

1st Samuel Ch 25

The last thing we saw was David's confrontation with Saul whereby David alerted Saul to the fact that he could've killed him in a moment there in the cave when he came in all alone, and there David and his men were, crouched back the black recesses of the cave. But instead of using the opportunity to justify sin in his life by taking matters in his own hands, he took the opportunity to allow the Lord to vindicate him by letting Saul live, and then following him out of the cave to reveal to Saul along with the 3,000 soldiers that accompanied him that Saul's life was given into his hands and he showed mercy. He didn't purpose evil towards him because he's not an evil man, and he held up a corner of Saul's robe and showed it to the whole army as proof that he was right there and Saul's life was given to him, but he spared it.

And so Saul was overtaken by a moment of sanity, confessed the fact that he knew that David would one day be king over Israel, called off the pursuit and went home, but David went back to the stronghold. And you remember the reason that he didn't go home, or with Saul back to the palace and give up this fugitive lifestyle was because he'd been there before. He'd heard Saul's apologies before; he'd seen him fall victim to regret with no lasting impact or change in his life. And there's a big difference between regret, and repentance, regret feels remorse, can even acknowledge the wrong in something done or said, but repentance brings change, in a consistent and on going manner. It goes beyond a temporary moment of sanity where we think, "What am I doing? I must be out of my mind!" And it produces the fruit of a different direction all together in our lives that's consistent, remember this vs we quoted Sunday morning? "*He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.*" Prov 28:13 Just to say, "I've sinned" really doesn't accomplish anything if you have no intention to cease sinning. Remember, what good does it do to say, "I've played the fool and erred exceedingly" if you keep on playing the fool? You see "*Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?*" Rom 6:16 In other words, the one who seeks to cover his sin will not prosper, but whoever confesses and *forsakes* them will have mercy. It's obedience to the Word of God that brings about practical righteousness, positional righteousness is yours in Christ, and it's impossible that we should improve on that. But practical righteousness entails human responsibility, that being obedience to God's Word. David was going to wait and watch for Saul to not only "confess" his error, but to "forsake" his error before he returned home. Meanwhile, ch 25.

Vs1

And this is all we read concerning the death of this Patriarch of Israel, the man and prophet of God who bridged the gap between the judges and the kings. Samuel served God literally from the womb, to the tomb. He was conceived out of the prayer of a desperate woman who vowed to consecrate him to God from his earliest days, lived out his life in the temple under Eli, and when Eli died he was raised up into the position of the overseer of Israel representing God to the people, speaking to them His Word.

He anointed the 1st 2 kings of Israel, he anointed Saul, and David, and as godly as he was, as diligently as he served the Lord and spoke wisdom and direction into the lives of the younger generations, and counseled and comforted David, is noted in the scriptures as a powerful man of prayer; none of that was able to spare him the penalty of death.

The bible is very clear, "*It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.*" Heb 9:27

What does that mean? It means that unless the Lord returns for His bride, because the bible tells us that there is a generation who will not see death (in regards to the rapture) but outside of that, we all have an "appointment" with death. So keep your day planners open because you can never be sure when he's going to come knocking and it's time for your appointment. How important it is to be leading lives of obedience unto righteousness because we never know when our soul will be required of us and God help us that when we see Him, that we are able to stand before Him with a clear conscience. Being able to say even as Samuel could say, "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*" 2 Tim 4:7

And it's important that we draw attention to the fact here that even though Samuel expired on the earth, God's Work didn't expire with him, notice the rest of vs 1(read).

So Samuel "died", but David "arose." And this is always the way that God works, God may begin a work in the life of one man, but His work never ends with the life of that man. When Moses died, Joshua was raised up, when Eli died, Samuel arose, and now that Samuel has died, we see that David arose. None of us are irreplaceable, God wants to, and will use your life to the degree that you avail yourself to Him, (not only in word but in deed), but God doesn't need any of us to accomplish His purposes. Now He'll bless your life and use you for His glory, or you can miss out on the blessing and He'll use someone else, but either way He's going to accomplish His purpose, it's just up to you whether or not you get in on it. So Samuel died, and then the focus pans immediately to David, the connotation being that now David is God's "main man."

Vs2-3

Now by these 2 verse we already know quite a lot about this man who pops up in this ch of David's life. We know that he lived in Maon, his business was in Carmel; we know that he was very rich (that is materially speaking) he was very poor in conduct and character, but he was wealthy monetarily and materially speaking. He had 3,000 sheep, and 1,000 goats, his name was Nabal, which as you may well know means, "Fool" and I'm not sure if his mama named him that or he acquired it through the course of his life but one thing is for certain and that is that he lived up to his name. We see that he was "harsh and evil in his doings" Prov 12:10 tells us that, "*A righteous man regards the life of his animal, But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.*" And this fool was harsh and evil, (wicked) and cruel in his doings.

“Fool” was his name, and believe me when I tell you that folly was his game and the author goes on to tell us that he was of the house of Caleb. Now Caleb was one of the 2 spies along with Joshua who gave the good report regarding the land of Canaan, but the name “Caleb” means “Dog” and so contextually speaking, the author here is just adding expositional clarification here as to this mans nature. He was a fool, he was harsh, he was evil, deceitful in his doings and “Caleb” that is, “Doggish” in his nature. And as you know to the Hebrew at this time, to be called a dog was about the worst insult you could have heaped on you, to them dogs weren’t little house hold pets. They were unclean scavengers that defiled anything they came into contact with. So not a very pretty picture painted here in regards to Nabal.

However, on the flip side of that his wife “Abigail” was quite wise, and very beautiful, and you just sort of read this and scratch your head and go, “How did that Geek, get her?” And we do this today, you see some Nabal, and he’s with a beautiful woman, and you think, “How did he get her?” Now Abigail we can excuse, I have no doubt (these being the days of prearranged marriages) that her father saw an opportunity for her to be taken good care of, thought he could overlook Nabal’s stupidity if it would make for a secure, worry free future for his daughter.

Now obviously that wasn’t a wise move on his behalf, because material wealth is the least of any form of wealth and he should’ve looked for a God fearing man who was wealthy in the things of the Spirit and of good character. But be that as it may we can excuse her, now as for you ladies today, there’s no good excuse, don’t hook up with some Nabal just for money or something dumb like that, don’t allow your standards of godliness to be compromised for the sake of a few bucks.

But what this story really seems to illustrate to us is the Word that Jesus gave when He said, *“Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”* Matt 19:23-24 And that was a real shocker to His disciples because they were of the same mentality that you and I fall so easily into and that is that material wealth was the fingerprint of God’s blessing and approval upon your life. And it’s not that godly people can’t be wealthy or that wealthy people can’t be godly, and that God can’t provide an abundance (materially speaking) for His children. But what Jesus was saying is that an abundance of wealth can be a definite obstacle when it comes to entering the Kingdom of God. Why, because wealth instead of nurturing contentment and generosity has a tendency to promote greed and a sense of self-absorption in that you’re prime priority is #1, it’s the, “I’ve got it, I’ve earned it, and you can’t have it” mentality. It’s like the man who came to the Rabbi who took the man and had him look through a window. And he said to the man, “Tell me what you see.” And the man said, I see children outside playing, people going back and forth about life’s business. And then the Rabbi took the man to a mirror and said, “Now tell me what you see.” And the man said, “All I see is myself.” And the Rabbi said, “I took you to one piece of glass and you could see through it and view the lives of others, and make observations accordingly. I took you to another piece of glass and all you could see was yourself.

Now that mirror was just like that window until it was lined with a little bit of *silver*.” And that’s how it can go, we can see, relate to, and sympathize with, and have compassion on others so often until we’re lined with just a little bit of silver and then all we can see is ourselves. And yet God would have us be concerned with others, and placing their needs above our own so that a mark of godliness would be generosity and a willingness to share, so we can see how riches can inhibit us from entering into the Kingdom. Again with man it would be impossible, “*But with God all things are possible.*” Matt 19:26 God is able to take the self-centered individual and give them a heart of generosity and liberality, but apart from God it’s not going to happen.

In verse 2 we see that it was sheep shearing time, which means that it was equivalent to harvest time, a time when the income was flowing, because they didn’t raise sheep so much for the meat as we might, but rather for the wool. And so when shearing time would come, it was a time of feasting and celebration, a time of generosity, and festivity.

Vs 4-8

Notice this, and don’t think that David has some racketeering, “sheep protection” scam going on here; this was a valid service, and one the Nabal accepted. These were hard days, and it was common for the Philistines or other neighboring nations to come into the borders of Israel as marauders and when they came upon a few shepherds, what could they do to protect the flock against a band of men? And so the Philistines or whoever it may be would simply overwhelm them and take their flocks or their grain, or whatever it may be. And we seen this in the book Judges with the Midianites in the days of Gideon. And so David and his men served as a wall of protection for Nabal and his shepherds, he would ward off any raiders and ensure the safety of Nabal’s flocks and his men.

And so when it was harvest time (so to speak) David, not wanting to intimidate him in any way, sends his men instead of coming personally, and he doesn’t demand a set fee, nor did he come week by week for compensation, but rather he waited until Nabal got paid before he asked for any compensation for services rendered. David has a need and so he makes it known, making known a need isn’t a problem, it’s when I seek to manipulate you in order to constrain you to give, that’s the problem. But David doesn’t say, “Let’s see, this many month’s, times this many men, keeping this many acres secure, here’s the bill.” He just says, “Whatever you think is right, we’ll accept.”

Vs 9-11

7 times in verse 11 Nabal refers to himself and how all that he has is his and he’s definitely not going to give any of it to David, after all who’s he? That’s the thrust of vs10, it’s not that Nabal didn’t know who David was, all of Israel knew who David was, the #1 song throughout that nation for years was about David. He was basically saying, “Who does David think he is?” And he accuses him of being nothing more than a rebellious runaway servant, but verse 11 illustrates the point, a little silver and all you can see is yourself.

Here he had the opportunity to advance the cause of Christ, to invest in a man like David's life, to get behind what God was doing, and he couldn't get beyond himself. You guys, giving to God's work, investing in the kingdom shouldn't be seen as obligation, it's opportunity, it shouldn't be done out of law, but out of love, learn the lesson here, Nabal played the part of the fool, selfish, refused to honor God with his resources.

Vs 12-13

Now this is interesting and a point we do well not to miss, notice how David responds to this circumstance. He doesn't say, "Wow, we should really pray about this and seek God's direction." He doesn't say, "Well, boys looks like this is another one we'll have to chalk up to letting God deal with it, let's move out." But rather he hears the news of the spiteful way that Nabal responded to his kindness and his request and he says, "Top 10 answers on the board, survey says, X sorry Nabal looks like you struck out." And he says, "Mount up boys let's take care of business." And part of us says, "Yeah David, you don't have to take any lip off that jerk, time to teach him a lesson." You know, he wanted to dance, but he didn't want to pay the fiddler, and David says, "No go." And this is the way we feel sometimes, there's a lot of Nabal's out there and someone has to teach them a lesson, and David was ready to fight, and we can understand, Nabal's insulted him to his face. But understand that this is not a high and shining moment in David's life. He's not responding the way that God would have him to respond to an insult, or assault on his character. Oh there's no doubt that Nabal's provoked him and (proverbially speaking) has spit in his face, and so David says that's it, I'm going to teach this guy a lesson.

But is that how God would have us to respond to an insult? Does 2 wrongs make a right? Does the wrath of man produce the righteousness of God? Doesn't the bible say, "Overcome evil with evil?" No, Jesus said, "*You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.*" Matt 5:38-39

Now a lot of people have miss understood those vs to mean if someone is cranking on you, and pummeling you, just go ahead and let them beat the tar out of you and don't try to defend yourself. When in reality "the slap on the cheek" is an expression meaning when someone hurls you with an insult. And what Jesus was saying was don't respond in like manner, bear it patiently, when they insult you, go ahead and let them, it's synonymous with what Paul was saying when he said, "*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*" Rom 12:21

And that's what David displayed so valiantly in ch 24 with Saul, not being overcome by evil, but overcoming evil with good. But with Nabal he's not demonstrating the same patience, of course Saul, David perceived as his superior, the Lords' anointed. And isn't always easier to be tolerant with those whom we perceive as our superiors, everyone's nice to the boss (type thing).

But I suggest to you that the real measure of a man's character is demonstrated in the way he reacts and responds towards those who he sees as his equal or even somehow beneath him. And here David is failing to respond in a manner that reflects the heart of God.

Vs14-22

Again back in vs 18- with the haste that she was able to prepare all of that stuff, implying that it was readily on hand just testifies to the wealth of Nabal, and shows all the more his unappreciative self centeredness.

And we see in vs 21-21 how his attitude just sent David through the roof, and again as to where in ch 24 David was able to resist the temptation unto taking vengeance into his own hands, here in a lesser matter, he's failing miserably. What's the lesson, we can never let our guard down, not even for a minute, maybe we secure some great victory and so we think, "Man I just need to relax a bit." But while we sleep our enemy plots, and it's often on the heels of great victory that these subtle temptations come when we're not really on guard.

Alan Redpath makes this comment, "Does it not show beyond all possible doubt that I cannot stand against the enemy of my soul unless the Lord upholds me moment by moment? This story tells me that however long I may have been on the Christian path, however often I may have overcome one temptation or another, however many times I have defeated sin in one area, it can strike in another and crush me in a moment."

The circumstantial parallels are uncanny, yet the way David responded to each of them couldn't have been more different. God help us to discern things like this that we might handle each circumstance with the utmost of integrity and blamelessness.

Vs23-27

There's no way we can exhaust the details of her actions tonight, but this is an area of scripture worthy of study because she does a lot of things right, and she does a few things wrong. 1st of all she exercises the utmost of humility, she's prominent, wealthy, beautiful, influential, yet she gets in the dirt before David and subjects herself to him. And the bottom line with what's happening here is that she's interceding for her husband, standing in the gap on his behalf. But we also see that she spoke rather insultingly of her husband and no wife should belittle her husband before other people. But she gives David some real food for thought in vs 26 where she said, "Listen, God's held you back from shedding blood unnecessarily, so let your enemies be like Nabal." In other words, "Hey, he's done something foolish, don't you respond in like manner, it takes 2 to tango, and let your enemies do foolish things and reap the rewards accordingly, but don't play the same game." Prov 26:4 says it like this, *Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him.*"

Vs28

Tell me that's not a word from the Lord to David, "You fight the battles of the Lord, and evil is not found in you." See how she's appealing towards his godliness and not trying to debate the ethics here. But she's saying, "David you're above this sort of thing, evil isn't in you." The implication being if you follow through with this you'll be engaging in a evil act, repaying evil for evil, but what were David's own words to Saul?

"My hand shall not be against you. As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.' But my hand shall not be against you." 1 Sam 24:12-13 In other words, I can't do wicked toward you because I'm not a wicked man, but Abigail is saying, "David, this isn't a righteous thing you're doing." So in doing this he would be forfeiting everything he declared of himself to Saul.

Vs29

Another profound word that David needs to chew on, "Saul is after you, but God has promised you the throne." And she likens David to one who's bundled up and held close to God, but his enemies are like stones that God will "sling" away. Now David knows a bit about slings doesn't he, so she's appealing to him in a manner that almost demands he respond in a godly manner.

Vs 30-31

"David God has promised you the throne, God's going to take care of you and any of your enemies He'll just cast away, now don't do this David or else when you get to the throne you'll regret how in a moment of rage you shed innocent blood, and lives were destroyed over one mans insult. David it'll haunt you all your days, you know this isn't right, and God has so much in store for you that this isn't worth your time."

Vs32-33

Prov 15:1 tells us, *"A soft answer turns away wrath"*

34-36

What an idiot this guy is, his life was literally with in inches of being over and he's clueless, partying it up man! Didn't notice any food missing, he's feasting like a king; this guy has more money than sense. Thank God he had a godly wife or his life would've ended in a blood bath that night.

Vs37

Apparently he had a heart attack of some sort and fell into a coma or something.

Vs38-39

David finds out Nabal is dead and he says, "Praise the Lord!" And he learned a very valuable lesson that we all do well to receive. And that is that God will vindicate His own, *"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*" Rom 12:19 No need to take matters into our own hands, the Lord will take care of us, we just need to rest in Ps 26 (you can read it later.)

Vs40-44

And you know what, David probably inherited all that belonged to Nabal seeing as how Abigail had no children and now she's David's wife. So how do you like that? If he'd of just showed the kindness and generosity of the Lord and sought to compensate David, all would've ended well.

But because he was a greedy miser and the very thought that she helped David, or that David was coming to end him that night that he was in a drunken stupor, realizing his life was nearly taken from him, it freaked him out, sent him into cardiac arrest, he fell into a coma and died and David got it all. It makes me wonder if Jesus wasn't thinking of Nabal when He gave this parable. *"The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'"* But God said to him, *'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."* Luke 12:16-21

God help us to learn the lesson, not to be a Nabal, but to eager to honor God with our resources, to be generous and not greedy. To meet needs and not be self-centered, and God help us to never let our guard down even after those moments of triumph where we've achieved some great victory knowing that our enemy never sleeps and is just looking for opportunity to devour us. And if we do begin to slip may God intervene even as He did with David so as even to save us if necessary from ourselves. Amen? Amen.