

Third Presbyterian Church  
Midweek Bible Study  
I Samuel - Chapter 25  
Way of Escape from Anger

1 Samuel 25:35-44 (NIV)

<sup>35</sup> 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." <sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>37</sup> 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. <sup>38</sup> About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died. <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, "David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife."

<sup>41</sup> 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."

<sup>42</sup> Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five maids, went with David's messengers and became his wife.

1. Is anger a sin? Why or why not?
2. According to the sermon give the definition of anger?
3. The sermon speaks about Temporary Spiritual Insanity (TSI).
  - A. Explain this idea
  - B. Has this ever happened to you
  - C. Speak about how to detect that someone is experiencing (TSI) and how would you minister to them in that moment to help them not give in to actions caused by (TSI)
4. Is it a reasonable expectation that someone to whom we have done good should be willing to return the favor?
  - A. What happens if they don't according to the sermon?
5. Discuss Abigail's response to receiving the news from her servant about her husband's actions against David.
  - A. How can we continue to be godly while angry?
6. Share a time when God made a way of escape from you being led by anger to do regrettable things?
7. Why is bible study necessary in helping us manage anger?
8. Discuss how being in the fellowship of believers helps us in anger management?
9. Discuss this statement; "Jesus didn't go to the cross primarily to die for us.....the primary reason was to please the father in heaven...."
10. In what way is it preferable to let God vindicate you rather than to avenge yourself of wrongs done to you?
11. Share your main takeaway from the sermon and the lesson?

## The Encounter of David with Nabal and Abigail: Lessons on Dealing with a Harsh, Selfish Man and a Wise, Courageous Woman, 25:1-44

**(25:1-44) Introduction— Mean-Spirited, Example of— Hard-hearted, Example of— Women, Courageous— Women, Wise:** a sharp contrast is drawn between a harsh, selfish man and a wise, courageous woman in the present lesson of Scripture. The picture painted of the man is that of a cold, mean person who was selfish and dishonest. Tragically, there are some persons who walk upon this earth who are hard and mean-spirited.

On the other hand the picture painted of the woman is that of a sensible, intelligent, understanding, wise, courageous, humble, and beautiful person. Just imagine such a woman, and thankfully there are courageous and wise women of the highest character who walk among us.

This is a description of the man and woman who encountered David in the present passage of Scripture. This is: *The Encounter of David with Nabal and Abigail: Lessons on Dealing with a Harsh, Selfish Man and a Wise, Courageous Woman, 25:1-44.*

**1. (25:1) Death, Example of— Samuel, Death of:** there was the death of Samuel, the spiritual leader of Israel who had served as both prophet and judge to the people. Remember, Samuel was the last person to serve as *judge* of Israel. His life and death closed the era of the judges and prepared the way for the monarchy, the rule of the kings. More than anyone else, Samuel's faith and courage had helped the Israelites begin the movement toward a united nation, toward undergoing a transition from twelve disunified tribes to a unified monarchy.

Samuel was a nationwide leader in both politics and religion. For this reason, all Israel mourned his death; and many attended his funeral, including all the tribal leaders. No doubt many thousands were present to pay their last respects to this great servant of God, one of the major national leaders of Israel. Note that he was buried in his home in Ramah, not in an elaborate tomb in some important public place. Warren W. Wiersbe says that this was in stark contrast to King Saul who had built a public monument for himself at Carmel (15:12)—a sharp contrast between pride and humility.

Receiving word of Samuel's death, David retreated deeper into the desert, probably for the purpose of mourning Samuel's death in an area much more protected from Saul's reach. Remember that Samuel had been David's spiritual mentor and counselor ever since he had been a young boy. A deep sense of loss and grief must have gripped his heart, driving him to his face before God. He was bound to be wondering who now would be able to advise and counsel him, especially in these days when Saul was so fiercely pursuing him.

The place to which David retreated was the Wilderness of Paran. This area was more than 100 miles south of the stronghold at En Gedi where David and his men had been hiding out from Saul. However, it should be noted that some texts and translations say that David retreated to Maon which was one of David's favorite hideouts (23:24-25). Note that the event with Nabal and Abigail, which begins in verse two, took place in Maon. Whatever the case, whether the Desert of Paran or Maon, David retreated farther away from Saul's pursuit, most likely to be more free to seek the face of God.

**Thought 1.** Samuel's death is a reminder that we must all die. The day is coming when we will no longer live upon this earth. Death is universal: every single person born into this world dies and no person can stop death. But some of us do not even reach old age. We are snatched away by the dark tentacles of death much sooner through such tragedies as...

- premature births
- accidents
- diseases
- suicides
- assaults
- murders

No matter how much we may want to remain on this earth and no matter what we do, we simply cannot stop the dark grip of death. Everyone of us *must* die. This is the clear teaching of God's Holy Word:

**"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12).**

**"For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Corinthians 5:4).**

**2. (25:2-17) Hard-hearted, Example of— Selfish, Example of— Greed, Example of— Dishonesty, Example of— Cold-hearted, Example of— Meanness, Example of— Nabal, Opposed David— Abigail, Described:** there was David's experience with Nabal, the husband of Abigail who was later to become David's wife. Having just been forced to flee for their lives, David and his 600 men were bound to face hunger and the need for other supplies. Just feeding such a large number of fugitives who were constantly on the run was an awesome responsibility. To provide food and supplies, David had to depend upon wealthy landowners and others who were sympathetic to his cause. Keep in mind that David had been protecting the citizens of Israel from Philistine raiders and marauders who would often sweep down upon the land killing, destroying, and stealing whatever they needed or wanted (23:1-6). Because of David's protection, many citizens and property owners willingly supported David and his fugitive band. But when David approached Nabal, he confronted a man with a cold, hard heart who was rooted in selfishness and greed.

1. Note Nabal's background: he was very wealthy, owning over 1,000 goats and 3,000 sheep (1 Samuel 25:2-3). He was married to Abigail, a sensible and intelligent woman who was also very beautiful. Nabal was a descendant of Caleb, a distinguished and highly esteemed clan. But note what else Scripture says about him: he was harsh and evil in his dealings. His heart was cold and mean. He was greedy and dishonest in dealing with people.

2. While hiding out in the Wilderness of Maon, some dire circumstance arose and David had to approach Nabal for food and supplies. He heard that Nabal was sheering sheep, so he sent a delegation to the very successful farmer with a personal message (1 Samuel 25:5-8). The message included four points:

- ⇒ David greeted Nabal by wishing him a long life and good health (1 Samuel 25:6).
- ⇒ David informed Nabal that he had been protecting his shepherds and flocks from bandits and marauders and that Nabal's workers could verify this fact (1 Samuel 25:7; 23:1, 5).
- ⇒ David requested supplies (1 Samuel 25:7).
- ⇒ David appealed as a "son" to Nabal, indicating a close bond between them in that David had protected Nabal's property just as a son would.

In light of his wealth and the protection David had provided, Nabal should have provided generous supplies for David and his men. But the response of Nabal to the request was a strong indictment against his character, an indictment that would soon lead to the hand of God's judgment falling upon him.

3. In a spirit of bitter contempt, Nabal denied David's request (1 Samuel 25:9-12). He rebuffed the messengers, ridiculing, demeaning, and insulting both them and David. In addition, he charged David with rebellion, with being nothing but a slave who had broken away from his master, King Saul.

Nabal demonstrated a cold and greedy spirit. He asked why he should take his bread and water and the meat he had killed for his shearers and give it to men he did not know. Note this fact: within this one verse, the word "I" or "my" is used seven times in the original Hebrew. This hard and selfish man gave nothing to David and his men. Turning around, David's messengers returned to David and shared with him the humiliating, contemptible behavior of Nabal toward them.

4. David's reaction was immediate, spontaneous: anger boiled up in him and he became increasingly incensed. He ordered his men to mobilize immediately to take vengeance against this selfish, ungrateful scoundrel. Mobilizing 400 men, David began the march to take vengeance against Nabal. Two hundred men were left behind to guard their camp.

5. While the above events were taking place, one of Nabal's servants who had heard the conversation reacted to Nabal's refusal to help David (1 Samuel 25:14-17). As a result, he went straight to Abigail and relayed his master's insults against David's messengers. Note that he justified David's request for supplies, stating that the request should have been granted. For David had always been very good to all the shepherds and servants of

Nabal, never mistreating them. Night and day David had been a wall around them, protecting them from bandits and marauders.

The servant urged Abigail to take immediate action and warned her of David's likely retaliation (1 Samuel 25:17). He expressed personal frustration, calling Nabal "a son of Belial" which means an evil, wicked, worthless person who is a scoundrel. Later in history, the word "Belial" was used to refer to Satan himself.

**Thought 1.** In a world with such desperate needs, God warns us against having cold, hard hearts. He warns us against being selfish and greedy, against covetousness. We must not hoard wealth, refusing to extend a helping hand to those in need. When there are so many people who are in such desperate need, we must help them. We must give to help the hungry, homeless, unclothed, diseased, poverty-stricken, destitute, impoverished, orphaned, widowed, imprisoned, and the person seeking refuge.

When a person needs the very basic necessities of life, we must give to meet those needs. In addition, when people are suffering under the bondages of sin and darkness, we must give by sharing the wonderful news of the gospel with them. The gospel of Christ must be taken to the desperate of this world who are held in the grip of despair and hopelessness. We must not allow our hearts to become cold, hard, selfish, and covetous.

**"I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, LORD, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:43-46).**

**3. (25:18-31) Sensible, Example of— Courage, Example of— Understanding, Example of— Humility, Example of— Beauty, Example of— Abigail, David's Wife, First Meeting:** there was David's experience with Abigail, his very first meeting with a woman who was later to become his wife. A beautiful and brave woman, Abigail demonstrated unusual intelligence, understanding, and wisdom. Her courage is seen in what she was about to do: go against the decision of her husband not to help David. She made the courageous decision to go out alone to attempt a reconciliation with the fugitive David, a fugitive whom she was almost certain would be seeking vengeance against her husband, herself, and their household. What bravery! She understood the crisis, and she had the inner boldness and the courage necessary to meet the crisis head-on. And this she did:

1. Losing no time, Abigail immediately made preparations and took a quick journey to meet David (1 Samuel 25:18-20). She had a generous supply of provisions packed and loaded on donkeys. Wisely, she then sent her servants on ahead of her so that the first thing David saw would be the provisions. She hoped that by seeing the provisions, this might soften his anger and make reconciliation easier to achieve. Note that she acted in secrecy, not telling her husband what she was doing.

As quickly as Abigail could, she traveled to meet David. Just as she was riding into a mountain ravine, she saw David and his 400 men descending down the mountain toward her, marching to retaliate, to take vengeance against her husband and his household.

2. Drawing closer and closer to the moment of confrontation, Abigail could tell that she was about to confront a man filled with venomous anger (1 Samuel 25:21-22). In fact, David had become so furious, so inflamed with anger, that he had not yet settled down. He was still venting his anger against Nabal and had just made a serious charge against him: that Nabal had paid or rendered evil for good. David had been protecting and watching over Nabal's property, making sure that nothing was stolen, and now Nabal was repaying David's goodness and kindness with evil. For this reason, David vowed to retaliate against Nabal and against all the male workers who served him.

3. At first sight of David and his men, Abigail quickly got off her donkey and made a humble, courageous approach to the fugitive (1 Samuel 25:23). She showed a desperate humility by bowing and falling at his feet.

4. Then she demonstrated unselfishness, a spirit of self-sacrifice (1 Samuel 25:24). She requested that David place the blame on her for the injustice done him. In contrast to the selfishness of her husband, she demonstrated a spirit of unselfishness by accepting responsibility for the evil done against David and his men.

5. Abigail then confessed that her husband's behavior had been wicked, foolish. She stated that his name, Nabal, meaning *fool*, was an appropriate name for him; for he had done a foolish thing (1 Samuel 25:25).

6. As for herself, Abigail pleaded ignorance of David's requests for supplies. She had not personally seen the messengers sent by him (1 Samuel 25:25).

7. After making her initial plea, Abigail boldly announced that she had actually come on behalf of the LORD (1 Samuel 25:26). The LORD had sent her to keep David from becoming guilty of vengeance and bloodshed. This was a very bold statement to make, for it showed that Abigail was expecting David to back off and not continue his pursuit of vengeance against her husband.

8. Apparently at this point, Abigail pointed to the supplies, encouraging David to take them and give them to the men who were following him (1 Samuel 25:27).

9. Abigail then asked David to forgive her offense, implying that she and she alone was the guilty party who had committed the terrible evil against David (1 Samuel 25:28).

10. Expressing her personal belief in the LORD's promise to David, she predicted that the LORD would place David upon the throne and use him to establish a permanent dynasty for the nation (1 Samuel 25:28-29). He must not, therefore, act rashly in seeking vengeance and shedding innocent blood. He must guard against wrongdoing as long as he lived, for his life was being protected by the LORD. Therefore, it must be the LORD who casts away David's enemies and not David himself. Painting a descriptive picture, Abigail told David that his life was bound securely in the *bundle of the living* by the LORD his God. But the lives of his enemies would be slung away just like stones shot from a sling.

11. Abigail then challenged David to consider how much better it would be to turn around and not take vengeance against her husband (1 Samuel 25:30-31). Saying no to vengeance would be far better because David was to become God's appointed leader. It would be far better for David to take office and become king without the blood of vengeance upon his conscience.

12. In closing her appeal, Abigail asked David to remember her after he became king (1 Samuel 25:31). Obviously she was requesting that David never react against her or her family in the future, but rather that he show favor, especially to her children.

**Thought 1.** If there has ever been a need for women of courage and character, it is today. Of course the same could be said of men. But this particular point of Holy Scripture deals with a woman, a woman of unusual courage and character. Brave women of strong moral integrity must permeate every generation, for it is primarily the mothers of the world who nurture the character of their children. For the most part, all of us are a product of our mothers. Consequently, the character of our mothers essentially becomes the character of society. This is an awesome responsibility; nevertheless, it is a fact. We are reared primarily by our mothers, which means that we take on their character, becoming much like them. The women of this world, in particular the mothers, determine what most little boys and girls become. And when these little boys and girls grow, they become us, the adults of the world. And it is us, the adults, who take responsibility for society, the communities and states and nations of this world.

The importance of women of courage and character cannot be overstressed. Listen to what the Word of God says:

**"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the LORD, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also" (Romans 16:1-2).**

**"Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus....Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us....Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the LORD. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the LORD" (Romans 16:3, 6, 12).**

**4. (25:32-35) Forgiveness, Human, Example of— Heart, a Forgiving, Example of— David, Heart of:** there was David's heart exposed before God and before Abigail, the dear lady who had just become an intercessor for the LORD. Boldly, Abigail had presented several logical arguments for David to forgive and not take vengeance against her husband Nabal. Her pleas for forgiveness were persuasive and touched David's heart. His heart was changed and he forgave the terrible evil of injustice done against him. He burst out with a statement of praise to God and pronounced a blessing upon Abigail for her good, sound advice. He also praised her for keeping him from the guilt of bloodshed and vengeance (Psalms 25:12; 141:5). And then David confessed the sin of his vengeful heart, that he had been determined to retaliate and to take revenge on Nabal and all his male servants (Psalms 73:2).

Finally David accepted the supplies and sent Abigail home in peace (1 Samuel 25:35). He had heard her persuasive arguments and plea and he granted her request (Proverbs 28:23).

**Thought 1.** Forgiving others is a serious matter. It is serious because if we refuse to forgive others, God will not forgive us. Then we will be doomed to an eternity separated from God. Just think for a moment: What if God did not forgive us? What kind of predicament would we be in, for we have all committed evil and wickedness against God? God tells us that our sins are as repulsive as stinking, filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Yet there is wonderful news: God does forgive. He has mercy upon us and forgives all the evil and wickedness we have done against Him. He forgives us and washes away all our sins.

But on the other hand, God turns around and says to us: if you are to receive my forgiveness, you too must forgive others. Just as I have forgiven your offenses, so you must forgive the offenses of others.

This is the clear teaching of God's Holy Word.

**"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).**

**"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).**

**"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25).**

**"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36).**

**Thought 2.** God warns us against anger and retaliation, against taking revenge upon people.

**"But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39).**

**"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness....Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:18, 29-32).**

**5. (25:36-44) Judgment, Example of— Vindication, of God's Servant, Example of— Marriage, of David— David, Wives of— Abigail, Wife of David:** there was God's judgment against Nabal and David's marriage to Abigail. What happened next is a clear picture of God's judgment and the vindication of His servant David.

1. Note what happened when Abigail met with her husband and shared with him her encounter with David (1 Samuel 25:36-38). When she first arrived home, her husband was having a large banquet in celebration of the

annual sheep-shearing that had just been completed. The banquet was as large as one that a king would hold. Nabal was so drunk that Abigail could not share about her encounter with David until morning. When morning arrived, she met with her husband and shared the events that had taken place. Suddenly, without warning, Nabal became like a stone. That is, he most likely suffered a stroke and became paralyzed. About ten days later he died. But note what Scripture says: his death was due to the hand of God's judgment.

2. Note David's response when he heard the news of Nabal's death: he offered up praise to the LORD (1 Samuel 25:39). But David was not praising the LORD in the sense of rejoicing and taking delight in the death of Nabal. On the contrary, he was praising the LORD for two very specific reasons:

- ⇒ Because the LORD had judged and vindicated his cause over the contempt and injustice of Nabal.
- ⇒ Because the LORD had kept him from the evil of revenge and bloodshed. As Robert D. Bergen points out, David blessed the LORD as judge and pastor. As the Chief Judge, He had vindicated David and punished the wealthy rancher. As the Chief Pastor, the LORD had watched over David's soul and kept him from doing wrong.

3. Note David's request that Abigail marry him (1 Samuel 25:39-42). Several weeks had passed since David and Abigail's confrontation, but the beauty and character of Abigail had obviously captivated David's thoughts and heart—so much so that he decided to request her hand in marriage. He sent his servants to ask and, if she accepted, to bring her to him. With the same decisiveness and humility she had already demonstrated, she quickly and humbly accepted. She actually bowed down with her face to the ground before David's servants, and she offered herself as David's maidservant to do whatever David needed, even if it meant washing the feet of his servants. Imagine such a spirit of humility! As quickly as she could, she made preparation and rushed with her five maids to David. Soon afterward, they were married. Observe this fact: by marrying Abigail, David immediately became a very wealthy property owner, for he was able to lay claim to Nabal's estate (2 Samuel 12:8; 16:21-22).

4. Note that David now had three wives (1 Samuel 25:42-44). There was Abigail, and Ahinoam of Jezreel, and Michal, who was Saul's daughter. However, Saul had taken Michal away from David and given her to Phalti. Just why Michal divorced David is never stated by Scripture. But the divorce could have been forced by Saul after he discovered that Michal had helped David escape his pursuit, or perhaps Michal herself requested the divorce due to the fact that David had been a fugitive for some years now. Whatever the case, she had divorced her husband and married another man.

**Thought 1.** God's judgment is the major lesson for us in this point. If a person has a cold, hard heart and is selfish and greedy, the hand of God's judgment will fall upon the person.

- ⇒ If our hearts are cold and hard against people or against God—God will not accept us. He will reject a cold, hard heart.
- ⇒ If our hearts are selfish and greedy, coveting more and more—God will not accept us. He will reject all selfish, greedy, and covetous hearts.
- ⇒ If we are mean and harsh and dishonest toward people—God will not accept us. He will reject every mean and harsh and dishonest person.

The hand of God's judgment is set against such people as Nabal. A cold, greedy, and dishonest person is not worthy of the kingdom of God. And none of us would want such a person living with us, certainly not for eternity. Imagine what the environment, the very atmosphere would be like living around such a person. God warns all hard-hearted, mean-spirited and dishonest persons: you will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2:5).**