

A fool and a wise woman

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[0:00] Let's pray and ask God to help us as we look at his word together this morning. Let's pray. Our Father God, thank you that in you we are safe and secure.

! Thank you that you have bled and died for us. Thank you that you will raise us to endless life. With you. And thank you that you speak to us through your word to help us to hold on fast to you. And we pray that you would indeed do that this morning. You would speak to each one of us and change us, we pray. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. I wonder what you think of when I say the word temptation.

Temptation. Temptation. If you were to look on Google images, if you were to Google that word, one common image is one like this.

[1:05] An apple. An apple. A snake. A snake. Which takes us back to the very beginning of time. To the garden of Eden.

Where Adam and Eve were tempted by the serpent. Did God really say? He said to them. They heard the voice of temptation and they gave into it and they ate the fruit. They saw they were naked.

They felt their shame before the Lord who they had sinned against. And now humanity has a constant struggle with temptations.

You and I face temptations week by week, day by day. Temptations to rebel against God and his good ways and to follow our own sinful desires.

[2:08] Temptation is real. It's a real danger. A real threat in our lives. David last week faced a bit of a temptation of his own.

As he had an opportunity, such a real and clear opportunity to take the life of Saul, the king. Who had been after David's life for a long time.

David was on the run from King Saul for such a long time. And now he had this opportunity. Staring at him right in the face. Kill him, David. But he resolved not to take the life of Saul, the Lord's anointed.

He did cut off a corner of his robe and he felt guilty for that. But he didn't go through with killing him as he could have done.

Get to the throne quickly. And now we get to chapter 25. In fact, last week as we were coming to the end of last week's chapter, Saul and David sort of felt like they had reconciled together.

[3:25] And we were kind of thinking that would be a nice place for this to end. And maybe Saul to say, well, you go and be a king now. And it would have been a lovely little happy ever after.

But that's not quite how it goes. There's quite a few more chapters in one. Samuel, Saul is still king. And David is not there yet. And now as we arrive in chapter 25, it's a significant day because Samuel has died.

Verse 1, now Samuel died and all Israel assembled and mourned for him. And they buried him at his home in Ramah. And then David moved down into the deserts of Mahon.

A significant day. Samuel, the person who this book is named after, has died. We saw Hannah, his mom, at the beginning of the book, praying earnestly.

God, would you bless me with a child? And God did in his grace. And Samuel was greatly used among the Lord's people as a prophet.

[4:37] Someone who spoke the words of the Lord to the people. He warned them of the consequences of choosing a king, a king like Saul.

He then anointed David as the new Lord's anointed king. And David had spent time with Samuel, learning from him. But now Samuel has died.

And David, no doubt mourning, is now without Samuel, without the prophet of the Lord. And after the funeral, he finds himself wandering around in the desert, in the wilderness.

And as we'll see, he faces a bit of a test. He has some temptation.

And when we get there, we're going to see David, to see whether he's going to prove himself to be a king who's following the word of the Lord.

[5:41] Or is he going to be a king a bit like Saul? Well, before we get into that, and before we get into the story proper, the chapter introduces us to two characters, Nabal and Abigail, in verse 2 and 3.

Let's just read those verses to help us see who they are. They say opposites attract.

In fact, these two very much are opposites. Nabal, whose name literally means fool. And if you were an Israelite reading this chapter, maybe you'd have laughed to yourself when you read that his name was Nabal, a fool.

Is married to an intelligent and beautiful woman, Abigail. But we do see that Nabal is a very wealthy fool.

He's got thousands of animals, 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. He's got a lot of wealth.

[7:14] And it also tells us a little bit about his character. We already get a sense of it. He's called fool. But at the end of verse 3, he was surly and mean in his dealings.

It also tells us that he was a Calebite. Almost a comment you could pass over very quickly. But Caleb in the scriptures, he's held up as a man of faith, a man who was bold in following the Lord. The Lord even described Caleb as someone who followed him wholeheartedly. Nabal, as we'll see, doesn't really seem to be doing that.

Proving that just because your family history might look good doesn't mean that you necessarily are going to be good like them. And his wife, as we've mentioned, is called Abigail, an intelligent and beautiful woman.

You kind of have wisdom and folly in this relationship. We're going to divide this long chapter. We'll get through it as quick as we can.

[8:27] But three headings for us. Three R's. The request, the response, and the resolution. So firstly, the request.

We find David, as we said, in the wilderness. He's there in verse 4, in the wilderness. And he hears about Nabal. Verse 4, while David was in the wilderness, he heard Nabal was shearing his sheep. His many sheep. His 3,000 sheep. How long would it take to shear 3,000 sheep? If you have any guesses, let me know afterwards.

And David hears about Nabal. He knows he's a wealthy chap. And he thinks, well, this is a good chap to be friends with. Good chap to be making requests of.

And so he instructs his men to go and speak to him. To go and really get some food. They're in the wilderness. There's probably not much food there.

[9:29] This guy has masses of it. So go and make a request to him. So verse 6, his instructions to his servants are this. Say to him, long life to you.

Good health to you and to your household. And good health to all that is yours. A polite beginning. Long life. Good health. Good health to you.

Pretty polite request. And here's the details of it. Verse 7. Now I hear that it is sheep shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not ill-treat them.

And the whole time they were at Carmel, nothing of theirs was missing. Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore, be favorable towards my men since we have come at a festive time.

Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them. And all the time his shepherds were shearing the sheep in the wilderness.

[10:29] David and his men, they didn't ill-treat them at all. They were generous to them. And so please, please give your servants and David whatever you can find for us.

Whatever food you can sort of rustle together. We'd be grateful for it. A bit like if someone was coming to join us at the end of our church lunches.

We have masses of food. Someone came in and said, have you got some to spare? I'm sure we'd be willing to give a little bit away. A reasonable request if we have plenty of food left to give. Quite a reasonable request for David and his men to make. David is in need of provisions for him and his growing band of followers. And God is interested, isn't he, in supplying the needs of his people.

And Nabal has the resources. God uses different means. And maybe this is the way God would provide for them. So let's have a look at the response.

[11:31] And we're going to see the responses of four people in this chapter. First of all, we need to see Nabal's response to this request. Verse 10, 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. It seems extraordinary to think that Nabal wouldn't have any idea who David is.

Who is this David? David's name was literally chanted on the streets. Saul has killed his thousands. David his tens of thousands. His name was everywhere.

Not knowing who David is would be like us not knowing who the prime minister is. I take it that Nabal does know who David is.

But I think he's responding in a way a bit like maybe Pharaoh responded to Moses in the book of Exodus. When Moses went up to him and asked him to let his people go, Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord that I should obey him and let Israel go?

[12:45] Of course, Pharaoh knew that Yahweh was the God of the Israelites, But I'm not going to listen to him. I'm not going to obey him. Who is he that he should have any authority or place in my life?

Nabal, the fool, is responding in a similar way. Who is this David? Who is this Lord's anointing? That I should give him anything of mine.

He's a bit of an anti-Christ, a bit like Saul has been. So is Nabal, anti-the Lord's anointing. And notice more of his response in verse 11.

It is mine.

It's not yours. He doesn't recognize, yes, the Lord's blessed me with all this. So I'll bless David and his men with that. No, it's a selfish response.

[13:57] He wants to keep it all for himself. And so the response is a firm no. No, I'm not going to give you anything.

He has the wealth and resources to do it, but he says no. He is anti-David. He is anti-the Lord's anointing. So what about David's response?

How's David going to respond to this? Well, he said, no, that's frustrating. Let's find food from somewhere else. Verse 12.

Let's see what he did. David's men turned round and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word. And David said to his men, each of you strap on your sword.

So they did. And David strapped his on as well. About 400 men went up with David. Well, 200 stayed with the supplies.

[14:59] Earlier, David was saying, good health to ye, Nabal. Now he's strapping on his sword and getting his men to do the same and heading up to kill Nabal, to get him out of the way so he can get the supplies.

Hang on, David. What are you doing? This is the sort of thing Saul would do. Remember a few chapters ago when Saul found out Abiatha, the priest, was giving David bread.

And Saul ended up ordering all the priests to be slaughtered. Irrational. David, what you're doing is a bit like what Saul might do.

I wonder if you've ever heard the word hangry. I wonder if you've ever felt hangry. Apparently it became an official word in 2018. It means to be hungry.

And as you feel more and more hunger, you feel irritable and bad tempered. To confess, I've definitely felt this before. But a bit of food that will calm you down.

[16:10] I think David's feeling a bit hangry here. He wants the food. He wants the supplies that Nabal has. And he is ready to go off and kill him for it. He's thinking about his stomach.

Rather than thinking about loving his neighbor. So far in 1 Samuel, I guess we could say that David's been behaving.

He's doing pretty well. Sure, he lied. A bit. But beyond that, and especially when you compare him with Saul, he's a pretty good chap.

But he is also like us. Sure, compared to Saul, he looks like a great guy to be king.

But he's like us. He is sinful. He is selfish. The temptation there for him to get the food by any means he can.

[17:12] Even if it means killing the man to get the food. It's there. And it's real. And it's dangerous. David is like us.

David is sinful. He is selfish. Maybe none of us are going to head off from church to kill someone to get our Sunday lunch. Maybe that's not a real temptation for us.

But there are other temptations, aren't there? Maybe we'll happily think of fiddling our expenses at work. Try to get a bit more money.

Maybe we'll willingly say lies in order to protect our reputation. Maybe to gratify our sinful sexual desires, we'll look for gratification in the wrong places.

Temptation is there. And it's a real danger for all of us. And David is like us. He is sinful. And he is selfish.

[18:19] And David could excuse his sin if he wanted to. He was hungry. He was irritable, hungry. We can excuse our sin. We were lonely.

We needed some relief. We were bored. We were sad. But it's still sin. And that's what he chooses to do.

That's the way he intends to go in verses 12 and 13. But before he gets there, two others get involved in this.

And I think these two other characters are a sign of God's providential grace to David in the midst of real temptation.

So first person who we see is Nabal's servant. How does he respond to all this? Well, he goes off and tells Nabal's wife, Abigail.

[19:16] Verse 14. One of the servants told Abigail, Nabal's wife, David sent messengers from the wilderness to give our master his greetings.

But he hurled insults at them. Yet these men were very good to us. They did not ill treat us. And the whole time we were out in the fields near them, nothing was missing.

Night and day they were all around us. And the whole time they were herding. We were herding our sheep near them. 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. And no one can talk to him. The servant explains and tells of the good of David and his men.

And the requests, the polite requests that they made. But explains that Nabal hurled insults at them. And as he describes in verse 17, Nabal is somebody that nobody can talk to.

[20:23] But if anybody can do anything, maybe his wife can talk to him. Maybe his wife can do something to help in this situation.

Maybe he'll listen to her. The voice of intelligence. The voice of wisdom. And so well done to that servant who steps in.

It's been a really brave thing to do. And surely also a part of God's providential grace. So that's Nabal's servant.

He gets a brief appearance in this chapter. And now we move to Abigail. And Abigail, well she moves quickly. She hears the disaster is over, hanging over her husband.

Verse 18, Abigail acted quickly. Time is short. David and his men are coming. And so what does she do? As she acts quickly, well the rest of verse 18 says this.

[21:28] She took 200 loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five sears of roasted grain, 100 cakes of raisins, and 200 cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on the donkey.

They're a wealthy family. And Abigail loads up the supplies. Loads up the things that David and his men were probably wanting.

And she heads out with her servants to go. Go. And the plan works rather well.

She's intelligent. She's wise. And this plan is a wise plan. Verse 20, As she came riding on her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending towards her, and she met them.

The plan was working. She met them on the way, on the journey, with the supplies. They're going to meet one another. And we get a bit of insight into what David has just been telling his men, just before they meet one another.

[22:45] Verse 21, David said, May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one of male of all who belong to him.

He has paid me back evil for good. I've done good to him. Now he's doing evil to me. And now David is intent on doing evil back.

Are you really any better, David? And so Abigail finally gets to David.

She gets off her donkey, bows with her face to the ground, a sign of respect towards David. And she begins to plead for the life of her foolish husband.

Verse 25, it says this, Please pay no attention. My Lord, to that wicked man, Nabal. He is just like his name.

[23:55] His name means fool, and folly goes with him. And as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my Lord sent.

So Abigail begins to plead for the life of her husband. I know he's a fool, but please have mercy on him. And she pleads to David based on past experience.

Verse 26 with David. And now, my Lord, as surely as the Lord your God lives, and as you live, since the Lord has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, may your enemies and all who are intent on harming you, my Lord, be like Nabal.

Possibly sort of helping David to think back to the last chapter where he refrained from taking the life of Saul. You've refrained from bloodshed.

And you have an opportunity to do the same here. Treat Nabal well, please, David. Please be merciful. And by the way, David, here's a gift for you.

[25:12] Verse 27. And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my Lord, be given to the men who follow you. Here's a gift. It's a generous gift.

We saw it being loaded onto the donkeys. Lots and lots for David and his men to have and to enjoy. Now, Abigail goes on in her pleas, please.

But this time, she appeals to him as the future king. So have a look. Verse 28. Please forgive your servant's presumption.

The Lord your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my Lord because you fight the Lord's battles. And no wrongdoing will be found in you as long as you live.

David, you're the king in waiting. May the Lord help you to fight his battles. She seems to be on the Lord's side, on David's side.

[26:15] And she encourages David as the Lord's anointed. And she encourages him further down with a wonderful encouragement. Verse 29. Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my Lord will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God.

But the lives of your enemies will hurl away. He will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. And possibly this is taking shepherd imagery, a bundle that a shepherd may have had.

You live securely in that, in the bundle of the Lord, the bundle of the living Lord. And as for your enemies, well, the Lord will deal with them.

The Lord will hurl them away as from the pocket of a sling. David, we know, use slings looking after a sheep to fight off enemies. The Lord will do that with you.

Your life is secure in him. You are the Lord's anointed king. An encouragement in the Lord.

[27:34] A bit like the encouragement David received a few chapters ago from Jonathan encouraging him in the Lord. Know that you are safe and secure in the Lord.

He will hold you fast as we sang. And know that the Lord will deal with your enemies. And so David, consider carefully what you're wanting to do.

Be a king with integrity. Don't be a king with blood on your hands. The final words here to David are this, verse 30 and 31.

When the Lord has fulfilled for my Lord every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him ruler over Israel, my Lord will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself.

And when the Lord your God has brought my Lord success, remember your servant. David, you're going to be king.

[28:40] Don't have the conscience of bloodshed, of shedding the life of Nabal for refusing your requests. Don't take your fellow Israelites life.

Don't have it on your conscience. Be a king with integrity. Wise words from Abigail. So is David going to listen to wisdom?

Or is he going to listen to the voice of temptation? You could kill this man. He's not done what you want him to do. He's paid back your good for evil.

What is David going to do? Well, verse 30T, David said to Abigail, praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me.

May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. David recognizes the hand of the Lord in Abigail coming to him.

[29:51] Praise be to God. You have stopped me from doing this wicked thing. Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, for his providential grace to David in this real temptation to take this man's life.

What David has been faced here in these verses where there's a temptation in the wilderness to get some food and to take shortcuts by killing the wealthy fool for this food.

And if you were to fast forward to the New Testament, to the Lord Jesus, who was David's greater son, you would read of him having spent 40 days and 40 nights in a wilderness, in a desert place. And at the end of it comes the tempter, comes Satan in his weakness and tempts him, saying, if you are the son of God, tell these stones to become bread.

Satan was giving him a shortcut to food. You're the son of God. You can do what you want. Just conjure up some bread. You need it. You're hungry. Jesus stood firm against temptation.

[31:14] It is written, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Jesus didn't give in to temptation.

He didn't even think of giving in to temptation. Unlike Jesus, David doesn't think to resist. He gets his sword ready.

He gets his men to get their swords ready and goes to try and get this food by any means. He has murderous and jealous thoughts. And if it wasn't for Abigail, he would have probably murdered Nabal all to get some food.

The Lord's anointed king would have had blood on his hands. And all of us know what temptations are like. We know the lure of temptation's power.

And all of us have given in to those temptations. They've caused us hurt and pain and caused that to others as well. But in Jesus, we see the one who has stood firm against temptation in the wilderness.

[32:29] In Jesus, we see the Lord's anointed without sin. the perfect king to reign on David's throne forever.

Someone who did shed blood but his own blood for you and for me, for all our sin. Temptations do come our way like they have come David's way in this chapter.

But we have hope when they do in the Lord Jesus who has stood firm against temptation. Another verse from the Bible, many of us will know it well.

1 Corinthians 10 verse 13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind and God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.

But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. There is hope when we face temptations.

[33:38] We can turn to the Lord knowing that because of Jesus we have someone we pray to who understands what temptations are like. And we can plead with him and cry out to him Lord you've said that you won't that you will provide a way out of temptation.

That you would help me to endure it. Stand strong. Stand firm. Lord help me by your spirit I pray. We have hope in temptation.

temptation. And for David he provided Abigail as kind of his way out of temptation. For us in our temptations maybe through the word of a brother or sister in Christ we will find a way out. Maybe we need to meet with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ one or two and share with them. Be accountable for all the different temptations we struggle with.

Regularly I'll go on a run with a Christian brother in Christ and we can share with one another very openly and honestly and pray for one another. We're not alone in the fight.

[34:51] We have a saviour who stood firm against temptation. We have brothers and sisters around us in Christ. We must move on to the resolution.

And we see two things. a funeral and weddings. A funeral and weddings. Verse 36. 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. The foolish Nabal foolishly got drunk. And so Abigail wisely told him nothing at all until daybreak.

And 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. About ten days later the Lord struck Nabal and he died.

Abigail was right in what she said to David. Your life is secure and God will deal with your enemies. And here in these verses he was bringing Nabal down to a sudden and sad end.

[36:03] His heart failed him he became like a stone and about ten days later the Lord struck Nabal and he died. No one can stand against the Lord and his anointed king.

Abigail surely knew the wisdom of Romans 12 before it had been written to not repay anyone evil for evil be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.

Do not take revenge my dear friends but leave room for God's wrath for it is written it is mine to avenge I will repay. Paul says in Romans do not repay evil with evil.

Nabal has repaid good with evil but David you don't need to do the same. Abigail helped him to understand it.

The Lord will deal with the wicked. And he says to us even when we're filled with temptations to bite back at someone instead don't bite back at them but go God's way.

[37:23] Trust that he is going to deal with all wickedness justice will be done. Can be confident in him and his power over evil.

But the other thing in the resolutions of this chapter is the weddings. David takes some wives say have a look down at the end of verse 39 then David sent word to Abigail asking her to become his wife.

His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail David has sent us to take you to become his wife. So David is now going to marry Abigail the newly widowed Abigail.

David has already been married to Michal Saul's daughter. Verse 44 tells us this Saul had given his daughter Michal David's wife to Pautiel son of Laish who was from Galim.

It's a bit unclear whether this has happened before David marries Abigail or after but nonetheless David is taking wives but I think it gets really bad when we read verse 43 at least in Abigail he has a good and wise wife but verse 43 David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel and they both were his wives David's beginning to take more and more wives and Deuteronomy 17 and instructions about a king there's a warning there there's a warning to David he must not take many wives or his heart will be led astray that's God's word to Israel about kings this chapter shows us David is not perfect at least he has a wise wife in

[39:38] Abigail but David don't take too many wives or your heart could be led astray David is not the perfect king maybe if you're an Israelite and you were reading through these chapters and seeing Saul and his wickedness maybe you were putting your hopes in David and thinking he's the good and perfect king well this chapter shows that actually he's not actually he's sinful where is the perfect king well we've seen him already this morning he's the Lord Jesus the one who stood firm against temptations for us who shed his blood his own blood for us and the forgiveness of all our sins David in his good and in his failings points us to the better the Lord Jesus Christ the perfect son of

God the perfect king we need we're going to end by saying a prayer and then we'll sing this song to close our service and then Mark will finish with a little prayer Father God we thank you thank you for your grace that you show to us David here and using Abigail to save him from following through the awful temptation and wanting to kill Nabal have blood on his hands thank you for your help for David and your grace there and we thank you Father for the ways in which you help us and we thank you that even when we do fall into temptation we have a perfect Savior who has not the Lord Jesus help us to put our hopes in him we pray and we ask this in Jesus name Amen