

1 Samuel 25 — Vengeance Is Mine

October 23, 2022

Have you participated in a leadership training course? If you have been part of one, you know what they talk about in one. Time Management. Goal Setting. Strategic Thinking. The Art of Delegation.

I don't know if you have recognized it, but the second half of the book of 1 Samuel describes God's leadership training course for the man God chose to be king. From the time God chose David to be king in 1 Samuel 16, until David becomes king at the beginning of 2 Samuel, this book describes God's leadership training program for his future king. It is a boot camp experience that is different from most leadership courses. God is teaching David how to handle suffering, how to handle opposition, and how to rely on God, instead of himself, in difficult times.

In chapter 24, part of God's leadership training program for David was the chance to kill King Saul. Saul took a potty break in the same cave where David and his men were hiding. David passed that leadership test. He didn't kill Saul. He didn't take vengeance into his hands, but respected Saul as the Lord's anointed and left vengeance in the hands of God.

Today, in chapter 25, David finds himself in another high-stress situation that is a leadership test from God. David will not handle this one well. God will use another person to calm him down from his anger. They will remind him of what it looks like to honor God and the king in this difficult moment.

There is a lesson for us in this. Sometimes we don't handle difficult situations well and our anger gets the best of us. In the heat of the moment we

plan to make foolish decisions. Many times, God in his grace, will bring a brother or sister in Christ into our lives at those times. That brother or sister in Christ will talk with us and nudge us toward good and godly choices.

This is one of the reasons we need the church. Lone Ranger Christians are not healthy Christians. If we are living the Christian life alone, we will wander into sin far more frequently. God wants us around brothers and sisters in Jesus who know us and that can speak lovingly to us when our anger or foolishness is heading in the wrong direction. That is something all of us need. I know I need those kinds of people in my life when I am angry or upset and find myself wanting to make rash or foolish decisions.

If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. It is great to have you. Take out your outlines. We are in 1 Samuel 25.

Background

Let's begin with a little background. Last week, we reached a critical moment in our story. Since David was secretly anointed king, and the crowds gave more praise to David for his victory over Goliath than they gave to King Saul, Saul became insanely jealous. The one thing Saul fought with every fiber of his being was admitting that David would be king and that David was a better and more fit king than he was. Last week, that finally changed. When David spared Saul's life after his potty break in the cave and David followed that up by showing Saul great respect when he came out of the cave, Saul broke down in tears in front of David and both armies. At that time, in tears Saul openly admitted that David would be king.

And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 1 Samuel 24:20 (ESV)

It seems that once Saul finally admitted that publicly, we have a pivot in the book. The first thing we read in the next chapter is about the death of Samuel. It seems like Samuel was hanging on until the transition from Saul to David began.

Samuel died.

Now Samuel died. And all Israel assembled and mourned for him, and they buried him in his house at Ramah... 1 Samuel 25:1a (ESV)

It says all Israel assembled and mourned for him. Was King Saul among the mourners? We don't know. 1 Samuel 15:35 says Saul saw Samuel on the day of his death. It appears that Saul visited Samuel right before he died. Did David show up for Samuel's burial? Probably not. In the last chapter, Saul and David agreed to part company, but David did not feel safe around Saul. He stayed far in the south of the nation, away from Saul, who is in Gibeah, which was in the north.

It says they buried Samuel in his house in Ramah. That doesn't mean they threw him under a carpet. It probably means he was buried in the back yard in the family garden.

... Then David rose and went down to the wilderness of Paran. 1 Samuel 25:1 (ESV)

Paran was to the south, far away from Saul's influence. This was the same area where the wilderness wanderings took place in the days of Moses. It appears David went there alone. The Bible doesn't tell us why he went there, but this was quite a road trip.

Time passed. Apparently, David returned from the region of Paran, and the next major episode of his life begins.

One of the big problems for David and his militia of 600 men was logistics. That was getting enough food and supplies. If David had a militia of 600 men, it is safe to assume some of them were married



and had children. This means there could have been a thousand or more mouths to feed. That is a lot of food every day! For this food, David and his men relied on the surrounding population to support them and their families. Not far from the Engedi was the wilderness of Maon and the town of Carmel. In Carmel, David and his men ran across an extremely rich man named Nabal.

Nabal's Folly

And 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. Now the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. The woman was discerning and beautiful, but the man was harsh and badly behaved; he was a Calebite. 1 Samuel 25:2–3 (ESV)

To give you a little context, Maon was the region where Saul had pursued David and his men earlier in this book. This was the place where Saul almost captured David and his men when they were on one side of the mountain with Saul and his men on the other side trying to capture them.

Many militias like David's operated like members of the Mexican cartel. They ransacked the people and stole what they wanted from people



and their vulnerable communities. David and his men were different. David ensured the good behavior of his army. This chapter will tell us David made every effort to live in peace with the people in this area. Later we will hear from Nabal's men about how good David's militia was to them. They were like a wall protecting Nabal's sheep and shepherds.

Instead of exploiting the people of this community and their flocks, David and his men protected them. Isn't this also the way we are to interact with the community around us? We also are to be known for doing good and for being good neighbors.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:10 (ESV)

The protection David and his men offered was significant. At that time, there was no police force. Wealthy men with large herds like Nabal's expected thieves and scoundrels to steal from them. They calculated that loss in their spreadsheet. This time, it was different for Nabal. Instead of experiencing his expected losses, there were no losses because David and his men protected the shepherds and the sheep.

As I was thinking about David doing good for his community, that reminded me that this is one of our goals at CrossWinds. Here at CrossWinds, we have seven core values that make us unique. They are defining qualities we hope everyone experiences. One of them is about the way we do outreach.

Outreach - We reach our community



by serving our community.

If CrossWinds Church was to evaporate tomorrow, and no longer be on this corner in Spirit Lake, we want our local community to be sad that we are gone. I am not just talking about Christians. I am talking about the entire community. We want the community to miss all the good things we were doing that would no longer be taking place.

In these verses, we are also introduced to the owner of all these flocks. This is a man named Nabal. In Hebrew, his name means foolish. As we will see, his conduct fits his name. He was harsh. He was unloving toward people. He was selfish. He was rude and badly behaved. He was the kind of guy who always scratched where it itched, even if he was in public. He prided himself in being able to burp the entire alphabet after chugging his beer. You know what kind of person I am talking about. We have all met these kinds of people.

The second character we meet is Nabal's wife, Abigail. She was everything he was not. He was a fool that acted like a slob. She was discerning and very beautiful. The Hebrew word for discerning doesn't just mean she was intellectually smart, but she was relationally and situationally smart. She knew how to handle herself well. Unlike her husband, she had a good way with people.

You may wonder how these guys ended up together. It wasn't a case of opposites attracting. On the contrary. This was probably an arranged marriage. Abigail probably didn't have much say in the matter. She is a lady doing her best in a tough marriage.

David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep. 1 Samuel 25:4 (ESV)

It was sheep-shearing time. It was time for Nabal to make a lot of money. For us this would be harvest season. This was typically a time of abundant goodness. It was a time when you paid your workers their year-end bonuses. You celebrated. You feasted. You gave gifts to the poor. It was a season a little like Thanksgiving and Christmas all rolled into one.

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. And thus you shall greet him: ‘Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. 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. Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David.’ ” 1 Samuel 25:5–8 (ESV)

During the festivities of the sheep-shearing season, David sent ten of his young men to ask for some of Nabal’s food. One thing we should notice is that David was not asking for much food. He only sent ten young men. He was only asking for the food that ten young men could carry back to feed his group of 600 to 1,200 or more people. As an extremely wealthy man with a very large operation, Nabal had more than enough extra food laying around.

In addition, David reminded them that his militia protected them from losses. Nabal’s great financial success that year was in part because of the police protection David and his men provided for the community.

David asked Nabal to just share what he had on hand. David didn’t want anyone to prepare food. He was happy to have a little of the leftovers, the table scraps, and the doggy bag from the harvest-season meal. This request was very reasonable and humble.

When David's young men came, they said all this to Nabal in the name of David, and then they waited. And Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters. 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?" 1 Samuel 25:9–11 (ESV)

This was not the kind of response that David and his men expected. This was a nasty unprovoked insult after all the good David and his men had done. He said, "Who is David? Who is the son Jesse?" Nabal knew David's identity. Everyone knew David's identity. Nabal knew David was the one who beat Goliath. He was a national hero. Earlier in this book, we read about how everyone in the land knew David and loved David, everybody except Saul. Just before this, Saul proclaimed that David would be king. Nabal knew this. David and his small militia were famous for soundly defeating the Philistine army in Keilah. Nabal knew all this. He just wanted to insult David.

Nabal also accused David of being a servant breaking away from his master. Nothing could be farther from the truth. David was not a rebellious man breaking away from Saul. He had been loyal to Saul even while he was being hunted by Saul. Everybody in the land knew this. David just refused to hurt Saul.

The English we have in our Bibles doesn't capture how cutting these insults were to David.

Why didn't Nabal want to share any of his excess food from this feast with David? It is because Nabal was extremely selfish.

He said, "Why should I share *my* bread, *my* water, *my* meat that I killed for *my* shearers?" What is the common word he uses? It is all about me! Nabal didn't

care that David and his men were hungry and scraping to survive. All Nabal could think about was his possessions and his stuff.

So David's young men turned away and came back and told him all this. 1 Samuel 25:12 (ESV)

If you were David, how do you think you would feel after hearing Nabal's answer? After all of that time trying to do good for your community, the wealthiest man around won't even share a few leftover Christmas cookies. In the last chapter, David handled the opportunity to kill Saul well. How will he handle these cutting insults from this fool? Let's find out.

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. 1 Samuel 25:13 (ESV)

David was outraged. We do not know what he was thinking, but his actions speak for themselves. He was going to war. Lots of people were going to die. He was going to fill a bunch of body bags. Nabal really was a fool. It wasn't smart to give an unprovoked insult to the only guy around with a 600-man army.

Before we go any further, let's stop right here because there are a number of good applications.

1. It is easy to fall into sin when we are surprised by harsh behavior or an insult and haven't had time to prepare to handle things well. When it came to Saul and the opportunity to kill him in the Engedi cave, I am sure David thought about that moment before it happened. He probably rehearsed it in his mind many times before it happened. He prayed about how God wanted him to act and knew how God wanted him to act. When the chance to kill Saul presented itself, he knew how to respond. This insult from Nabal was

different. He wasn't expecting it. It was unprovoked and uncalled for. David responded with rage because he was surprised by this and not expecting this. The same is true for us. If we have a chance to prayerfully prepare for a conflict, we generally do better than when we find ourselves unexpectedly surprised by a conflict, such as someone cutting us off in traffic. The problem is how can we better prepare for those surprise insults and relational hurts? Let me share with you what I am working on. When I get up in the morning and am in the shower, my mind is working on how to handle the tough relational moments that will happen in my day. I am praying over them and asking for help with them. One of the new things I am trying is in that time also asking God for grace to respond to the surprise hurts, not just the known hurt. That way when the surprise hurt happens, I remember I have already prayed about it. You see, it is not a matter of "if" I will be hurt by an insult. It is only a matter of "when." Since that is the case, I am trying to pray for the grace to respond to the hurts when it comes. It will come. It is only a matter of when that hurt or disappointment arrives.

2. David's ungodly response to Nabal came immediately after the spiritual success of sparing king Saul. Many times after we have spiritual success and we handle a tough situation the right way, we let our guard down. That is when the devil loves to hit us with sneak attack temptation and we fail miserably because our guard is down and we are relying on our own strength instead of God's. This is always a challenge. When life is falling apart, we are quick to read our Bibles and call out to God in prayer. We are constantly

telling God how much we need his grace and mercy through Jesus. Once life is smooth sailing, we look to ourselves and take our eyes off of Jesus. That is when the most effective surprise temptations take place, and we are apt to fail miserably, just like David.

3. Be careful about expecting respect. It seems clear at this point that David had grown to expect a certain amount of respect to be paid to his name. After all, he was David. He was famous. Everybody loved him. He always escaped from Saul. He just led the king to tears in the last chapter. He beat Goliath and was a national hero! When Nabal insulted his reputation and said David and his men were nobodies, that hurt a lot. It offended David's ego. The problem was David had come to expect respect. When David didn't get respect, his pride launched him into a rage. The same thing can come to us. We can come to expect respect because we have served in a church for many years. We have the notoriety of an important position. This is not to say we shouldn't give respect but if a leader comes to expect respect, his ego will lead him into sin as soon as he is disrespected. The model for how to handle this is Jesus. Jesus was the one who deserved the most respect. He created everything. He was whipped. He was beaten. He was disfigured. He had nails pounded through his hands. He received the most disrespect of anyone, yet how did he respond. He didn't cuss out his executioners. He responded in kindness and patience, not hatred. Look how Peter describes this.

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps... When he was reviled (insulted), he did not revile (insult) in return; when he suffered, he did not

threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 1 Peter 2:21–23 (ESV)

Abigail's Wisdom

But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he railed at them. Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them. They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore know this and consider what you should do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his house, and he is such a worthless man that one cannot speak to him." 1 Samuel 25:14–17 (ESV)

This young man knew the identity of David and the truthfulness of David's claim about protecting Nabal's flock. He also knew that it was worthless to talk to Nabal because he was such a fool that he wouldn't listen to anybody but himself. This young man also knew that if something wasn't done, disaster would result.

Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys. And she said to her young men, "Go on before me; behold, I come after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal. 1 Samuel 25:18–19 (ESV)

Abigail stepped into Betty Crocker mode. She prepared a feast. While this sounds like a feast, it is not much of a feast. This was just the food they had leftover from the sheep-shearing season feast. Notice that it says she had five sheep already prepared. For David's 600 men and possibly over 1,000 mouths to feed, this food would not go far. At least it was a good gesture, and it was what she had on hand.

We do not know if it happened this way, but in the next section, it appears that as Abigail drew near to David's warriors, the terrain permitted her to hear what David was saying before she was seen. If that is true, what she heard revealed that things were much worse than she thought.

And as she rode on the donkey and came down under cover of the mountain, behold, David and his men came down toward her, and she met them. 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. 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." 1 Samuel 25:20–22 (ESV)

The fierceness of David's words are lost in the translation. David was in an outrage. We would say he was "Going Off" at Nabal's insult. His plans were not just to kill Nabal, but to kill every male in his household. That was a lot of men.

In the last chapter, David was filled with remorse after cutting off just the corner of King Saul's robe because he had so much respect for God's anointed king, even though he was a murderer. Here, after one insult from a foolish man, David was planning on not just killing the man but on killing all the men in his family.

Folks, just because we respond rightly in one moment is no guarantee we will respond rightly in the next moment.

This is why we need community. This is why we need one another. This is why we need to be not just in the large gathering of the church where we talk to one another on the surface, but we need to be in a Life Group or an Iron Man group where people can talk to us candidly about issues in our life they see developing in us.

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17 (ESV)

Here God sends someone to talk David off the edge of his murderous rage. It is Abigail, Nabal's wise wife, who will diffuse the situation and save the day.

This speech is the centerpiece of the chapter. As we go through it I will pull out some lessons we can learn from it about how to talk to people when they are angry and upset and how we can better talk them out of their rage.

1. Take a position of humility. Show respect.

The first thing we see is that Abigail approached David with the kind of respect he did not receive from her Nabal, her husband.

When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. 1 Samuel 25:23 (ESV)

Whenever we want to talk to someone who is angry or want to make a sinful choice, we must start in a posture of humility, not pride. Never start by saying, "I am better than you." Never start by saying, "Let me tell you what you are doing wrong." Never start by saying, "You are so stupid." That approach will fail every time. Always start by being humble and kind. Go low and humble yourself. If you are in a marriage where there is tension, don't begin by saying, "That was really stupid." Begin by saying, "I am sorry. I probably misunderstood you. I know you were probably trying to do the right thing but I took it the wrong way." Humble words with a soft approach is the only way to begin a conversation with an angry person that can begin to talk them off the ledge of making a rash decision.

2. Begin the conversation by confessing my own sin, not pointing out the other person's sin.

She fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant. Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. But I your servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent." 1 Samuel 25:24–25 (ESV)

Abigail begins the conversation not by pointing out what David is doing wrong in his rage, but by taking as much of the problem as she reasonably can on herself. Nabal was not in charge of the kitchen. If your young men had just talked to me, things would have been different. This situation is my fault.

This is so important for diffusing a tense situation. Abigail doesn't begin by pointing fingers at David and saying, "How dare you be angry." She owns as much of the problem as she can. She deflects the problem to herself and protects other people.

Here is what we can learn. In a conflict, be the first one to own the guilt and absorb the issue. Don't start by pointing fingers. In a marriage, you never start by telling off your spouse and focusing on their issues. Always begins by de-escalating the conflict by saying, "I am sorry. Here is where I am at fault. These are my issues." Even if our issues are small, we start by owning them anyway. This disarms people. If we own our sin, it encourages the other party to own their sin. That is what Abigail did with David. That is what we also must do in a conflict.

3. Offer to make restitution if I have done wrong.

[And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. 1 Samuel 25:27 \(ESV\)](#)

Abigail didn't just admit that her husband treated David poorly, but she offered to make things right. She didn't just ask for forgiveness, but she went out of her way to restore what her husband's sin took away. The Bible is clear that genuine confession of sin is always accompanied by sincere attempt to correct the wrongs done by sin.

We see this in the New Testament. We can look at the example of Zacchaeus.

And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." Luke 19:8 (ESV)

Zacchaeus didn't simply apologize for stealing from people. He went out of his way to restore anything he had stolen.

In the same way, when we are trying to defuse a conflict, we must not just be humble. We must not just be quick to own our portion of the guilt. We also must be quick to restore anything that sin damaged and heal anything sin broke.

In a marriage, if you have hurt your spouse because you work too many hours. If you are away too often and are not giving the spouse the attention they deserve, don't simply say you are sorry. Make a plan to restore to them the time you have taken from them. Plan a vacation to get away, just the two of you. If that doesn't work, make a regular date night. Don't merely say you are sorry. Take the extra step to restore whatever your sin has taken away.

4. Remember that God works to protect us from our sinful choices. He often does that through other believers.

Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, because the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal. 1 Samuel 25:26 (ESV)

Notice Abigail's words speak about the past. Hasn't the Lord restrained you from bloodguilt and saving with your own hand in the past? Aren't you glad God kept you from acting in anger and carrying out your rash decisions in the past? If that is true, maybe God is doing the same thing right now.

For those of us who are married, we simply need to look at our marriages. Isn't it true that there were times in our marriage when we were hopping mad? Isn't it true that we thought terrible things and considered drastic actions? Today, we thank God for restraining us and keeping us from carrying out those rash choices. If we are thankful we didn't carry out the choices we made in our anger in the past, chances are we will be thankful if we don't carry out the impulsive choices we make in our anger today.

Many times God used godly friends to talk us off the ledge in the past. We must be open to the fact that he is probably going to try to use godly friends to try to talk us out of a rash choice today.

Thank God for his restraining grace and for him sending other people to help restrain us from our crazy choices.

5. Remember that God's people are to be known for their forgiveness, not for evil.

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. 1 Samuel 25:28 (ESV)

Our reputation should be one of forgiveness, not of revenge and evil. Abigail heard that God had chosen David as the Lord's king. She believed God would lift him up to be the next king. On the basis of God promising to get David to the kingship, she appealed to David to choose to forgive Nabal not to get revenge on Nabal. God will take care of getting David where he wants David to be without David needing to take revenge. David doesn't need to ruin his reputation by making an evil choice. God will also get us where he wants us to be in spite of whatever sin has been done to us. That sin that is done to us can not

thwart God's purposes for us. This means there is no need to worry about getting even. Our job is to show the same kind of mercy, forgiveness, and grace that God has shown to us to other people. We leave vengeance in God's hands.

6. Remember that God promises to protect his people. We don't need to take revenge to protect ourselves.

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. 1 Samuel 25:29 (ESV)

Abigail reminded David that his life was under God's care and protection. God would protect him. He didn't need to protect himself. God would fight for him and protect him. God will throw his enemies away from him like a rock coming out of a sling. After killing Goliath, David knew all about rocks coming out of slings. If God promises to protect David, he doesn't need to go out of his way to get revenge. He can leave revenge in God's hands.

While we are not King David and are not designated by God as Israel's future king, there is still truth here for us. God promises to protect us. Nothing will happen to us that is outside of God's good plan for us. That doesn't mean life will be easy. It means we do not need to protect ourselves and get revenge against people. We are to show love, mercy, forgiveness and grace to people, like God has shown those same things to us through Jesus. God puts showing love, mercy, grace, and kindness in our hands. We leave vengeance in God's hands.

7. Those who carry out revenge will live with regrets.

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.” 1 Samuel 25:30–31 (ESV)

Anytime we carry out revenge and try to get even with someone, that can be in our marriage or in our work, we will live with regrets. We will wish we hadn't done it. David, if you carry out your revenge, you will only live to regret it.

In marriage, if things get heated? in the relationship and we start thinking of ways to punish our spouse by withholding affection or time or our heart or forgiveness, we will look back and regret it. It always works that way.

The big point Abigail was making is not just David, but each of us must remember to leave getting even in the hands of God and not carry those things out. The Bible talks about this in many other places.

Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.’ Deuteronomy 32:35 (ESV)

The Bible also clearly talks about this in the New Testament.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” Romans 12:19 (ESV)

As God's people, we are to be known for forgiving people, not getting even with people. God tells us to leave vengeance in his hands. Showing mercy, grace, and forgiveness is what he leaves in our hands.

Incidentally, last week someone asked me about how this applies to criminals in society. Does this mean we should let all the criminals out of jail? No, it doesn't. This is talking about personal relationships. The Bible tells us that one of the roles of our government is to keep evil in check. The government has a right to arrest people and keep them in jail as they perform their role of creating a

safe and peaceful society. Paul speaks about this in Romans. Speaking about the government, he says...

...for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Romans 13:4 (ESV)

What will happen? Will David brush Abigail aside and continue in his murderous rage? Will he listen to her and calm down? Lives hang in the balance. Let's find out what happens.

David's Response

And David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! 1 Samuel 25:32 (ESV)

Boy am I thankful God sent you to meet me.

Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand! 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 25:33–34 (ESV)

David thanks God for Abigail speaking truth to him in a gentle and grace-filled way that helped him back down from this heart-pounding moment. He thanked God for sending such a godly woman to speak to him the truth he needed to hear.

Then David received from her hand what she had brought him. And he said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. See, I have obeyed your voice, and I have granted your petition." 1 Samuel 25:35 (ESV)

When Abigail took the initiative, it completely changed the situation when she humbly, respectfully and truthfully talked David out of his sin.

This is a great reminder of why we need community. This is a reminder about why we need other people to remind us about the truths of God that when we are upset it is easy to forget.

This is one of the reasons it is important to be a regular part of the church and to get to know people, not just attend church.

What follows is an interesting epilogue.

Nabal's Loss and David's Gain

And Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king... 1 Samuel 25:36a (ESV)

We should expect this. Nabal was a party animal.

...And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until the morning light. 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. 1 Samuel 25:36b–37 (ESV)

When Abigail came home, Nabal was completely drunk. She didn't bother wasting her time talking to him until he sobered up in the morning. When she told him how close he and the entire household came to death, he had a stroke. He didn't last long in that state.

And about ten days later the LORD struck Nabal, and he died. 1 Samuel 25:38 (ESV)

Notice that the stroke did not kill him. God killed him. David didn't have to take revenge. God took revenge. What a reminder about the shortness of life. Nabal had all kinds of riches but he left it all behind. The one thing he left behind that was more important than his riches was his reputation. I bet you he wished he could have changed it.

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.”.... 1 Samuel 25:39a (ESV)

David thanked God for carrying out revenge and being a God of justice, but he also thanked God for using Abigail to restrain him and carrying out revenge himself. He had no regrets for choosing to leave those hurts in the hands of God.

...Then David sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her as his wife. When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her, “David has sent us to you to take you to him as his wife.” And she rose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, “Behold, your handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.” And Abigail hurried and rose and mounted a donkey, and her five young women attended her. She followed the messengers of David and became his wife. 1 Samuel 25:39b–42 (ESV)

Now that Nabal was dead, David quickly asked Abigail to be his wife. Do you know why he wanted her as a wife? I don't think it was because she was a wealthy widow, I think it was because she was a very wise and godly woman who had the courage and tact to talk to David and steer him away from sin. David said this is the kind of woman I need in my life!

Ladies, Abigail is a great model of what a godly wife looks like. Single guys, this is the kind of woman to look for.

At this point, we are given more details of David's marriage.

David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and both of them became his wives. 1 Samuel 25:43 (ESV)

David married more than one woman. While it was culturally acceptable for kings and powerful people to have more than one wife, that is not the way God intended marriage to work. He intended it to be one man and one woman in marriage for life.

...and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? Matthew 19:5 (ESV)

God warned kings not to take more than one wife.

And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold. Deuteronomy 17:17 (ESV)

In the future, David's lust for women will cause him a lot of trouble. It will lead to great trouble, especially with a woman named Bathsheba. Polygamy will lead to the destruction of David's kingdom. I bet he wished he had followed God's plan and limited himself to one wife like God originally intended.

What about Michal, the wife who courageously risked her life to save David.

Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was of Gallim. 1 Samuel 25:44 (ESV)

Applications

1. Like David, when people hurt us, it is easy to want to carry out revenge. That can be physical injury, legal revenge, socially snubbing, gossip, or libel on Social Media. As God's people, we leave revenge in God's hands. In time, God will carry out justice. Our job is to show forgiveness, love, and mercy, just like God has shown forgiveness, love, and mercy to us. This includes our enemies.
2. It is on the heels of spiritual success that we are most vulnerable to spiritual failure.
3. God does not want Lone Ranger Christians. We need the church. God uses other Christians to help us see our sins and wisely counsel us away from sin.

4. Am I like Nabal, who was too foolish and proud to listen to gentle correction?

Am I like David who valued gentle correction from someone less than him?



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