

Because he has enough to get drunk on while he refused to share.

Abigail wisely waits until the morning.

Verse 37, **"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."**

Once he sobers up, he is informed what happened.

And the heart that was hard.

The heart that was selfish.

The heart that was merry and drunk.

That heart dies.

And he is bascially in a coma.

He cannot move.

And he stays perfectly still, but alive for ten days.

Until at the end of ten days, God kills him.

David did not have to do a thing.

And he recognized it was God.

Verse 39, **"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."**

God took care of it.

God brought vengeance.

This I think is the lesson David is meant to learn.

I think God is trying to teach him this over and over in the wilderness.
That David needs to be patient.
He needs to trust the Lord will deliver.
He does not have to do it on his own.
God will take care of everything.

Especially, God will take care of Saul.
And David finally seems to get it after this instance.
Because he sees it happen once again.

It does get a little disappointing at the end.
David takes Abigail as his wife.
We find out that his wife has been given to someone else.
So it seems like he is divorced or unmarried.
So, we could scratch our heads but say it seems okay that David marries Abigail.
But David makes a mistake.
He also takes another woman in verse 43 to be his wife.
He decides to have two wives.
This is the first sign of David's sexual sin.
And it will get him in big trouble later on.
And his son Solomon will struggle in the same area.
SO we have to be careful in how we talk about David.
And to remember that he was flawed.
And he had serious sin.
He grows in areas of faith like we see here, and then he fails somewhere else.

And like him we will do the same.
The difference between David and Saul is not how much they sin.
It is not even whose sin is worse.
It is that David listens to rebuke and repents.
And Saul doesn't.

And where David succeeds here, is in trusting God's judgment.

And so should we.

We don't have to decide who is worse between Saul and David.

We do not have to stand over others in judgment.

We can trust the Lord to deal with it.

Just as God took care of Nabal, he will take care of Saul.

And just like God took care of David's enemies, He will take care of all of them.

This is one of the reasons we hope and long for Christ's return.

Because we know that He will make all things right.

And one day He will bring judgment and justice against those who do evil.

And those who have wronged us, those who have escaped.

And because of that, we can trust his judgment.

And we can wait patiently for him to come.

Where have we been this morning?

We need to not be like Nabal and do evil to those who do good to us.

We need to listen to Abigail and Christ and forgive those who do evil to us.

And we need to learn like David to wait for God to judge those who do evil.