

1st Samuel Chapters 25 – John Karmelich

1. We interrupt the continuing story of Saul trying to kill David to bring you a love story! ☺
 - a) Chapter 24: (last lesson): David is on the run as King Saul is trying to kill him.
 - b) Chapter 25: (this lesson): David tells the story of how he met his wife Abigail.
 - c) Chapter 26: (next lesson): David is on the run as King Saul is trying to kill him.
 - d) The big question for this lesson is, “Why is this story included?” Why do we get an interruption in the continuing saga of “fugitive David” for a love story?
2. Before answering that question, let me summarize the chapter:
 - a) Saul vowed at the end of Chapter 24 that he would not kill David. David didn’t trust Saul and David and his small army continued to exist and move about as a group.
 - b) David’s men volunteer to help protect the assets of a wealthy sheepherder named Nabal.
 - c) David asks Nabal for an offering for his service. Nabal tells David in effect, “get lost”.
 - d) David vows to kill Nabal for his insults along with everyone on his payroll.
 - e) The hero of our story, Nabal’s wife Abigail, then comes to the rescue:
 - i) She meets David’s army with food without telling her husband.
 - ii) She apologizes for her husband being such a putz. ☺
 - iii) David calms down and agrees not to do any harm.
 - iv) When Abigail tells her husband what she did, he has a stroke and eventually dies.
 - v) David then proposes to Abigail, and she accepts.
 - f) A common question people ask new couples is, “How did you two first meet”?
 - i) You have to admit, David’s got a story that you don’t hear every day! ☺
 - g) That’s the chapter in a nutshell. Again, my question is, why is this story included?
 - i) After all, the bible could have just said, “And David married Abigail” without giving all of these details.
 - h) In fact, one of the final verses of this chapter (Verse 44) is as follows:
 - i) “David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both were his wives”.
 - ii) The bible gives all the details of how David met Abigail, and yet we only a brief reference to Ahinoam.
 - iii) So why is Abigail so special, other than the fact this is a good story?
3. In order to answer the “why” question, let’s remember some basic bible rules:
 - a) Paul said, “For everything that was written in the past (i.e., Old Testament) was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” (Romans 15:4 NIV)
 - i) My point here is that Scriptures are not just here to teach us cute historical stories. They are life lessons designed to be applied to our personal life.
 - b) Jesus said, “You diligently study the Scriptures (Old Testament) because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” (John 5:39-40).
 - i) Jesus claims that His story is woven through the Old Testament in word-pictures.
 - ii) When you study your Old Testament, there are relatively few statements that bluntly speak of a coming Messiah. For Jesus to say the “volume” of the book speaks of him is to say that there are word-pictures of Him throughout the bible.
 - iii) When we get near the conclusion of this lesson, I’m going to argue how this story between David and Abigail is a picture of our relationship with Jesus.
 - iv) Hopefully, you might see a few clues to this as we go along.

- c) One of the things I've been teaching throughout 1st Samuel is how these stories affect our daily lives as Christian believers. This chapter is especially helpful for Christian couples. It teaches a lot about the benefits of how to be a good godly wife or husband.
 - i) These stories teach examples of what we can do right.
 - ii) I believe what attracted David to Abigail was that he "met his match" spiritually.
 - iii) David does not do "God's will" in his desire to kill Abigail's husband and all of his husband's men. It was the "Godly" words of Abigail that change David.
 - iv) I'm speculating that when David heard Abigail speak, David thought, "I need a woman like this. One who worships God and in a humble way, shows me my faults so I could have a better walk with God."
 - v) Abigail made David a better follower of God.
 - a) That should be the goal of all Christians to their spouses. That is one of the benefits of a strong Christian marriage: One where each person can lift up the other and help each other mature in their relationship with God. At the same time, they do it in a humble way as opposed to criticism.
 - vi) In this chapter, Abigail gets more text than David. I'm speculating that a reason is because she is doing "God's will" at the moment, while David is not.
 - vii) Further, Abigail is a model for us, both men and women on how to approach our spouse in those moments when our spouse is "out" of God's will.
- 4. Chapter 25, Verse 1: Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah.
 - a) Before we get into the main story of Chapter 25, we have this half-of-a-verse describing the death of Samuel.
 - b) There is something special about a great man dying that gets everyone in the region to stop and contemplate what he did.
 - i) In the United States, when a President dies, it gets the country to stop and reflect what that man accomplished.
 - ii) The same could be said of Samuel. I'm speculating that Samuel got a greater assembly for his death than anything he ever had in his life. There is something about death that makes people stop and contemplate their accomplishments and compare that to their own lives.
 - c) When you read through the remainder of the Old Testament, you will occasionally notice the respect given to Samuel. You get the impression that after Moses and Abraham, that Samuel is considered part of say, "the top 5" greatest men in ancient Jewish history.
 - i) God told the prophet Jeremiah said many centuries later: "Then the LORD said to me: "Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people." (Jeremiah 15:1a NIV).
 - a) God is telling Jeremiah that the wickedness of the Israelites at that moment is too much for God to bear.
 - b) My point here is that Samuel is mentioned in the same breath as Moses as being someone special. That alone is a great obituary comment.
 - d) Stop and think about Samuel's death from David's perspective:
 - i) Samuel was the guy who told David he would be king one day.
 - ii) Samuel is the first person David ran to when he first started running from Saul.
 - iii) I'm guessing that when Samuel died, David thought, "OK, who is praying for me now? If worse came to worse, I could always run back to Samuel. Now that he's gone, where I can I turn?"
 - iv) It is another "sign" that David had to "just" trust God in this time of his life.

- e) The death of Samuel is going to affect Saul in a similar way.
 - i) Coming up in a Chapter 28, Saul goes to a witch (“medium”) to speak to Samuel back from the dead. Saul needed advice and in his desperation, tried to speak to Samuel after his death.
 - ii) What that tells me is that Saul also was at a loss after Samuel’s death.
 - f) It is almost as if the death of Samuel brought a temporary truce to Saul trying to kill David. I believe one of the reasons that God timed the death of Saul to occur here is that both Samuel and David could stop the cat and mouse game as each had to grieve over the loss of Samuel. It also provided the opportunity for David to meet Abigail.
 - g) It is best to study the early chapters of 1st Samuel and see how greatly God used this man. This is a guy who’s mother Hannah gave to God in order to strike a deal because Hannah was barren. God then “used” Samuel to be a great spiritual leader for the Nation of Israel all of his life.
 - h) Jewish tradition states that Samuel himself wrote or compiled up to 1st Samuel up to his death in this verse and that the prophets Gad and Nathan finished the book.
 - i) It could be. I’m speculating David wrote parts of the book and others compiled the stories and put them together.
 - i) Meanwhile, let’s move on to the story of David and Abigail.
5. Verse 1, Second Sentence: Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon. ² A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. ³ His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings.
- a) We last left of David and his army of about 400 men hanging out in a desert oasis called En Gedi. Now we reading of David and his men moving to a location called Moan.
 - b) Here we get introduced to Nabal. He is a rich man because he has lots of livestock.
 - i) The word Nabal means, “fool”. I suspect he wasn’t born with this name, but it became his nickname.
 - ii) In the Hebrew culture, one’s name is associated with one’s personality.
 - iii) Let me “biblically” define a fool:
 - a) “The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.” (Psalm 14:1 NIV)
 - b) Therefore to define a fool begins with the idea that they don’t care about God nor are interested in being accountable to God.
 - c) If you start with that premise, the actions of a fool will follow.
 - d) It is interesting to note that Jesus teaches on the Sermon on the Mount not to call anyone a fool. (Matthew 5:22). I believe Jesus point there is that we don’t know who is saved and who is not. God “eternally” judges, and we don’t. We can judge actions, but we don’t know who is saved.
 - iv) I wonder if Nabal accepts his name. We have all seen people accept derogatory nicknames for themselves.
 - a) It is as if Nabal is saying, “Yeah, I really don’t give a rip about God. If people want to call me a fool for that, so be it. I’m a rich man anyway, what do I need God for?”
 - v) We also get another clue to his name as the text says he is a “Calebite”.
 - a) That means he is a descendant of Caleb. If you read the story of Caleb in Numbers and Joshua, the bible speaks wonderfully of Caleb. When the Israelites first spied out the Promised Land, Caleb was one of two spies that brought back a positive report.

- b) To paraphrase Caleb, "Hey, there are lots of armies and giants in this land, but who cares because God is with us and with God, nobody can stop us!" (See Numbers 13:30.)
 - vi) So why mention that this "fool" is the son of Caleb?
 - a) I don't think it is so much about the family name as it is about what the word means. "Caleb" means dog. Not a household dog, but a rough "street dog" that can attack people. It is meant as a slur against Nabal.
 - c) The text says of Nabal that he is "surly and mean in his dealings".
 - i) This reminds me of a professor in college that taught me this parable:
 - a) The young rabbi asked the old rabbi, "Rabbi, what must I do to be rich?"
 - b) The older rabbi responded, "Well, for the first 15 years, you must be a mean bastard."
 - c) The young rabbi said, "Well, what happens after 15 years?"
 - d) The old rabbi said, "Well, after 15 years, you get used to it". ☺
 - ii) The point of that little parable is that we can get set in our ways, good or bad. It appears that this is a good illustration of Nabal.
 - d) Next, the text introduces us to his wife Abigail in Verse 3.
 - i) The text says, "She was an intelligent and beautiful woman."
 - a) Well, since David took her as a wife, he had to say this. ☺
 - b) Abigail is in good company. The only other women in the bible that describes their beauty are Sarah, Rachael and Esther.
 - ii) So why would a beautiful and intelligent woman like Abigail get stuck with a jerk like her husband Nabal?
 - a) Marriages were arranged by the parents. I'm guessing her parents agreed to this as they saw his money and figured she would be taken care of.
 - b) Can't you just picture her husband saying, "Well, everybody thinks I'm a fool huh? Well, I'm rich and I've acquired a good looking and intelligent wife. Gee, who's the fool now?"
 - c) Jesus told a parable of a similar fool. Jesus told of a man who didn't care for God and thought he was set for life because he had lots of money.
 - (1) Jesus said, "But God said to him, 'You fool! (God can call people fools, we can't. ☺) This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'" (Luke 12:20 NIV)
 - (2) Jesus point: "Don't live for stuff. You only will get rewarded in this life. Eternity is a lot longer than our life here on earth.
6. Verse 4: While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. ⁵ So he sent ten young men and said to them, "Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. ⁶ Say to him: 'Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours! ⁷ " 'Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. ⁸ Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.' "
- a) For a shepherd, payday comes when the sheep are given haircuts and the wool is sold.
 - i) Nabal had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats (Verse 2) was getting ready for payday.
 - ii) Therefore, this is also the time when Nabal is most vulnerable to thieves.
 - iii) David, apparently out of his good will and the fact that he was in the neighborhood, protected Nabal from such thieves.

- b) One has to understand that payday is also a festive time.
 - i) All the workers have been working all year, and now comes payday.
 - ii) It is time for the rewards for one's work. That is hinted at in Verse 8.
 - c) In Verses 6-8, David gives instructions on how to ask for food for his men.
 - i) In Verse 6, David says to first give a blessing on Nabal and his household.
 - ii) In Verses 7-8, David tells Nabal how none of his sheep were ever stolen by David.
 - iii) By the end of Verse 8, David is asking for a free-will gift as opposed to demanding that Nabal give it to him.
 - d) David's request for money is not a "mafia style protection racket". ☺ Old Testament laws and customs require that one help out strangers in need, especially fellow Jews.
 - i) This verse also shows that it is ok to go ask for help when you need it as opposed to just sitting there praying for a miracle. Not that I'm against prayer, but the point is that it is ok to take action as well.
7. Verse 9: When David's men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David's name. Then they waited.
- a) Notice that David tried to be as subtle and humble as possible.
 - i) Remember that David was well known. I suspect word got around Israel about David and Saul's escapades. At the least, it was known that David was to be the son-of-law of the king. Further, remember the "hit song" mentioned several times in 1st Samuel how "David has slain his tens of thousands and Saul his thousands".
 - ii) David sent messengers as opposed to coming himself. David did not want to appear to be a warrior coming to demand payment, but ask as a donation.
8. 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. ¹¹ Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?"
- a) If you recall, whenever Saul wanted to insult David, Saul would call David "Son of Jessie". That meant the "son of a nobody" as opposed to "Saul's son in law" or "the man that killed Goliath", etc.
 - i) Here was Nabal doing the exact same thing. He was calling David a "nobody".
 - b) Next Nabal says, "Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days."
 - i) I'm guessing that this is a subtle reference to the fact that Saul thought of David as one who was trying to seize the throne. If I know Saul, he probably had "wanted dead or alive posters" of David all over Israel trying to find him.
 - c) Finally, Nabal has a bad case of the "me, myself and I's".
 - i) Nabal says in Verse 11, "Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers..."
 - ii) This is Nabal saying, "Look, this is my stuff. Who is this David guy anyway asking me for a handout?"
 - iii) Going way back to Exodus, Moses commanded that when a field was to be harvested of crops, the farmers were to be "a little sloppy" and not harvest the whole field. The idea was to leave some for the poor of the land. (See Exodus 23:10, Leviticus 19:19, Deuteronomy 24:21).
 - a) Further, the idea is God saying, "Look folks, I'm trying to teach you a lesson here. ☺ All you have gained is due to me blessing you. Give generously to those in need and I promise to take care of you."
 - b) It is God saying, "This is a way to test your faith. Give to the needy and I promise to supply of your needs".
 - iv) Nabal thought of it all has "his food" and "his stuff" and wouldn't help David.

9. Verse 12: David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word. ¹³ David said to his men, "Put on your swords!" So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.
- a) David got the response from Nabal. David's response was, "Put on your swords!"
 - i) To use a modern cliché, "Let's lock and load boys, it's hunting time!"
 - b) Personally, my testosterone filled body just agreed with David. ☺
 - i) Let's face it, David was a good guy and didn't harm any of Nabal's animals.
 - ii) David asked for a free-will gift. This was a "proper Jewish" request.
 - iii) Nabal sent an insult back to David and now, David's adrenaline is flowing and David wants to kill Nabal. In Verse 22, we will read of David's vow to kill every man who works for Nabal.
 - c) Now, let's back up and think about this in context of the last few chapters:
 - i) David had an opportunity to kill Saul back in Chapter 23, but held back because David understood that Saul was "God's anointed king".
 - ii) David learned a valuable lesson in Chapters 23-24 about living on God's timing.
 - a) God teaches us that God and God alone avenges our enemies for us.
 - b) It doesn't mean that we stand there and let people harm us. Remember that David did run for his life as opposed to letting Saul kill him.
 - c) At the same time, God does not call us to avenge our enemies. That is different from self-defense. This is about taking the law into our own hands as opposed to letting God deal with those who hurt us.
 - iii) My point here is that God is testing David here with Nabal.
 - a) It is as if God is saying, "OK David you past the test with Saul. Now instead of a king, I'm going to put a "nobody" in your face and see if you react the same way.
 - b) What God is trying to teach David here in the principal of "Let God deal with your enemies" is that it not only applies to the people we revere, but also the people we can't stand!
 - c) It was easier for David to say, "let God deal with it" with King Saul because David respected Saul's role as the Israelite king. It was much more difficult for David to understand the principal of "Let God deal with it" with a foolish man like Nabal.
 - iv) One of the things you learn as a Christian is "after a great victory, watch out".
 - a) That means that after we pass a "test" of God, our egos tend to go up a few notches. This is often why God tests us again soon afterwards to make us more dependant upon God.
 - b) That is what David is going through here.
 - c) In Chapter 24, David passed the "don't kill Saul" test and David got his life spared as a reward. Now God is testing David again by putting a "schmutz" (I'm using a lot of Yiddish today ☺) like Nabal in David's life and seeing how David reacts.
10. Verse 14: One of the servants told Nabal's wife Abigail: "David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. ¹⁵ Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. ¹⁶ Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them. ¹⁷ 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 that no one can talk to him."
- a) Now we read of Abigail's reaction to this event.

- b) Notice the servants went to Abigail and not to her husband. That alone speaks volumes of what the servants thought of Abigail and what they thought of her husband.
 - i) In other words, "Abigail, help us. We all know your husband is a stubborn idiot and is going to get us all killed. You're his wife. Can you talk to him or do something to save our lives?"
 - c) Also notice how well the servants spoke of David in Verses 14 and 15. The text teaches how David's men never stole any sheep and how they helped protect them.
 - i) This is a reminder of how all we do in life affects others. I doubt David's men took on the job of protected the sheep just for the potential reward, but because "it was the right thing to do".
11. Verse 18: Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. ¹⁹ Then she told her servants, "Go on ahead; I'll follow you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.
- a) What Abigail did was act. She took a bunch of food, saddled it up on donkeys and told some servants to go send it ahead to David and his men.
 - i) Also, give the servants some credit. They understood Abigail was going against her husband's authority. They agreed to all of this as well!
 - b) Notice there was lots of food already prepared.
 - i) We'll read that the husband and his buddies had a big party while his wife was doing all of this. That food was for that purpose. This does show that there was food available to give David and his men, but the husband was plain stingy.
 - c) Notice what we don't read Abigail doing: She didn't stop to ask her husband.
 - i) There is a biblical principal that a wife is to be submissive to the husband's will in all things. (Numbers 5:19-20, 1st Timothy 2:11-12)
 - ii) Abigail's disobedience in this situation is a good example of "higher law". If we are given an order by a "superior" (e.g., spouse, parent, government leader) that is a clear violation of Scripture, then one can claim a "higher law" and obey God over those in authority over us. One may still have to "take their lumps" to those in authority over them, but in God's eye, one did the right thing.
 - a) For example, if a husband orders a wife to steal, the wife can say no even though God desires that the wife be in submission to a husband's will.
 - iii) That is the case for Abigail. Her husband violated Old Testament laws about being generous to those in need. The wife applied "Higher law" by disobeying her husband's orders not to help David by giving them food.
 - iv) You have to understand the risk she was taking. The husband could at the least divorce her over this. There are few options available for an older divorced woman in that culture. It was life threatening.
 - v) To me, the hero's of the bible are usually those willing to take a risk in the time of need. I always liked the cliché, "People are like teabags. You never know what flavor they are until you get them in hot water." Abigail is one who stood out in times of trouble. In that sense, she is a great match for David as she too was willing to take a stand for God, even at the point of risking her own life.
12. Verse 20: As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. ²¹ David had just said, "It's been useless--all my watching over this fellow's property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. ²² May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!"

- a) Verses 20 describes David's first visual encounter with Abigail. Their first spoken words together begin in Verse 23.
- b) Verses 21 and 22 are about David making a vow.
 - i) David was angry with Nabal for not giving him or his men any food.
 - ii) David vows to kill all the men under Nabal for not helping him.
 - iii) This is a classic case of a male overreaction to a problem. ☹
 - iv) This also reminds me that sometimes I make the worse decisions when I am hungry. There is an acronym called "H.A.L.T." that is appropriate here. It is a reminder to check our behavior when we are (H)ungry, (A)ngry, (L)onely or (T)ired. Our worse behavior often comes out in one of those four situations.
 - v) Remember this is the point where Abigail comes out to meet David. It was also "God's timing" that a woman came out to meet David as David just vowed to kill all the males. If Abigail's husband came out, or some male servants, David in his rage could have killed them without even listening to them.
- c) Let's compare David's reaction here with what he said to Saul in the last chapter:
 - i) David had an opportunity to kill Saul in the last chapter, but backed down because he was "God's anointed".
 - ii) Now here, some guy refused to give David a free handout, and David reacts by vowing to kill every man in sight. It was not a capital crime for Abigail's husband to refuse David.
 - iii) Obviously David was wrong for thinking this. As I stated earlier, God often tests us after we have past a great test.
 - a) David "past the test" with Saul by offering mercy and kindness to Saul instead of killing him. Now David is faced with Nabal, who is a "fool".
 - b) My point here is that God expects our behavior to be consistent.
 - c) In a sense, it is much easier to be a good person in front of a "king". We are often on our best behavior in front of people we respect. God also expects us to have the same standards and lifestyles in front of "fools".
 - d) David only shows mercy to Nabal after Abigail convinces David it is the right thing to do. It took Abigail to convict David of his sin.
- d) What about vows? Is David obligated to keep that vow? What about Jesus word's about keeping vows and "let your 'yes' be 'yes'"? (Reference: Matthew 5:37).
 - i) There is a Jewish tradition that a vow made to commit violence is not binding.
 - a) In the New Testament, there were some Jewish zealots who took a vow not to eat nor drink until they have killed Paul. (Acts 23:12) When they failed, I doubted they starved to death. Such vows are not considered "binding by tradition" (i.e., the bible does not specifically comment on this).
 - b) I don't believe God expects us to keep sinful vows. In such cases we are to confess the sin and correct whatever "wrongs" that have occurred.
 - ii) With that exception said, God expects us to keep whatever vows we make.
 - a) This is about being a "man or woman of your word". If people can't trust you in vows about anything in life, how will people take you seriously when you talk about God? That is why honesty and commitment are such highly valued terms in the bible.
 - iii) David's sin was making the vow in the first place. When David repented of that vow, it was no longer binding.

13. Verse 23: When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. ²⁴ She fell at his feet and said: "My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. ²⁵ May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name--his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent.
- a) From Verse 24 through Verse 31 is one speech by Abigail to David.
 - b) Verse 23 shows her submissiveness to David. Remember that she did not know about David's vow. She only knew that David had an army, threatened her husband and that her husband refused to help her.
 - c) The first thing out of her mouth was "blame me alone".
 - i) She was willing to take the blame upon herself so as to spare the life of her husband and her servants. That is a good sign of leadership.
 - d) The next thing Abigail does is say how rotten her husband is.
 - i) If there is one thing I know in life, it is that all husbands and wives are walking authorities on the faults of their spouses! ☺ We overlook our own faults, but we can ramble off a thesis paper on what is wrong with our spouse!
 - e) Abigail went on to say in effect, "Look the guy's name (or nickname) is "fool" and the name is well-deserved. I didn't know that he sent the negative greeting to you.
 - i) Notice Abigail first stated "put the blame on me" and then she said what a rotten guy her husband was. She got her priorities right in confession.
14. Verse 26: "Now since the LORD has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal.
- a) Before I go any further, I have to commend Abigail for giving a great speech without any serious preparation. It is a sign of her character to make these comments on the spot.
 - i) This reminds me of something Jesus said: "But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you." (Matthew 10:19-20 NIV).
 - a) That promise by Jesus does not mean we can ignore the bible because the Holy Spirit will give us the right words in the time of trouble. If anything it is just the opposite. If we are "grounded" in God through our bible study and prayer time, then God can and does bring the words to mind we need to say in critical times like this.
 - b) Now to the text itself. Notice she puts David on a "higher level" than Nabal.
 - i) The verse says in effect, "God has kept you from bloodshed and avenging my husband. God has prevented you from taking matters into your own hands as opposed to letting God deal with your enemies.
 - ii) Abigail is giving David "a reputation to live up to".
 - a) I can just hear David thinking, "Yeah, that's right. I was thinking that." ☺
 - c) She compliments David by saying in effect, "May your enemies be like my husband".
 - i) In other words, "David, you are God's anointed. You will be king. My husband is an idiot. May your enemies have the characteristics of my husband!"
 - ii) Remember she was married to this guy not by choice, but by arrangement.

15. Verse 27: And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you.
- a) Have you ever been in a situation where someone was angry with you and you didn't know how to calm the situation? Remember this Proverb:
 - i) "A gift given in secret soothes anger, and a bribe concealed in the cloak pacifies great wrath." (Proverbs 21:14 NIV) This is Abigail applying that Proverb!
 - ii) It's hard to be angry with someone when they are presenting you a gift!
16. Verse 28: Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD's battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live.
- a) My loose translation: "Look David, everyone knows you will be king, including me. It is obvious to all of Israel. Since you are going to be king, you must learn to be "above it all" and let God avenge your enemies. That includes my husband as well as King Saul. "
 - b) This principal applies to us as well. When God says, "Vengeance is Mine" (Deut. 32:35), that applies to all who commit their lives to God. It means not to harm those who harm us, but let God take care of it.
 - c) Does that mean we let people say, hit us over and over again? No. In the Gospels, we read where Jesus ran from harm. The apostles ran from harm. David ran from harm. The point is they didn't take vengeance into their own hands. This is not about self-defense. This is about taking actions into our hands where God never intends us to take such actions. The bible lays out principals when it is appropriate to go to war, and how criminals should be punished. The point here is to not go above and beyond such laws.
17. Verse 29: Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling.
- a) My translation: "David, trust in God and He will take care of you."
 - b) Notice the reference to "pocket of a sling". That was a not so subtle reminder of how David defeated Goliath with the slingshot. Abigail used a past time when David did trust in God. She used that as an example to live up at this point.
18. Verse 30: When the LORD has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel, ³¹ my master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the LORD has brought my master success, remember your servant."
- a) The final argument that Abigail uses is, "Look David, when you become king, you don't want your reputation blemished by killing someone who failed to be generous to you".
 - b) The main theme of Abigail's argument is to give David a reputation to live up to.
 - i) There is nothing wrong with using that as a motivation tool. You can find that style all throughout the bible. It appeals to one's ego. ☺ More importantly, it is saying, "This is God's standards of right and wrong and we (yes we) should desire to let God work through us to live up to those standards!"
 - c) Finally, she ends with "remember your servant".
 - i) If you know your bible, you have to think of the thief on the cross next to Jesus who says, Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:42 NIV). Jesus said that thief was saved because of that statement.
 - d) Back in my introduction, I mentioned that Abigail is a model of our Christian salvation.
 - i) She was willing to risk her life, forsake her husband and forsake all she had for the sake of submitting to David. She reminds David that she is aware he will be the king one day and submits to that fact. She ends with "remember your servant".

- ii) The promise of a future Messiah is not only that he will pay the price for our sins but also rule one day. That is what the last few chapters of Revelation is all about. We, like this girl ask Jesus to “remember us”. Not only for the sake of our sins, but also for the sake that Jesus is and will be a king forever.
 - iii) If you want to know why this chapter is so important and why we interrupt the “Continuing adventures of Saul chasing David”, it is because Abigail is essential to “your average believer” as a model of our submission to God.
- 19. Verse 32: David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. ³³ May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. ³⁴ Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak." ³⁵ Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, "Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request."
 - a) Here we read of David’s first words to Abigail. David does not open with “Nice speech, ok, you win.” ☺ David’s first words are, “Praise God!”
 - i) David understood how this speech was “God-ordained”.
 - ii) David understood how God himself orchestrated Abigail to come to him today.
 - iii) David got his focus back on God and not on his anger at Abigail’s husbands.
 - iv) If you want to know how to “right a wrong”, start by getting your focus on God!
 - v) With David’s realization of how all of this was God-ordained, David repents.
 - b) When David said all of this is God ordained, it does not mean that God spoke audibly to Abigail. It does not mean an angel told Abigail, “Here’s your speech to read to David”.
 - i) I’m sure Abigail was simply concerned with saving her life and her household. She didn’t plan or pray, she just took action. It was only in hindsight where David and Abigail realized this is all “God ordained”. That is the way “God’s will” works for us as well. If we are well grounded in God through prayer and His Word, then how we act in such situations is usually “God ordained”.
- 20. 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. So she told him nothing until daybreak. ³⁷ 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. ³⁸ About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died.
 - a) Now comes the tough part for Abigail: Having to explain all of this to her husband.
 - b) When she got home, her husband was drunk. She was smart enough to wait until he sobered up to tell him the whole thing.
 - c) This is also further proof of the foolishness of her husband Nabal. He trusted in his wealth. He trusted in his men to protect him from David. He got drunk. An example of a fool is one who trusts in “stuff” over and above God for security.
 - d) When she told him the news, apparently he had a stroke and died ten days later. The point is David eventually trusted in God to deal with David’s enemies and God came through on keeping his promises.
- 21. Verse 39: When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise be to the LORD, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head." Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife. ⁴⁰ His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, "David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife."

- a) Like David's last little speech, David gets God-focused first.
 - i) David understands his life (like ours!) is all God-ordained. By David being submissive to God's will and not taking revenge, God fulfilled His promises to David by taking care of his enemies for us.
 - ii) OK John, but I have this rotten person who's been bugging me for years. Why hasn't God zapped him or her with a stroke? ☺
 - iii) First of all, who are you (and me) to tell God anything? God works on His timing and not on ours. That person is probably still there as God is trying to teach you additional lessons. A better suggestion is to ask God to teach us the lessons He wants us to learn in these situations and to help us be a good witness to God through whatever we are going through.
 - b) It is interesting to read this from Abigail's perspective. Even though she was married to a bad husband, his death meant uncertainty for her life. What was she to do now?
 - i) When we are willing to give "all" to God, He then steps in and rescues us.
 - ii) We read that David proposes to her in marriage at this point.
 - iii) Again, this gets back to our model of salvation through Jesus:
 - a) We say to God, "we are sinners, and we deserve your punishment".
 - b) God does not say I forgive you, but I myself will bear the punishment on the cross. (This is why it is essential to understand Jesus as God.)
 - c) Remember, we are the one's who deserve to be punished for our sins. Out of love for us, God then raises us up to be the bride of Christ!
 - d) Here is David asking Abigail to be his wife after she submits to him. It is a wonderful picture of how God works in our lives!
22. Verse 41: She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, "Here is your maidservant, ready to serve you and wash the feet of my master's servants." ⁴² Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five maids, went with David's messengers and became his wife.
- a) Here is the "happily ever after part". ☺ She accepts his offer in marriage.
 - b) Notice in these verses her way of saying, "yes" to David is in very submissive!
23. Verse 43: David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both were his wives.
- a) We get this "footnote" in Verse 43 about David's other wife Ahinoam.
 - i) There is "no story" about Ahinoam, how they met, what happened, etc.
 - ii) It is only Abigail who gets a whole chapter dedicated to their first meeting.
 - iii) I can just picture some girl asking Abigail many years later, "How did you meet David?" It makes a great story to teach on God's will, submission, salvation, etc.
 - b) A quick discussion of "polygamy". Does God "condone" multiple wives?
 - i) The bible does teach that kings should not multiply wives (Deut. 17:17).
 - ii) It is not a capital crime, but polygamy does not please God either.
 - iii) Every time a bible-husband has more than one wife, there is trouble.
 - a) We'll read in 2nd Kings of sibling rivalries beings stepbrothers due to David's multiple wife relationships.
 - b) God does not strike David dead for this crime, but he does suffer the consequences of living such a life.
24. Verse 44: But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Paltiel son of Laish, who was from Gallim.
- a) Meanwhile, back at the palace. ☺ Here is the only reference to Saul in the whole chapter.

- b) Saul's daughter Michal was promised to David as bride back in Chapter 18.
 - i) Apparently, they were engaged, but never married. Here Saul is saying, "As far as I'm concerned, David is as good as dead. I don't even want to think about him. He will never be my son in law. In fact, I'm going to go back on my word to give my daughter to David and go give him to another guy!"
 - c) This is the same Saul who promised not to kill David in the last chapter.
 - i) We don't know the time delay between Chapters 24 and 25, but apparently it was long enough where Saul's jealousy kicked in again and Saul wanted David again. We'll read more of this in the next lesson.
 - d) In the meantime, we got a wonderful interruption of "David the Fugitive" to "David meets his bride". We get a love story that teaches us about salvation, repentance, submissiveness and God's will getting accomplished in the worst of situations.
25. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, One of the most difficult challenges for a believer is to put the difficult people in our lives into Your hands. Instead of taking vengeance, help us to manifest Your love in us so that we can be better witnesses to others. Help us to remember the promise that You take care of all of our needs, including those that wish to do harm to us. Help us to remember that You are our protector as well as our Savior. Help us to learn to be submissive to Your will so that in all we do, You are glorified. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.