

## 08-06-17 – Conflict with a Fool

### 1 Samuel 25

I'm sure almost everyone here has had an experience of injustice against you. You didn't do anything wrong, in fact, you may have been doing good, but someone perpetrated an injustice against you, and you paid the price. It wasn't fair, so how could God allow such an event in your life?

The author starts off this lesson with a story about an architect, who is dealt a serious injustice in his life and career. He really couldn't do anything about it. He worked for a couple of years for a friend whose company was not doing well. There was a promise of better money when things worked out better. The company began to thrive, but the employer fired his architect friend and gave him nothing.

This reminded me of my son, Brian's experience in an architectural firm locally. He stayed making less pay than he deserved, because he wanted the company to thrive. He worked endless hours for no compensation and only abuse. Eventually, he left and went to another firm that treated him with the respect and pay he deserved. It was an injustice. It was unfair, but it happened for real – a life lesson. So how do we react when things like this happen to us?

Today, we're going to look at another part of David's life when injustice threatened. Let's see how he reacted and what we might learn from his experience.

In David's time there were no legal systems to handle business disputes. A handshake sealed the deal, and injustice was settled with the sword. It wasn't who was right but who was strongest that prevailed.

### 1 Sam. 25

David and the six-hundred men who followed him while fleeing from Saul, were in need of food and rest. Along their journey, they helped the shepherds of a wealthy man named Nabal (Fool).

So, David sent a few men to Nabal. He told them to tell Nabal how they had helped him and his shepherds. He told them to ask Nabal for provisions for his men – any amount he could give. David was the anointed next king of Israel; he had a reputation throughout the land regarding killing the Philistine giant, Goliath. Everyone knew about David, even Nabal but...

**1 Sam. 25:2-3 (NLT) - *There was a wealthy man from Maon who owned property near the town of Carmel. He had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats, and it was sheep-shearing time. This man's name was Nabal, and his wife, Abigail, was a sensible and beautiful woman. But Nabal, a descendant of Caleb, was crude and mean in all his dealings.***

So, we're given a little background about Nabal and his wife, Abigail. They are quite the opposites. David's request was diplomatic and appealed to Nabal's senses, but he didn't have any. Let's look at this exchange. Think about this as if it were you in David's shoes/sandals.

**1 Sam. 25:4-11 (NLT) - *When David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, he sent ten of his young men to Carmel with this message for Nabal: "Peace and prosperity to you, your family, and everything you own! I am told that it is sheep-shearing time. While your shepherds stayed among us near Carmel, we never harmed them, and nothing was ever stolen from them. Ask your own men, and they will tell you this is true. So would you be kind to us, since we have come at a time of celebration? Please share any provisions you might have on hand with us and with your friend David." David's young men gave this message to Nabal in David's name, and they waited for a reply.***

David could have played his king card, but he didn't. He could have demanded or suggested an amount of provisions needed for his men, but he didn't. He left everything in the hands of Nabal. Nabal chose to reject David's request and use this as an opportunity to stamp David's head into the ground. It was mean; it was unfair; it was evil, but God was still in it for David's good.

Here is Nabal's reply...

***vv. 1—11 - "Who is this fellow David?" Nabal sneered to the young men. "Who does this son of Jesse think he is? There are lots of servants these days who run away from their masters. Should I take my bread and my water and my meat that I've slaughtered for my shearers and give it to a band of outlaws who come from who knows where?"***

Really? Even if David wasn't the anointed next king of Israel, should he be so mean to a person in need? David was a man of war, a man of bloodshed, a man who didn't just sit back and let others insult and humiliate him. Remember how he stood up to a Giant because he insulted the armies of Israel? He had the personality and the God-given and proven strength to step in and take over this situation, and that's exactly what He decided to do.

***vv. 12-13 - So David's young men returned and told him what Nabal had said. "Get your swords!" was David's reply as he strapped on his own. Then 400 men started off with David, and 200 remained behind to guard their equipment.***

Have you ever been mistreated to the point that you are blinded by your anger? I have! Many years ago at my job, I had a good position and a good reputation. A management shakeup took on a life of its own. After an independent audit of our department, my group was the only area that was not criticized. In fact, they suggested that I be put in charge of the area that was struggling. I recommended my friend, George, be promoted to my leadership position as I moved over to this new group as leader. Well, that did not last long. As soon as the reorganization was in place, the department management cooked up a plan to get rid of me. I was demoted without being told, and another insider was put into my position.

This left me out in the cold. I asked to return to my old group and report to George. My heart was burning. I hated these schemers and all they did to me. I didn't deserve this treatment. Why would they single me out and ruin my career. I wanted revenge, bad. I just didn't know how to make it happen. I prayed, but my prayers were tainted by anger and revenge. I had to do something to get them back, or at least, salvage my reputation, but how? I was sick over it all.

I was attending church, reading my Bible, involved in music ministry – like normal, but I had this huge burden on my shoulders, like a heavy weight that I could not remove. Then, one morning, I read Psalm 75 and these words rang out to me... Something I rarely do is quote from the KJV...

**Ps. 75:6-10 KJV – “For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them. But I declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.”**

Anger had clouded my ability to see God in all of this. Anger clouded David's ability to see God in his situation. Notice, he never prayed about it. He made a command decision to strap on swords and take matters into his own hands and under his control. This is always so much easier, since we know what we can do now. We don't have to wait for an answer from God. Let's get this party started and take revenge – It's only right! David chose to follow his emotions rather than God. Have you ever done the same thing? I have.

### **The Response of Retaliation:**

Background: Years of running and fear and hunger had taken its toll on David. This insult by a fool pushed him over the edge. Samuel had just died and all Israel mourned the loss including David. After all Samuel is the one who anointed David the next king of Israel, and before David could take the throne, he is on the run and Samuel dies.

David could have committed this matter over to God. Who knows how God would have provided for his provisions? Stranger things have happened... the unexpected meal, or meeting someone along the way who has extra to share – God can do anything. Why didn't David pray and commit this thing to God, and then go forward believing God will provide as He promises? Gee, maybe David is more like you and me than he is the famous psalmist and king that we want to believe. David was quite human and with a violent nature and history.

Inflamed by anger David was led to a form of retaliation that sought lopsided justice. If he continued on this path, it would have destroyed many innocent people. It is also obvious that David was not trusting God in this mess. He took matters into his own hands and carried them out his way. *“This was David taking on himself responsibilities that are best left with God.”*

Wasn't this just like Saul? David was taking a situation he could not control and taking his anger to the max, and even planning murder to remedy the matter. Not Good. This was exactly what he was running from in Saul. David realized that the kingdom belonged to God and only He could assign its leadership to another, but Nabal was just a rich fool that David planned to murder. Saul was an anointed king over David, but Nabal was beneath David. David had patience with Saul, but he would never have patience with Nabal. Never.

Someone compelling would have to talk some sense into David, because he was on a mission of murder and destruction ... Enter Abigail...

### **The Response of Reason:**

*“Abigail was apparently as wise as Nabal was stupid!”*

**vv. 3a - *This man's name was Nabal, and his wife, Abigail, was a sensible and beautiful woman.***

One of Nabal's men went to Abigail to tell her all that happened between Nabal and David's men, that Nabal was very unreasonable and mean.

*“She quickly gathered 200 loaves of bread, two wineskins full of wine, five sheep that had been slaughtered, nearly a bushel of roasted grain, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 fig cakes. She packed them on donkeys...”*

As David was riding along he was brewing his anger even more...

**vv. 21 – *“But he has repaid me evil for good. <sup>22</sup> May God strike me and kill me if even one man of his household is still alive tomorrow morning!”***

David made a vow before God to rid the earth of this man Nabal and all he is over. David was operating on pure pride motivated by anger.

Abigail saw David approaching as she rode out to meet him. This is what she said – listen to the humility that cuts through everything David was feeling and thinking...

**vv. 23-31 - When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed low before him. <sup>24</sup> She fell at his feet and said, “I accept all blame in this matter, my lord. Please listen to what I have to say. <sup>25</sup> I know Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man; please don’t pay any attention to him. He is a fool, just as his name suggests. But I never even saw the young men you sent.**

<sup>26</sup> “Now, my lord, as surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, since the LORD has kept you from murdering and taking vengeance into your own hands, let all your enemies and those who try to harm you be as cursed as Nabal is. <sup>27</sup> And here is a present that I, your servant, have brought to you and your young men. <sup>28</sup> Please forgive me if I have offended you in any way. The LORD will surely reward you with a lasting dynasty, for you are fighting the LORD’s battles. And you have not done wrong throughout your entire life.

<sup>29</sup> “Even when you are chased by those who seek to kill you, your life is safe in the care of the LORD your God, secure in his treasure pouch! But the lives of your enemies will disappear like stones shot from a sling! <sup>30</sup> When the LORD has done all he promised and has made you leader of Israel, <sup>31</sup> don’t let this be a blemish on your record. Then your conscience won’t have to bear the staggering burden of needless bloodshed and vengeance. And when the LORD has done these great things for you, please remember me, your servant!”

Abigail knew who David was, just like Nabal knew. She appealed to David based on that knowledge, but Nabal cursed David by that knowledge. Opposites don’t always attract.

“As he listened, David saw his own foolishness for what it was.”

**vv. 32-33 – David replied to Abigail, “Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you to meet me today! <sup>33</sup> Thank God for your good sense! Bless you for keeping me from murder and from carrying out vengeance with my own hands.”**

Abigail returned home and the following day she told Nabal all that happened...

**vv.37-38 - In the morning when Nabal was sober, his wife told him what had happened. As a result he had a stroke, and he lay paralyzed on his bed like a stone. <sup>38</sup> About ten days later, the LORD struck him, and he died.**

You see here and in many places in Scripture, God has our back. We do not need to take vengeance for ourselves. If we trust in Him, He will take care of us even if we don’t sense it or can see it at the time. God is faithful, even when we are not. That’s how much He loves you.

David, having an eye for the pretty ladies, sent for Abigail to be his wife – ahh. A happy ending.

## **The Response of Faith:**

What should David have done in response to Nabal from the beginning? Obviously, he made the wrong action choice first. What can we learn from this story?

### **1 – Anger causes us to lose perspective.**

**Jas. 1:19-20 – *Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. <sup>20</sup> Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.***

We can be sure that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

### **2 – Our initial response should be to lay our anger before God.**

**Eph. 4:26a - *And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.”***

**Rom. 12:19 - *Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the LORD.***

### **3 – We must look at injustice through the eyes of the cross.**

Of course, as in all things, our example is in Jesus...

**1 Pet. 2:23 - *He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.***

*“We must simply realize that our case may not be tried immediately. But be assured, it will be tried – by God Himself. Eventually, the truth will come out, and justice will be meted out with fairness. The wicked will continue to prey on the righteous. The wealthy will exploit the poor. Some employers will continue to chisel employees out of what is their due. And some parents will continue to be cruel to their children.” (Growing through Conflicts – p. 77 – Erwin W. Lutzer)*

*“God has entrusted you with the same kind of suffering that His Son endured.”* We are just following in His footsteps, so we must learn from Him how to endure in Christ. It is possible. Many injustices will never be made right, and our earthly quest for justice will always fall short.

**Commit your complaint to God. He will NEVER disappoint.**