

The Life of David, 1 Samuel 25, How Not to Be a Fool, 3/25/25

In 2009, my mens small group was preparing to go on a missions trip to Guatemala. Now the Missions Trip Director, Kyla, created a step-by-step guide for the trip leader to follow that was really a compilation of the best practices after many years of sending trips. One of the very first steps in that guide was to delegate responsibilities to members of your missions team and don't try to do it all. Well, in my youthful arrogance, I thought, "Well that's for those leaders who aren't organized, maybe can't handle things as well as I can. But that doesn't really apply to me. I got this." So Kyla notices I seem to be doing all the organizing and she says to me, "Nate, did you read the Leaders Guide?" "Yes." "Well you know, one of the first steps talks about the importance of delegating tasks to your team, you seem like you are taking on too many things." So I nodded politely, said thank you, and assured her... "Kyla, don't worry, I got this." We get two days before our flight, I'm going down my leader checklist, and I realize...I never made copies of all our team passports like I was supposed to and so I reach out to all the guys, I get their passports, I make all the copies on the printer at church, get them back to them... phew... problem solved. So the night before our flight, I'm getting all my stuff ready, feeling frazzled, OK-toiletries, plane tickets, money, passport...Where is my passport? And my eyes got big and I got a knot in my stomach, oh no! I began to realize, in the hurry of everything, with all the last minute photocopying of passports, I must have left it at the church. I'm 8 hours from boarding my flight and I don't have my passport! Head back to church. Well I look everywhere, nowhere to be found. Gone. Well guess what? Everyone on my team boarded that plane, everyone got to Guatemala, everyone was on that mission trip...except me! The next day, Kyla said to me, "Well, Nate, I guess you don't got it huh? You should have listened to me!" I was reminded of the voice of lady wisdom in the Proverbs- **Proverbs 8:1 Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice?**

V.36 All who fail to listen to her voice will injure themselves. Now miraculously, I was able to get a passport quickly, book a flight and meet up with them within about a day and a half...that was God's sheer grace on me. But the embarrassment of that day taught me a valuable lesson about how not to be a fool: When God sends lady wisdom your way, listen!

Well, today in 1 Samuel 25, David is headed for disaster when he hears the same voice of lady wisdom personified in a woman named Abigail, what will he do? And the question for us today is the same, what will we do when God sends the voice of wisdom to us in our circumstances?

Some background. V.1 we find out Samuel the prophet dies and the entire nation of Israel mourns for the great prophet, and sometime after this, David and his 600 men head down to Southern Israel, as far away from King Saul. By now they are trained soldiers, living like a guerilla force and what they are doing in chapter 25 is protecting the shepherds and the farmers that are down there from the Philistines and any other band of marauders. And in response the shepherds and farmers provide them with milk and food, and that's how they are making a living, it's a nice reciprocal relationship. **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 was surly and mean in his dealings—he was a Calebite. Now wives, show of hands, how many of you feel like this describes your marriage? Just kidding. We see this is kind of a beauty and the beast relationship here. Not only was he mean, but his name actually means fool. Can you imagine your mother naming you “fool” so every time she calls on you, “Hey fool, come in for dinner...” Maybe he was the last of a bunch of kids and they named him fool because they were foolish to have another one, maybe it was a nickname...we don't know why he has this name, I pity the fool...but we will see shortly that it's fitting. And you say “This beauty and beast, how did these two get together?” Abigail wasn't on “beauty and the beast” dating app.” Well, the answer back then was money and power. Nabal was rich and powerful and Abigail's parents likely arranged this for her and their financial security.

4 *While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. 5* *So he sent ten young men to Nabal...* now let me summarize what's happening here. In those days sheep-shearing was a harvest time, a celebration time when you reap the profit of all the hard work by selling off the wool. And it was customary to give a Thank You gift to people who helped you become successful at this time...Because after all, like Coach Siriani of the Superbowl Champion Eagles said all year, “*You can't be great without the greatness of others.*” So, David sent some of his young men to this, essentially expecting that they would get a nice big bonus, after all the security detailing for him, and how his men had been nothing but professional. But listen to Nabal's response. **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?” Wow. Ebenezer Scrooge comes to mind. What a cheapskate! But this is more than just being cheap. Do you all know LC Sayadian, she's amazing, Connections Director, she's Persian. Well this week when we were studying this text in our staff devo, she said as soon as she read this, she knew this was going to be a big problem, because in a shame/honor culture, a hospitality culture like the middle east was then and still is today, to respond the way Nabal did was a great way to start a massive conflict. But this is David, he's a man after God's heart, let's see how he responds. **12** *David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word.*

13 *David said to his men, “Each of you strap on your sword!” So they did, and David strapped his on as well.*

*About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies. And as David and his men are galloping, he's getting more and more angry just thinking about it. **21** David said, "It's been useless—all my watching over this fellow's property in the wilderness*

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!"* Whoa, talk about bad intentions, he's talking to himself in the 3rd person now...It's on!

David was about to do something completely rash...wouldn't have been much of a fight. A chainsaw to a twig. He goes ballistic. You say, "Whoa, whoa, isn't this a godly man? What happened to the David that felt bad for cutting off the corner of Saul's robe in just the last chapter?" Well anger got the best of him. I think this was like a straw that broke the camel's back...he's tired of being insulted and overlooked and treated poorly by rich, powerful men... and this time he's going to go full Rambo on them. Now I want you to see this because even though David is a man after God's own heart, he doesn't have God's heart, David's was a sinner just like you and me. Even the best of men are men at best. Sin was crouching at David's door, but he was being mastered by it right here.

Well at just the right time God sends Abigail into the picture. She finds out what her foolish husband did, and catches wind that David and his men are on the way with bad intentions, and she meets him before he arrives. As one author said it, she meets David's caravan of retaliation with a caravan of reconciliation.¹ And she pulls together with her servants a huge gift basket of sorts...full of fruit, and cakes, and fruitcakes and meat kabobs, a bunch of Wawa gift cards...

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: "Pardon your servant, my lord, and let me speak to you; hear what your servant has to say.*

25 *Please pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means Fool, and folly goes with him.*

You think these two had a healthy marriage? Not exactly...they could have used Re|Engage. But she wasn't wrong. Well what she goes on to do here is just a masterclass in deescalation. Abigail steps in the gap, puts herself in harm's way, she intercedes for her husband and all the men in the house of Nabal. And she goes on to give David some valuable advice. "David when I look at you, I'm looking at the next king of Israel. Don't ruin your reputation with a cheap massacre like this, this isn't the kind of man after God's own heart, you are going to be sorry for the rest of your life, what kind of king will you become if you do not learn mercy?" Abigail proves to be lady wisdom personified.

¹ Skip Heitzig notes- <https://calvarynm.church/teachings/#/series/314/sermon/4601>

How will David who has a head full of steam, smelling blood, looking for a fight respond to Abigail? **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.

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." David's emotions were soothed by her wise words, he listened, he thought about it, he repents and comes to his senses, and he credits God for sending Abigail at just the right time.

What happens to Nabal the fool? Well, he doesn't know about any of this, he has a big party that very evening, gets drunk, the next morning while he's trying to sober up, Abigail says, "Oh by the way...remember David, the one YOU disrespected, well he was coming to kill you, and all the men in this house, I gave him a big gift, the gift YOU should have gave him, and he decided not to kill you. So...you're welcome, you fool!" **37and his heart failed him and he became like a stone.**

38 About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died. David hearing the news once again, is taught the lessons of non-retaliation and mercy. To trust that God is the avenger, He is the one who brings justice and it shouldn't take it into our own hands. And in case we are ready to say, "David, didn't God already teach you that lesson in the cave with Saul?" Remember how many times we have to learn again and again and how patient God is with us.

In some ways, I wish this story ended right here with David learning this lesson, but the author tucks in a subtle little detail that foreshadows a destructive pattern not only for David, but for his legacy and his children. V.41-43 tells us that David takes the now widowed Abigail as his wife, and at first, that sounds great. Abigail is an amazing woman, certainly she will be a great wife. But this begins for David the multiplication of wives because he already had a wife, Ahinoam of Jezreel, and eventually he remarries Michal and marries Bathsheba as well. David sadly begins to follow the custom of his day to exploit his position as King to take several wives. In Deuteronomy 17, God had explicitly warned future Israelite Kings not to do this. This chapter is one of the first indications that even though David is the anointed next king, he's still not the ultimate, true king that the world needs and our hearts search for, only Jesus is that king, who uses his position to serve, not to be served. Not to abuse power, but to give it up for us.

That's where the chapter ends, let's talk about us today. My former pastor, Lon Solomon, tells a story about his high school chemistry teacher who had a saying, **"A word to the wise is sufficient, but a fool needs to be rapped on the head."** And it took him a while to figure out why she was always saying this to him! His teacher was aware of something important about the human heart. We all have a tendency to be Nabals. **Proverb 21:2 All the ways of a person seem right in their own eyes.** Don't we love to be right? Don't we often get stubborn and stuck in our

own head? Or like David, we get a head full of steam where we are bent on doing something foolish? As fallen creatures have an amazing ability in our flesh to justify our actions and do things our own way. This is really the sin behind all sins isn't it?

Adam and Eve- Justified eating the fruit, convinced they knew better than God what would make them wise. Samson justified shacking up with the Philistine Delilah, thinking he knew better than his parents and it ended up costing him his hair, his eyes, and his very life. Saul justified going after David in the wilderness to kill him, refusing the wisdom of his own son, Jonathan. We have an amazing ability to do this. We ask for very little advice and we want even less. And sometimes, we end up in the ditch of life filled with regrets and paying the price.

Friends, just like Abigail, lady wisdom calls out to us, are we listening? Or are we more like Nabal? Hard-headed, and even harder-hearted. Closed off, stubborn...what the Bible calls a fool. One of the admirable traits of David, is that while he didn't always get it right, he always made it right. He was headed in the wrong direction, but when God sent lady wisdom in Abigail, he stops, he listens, he humbles himself, and he commits to change. Since becoming the lead pastor at Brandywine, I've made it a regular prayer that I wouldn't not be a Nabal, but a David, open to the Abigails he sends my way. That I would have a heart of wisdom. There have been times I've gotten mad and wanted to stew in it, but a voice of wisdom from Pastor Terry would help me calm and repent. Or I've gotten excited, thought I knew exactly what decision to make, and then I bring it to Todd and Ministry Leadership Team and they begin to question it, and say, well have you thought about this, or that...and by the end I go, you know what. You are right, maybe we shouldn't put a slide from the top of the steps to the bottom in the new building plan. I'm still on my way in that process.

How does God send us voices of wisdom? Certainly, first and foremost the Word of God and our own prayer life. But in addition it's people he sends, it's the Abigails. 1) Often, it's our parents- one of their jobs is to bring up their children in the admonition and instruction of the Lord. Many times they are sharing wisdom based on their own mistakes. They probably know you better than anyone else. While they aren't always going to give you wisdom, when it comes, we would be wise to heed it.

2) Friends- Faithful are wounds of a friend the Bible says. They will tell us the truth, even when it hurts. You'd be wise to cultivate friends that don't give you the advice to just "follow your heart" or "you do you." But tell you the truth from a Biblical worldview! They are the Abigails in your small group that speak up and say, "I don't think you should quit your job just because you don't like your boss." Or "I don't think that guy or girl is right for you." Or "You know, running to a new church isn't going to fix your problem, you need to confront the conflict."

3) Our Church leaders

Hebrews 13:17 *Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will have to give an account.* Your pastors, the deacons, your group leaders, your mentors, teachers...are called to be Abigails, keeping watch to help guide you. Preaching and teaching of the word, providing you counsel. As a pastor, I've seen many David's listen to

counsel and avoid disaster in their marriage, in their finances, in their moral life...and sadly I've seen many Nabals shipwreck their lives, and some come back later with deep regret and say I wish I had listened, it would have saved me this heartbreak.

4) For those who are married, **Our Spouse**- this goes both ways, but I have the most experience with my wife being an Abigail to me, giving me wisdom that I need to hear. Sometimes I can be like the Titanic...and my wife is the best iceberg spotter. Just recently, she warned me that I was approaching the situation wrong, and I didn't listen, and I came home and said...you know I should have listened to you, you were right. And husbands, if you say, well your wife doesn't disagree with me like that, it's not because you are making all the right decisions, it's probably because she's learned that you are like Nabal. V.17 *she says that no one can talk to him*, he's not safe to tell. Humble yourself, ask her for wisdom. And wives, every once in a while throw us a bone and let us not only listen to your problem, but actually try to help fix it? We would love that! Is there an Abigail in your ear right now that you need to listen to?

Wisdom calls out to us **Proverbs 8:35 For whoever finds me finds life**. Abigail's wisdom points to the ultimate wisdom incarnate- Jesus Christ. In John 6:68 Peter says, **To whom else should we go? You have the words that bring eternal life.**

For some of us the first and most important voice of wisdom we need to listen to Jesus himself who said "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but through me." and "I am the resurrection and the life, whoever believes in me, though they die, will have everlasting life." and "I am the truth that sets you free."

Before I came to faith in Jesus I was like Nabal, I stopped listening to my parents wisdom about where to find life, stopping listening to God's Word and I was following my own wisdom. I was saying about life, "I've got this." But it wasn't leading to life, it was leading to a trail of brokenness, regrets, and bad decisions. God sent some Abigails into my life. For one, Pastor Bob, who led me back to faith. Where my eyes were opened to my own foolishness, thinking I didn't need God, I didn't need Jesus in my life. And like David in that moment, I stopped, I thought about it, humbled myself and repented of my sin, my life of rebellion. And I trusted in who Jesus is, and what he did for me. What about you?