

1 Samuel 25 – Vengeance Is Mine

October 23, 2022

Background

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)

1. 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)

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

2. 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)

- David was a good neighbor. He did well for his community.

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)

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

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)

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)

So David's young men turned away and came back and told him all this.

1 Samuel 25:12 (ESV)

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)

- It is easy to fall into sin when we are not prepared for it. Each day we need to prepare for the temptations we don't know are coming, not just the ones we do know are coming.
- Some of our greatest temptations will come on the heels of spiritual success.
- Be careful about expecting respect. The more we expect respect, the more likely it is that we will have a sinful response to those that hurt us.

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, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 1 Peter 2:21–23 (ESV)

3. 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)

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)

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)

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

How do I talk to someone struggling with anger or sin?

A. Take a position of humility. Show respect.

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)

B. 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)

C. 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)

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)

D. 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)

E. 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)

F. 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)

G. 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)

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)

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)

...(government) 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)

4. 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)

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)

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)

5. 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)

...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)

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

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)

...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)

David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and both of them became his wives.

1 Samuel 25:43 (ESV)

...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)

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)

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 was willing to receive gentle correction from a brother or sister in the faith?**

Life Group Questions

1. Read 1 Samuel 25. What is one thing you didn't understand from the message? What stuck out as important?
2. What circumstances have you experienced with family, friends, or at work that tempted you to take revenge either physically, socially, with your words, or on social media? Read Romans 12:17-21. How do these verses help you overcome that temptation? Does this mean a Christian can never sue in a court of law?
3. Can you think of times when God used a brother or sister in Christ to protect you from making a sinful or unwise action? Thank God for his protecting grace through other people! What does this tell you about the importance of the church and making time to have close Christian friends that can honestly speak to us about our choices?
4. Read Psalm 18:1-3. What does it do for your heart to know God promises to defend us?
5. Read 1 Samuel 25:23-31. What can we learn from Abigail's speech about how to talk to someone who is angry and committed to pursuing a sinful or unwise choice?
6. In what ways does Abigail exhibit the characteristics of the wise wife found in Proverbs 31:10-31?
7. Read 1 Samuel 25:36-44. How did God hand out justice against Nabal? What does this story teach us about why it is important to quickly repent of our sins? What does this story teach us about the times God delays handing out justice against sin? (See 2 Peter 3:9)