

David, Nabal and Abigail

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[0 : 00] Well with God's help I would like us to turn back to 1st Samuel and chapter 25 and again looking at verses 23 and 24. 1st Samuel chapter 25 at 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 fell at his feet and said on me alone my lord be the gift. Please let your servant speak in your ears and hear the words of your servant. There was once a young soldier Ernest Brown who joined the Argyll and Southern Highlanders. He did so during the World War II and in his early 20s he was arrested by the Japanese and he was taken into a jungle camp where he was given a task of backbreaking a work during the day. They were slowly being starved to death and there were daily beatings. For him Scotland seemed another world away. In the camp soldiers became like barbarians. They simply looked out for their own good. They fed themselves but they also stole from their other soldiers, their friends. They started to steal from their dying colleagues.

The law of the jungle became the law within a Chiung Hai camp. Then something happened, something strange happened. Two soldiers came. Two soldiers who were starving just as much as these men were. But they kept a higher code than other people within the camp. They began to share the meagre meals they had with other soldiers. They volunteered for extra work and they washed the sores of the soldiers who were suffering.

They used to bath them. And after time the young Scottish soldier Ernest Gordon got better because these two soldiers looked after him. And through time he was able himself to give to other soldiers, to give something of what he had himself. Other soldiers began to do likewise. Over time the tone in the prison changed. It brightened. It softened. And instead of selfishness there was sacrifice. The soldiers, they began to worship and they began to keep Bible studies. 20 years after that event, obviously Ernest Gordon was by then rescued, long rescued. And this is what he said, death was still with us. No doubt about that. But we were slowly being freed from its destructive grip.

Selfishness, hatred and pride were all anti-life. Love, self-sacrifice and faith were the essence of life.

[3 : 16] Gifts of God to men. Death no longer had the last word in Chiung Kai. Gifts of God to men. Well, the thing is this. What about you today? What kind of day did you have? What kind of world do you spend your life in? Is it a world of selfishness? Is it a world of hatred? Is it a world that's full of pride? Well, you know, you find all of these things. You find it in schools.

You find it in the boardrooms of companies. You find it in homes throughout all our nation. And the code of the jungle. It is live and well, isn't it, in our own society. Every man looking out for himself. It's the survival of the fittest. Does this contaminate your world? Is that what you go to every day of life? Does it dominate the circle that you find yourself in?

Well, do you know this passage that we read tonight in 1 Samuel 25? It teaches us something about that. A world similar to that. And there's someone there, someone that we're going to see in a moment. Someone who lives in that kind of world. Someone who loves himself, full of pride, selfish, and hater, and he hates other people. But before we look at that, there's an interesting start to this chapter where it says, Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him. And they buried him in his house at Ramah. It is like a passing verse.

But think of the significance of this verse. Here is this man, Samuel, a prophet that God had placed in the house of Eli. Now, if you had someone, a child, and you thought to yourself, I want this child to grow up in a good church, in a church that is preaching and telling the truth. Is that where Samuel was taught?

[5 : 26] No, it wasn't. But that is the very place that God had placed this young man. Because through him, God was going to bring the people of Israel back to himself. Now, this is the man, Samuel, who anointed David to become king. And for David, he was that special person. That special person. We can all think of them. Think of people that we can have lean on in life. And if these people are taken from you, how much is missing in our own lives? I remember in our own church in Smithton, when we were there as a young family, growing their children growing up. And there was one certain person who made our church special. And that was Mr. Lammond, who used to be the minister in Edinburgh.

And I remember the great loss we felt after his death. And I remember David Meredith, who you're going to have this weekend, and I hope you enjoy, I'm sure you will enjoy his preaching. I remember him saying about Mr. Lammond, he said, you know, Kenny, when he comes into church, and the moment I begin preaching, his head goes down. And he said, he's not sleeping. He's not sleeping. Do you know what he's doing?

He's praying that the word that is being said is going to touch the heart of someone in the congregation. And the moment I used to say, Amen, at the end of the service, Mr. Lammond would lift his head.

That is something similar to what Samuel would have been to David. He didn't see him every day. He didn't have to. But he knew he was there. And whenever he needed to see someone, he knew that he could depend on Samuel to give him words of wisdom. But we need to be careful about that, too, because Samuel was fallible, like all of us. And Samuel was open to make mistakes as well. But what is happening here in our passage this evening? That is, as we are passing by, we notice that David here is in the wilderness of Paran. What's he doing there? Well, he's actually running away from King Saul. Saul is out to kill him, basically. And he has to run and get away from Saul. If not, he would kill him. Now, David had an opportunity himself in the previous chapter, in chapter 24, where he was hiding in a cave. Saul came into that cave. And it says in the Bible that he was relieving himself, that he was possibly he lay down and slept for a while. Because David was able to come up and tear part of his cloak and take it away and prove to Saul that he was that close to him to put him to death. But yet he held his hand back and his people couldn't believe that David didn't kill him. Why was that? Because he said, how can I touch whom the Lord has anointed? And by David choosing that, now this was his choice, you can either, David, go back to your caves or go and live in a palace.

[8 : 47] You're only one stab away from that. But he said, no, how can I touch whom the Lord has anointed? And he went back to his caves until God made sure the timing was right for David to become king in Israel. So Saul was told all this. Saul repented, showed remorse. Saul went back home, but David didn't go with him. David went back to the caves. Now, this is where we're at. But we are told here that there's a man, the man in verse 2, there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. The man was very rich. He had 3,000 sheep, 3,000 goats. He was shearing his sheep in Carmel, and the name of the man was Nabal. Now, there's a man called Brueggemann. He's a theologian, and this is what he said about that verse. The way of introducing Nabal is precisely on target. Nabal's possession preceded his own person.

His life is determined by his property. Nabal lives to defend his property, and he dies in a norgy, enjoying his property. Only after being told of his riches are we told his name. So that basically tells you what this man Nabal was like. His business, this was all his life, and this is what everything meant to him, and this is what we're told about him. Then we are told about his name in verse 3. The name of the man was Nabal, but notice the contrast. And the name of his wife was Abigail. The woman was discerning and beautiful, but the man was harsh and badly behaved. Badly behaved. Well, what do we know then about this man? He's rich. We are told he's got how many goats? He's got 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. And possibly he would have had a lot less than that were it not for the protection of David, because David and his people in the wilderness protected him day and night. How did he do that? Well, in those days there would be raiding parties who would go after shepherds to steal of their flock and just take it away for themselves. What did David do? David protected them during this time. So it meant that Nabal didn't lose any of his flock. Now, common courtesy was to pay someone for doing this. There wasn't a written law for doing that. It was like a gentleman's agreement that if you look after my flock, then I will pay you accordingly. That is why David sent his young men to this man

Nabal during the shearing, so that he would give out of his own heart goodness to give it to David in payment for looking after his flock. But isn't it interesting how this man reacted to David's men? We see it in verses 10 and 11. And Nabal answered David's servant, who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? Nice guy, yeah. After protecting all his sheep all that time. And look what he says in verse 11. He calls David a nobody, basically. Who is he? Who is his men? He's on about. He says, shall I take my bread, in verse 11, 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? Am I going to give of my riches and just hand it over to nobodies? I will not do that.

[12:43] Well, have you noticed what verse 11 is loaded with? I 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. It is loaded with I, me, and mine. Now those of you who are in the galley today would have seen that. Where does that come from? That comes from the devil himself? Because that is what he said before he fell out of heaven.

He wanted to be higher than God. I want to be up there. And this is what it's like. This is what this man's heart is like. It is loaded with I, myself, and my. Well, Nabal's name simply means fool. And what's the biblical term for the word fool? The fool says in his heart, there is no God. And in a short space of time, we've realized what this man is like spiritually. We see what he's like morally and socially. He is simply a disaster. Now, we know David. We know that David is a patient man. You know, the way he dealt with Saul. He's going to wait until God's timing to become king. So he will deal favorably with this man. We know because we know David. He will not touch the Lord's anointed.

But is that what happened? Ah, but hold on. Maybe we got David on a bad day. Maybe we've got David on a body because his men are starving. After all, his men looked after this man's sheep. And possibly David is feeling a wee bit edgy. What happened? Look at verse 13. After the young men had turned away and came back and told them all this, verse 13, David said to his men, every man strap on your sword.

[14:54] Well, Nabal's got a problem, wouldn't you see? But you know, it's not Nabal that's got the problem. It is David. It is David that's got the problem here. David has lost his temper and David is simply out of control. Picture of what is going on here. 400 men plus himself, 401 men going to head down to annihilate this man, Nabal simply because David has lost control. Is he going to use all these men?

But then you might say, but hold on a minute. David is well within his right. He's well within his right to do this because this man has rejected the kindness that David, and this is how he's repaying him, repaying him simply with insults. I will show him not to mess with me. But what's the difference between him and Saul? Well, Saul is the Lord's anointed. But this man, Nabal's a fool simply, and I will deal with him like a fool. I will sort him out because he is not going to do this to me.

I will teach him a lesson. Well, the question is this. Do you hear yourself in that argument? Do you hear yourself in that argument? I heard myself in that argument. You know what someone gets to you? You want to sort them out, and you want to do it straight away. You want to sort it out.

I remember when we were in college. John McLeod gave us a good bit of advice. He said, if ever you receive a letter, don't reply to it straight away. You should always wait for a day or two, because what you would write two days later is so different to what you would write when you first received the letter. Have you experienced that in your own life? That is the way it was with David. Oh, Nabal was wrong for what he did, but David was also wrong in trying to avenge.

Now, there's a key element in this passage, a key element, and it begins at verse 14 to verse 17. But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife. What is that all about? This is a servant of Nabal.

[17:39] He saw the kindness of David, and he thought to himself, I'm going to tell Abigail about this. This is not right. What is doing? And I'm going to tell her. Do you see in God's providence how he used an insignificant servant to tell Nabal's wife, Abigail? And that reminds us so much of something else that we have in the Old Testament in 2 Kings chapter 5. Do you remember Naaman, the Syrian, who was dying, who had leprosy? And remember there was a young girl they took on one of their raids.

They carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. And do you remember she said to Naaman's wife, would that my Lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria? Why? Because he would cure him of his leprosy. And you know there's something in

us that says, let him die of his leprosy, for taking me from my family, for spoiling my life. Let him die of it.

But do you notice the servant's heart? With the fear of God in her heart. Oh, that my master would meet the man of God so that he could cure him from his leprosy. Is that our heart tonight with those who want to bring us down? Do we bring them to God in prayer? Oh, whatever it is, Lord, that leaves them like that. Will you come and heal the damage? You heal the damage because I can't do it. All I want to do is to avenge my anger. I just want to sort it out like David did it. And he told Abigail. What was so significant about that? Well, remember we read about this woman. She was discerning and beautiful.

Discerning and beautiful. What does discerning mean? It means that she was intelligent. She knew the situation and she knew the danger of the situation. And what does she do? She acts on it. What do we have? What is the picture here? Here is God in his providence using an insignificant servant with a message so important that it was to save the house, the house of Nabal. Now, you might be here tonight and you might think you're insignificant. You might think that it doesn't matter what you would say to a person. You should always say it. If you've got something to say, and if it is of the Lord, you should tell people, don't hold back, but use what you've been given to God for his glory. And we see how this lady, how she went about to intervene and to prevent a tragedy.

[20 : 49] We see in verses 18 down to 19, she took donkeys and everything that was laden on the donkeys. And it is interesting that in God's providence, he provided this woman to restrain David. His timely providence restrains. You know, his chosen king was going to make a mistake. How was this a mistake? You know, this would have been with him for the rest of his life and it would have tarnished his life. It would have burdened him if God had not stopped him. But God in his grace stopped the man, the man of his own choosing. Isn't that interesting? David was going to make a mistake. Well, it's interesting that we have four times in the story. It confesses God's restraining action. Verse 26. Now then, my Lord, as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, because the Lord has restrained you from blood guilt. Verse 33.

Blessed be your discretion and blessed be you who have kept me this day from blood guilt and from avenging myself with my own hand. Verse 34. For as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from hurting you. And again, verse 39. Blessed be the Lord who has avenged the insult. The insult I received at the hand of Nabal. Notice what she did. She took drink and food to feed the young men, something that Nabal should have done. She in her wisdom took plenty and she became, she became the final barrier between herself and this man who was going to kill her whole family.

She came to be the go-between. Well, isn't it interesting what we notice she says in verse 24. She fell at his feet and said, on me alone, my Lord, be this guilt. Isn't it interesting she didn't defend her husband, Nabal, but she agrees that he's astoundrel. Notice verse 25. Let not my Lord regard this worthless fellow Nabal.

For as his name is, so is he. She doesn't boast, she doesn't beg, she doesn't beg for justice. Do you know what she begs for?

For forgiveness. I am sorry for what's happened. Will you please, please forgive me? Isn't it interesting when you hear a voice like that, how it touches you? How do you think Jesus feels when we come and we say that to him?

[23 : 43] Do you think he's got a heart of stone? No, he doesn't. Oh, he loves to hear the cry of a penitent sinner who comes to him and simply says, Lord, I'm sorry.

But isn't it interesting that this woman, she wasn't to blame for any of it. But yet she says in verse 24, on me alone, my Lord, let this guilt be.

Well, she knew that David was to be king. We see that in verse 28. She reminds in verse 31. And what she's basically saying is this. Do not ruin your kingship because of murder.

Don't do it, David. Don't do it. This is going to spoil your kingship. Oh, yes, you've been wronged. But murder is not the answer.

This is not the answer. And she stopped him. She stopped him in his tracks. Oh, it's interesting. It's interesting that by her words, his heart began to melt.

[24 : 54] Have you ever experienced that? I remember a friend of mine once saying about someone that did something to him. And he didn't. He blamed him for doing something which he never did.

And he said, I had this kind of bitterness toward a Christian land. I had this bitterness towards him. And he said it was there for years. And to tell you the truth, the other person didn't even know about it.

But it was eating away at my heart until I prayed about it. And until God took it away. And I asked him, did it go away straight away?

He said, no, it didn't. He said, do you know what it was like? Do you know what it reminds me of? It was like a thawing. It was like a thawing. Like melting away.

Do you know that is what happened here when David listened to this beautiful woman? His heart melted as she spoke to him. Just put the blame on me.

[25 : 58] I'll take the guilt of it all. And please, please let it be on me. What happens? Her gentleness reversed the anger of David.

Apologies can disarm arguments. And humility has got great power. Did you know that? Being humble has got great power.

Well, this is plenty. This is something that this woman had plentifully. David confesses that God, through Abigail, has kept him from tragic wrong.

We read that in verse 34. But 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.

So much as one male. Do you know what is worth noting here? And I believe this is why God chose him. Is David's teachable spirit.

[27 : 05] Are you like that? Are you teachable? Can anyone sway you? Just, you know, you might have one view. But now you've heard someone speaking to you.

And you're thinking about it. And can you be persuaded on that matter? Or do you stick by your guns? Whether you're right or wrong, you're not going to budge.

David had a teachable spirit. And that is why God chose him to be king over Israel. He was a man after God's own heart.

Well, Abigail's mission, it was successful. And, you know, it reminds us. It reminds us of a mission a thousand years later. Where?

On the hillside. Outside Jerusalem. Abigail, she never knew David's greater son. But you know what she's doing here? She's prefiguring David's greater son.

[28 : 06] Why is that? Well, Abigail placed herself between David and her household. What did Jesus do? Jesus placed himself between us and God.

Abigail, she volunteered to punish. To be punished for Nabal's sin. Jesus agreed to be punished for your sins and for mine.

To be transferred unto him. Please, Lord, don't let them, Father, don't let them suffer. I will suffer in their place.

Abigail turned the anger of David away. And by Jesus dying on the cross. He turned God's wrath away from his children.

And now he accepts us as sons and daughters into the kingdom. And as they speak about you tonight. And as they look at you tonight.

[29 : 09] They ask, if they were to ask one another, who is that? Oh, that's my son. And that is my daughter. To be never again.

To be condemned. Because it's been dealt with. At Calvary by our Lord. Well, you know, something similar happened in the prison camp.

You know the story. One evening after work. When the guard took them back. He counted the shovels. And he said there was one missing.

He insisted that someone stole it. And he screamed at the prisoners. He asked them to stand and run. And attention. And he said, if you don't stand.

The person who stole this. If you don't come forward. I will shoot you. One by one. And they were like that in silence. Until one spotty soldier stood to attention.

[30 : 11] And he said, I did it. I did it. And the man, the guard, beat him to death. Until he himself was exhausted.

His friends took him back to the camp. And buried him. And just in the off chance. They counted the shovels again. And they were all there.

Not one of them missing. That man died to save the others. How much more Jesus Christ.

Who died for you and I. How much more. Don't you just love him for that. Now the point is this. If he has done that for me. Surely I can forgive other people. Do you see how it works? Do you see how it works?

[31 : 11] I've done that for you. Jesus said. I am now waiting. I'm waiting. To see you to it. For others. But what about those.

Who gave me a hard time today. What about them? Oh especially. Especially them. I want you. To forgive them.

Oh the act of grace. Where we could never. Ever do it. Alone. Well Abigail. She goes home. She finds her husband drunk. And she waits till morning.

To tell him. She tells him that. If it wasn't for her. Intervention. That he would have been a dead man. Along with all. His family.

And isn't it interesting. That you probably noticed. I couldn't even say. Calebite. At the start. When I was reading it. And isn't it interesting.

[32 : 08] That the writer highlights. That this man. Was a Calebite. What's the significance of that? Well do you remember Caleb? Do you remember him?

Who was he? He was the one. Who went into the promised land. To check out. Everything. With Joshua. And he came back. With a good report.

And he said. Let's go for it. Because God. Is on our side. Now the point is this. Nabal. Is off.

That line. Of that family. But Nabal. Is not. A good man. We cannot. Depend. On godly. Parents.

You could have been brought up. In a Christian home. And you could boast. That your father. Was an elder. If that's worth. Boasting about. Or a minister. Is. If.

[33 : 02] Even. To say. That everyone. In my family. Are Christians. It means. Nothing. Here was this. Poor soul. And all he said.

Was this. Who is. David. Who is. The son. Of Jesse. It is so. He knew. Exactly. Who David. Who David was. But he didn't want.

To know him. Personally. He didn't want. To know him. And that's possibly. Some of us. Tonight.

Who are not wanting. To know. The Lord Jesus Christ. And isn't it ironic.

That his own wife. Became. His. Savior. Too. Every one of you. Heard. That Jesus died. For sinners. Every one of you.

And no one. Can turn around. And say. He didn't die for me. Well he did. He died. For sinners.

Sinners. Like you and I. But do you know him.

[33 : 58] Personally. We need. To get. To know him. Well. He's been trying. Possibly. To get your attention. For many years. And still.

You're rejecting him. For those. He's caught. Their attention. They're going to come. This weekend. And sit. At his table. And to celebrate. His death.

Until he comes. But others. He's still trying. To get your attention. Maybe he had it once. Maybe he had your attention. Once. But. No.

It's not the same. You've let him go. There was once. R.T. Kendall. I read in his book. When he was 15 years of old. He mentioned. An old preacher.

W.M. Tidwell. Came to speak. At their Sunday school. And he was going to preach. You know that parable. In Matthew 22. The man who was not wearing.

[34 : 53] The wedding garment. And. He preached. According to Kendall. With unusual power. And he said. It was an amazing sermon.

And he said. It was in a setting. Where there was an altar call. He asked. If you wanted to hear more. For the children to come down. And hear. And he called them. And then.

He said this. After. Some came. Others didn't. And. And. Kendall said. That there was this young girl. Of 16. In the congregated. In the Sunday school.

Class. And she was from a Christian family. But she herself. Rebelled. Against. The gospel. And this is what Tidwell said. Not being satisfied.

With those who came forward. He said. I cannot end. This service yet. Somebody here. This morning. Is receiving. Their last call. They waited.

[36 : 10] Nobody came. Well. The next evening. When Kendall. Was doing his paper round. When he came home. His mum said to him. Have you heard the news.

Of Patsy. And he said. No. What happened. Oh it's awful. She said. A couple of hours ago. She was on her way home. From school. And a car mounted.

The payment. And she's no more. What's it her. That was receiving. Her last call. What about you. It could be. Our last call. Have you rejected him. Up. Until now. Have you rejected him. What is so wonderful.

About this God. Is this. In this life. We're going to make mistakes. But in his providence. He has a way.

[37 : 06] Of drawing us back. To himself. In our own sermon. On Sunday. We've been going through. The gospel of John. In chapter 10.

And you know. Where it speaks. About the shepherd. And the sheep. And the sheep fold. And it speaks. About the shepherd. And his rod. And we've got a picture. Of his rod. And staff. In Psalm 23.

Do you know. In the sheep fold. In any village. There was a door. And a porter. Would be looking after. The sheep. At night. But what. The shepherds. Used to do. Would take the sheep.

And look after them. Out in the mountains. And then take them. Back to the village. At night. And they would lead them. They themselves. Were out in front. And when they would come.

To the sheep fold. The shepherd. Would put his rod. Across the door. And he would call. Each sheep. To come. And they would come. By name. That is how they do it.

[38 : 03] In the east. And before. Allowing. The sheep. Into the fold. He would check. That they were. Without blemish. Or spot. Or tuts.

Or injury. When you think. About the rod. Of God. It is not about judgment. Not for his own. It is for comfort.

It is the comfort. Of the staff. Of Psalm 23. And if there would be. Anything wrong. With any of the sheep. You see. The shepherds went home.

And went to sleep. But if there were. Anything wrong with them. The shepherd. Would stay with them. And he would. Cleanse their wounds. And he would. Protect them.

That is why. The God of Israel. Neither slumbers. Nor sleeps. But he looks. After. His own. Children. Oh. Don't you just love.

[38 : 58] The picture. We have. Of the good shepherd. And it is by the providence. Of God. We are being kept. From making huge mistakes.

In life. That is why. It is important for us. In the morning. Before we leave the home. As Lord. Keep me. From putting a spot.

Or blemish. On your cause. May I be protected. To keep your name. And to protect it. For the glory. That your name.

Deserves. Isn't it wonderful. In many ways. That we see. That even the king. Of the king of Israel. Made mistakes. It kind of gives you.

A wee hope. Doesn't it? Well. He did it. Maybe there's hope. For me tonight. If I come to him. As he stops me.

[39 : 54] With his rod. And as I tell him. About my hurts. He might comfort me. Not might. He will. Comfort you.

And he will dress up. Your wounds. To face. Another day. Well may it be. That you have a blessed time. And as you come to feast.

Oh. Don't you look forward. To be there. With together. And with the Lord. Where he promises to be. Where the two or three. Are gathered. In his name.

And also. To sup with him. And if you are still. Without Christ. He's knocking at the door. Waiting for you. To open. Isn't he patient?

Isn't he patient? Ah. We rejoice. In the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. Let us pray. Amen. Amen. Heavenly Father.

[40 : 53] We thank you. For your goodness. We thank you. That you do. Restrain us. At times. You do. Put the blocks on us. And thankfully. You do. Because you.

Love your children. You shepherd them. You lead them. You allow us. Possibly. Sometimes. To drift. But yet. You come looking. For us. With your staff.

And your rod. But not only that. Lord. You throw us. On your shoulders. And you carry us. Back. Into the fold. We thank you. For that picture.

Of the good shepherd. And we pray. That we would follow. His example. So that we would enjoy. Fellowshiping with him. And with the other sheep. In the fold.

Bless us. Take away our sins. And forgive us. Lord. In Christ. We ask it in his name. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
[41 : 45] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.