

# “How the Mighty Fall” // 1 Samuel 25 // *The Life of David* #9<sup>1</sup>

## Announcements

[Video: History of SEE] \*\*KEEP VAMPING\*\*

We do whatever it takes to reach all people...

Want our church to reflect the diversity of our community...

Praying also for Iran. Pastor Nathan ...

**Join me as I pray...** Prayer

## Introduction

Grab your Bibles and open them to 1 Samuel 25. Hold your place there, but first, let’s take a little trip back in American history.

The date is April 27, 1777; the place, Ridgefield, CT. Two years into the American Revolutionary War,<sup>2</sup> one of George Washington’s favorite and most reliable Generals—was outmanned and outgunned by oncoming British forces. He ordered his men to retreat—and they did... but **he** stayed there on the hillcrest. It was one of the bravest things anybody had ever seen: the Commanding Officer remained at the battle line, single-handedly fighting off the British so his men would have the precious few seconds they needed to escape into the woods. In the process, his horse got shot out from under him, and it left him pinned underneath. But somehow, even from that position,

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<sup>1</sup> Works Consulted: Tim Chester, *1 Samuel For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God’s Word for You)*, The Good Book Company, September 15, 2014; John Sailhammer. *NIV Compact Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); Thomas Schreiner, “Rebuke and Submission,” a sermon posted by The Gospel Coalition; Women of the Bible, “A King, a Fool, and a

he managed to fight off the British soldiers who were at arms-length and escape.

This was just one of many heroic feats that the men under his command had seen him pull off. His name was Benedict Arnold, he was one of America’s youngest general’s, and (arguably) their most capable military mind.

But he had a fragile ego—and the Continental Congress, for reasons still unknown to us—overlooked him for promotion time and again. Almost all his contemporaries, men whose skill and accomplishments were vastly inferior to his own, were promoted. To make matters worse, Congress refused to raise his salary, even when he desperately needed and clearly deserved it.

Fast forward to October, 1777. Saratoga, NY. Benedict Arnold is under the command of General Horatio Gates, a man whose skill wouldn’t have held a candle to Arnold’s. The men at Saratoga loved and preferred Arnold, but Gates was in charge.

General Gates refused to heed Arnold’s counsel about how to fight the battle—mainly because he was jealous; and, as an act of petty spite, banished Arnold to his tent where he was commanded to sit the battle out. But then the battle started to go badly, just as Arnold had predicted it would, and Arnold couldn’t stand it—So he broke out of his tent and rode up to the front lines like a madman, from where he organized some men and launched a counter-attack that shifted the momentum of the battle. Historians says that Arnold’s bravery and intervention won the battle of Saratoga.

Wise Woman,” a TGC podcast posted on January 6, 2020; Andy Stanley, “The Abigail Way,” a sermon preached at North Point Church, posted on May 15, 2018, *not* by the Gospel Coalition; Peter Krol,

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/dont-get-too-familiar-with-the-bible>

<sup>2</sup> “History Daily,” Noiser podcast. Accessed September 26, 2022.

During that battle he was wounded—shot in the leg—and he had to spend the next 5 months recuperating in a hospital tent. Meanwhile, General Gates took full credit for the victory, never even mentioning Arnold. And once again, the Continental Congress gave no recognition or reward to Benedict Arnold.

Fast forward to 1779. Benedict Arnold is now in Philadelphia. His wife Peggy, a Tory loyalist, has been passing him British articles about the war, and Arnold realizes that the British officers speak better of him than even his own government does.

Peggy arranges a meeting between Arnold and British officer John Andre; and, just like that, an American patriot war hero became a national symbol of cowardice and greed, a man whose name is now synonymous with the word ‘traitor.’

**How tragic to spend a lifetime faithfully serving one allegiance only to become a traitor to it in the end.**

**Today in 1 Samuel 25 you’re going to see David come this close to doing just that--**to selling out the values he has championed up to this point.

Think of 1 Samuel 25 as “part 2” of the story we looked at last week in 1 Samuel 24: We left off in chapter 24 with David as the hero, bravely defying his men who were urging him to take matters into his own hands and kill Saul. In that moment, David was the one who boldly urged them to trust God, and wait on him and do things his way.

In this chapter, David is the one whose faith falters; the one whose flesh gets the best of him, and somebody else has to come to HIS rescue.

**And while on one level** it’s understandable, it’s going to leave us wondering: **Is David really the King we’ve been waiting for?**

**Let’s read:** 1 Samuel 25:1 Now Samuel died. And all Israel assembled and mourned for him, and they buried him in his house at Ramah.

This is important, I think, because Samuel had always functioned as a type of father figure for David; a spiritual mentor; the one who believed in David when nobody else did.

And now he’s dead, so David feels shaken. Unmoored.

**2** And there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. The man was very rich; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats.

- Simply owning land in that day would have made you wealthy; to have 3000 sheep and 1000 goats to go w/ it would have put you in the upper .01%.
- Having 3K sheep and 1K goats would be like saying today that someone had a fleet of Lamborghinis and a couple of vacation homes in Turks & Caicos.

**3** Now the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. The woman was discerning and beautiful, but the man was harsh and badly behaved; (How many of you ladies feel like this describes your marriage? Just kidding. But this does get really interesting.)

**Let me summarize the next few verses for you:** David and his men had been staying in the vicinity of Nabal and his pastures, and a number of times David and his men protected Nabal and his property from Philistine raiding parties. They’d been sacrificially helpful to Nabal’s shepherds and really helped them thrive. Vs. 16 says that David had been like a **shield wall** for Nabal.

Well, in those days it was customary to, once a year, at the time of the sheep-shearing, to give a Thank You gift to people like that who had assisted you. So, David sent some of his young men to ask for it--

it was basically assumed--but Nabal rejected the men, and to make matters worse, he sent them away with this stinging insult, **vs. 10**: "Who is David? Who is the (runt) son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters. Who is David? He knows who David is. Not only does he show no gratitude, he takes a shot at David. David's just another runaway slave. Imagine you are a waiter at a really nice restaurant, and some large party comes in, rents a private room, and you and a couple of runners are assigned responsibility for them. They are there for like 5 hours, until after midnight, and you and your team give excellent service; really busting your hump to take care of their needs. Well, the bill comes, it's for several thousand dollars, and the guy disputes several items and leaves no tip. You are like, "Sir, I think you forgot to fill out the tip portion." And he says, "**Quit begging me for money, you mouth-breather.** The only reason you are a waiter is probably because you flunked out of school and you can't handle a real job. Get out of my face." I'm guessing if that's you, you're going to be angry on multiple levels.

That's basically what happened to David, just on a much larger scale—with him and all of his men, over a **year's** salary, not just a **night's**.

Plus, Nabal's insult, I think, touched on a tender spot for David: David had grown up as the runt; I mean--for crying out loud--when Samuel came to choose one of Jesse's sons as King, David's dad FORGOT ABOUT HIM. Literally didn't even invite him to the tryout! That's not a wound you recover from easily. For David's whole life he's felt overlooked. And then Saul publicly smears him and exiles him. He tells everybody David is a traitor and an opportunist. This insult plays on those insecurities.

**So, vs. 13** David says, "That's it. Every man strap on his sword! It's go-time." **Vs. 21**, "Nabal has returned me evil for good. 22 (God help me) if by morning I leave so much as one male<sup>3</sup> of all who belong to him."

David is going out for vengeance against this nobody. Where is that guy from 1 Samuel 24 who said, "I will not take vengeance into my own hands. I'll let God handle these things."

Last week David resisted killing Saul when Saul, who was actively seeking his life, was sitting there right in front of him. This week, he is about to murder a bunch of innocent people because he got stiffed on a tip and insulted. The guy who resisted killing his enemy is about to murder the whole household of a nobody. He passed the big test and is about to fail the little one.

(BTW, Does that ever happen to you? You resist some big temptation only to fall to a much smaller one? That's happened to me SEVERAL times in my life. After some big spiritual victory, I fall prey to the smallest of temptations.) **David is TIRED**--he's worn out, and this guy is playing on his deepest insecurities. So David loses it.

**Well, Nabal has a wife named Abigail.** And you remember, vs 3, she was discerning and beautiful. She hears about this and **vs. 18**, **Then Abigail made haste and** (pulls together a big gift basket full of fruit and meat kabobs, some fig newtons, a couple of Starbucks gift cards and a pair of AirPods, and she hurries out to meet David.

**Vs 24** As she approached David she bowed to the earth and says: **She fell at his feet and said**, "On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant. 25 Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he." Nabal's name means "fool" in Hebrew--which means it either originated from another language or was a nickname his

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<sup>3</sup> Technically, "all those who pee against the wall while standing up."

buddies gave him--because I'm having a hard time seeing any parent knowingly name their kid 'fool.' I mean, I've heard some crazy name stories--one lady who delivered a set of twins--one came out just before midnight, and the other just after midnight, and the mother named them, "Today," and "Tamarra." Or I heard about a guy in Texas whose last name was Hogg. He had twin girls and named one Ima and the other Ura. Ima... Hogg and Ura... Hogg. That's funny for him, but where was the mom in that situation?

So, I've heard some crazy, "what were those parents thinking?" naming stories, but I just can't imagine a parent ever intentionally calling their kid "fool," so, Nabal is either from another language or it's a nickname. Either way, that's what his name is.

She continues, **Nabal (fool) is his name, and folly is with him. He's named "stupid," he is stupid.** (Ladies, this is not exactly a model for how you should talk about your husband, but, you know, when there's a band of soldiers coming to kill all the males in your house, you do what you gotta do.)

**But I your servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent.** I love this: "David, this wouldn't have happened if I had been involved. *NEXT time you come--ask to speak to the lady of the house.*"

Now, listen to what she says next: [29] "David, **If men rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, the life of my lord shall be... in the care of the LORD your God. And the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling.**

- **What's she doing?** She is reminding David of the promises of God. Who he is in the Lord and what God has promised to do for him.
- **Did you see how she brought up the word 'sling' twice in her statement?** What's she trying to do? She's very subtly and very artfully reminding David: "Hey David, Remember how God took out Goliath for you? God fights your battles, David? You don't have to take matters into your own hands!"

[30] And when the LORD has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel, [31] my lord shall have no cause of grief or pangs of conscience for having shed blood without cause or for my lord taking vengeance himself.

- One day, she says, when you come to the throne, you're going to have to tell the story of how you got here. And on that day, David, when you are telling your grandkids the story of how God put you on the throne, do you want to have to mention a chapter like this--where you got insulted by a 'nobody' and killed a bunch of innocent people in response?

BTW, could I pause there? **That's actually GREAT counsel.** One day, your life will be told as a story to the next generation. Are you living in a way now that you'll be proud then of how it's told?

- "Mom and dad didn't wait to be married and do things God's way, so they lived together for a couple of years." Is that what you want your kids and grandkids to say? Or would you rather them say, "Mom and Dad were determined to do things God's way, and they put Christ at the center of our home from the very beginning."
- Or how about, "Mom and Dad always always lived right at the edge of their spending abilities. They didn't really tithe or save because they just wanted to enjoy things in the moment. They always wanted the best clothes, the best cars, the best vacations *right then.*" Or, "Mom and Dad determined to put God first in their finances and live generously always. We trusted God even when it was hard and they taught me that I could trust him, too. I saw them live out trust and generosity."
- Or how about, "When he was single, he was frantic and desperate." Or, "He learned to trust God and wait on him no matter the circumstances."

- **Faith means living today in a way that one day you'll be glad you did.** It means thinking about how you want the story of your life told to the next generation, and living that way now.

[32] And David said to Abigail, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you (that’s a key word) this day to meet me! [33] Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from avenging myself with my own hand!

Here’s our first lesson:

### 1. We need the body of Christ

Everybody has lapses of judgment. David in the previous chapter is the one urging everyone else to stand firm; now he’s the one who caves. That’s why we all need Abigails in our lives—even if you think you’re a David. In **Vs. 32**, **David recognizes that God sent her to him.** God sent you to warn me and keep me from danger.

**You have to be in a place** where God sends those people to you, because everybody has lapses in judgment; everybody gets caught in a weak moment when the right combination of factors expose a vulnerability.

**Abigail is that friend who speaks up in your small group** when you are about to make a bad decision. I’ve told you this before, but people in our church sometimes tell me about the dumbest decisions they have made, and I’m trying to keep a straight face when they tell me about it, and I ask them, “Why on earth did you think that was a good idea?” And they say, “Well, I prayed about it and it felt right.”

- Please don’t misunderstand what I’m about to say, but God has given you something even more reliable than prayer, and that is the counsel of the body of Christ.

- That’s HOW God answers your prayer for wisdom--in a multitude of counselors there is wisdom.
- When people make one of those bad decisions, it usually happened in the throes of an emotion--they were angry, or excited about the possibilities of the new romance or your eyes get starry at the new possession you might have--and you need someone wise who was detached from the emotion to tell them the best thing to do is. *An isolated man seeks his own desire and rages against all sound judgment.*

You need Abigails in your life. And, you should pray to be an Abigail to others. Abigail is a model of godly counsel in every way.

- **She speaks with calm clarity in an emotionally charged situation.** Even with so much on the line, she is as cool as a kosher cucumber. She doesn’t freak out.
- **She comes humbly:** she bows down, shows honor. She doesn’t come haughtily or filled with rage or self-righteousness.
- She comes **kindly, bringing food and warmth**, but she speaks **boldly and honestly, not mincing words**. Best of all, she grounds her counsel **in who God is and the promises he’s made to David**.
- **God give us friends like Abigail! Amen?**

**And by the way, I love how this story rather subtly challenges our stereotypes.** Nabal is the weak, emotional one and Abigail is the calm, courageous one. Our society often assumes the opposite: women are the irrational, emotional ones and men are the calm, strong ones. In this story, both David and Nabal are the ones consumed by their emotions, and it’s only Abigail who keeps her head!

Ladies, God made you to be an Abigail. Some of the best chapters of human history and for sure some of the most important chapters in church history have been written by strong, wise, courageous women--women who saved the day when the men around them were acting like fools. As a dad of 3 young daughters, I want to raise Abigails, not doormats.

**Which leads me to our second lesson.** This one is an exclusive for the ladies:

**2. Ladies: You can be a wise woman (and a blessing to your family) even with a foolish husband**

Sometimes a woman ends up in a marriage that is, shall we say, not ideal--maybe she got married too young, or before she was a Christian, or maybe the guy has just changed, or whatever--but, bottom line, she's married to a guy who is not leading his life as a spiritual leader, and she feels trapped, like she'll never be able to make positive impact on the world or her family. Every week, listening to me, I'm guessing there are hundreds of you women in that category.

**Learn from Abigail:** Abigail saves the life of her husband and children despite her bad marriage.<sup>4</sup>

**Some of you are in difficult marriages,** and I don't want to sugarcoat it: I know it's hard. But God has you there for a reason.

- You can probably see how God has used that difficult marriage to teach you more about him, right? Sometimes the best insights about God come through pain and difficulty. **It's like Socrates (who was not a Christian) always said, 'By all means, marry. If you get a good spouse, you'll be happy. If you get a bad one, you'll become a philosopher.'**—or, we would say, a theologian.
- It's similar to how a pearl is formed in an oyster. That beautiful pearl starts in the heart of the oyster as an irritant, a grain of sand. The oyster covers the irritant with pearl, and through years and years of living with that irritant, something incredibly valuable is formed.

- **No irritant, no pearl!** For some of you, that difficult relationship is the irritant that forms the pearl of God's character in you.
- Go home today and start calling your husband your pearl. It will be kind of an inside joke. Just kidding. Don't say that.

**But God is using this marriage to produce beauty in you. And this is important, too:** Just as he did with Abigail, God has you there to save the lives of others in your family.

- In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul said that a believing mom in an unbelieving family sanctifies her kids. To "sanctify" means "to set apart." Paul is saying that her presence in the home "sets apart" your kids for grace. It gives them a chance to see the gospel lived out and believe.
- **A guy on our staff once told me that the only Christian** in his family was the grandmother—not his parents; none of the grandfathers, aunts, uncles, or anybody else followed Jesus. He said she faithfully stayed in an environment where she was lonely, sometimes ridiculed. But one by one, he said, he watched as every single grandchild got saved. Now, he said, all of us grandchildren are believers, all because of a grandmother who stayed in a difficult situation where she felt alone. That might be you.
- **God might even use you to save the life of your husband.** In 1 Cor 7 the Apostle Paul talks about unbelieving men who are woken up because of the consistency, wisdom, and patient, faithful beauty of their wives. They see how you react to hardship and it opens their heart to the gospel.
- My point is: Who knows what God will do with your faithfulness? Don't abandon your post! **Learn from Abigail:** Even if you're married to a fool, God can still use you as a tool!

I have a corresponding point for the men:

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<sup>4</sup> *Women of the Bible*

### 3. Men: Don't be a Nabal

**What a terrible story to be told about your life.** Don't make your wife have to go behind your back to accomplish these things--to get your kids in church, to honor God with your finances--because you're living a life of foolishness.

Lead in such a way that her wisdom *complements* yours. Men: **Are you the spiritual leader in your family? A leader in generosity?** Some of you need to wake up out of your Nabal ways. (Your wife has been inviting you to church, pleading with you. And now you're here. That's not accidental. You may not have it all figured out yet, but the journey of 1000 miles begins with the first step, and it's time today for you to take that step.)

**Let me show you how this story ends:** 36 And Abigail (returns home) came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was (crunk) very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until the morning light. 37 In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal.

- (By the way, I have to point this out. It's just too good to pass up. This chapter is filled with Hebrew "plays on words" that we miss in English. Scholars say it's all really obvious in Hebrew. 'Nabal' not only is the word for "fool," it also sounds like the Hebrew word for 'wineskin,' "Nebel." And get this, that phrase, "When the wine had gone out of him" was a Hebrew euphemism for peeing. The author is saying, "Nabal is nothing more than an insignificant wineskin peeing away his life..." And when the wine is gone, there's nothing left of him.
- In chapter 24 the author made poop jokes; in chapter 25 he makes pee jokes. There's actually a couple of others in here I'm not taking time to point out. But they are obvious in Hebrew. So,

middle school boys, hear me clearly: tell your parents later that I said if you like to make potty jokes, "urine" good company.

Alright, back to the text...

...when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. 38 And about ten days later the Lord struck Nabal, and he died.

This is tragic for Nabal, but the author is trying to show us that just like Abigail said, God will fight David's battles for him, if David will just leave things in God's hands. David doesn't need to take vengeance on fools like Nabal, God will do it

And that leads us to our fourth lesson:

### 4. You cannot accomplish the promise of the Spirit in the power of the flesh

This is the theme that ties this story to chapter 24, only that in this chapter David almost goes back on the lesson he demonstrated for us so beautifully in the previous one.

When life takes an unexpected turn, we have a choice: we can take matters into our own hands, or we can do things God's way and wait on him to fulfill his promises, and maybe the primary way we are tempted to take matters back into our own hands is by exacting vengeance on our enemies. It's like I said last week, when you are wronged, a little tuning fork gets rung inside of you that feels like it is in complete harmony with the universe, and when you are getting back at someone, it feels so right--you feel like you are nigh unto deity in telling the person off, or paying them back.

- **Think about it:** When someone does something rude to you in traffic, pulls into your lane and runs up on your bumper, and then

has the audacity to somehow act like it is your fault; they lay on the horn, and then zoom by you giving you the one-finger-salute, do you just instinctively roll down the window and yell, “Bless you friend!” No, our instinct is to respond to unkindness with unkindness.

**That’s our instinct.** And momentary traffic episodes may not be that big of a deal, but that same instinct works its way out in every relationship—we think to restore righteousness we need to take matters into our own hands.

- So, your friend is self-absorbed and insensitive to your needs; so you respond by being aloof and distant.
- Your boss is a jerk; so you respond with sloppy work or by finding ways to undermine him.
- Your spouse is rude and insensitive to you; so you are cold and petty toward them.
- Some family member lets you down or makes you mad, so you blow up and scream at them.

All of these responses are trying to fix a situation by the power of our flesh. We think that by repaying unkindness with unkindness, we can fix them, because hopefully when the other person gets a taste of how they’ve hurt us, that will make them change their ways.

**The only problem is:** Have you noticed that it rarely works? Listen carefully to this verse from James in the NT: “For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” (James 1:20)

- Righteousness in these verses would be synonymous with “the kingdom of God.” The anger of men cannot produce righteousness; the anger of man won’t build God’s kingdom.
- It feels like when you see a lack of righteousness in your spouse or your kids or your boss or your friends that if you get angry and punish them for what they did, that will wake them up into

righteousness. But James clearly says here, “The wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”

- Something else does, he says. The implanted word, sown in grace, produces righteousness. So “Put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness” (out of the wicked comes wickedness) and respond, instead, with meekness and forgiveness and grace. That’s how GOD’S righteousness is produced in the world.

**Think about it: That’s how Jesus changed us, right? Jesus didn’t change us by paying us back for our sin; he changed us by showing us grace.** God’s law told me what I was supposed to do; and his threats of judgment may have scared me into some outward conformity; but only his grace gave me the desire to obey him. Only grace changed me.

**You’ll never accomplish the work of the Spirit** by the power of the flesh.

This was a big theme in Paul’s letters, too: Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good. (Romans 12:21)

- You wanna conquer evil around you? In your boss, your kids, your friends?
- That word conquered is a military term in Greek. How do you conquer evil in others? Not by repaying evil with evil, but by repaying evil with good, and trusting God.

Taking matters into your own hands doesn’t truly **conquer** evil in them OR in you. It just makes a mess for everyone.

- Many of you know Rick Langston--he’s one of our oldest pastors on staff, in his 60’s. He and Judi have a great marriage. They recently celebrated 41 years of marriage. One day he said to her, ‘Hey, I know for these last 41 years, I haven’t been a perfect spouse. Over the years I’ve often been selfish and rude and sometimes I’ve blown up at you over small things. But every time I

do, you just stay so calm! How do you do that? And she said, **'Oh, it's easy. Whenever you blow up at me I just go and clean the bathroom. I scrub the toilet and it takes my anger away.'** And Rick said, *'That helps?'* She said, 'Oh yes, because I always use your toothbrush.'" (Just kidding. That story is not true.)

- Here's another one that is true. Winston Churchill had a longstanding feud with a lady of the English nobility named Lady Astor. Their longstanding acrimony was so bad (this is not a joke) that people would never invite them to the same party, because for sure—like vinegar and baking soda—some blow-up would happen. Well, sure enough, some nabe to London did it, and over dinner Churchill and this lady got into an argument and Lady Astor shouted, 'If I were your wife, Winston, I would poison your coffee!' To which Churchill replied, 'And if I were your husband I would drink it!' Once Lady Astor was throwing a costume ball and she HAD to invite Churchill, since he was the Prime Minister, but she didn't want to. And, when Churchill accepted the invitation he asked her what costume he might wear so that no one could recognize him, since he didn't want to be seen at her house. She responded that if he came sober, no one would recognize him. To which he responded, 'Yes, but you are ugly, and in the morning I shall be sober.'<sup>5</sup>

All these amazing responses--world-class-wit, but their relationship never got better. Tit for that just deepened the divide. Repaying evil with evil never stops evil, it just multiplies it.

If we want to be vehicles of God's power, producing true righteousness in the hearts of people we love and in the world, if we want to be vessels that God uses to build his kingdom, then we will leave vengeance to God and respond with grace instead.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.britishpathe.com/gallery/winston-churchill-quotes/2>; Consuelo, Duchess of Malborough, from her autobiography, *The Glitter and the Gold*.

**Because, again, that's how Jesus changed us.**

Which brings me to the last point of our story:

VAMP

## 5. Is DAVID the King we are looking for?

In some ways, I wish this story ended with David relenting of his desire to take vengeance on Nabal, but the author tucks in a subtle little detail that portends much worse things to come.

Then David sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her as his wife... 42 And Abigail hurried and rose and mounted a donkey, and her five young women attended her. She followed the messengers of David and became his wife. And at first, that sounds great. Abigail is an amazing woman, a good catch, for sure. But this begins for David the multiplication of wives. See the next verse?<sup>6</sup>

43 David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and both of them became his wives. That's now wives 2 and 3.

David unfortunately begins to follow the custom of his day to exploit his position as King to take lots of wives. In Deut 17, God had explicitly warned future Israelite Kings not to do this.

This chapter is one of the first indications that David may not be the promised King we are looking for. You see, up until this point he's seemed like he was. David was the humble shepherd boy who trusted

<sup>6</sup> Technically, David was divorced at this point. Vs. 44. Saul had annulled his marriage to Michal and given her to someone else. But still, it marks the beginning of the multiplication of wives.

God and lived with undaunted courage. Up until now he has carried himself with grace and trusted God in impossible circumstances.

But here we see, in this chapter--FIRST, a lapse in faith where David succumbed to a vengeful spirit; and SECOND, he starts to leverage his Kingly privilege to multiply wives in direct disobedience to a command of God. We're just a few chapters into David's story, and already our hearts are beginning to yearn for a King more righteous than David.

The point is that our salvation will never come from man, no matter how strong or righteous they appear.

*For ALL have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There is none righteous--no, not one. Even David will fail us. Your dad will fail you. Your spouse will fail you. I will fail you!*

In fact, in this story, Abigail is the closest picture we get of Jesus--think about it, she is a wise, discerning sage who rides in on a donkey, humbles herself, then takes all the blame for what's happened on herself (even though she is innocent). She offers a meal of peace (which happens to be, btw, a meal of LAMB, and by her bravery and sacrifice purchases salvation for many.<sup>7</sup> David is not the best picture of Jesus in this story, she is, and we're starting to see that David is not the hoped-for-King who will give us identity, security and happiness.

Those things will have to come through a later King--a descendant of David--who will lay down his life for all of us treasonous Nabals.

BTW, if you are looking for us in this story, we are Nabal, strutting around like kings, ungrateful to God for his kindness, despising and rebuffing his goodness. And Jesus, the true King, refused to take vengeance on us, dying for us instead.

The true King, the King we are searching for, is not David. It will be the Son of David; but not just the Son of David, he will also be the Son of God.

And, unlike David, he will NEVER falter or fail or need to be reminded to trust God. He'll be the hope--not just of Israel--but of all the nations. And whether you know it or not, he's the King you're searching for too.

### Bow Heads

1. **Similar to last week:** where are you trying to accomplish God's purposes in the power of the flesh? **Where are you about to become your own Benedict Arnold?** Where do you need to rest and trust God? To let God grant vengeance?
2. **Have you submitted to King Jesus?** That's the big point. He's the true King that God gave--who will give you what you are looking for; who gives you grace instead of judgment, if you surrender to him and receive his offer to save you.

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<sup>7</sup> Peter Krol