

For the past several months, we've been following David's journey to the throne. This journey began in chapter 16 with his anointing and for the past few weeks has found David fleeing from Saul in the wilderness of Judah. While David was promised the throne in chapter 16, he won't actually sit on that throne until 2Samuel 5. And so, between 1Samuel 16 and 2Samuel 5, David would learn important lessons to prepare him as king, in what we might call the university of affliction.

Both chapters 24 and 26, described David's interaction with Saul and his restraint in not killing or harming Saul, between these in chapter 25, we find David portrayed in less favorable conditions.

Chapter 25 recounts David's interaction with Abigail and takes place in four distinct scenes: Nabal offends David (vv1-13); Abigail Appeases David (vv14-35); Abigail Confronts Nabal (vv36-38); David marries Abigail (vv39-44).

- I. Nabal Offends David (vv1-13)
- II. Abigail Appeases David (vv14-35)
- III. Abigail Confronts Nabal (vv36-38)
- IV. David Marries Abigail (vv39-44)
- V. Five Lessons

#### I. Nabal Offends David (vv1-13)

1. Chapter 25 begins with a rather straightforward announcement, v1—"Then Samuel died"—that's all we read (just three English words).
2. We're then told that the Israelites gathered together and lamented him—"and buried him at his home in Ramah."
3. I find it rather interesting that Scripture usually says very little about the death of great figures—"Then Samuel died."
4. And then, v2 and following, the narrative continues without missing a beat—Why is this? Why so little information?
5. Well, I suggest brethren, it's because the story of redemption is never about one man, regardless how important he was.
6. Samuel was one of the great OT figures—he served God with faithfulness during a trying and difficult transition.
7. And yet, as important as Samuel was, it was never about Samuel, it was always about God, the one Samuel served.
8. Dear brethren, regardless how important we may think we are, the church of Jesus Christ will continue after us.
9. V2—"Now there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel, and the man was very rich. He had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel."
10. In olden days a man's riches were determined by his possessions—how much livestock, servants, and land he owned.
11. In v3 we learn the name of this man and his wife, v3—"The name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail."
12. But more importantly we learn about his character, v3—"And she was a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man was harsh and evil in his doings. He was of the house of Caleb."
13. In other words, Abigail and Nabal were opposites—Abigail was a wise woman while Nabal was a foolish man.
14. From v4-9, we learn that when David heard Nabal was shearing his sheep, he sent 10 young men to greet Nabal in his name.
15. Seemingly, from v7, David and his men had protected Nabal's shepherds earlier, and thus expected to be treated kindly.
16. V8—"Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day."

17. That is, David send his servants on a day when Nabal was having a feast—that is, a feast for his servants who were shearing his sheep.
18. David assumed that Nabal would share with him and his men, bread, water, and meat, that he prepared for his own men.
19. Thus, David's men communicated to Nabal as David commanded them, and they then waiting for a response (v9).
20. Thus, at this point, I want to briefly consider Nabal's response to David's servants, and David's response to Nabal.
21. (1) Nabal's response, vv10-11—"Then Nabal answered David's servants, and said, 'Who is David and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?'"
22. In other words, Nabal refused to share his possessions with David—four times Nabal uses the word "my"—"my bread" "my water" "my meat" and "my shearers."
23. Simply put, Nabal was greedy and unwilling to give from his abundance to David, even though he knew who David was.
24. V10b—"There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master"—that is, as David broke away from Saul (and many of David's men break away from their masters).
25. V10a—"Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse"—this proves he knew who David was and it's likely an expression of disdain.
26. If you remember, the fact that David was the son of Jesse underscored David's humble beginnings—he was from Bethlehem and the family of Jesse.
27. Thus, Nabal didn't merely refuse to assist David for lack of ability, he refused to assist David because he despised David.
28. (2) David's response, vv12-13—"So David's young men turned on their heels and went back; and they came and told him all these words. Then David said to his men, 'Every man gird on his sword.' So every man girded on his sword, and David also girded on his sword. And about four hundred men went with David, and two hundred stayed with the supplies."
29. In other words, David intended to return to Nabal with a small army of armed men, to destroy him and his servants.
30. Now, let me point out that the chapter later describes David's response as improper, hasty, and something he would regret.
31. V33—"And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand."
32. V39—"Blessed be the LORD, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and has kept His servant from evil."
33. That is, David was kept from acting evil in avenging himself upon Nabal—David knew it was God's place to avenge.
34. Thus, there's really no other way to look at this—David's response to Nabal (to destroy him and his house) was wrong.

## II. Abigail Appeases David (vv14-35)

1. V14—"Now one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, 'Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master; and he reviled them.'"
2. Apparently, one of Nabal's servants, had enough sense to appeal to his wife, Abigail, whose judgment he trusted.
3. V18—"Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded them on donkeys."
4. In other words, Abigail was going to offer these as a sacrifice of sorts, to appease or turn away the wrath of David.
5. From v19, we learn that Abigail failed to tell her husband what she was doing, because she knew he would hinder her.

6. Thus, she sent her servants ahead with the gifts and followed close behind, and according to v20 she finds David and his men.
7. Verses 21-22 form something of an aside, in which the author wants to underscore the extent of David's anger.
8. V22—"May God do so, and more also, to the enemies of David, if I have on me of all who belong to him by morning light."
9. In other words, David had every intention, not only to kill Nabal, but every single male who dwelt within his house.
10. V23—"Now when Abigail saw David, she dismounted quickly from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground."
11. In other words, she humbled herself—Abigail humbled herself before David, as a servant would bow to a master.
12. Now, keep in mind, Abigail was a rich woman, she commanded a large household of likely, hundreds of servants.
13. And yet, she falls to the ground in utter humility and evident submission to David, who at present, was a fugitive.
14. Thus, I want to briefly summarize Abigail's words to David in three parts—she admits her sin (v24), she pleads for forgiveness (vv25-28), and she praises him as the true king (vv29-31).
15. (1) She admits her sin (v24), v24—"So she fell at his feet and said: On me, my lord, on me let this iniquity be! And please let your maidservant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your maidservant."
16. Here Abigail owns the sins of her foolish husband as her own, because they were one by the covenant of marriage.
17. She doesn't merely blame her husband, but she owns his sins as her own—she understood their fates where interconnected.
18. V34—"For indeed, as the LORD God of Israel lives, who has kept me back from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, surely by morning light no males would have been left to Nabal."
19. (2) She pleads for forgiveness (vv25-28)—within these verses Abigail, offers her gifts to David in exchange for forgiveness.
20. V27—"And now this present which your maidservant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant."
21. Abigail not only owns her husband's sin as her own, but she repents of that sin and brings food for David's servants.
22. (3) She praises him as the true king (vv29-31)—here Abigail foretells Saul's destruction and David's exhortation.
23. Throughout her entire speech she makes refer to David's innocence, foretells Saul's death, and predicts David's exaltation.
24. V29—"Yet a man has risen to pursue you and seek your life, but the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God."
25. In other words, Saul is presently seeking your life, but eventually he shall be removed from the throne, and you replace him.
26. V30—"And it shall come to pass, when the LORD has done for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you ruler over Israel...v31 but when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your maidservant."
27. This section ends with David's response to Abigail in vv32-35, wherein he verbally expresses gratitude to Abigail.
28. V35—"So David received from her hand what she had brought him, and said to her, 'Go up in peace to your house. See, I have heeded your voice and respected your person.'"
29. In other words, David took Abigail's advice, and sent her away in peace—she came to David in turmoil and left in peace.

### III. Abigail Confronts Nabal (vv36-38)

1. Having been send away in peace by David, Abigail returns to her husband, she finds him ignorant and unconcerned about the situation.
2. Unknown to him, she had just turned David away from killing Nabal and every male within his extended household.
3. She finds Nabal giving a feast and drunk with wine—this again underscores his hard heard and lack of concern for David.
4. Because he was very drunk, she waiting until the morning to tell him of her dealings with David the day before.
5. V37—"So it was, in the morning, when the wine had gone from Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became like a stone."
6. That is, he likely had a heart-attack and became paralyzed, v38—"Then it happened, after about ten days, that the LORD struck Nabal, and he died."
7. It's important not to overlook the obvious—Nabal's death was a judgment of God upon him for his wickedness.
8. Furthermore, it's also important to notice, chapter 25 provides a contrast between the death of Samuel and Nabal.
9. While all men die, not all men die alike—v1 simply says "then Samuel died" whereas we read of Nabal "the LORD struck Nabal, and he died."
10. Thus, both men die, but both men die very differently—Samuel dies as a faithful servant, and Nabal as an enemy of God.

#### IV. David Marries Abigail (vv39-44)

1. Seemingly, because Saul took Michal back and gave her to another man, David already married Ahinoam of Jezreel.
2. After he heard of Nabal's death, he sent his servants to propose to Abigail, that she too would become his wife.
3. V41—"Then she arose, bowed her face to the earth, and said, 'Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.'"
4. In other words, this godly and wise lady gladly and willingly became the wife of David to serve him, the rest of her life.
5. A.W. Pink—"God gave Abigail favor in the eyes of His anointed. David was charmed not only with the beauty of her person and the prudence of her character, but also with her evident piety—the most important quality of all in a wife."
6. Now obviously, we are forced to say a few words about polygamy—how can David and Abigail, both being godly people, practice such a thing.
7. Well, let me say in the first place, as you know, David wasn't the only OT saint who had more than one wife (for example, Moses, Jacob, and Solomon).
8. Now I suggest there are two important truths to keep in mind, as we consider the subject of OT saints and polygamy.
9. (1) The OT nowhere commands or commends polygamy—in fact, in most cases it caused rather serious problems.
10. Thus, polygamy was never the result of His revealed will, but it was something God permitted for various reasons.
11. From the very beginning, God brought together one man and one woman, but this truth over time was overlooked.
12. (2) The NT everywhere forbids and condemns polygamy—that is, the NT makes clear what was less clear in the OT.
13. Eph.5 says that a woman must submit to her own husband and men must love their own wives as their own bodies.
14. And Paul describes all potential elders in 1Timothy 3, as "husbands of one wife" that is, they must be "a one-woman man."
15. Thus, the fact that God overlooked this weakness in the OT, in no way justifies the practice of polygamy today.

## V. Five Lessons

1. There are many lessons to be learned from this chapter—lessons from Nabal, Abigail, and David (but I want to limit ourselves to five obvious lessons).
2. (1) In Nabal we find a picture of a proud and foolish sinner—as I've said before, Nabal's very name means "fool."
3. He is in many ways the perfect example of foolishness, and as such, he serves as a strong warning for all mankind.
4. Thus, let me quickly suggest three things true about Nabal, which is also true of every single person by nature.
5. (a) He's worldly—by this I mean, Nabal was fixated upon his earthy goods—his heart was bound with this world.
6. V11—"Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?"
7. By "worldly" is meant life fixated on this world—Nabal was taken up with the things of this world—sinful or not.
8. And thus, even though few men have an abundance of possessions, all men by nature, live for the things of this world.
9. Native man is not able to look up above the things of this life—he lives for himself and for the temporal things of this world.
10. Our Savior told a parable in Luke 12, that has Nabal's name written all over it, v16—"The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully."
11. If you remember, he built many barns to house his crops, v19—"And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'"
12. V20—"But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' V21—"So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."
13. (b) He's unwilling—by this I mean, Nabal was unwilling to serve David with his own person and possessions.
14. And so, man by nature refuses to bow the knee to David's greater son, he refuses to pay homage to Him as king.
15. What Nabal said of David—"Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse?"—so man says, Who is Christ that I should serve Him?
16. Perhaps I can say, just as Nabal despised God's anointed one, so we all by nature, despise Christ the Lord's Anointed.
17. Just as David sent His servants to Nabal, so our Savior sends His servants (ministers) to the fools of this wicked world.
18. And yet, like Nabal, man is by nature is unwilling to acknowledge David's greater Son as God's anointed King.
19. (c) He's unconcerned—by this I mean, just as Nabal feasted while David's wrath was coming, so man lives with no concern Christ's wrath is coming.
20. How foolish we are by nature, for we think we can spurn Christ and His servants and there not be any consequences!
21. (2) In Abigail we find a picture of a wise and prudent wife—this is a beautiful and important lesson from this account.
22. While Nabal is an example of folly Abigail is an example of wisdom—Nabal was a foolish husband and Abigail a wise wife.
23. Most of you know that Proverbs 31 describes a virtuous wife—she's described in relation to God and her house.
24. Verses 11-12—"The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life."
25. It's actually an understatement to say, Abigail sought the good of her husband—she sought to save Nabal's life.

26. O brethren, happy is that man who has a woman who—"does him good and not evil all the days of her life" (v12).
27. And let us not be like Nabal, who obviously failed to appreciate such a wife, but let us praise our wives in the gates.
28. (3) In David we find a reminder of God's restraining hand—this is actually a very central and important lesson.
29. Through various means, God restrained David from doing something that he Himself admitted was evil and wrong.
30. Now here I want to talk a few minutes about providence—providence refers to God's activity among His creation.
31. It's through providence that God brings to pass all that He's eternally decreed—God works within providence.
32. But though God works within providence as the primary cause of all things, He works through secondary causes.
33. For example, in v33 David blessed Abigail for having kept him from killing Nabal, and then in v34 he blesses God for having kept him from killing Nabal.
34. Which is it? Who kept David from killing Nabal and his household? Was it Abigail or was it God? Who should be thanked?
35. Well, both should be thanked, for both God and Abigail worked in keeping David from killing Nabal and his house.
36. But, they did not both work in the same exact way—God was the primary worker and Abigail the secondary worker.
37. Thus, here's the point—God Himself restrained David, and yet, He restrained him through the means of Abigail.
38. These two ideas are brought together in v32—"Blessed is the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me!"
39. God sent Abigail to keep him from a foolish act that would have had lasting effects upon David and his servants.
40. Brethren, we must remember, what did for David three thousand years ago, He still does for His people today.
41. (4) In Abigail and David we find an example of forgiveness—within Abigail and David we find four steps to forgiveness.
42. Let me just say, before we consider these three steps, that knowing how to seek and grant forgiveness is key to any relationship.
43. This of course is true among siblings, friends, church members, but especially within marriage (husband and wife).
44. If I were asked what is one of the most important parts to a healthy marriage, I would say communication (and especially asking for and granting forgiveness).
45. (a) Honest confession—this is the first step to receive forgiveness—we must honestly confess our need for forgiveness.
46. Abigail didn't try to justify her husband, she simply admitted that what he said and did was foolish (thus the very step to forgiveness is to confess our sin to the offended party).
47. (b) Proper restitution—by this I mean, there needs to be true repentance that often includes sufficient restitution.
48. In the case of Abigail, it meant giving David what was right for him to have—she did not approach David empty-handed.
49. In our cases it means making right any thing we've done to offend a person—this is apart of what's called repentance.
50. Lk.17:3—"If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him"—repentance is necessary for forgiveness.
51. Repentance is evidence of true sorrow and humility—Abigail showed her repentance by her words and actions.

52. (c) Humble petition—having owned our sin and made proper restitution, we must next humbly ask the offended for forgiveness.
53. Walk Chantry—"Only after her admission of guilt to the offended one, and after having made restitution, did Abigail request what she was seeking: 'Please forgiven the trespass of your servant' (v28). She is a shining example of how to seek forgiveness."
54. (d) Heart acceptance—this aspect of forgiveness concerns the offended party—when someone owns and repents from their sin, and then humbly asks for forgiveness, we must forgive them.
55. The Hebrew word rendered "forgive" in v28 "to lift or carry away" and refers to the removal of the offense from us.
56. When we forgive, we remove the offense from between us—we refuse to allow the offense to affect our relationship.
57. (5) In Abigail we find a picture of a poor believing sinner—this lesson may not be that evident at first thought.
58. But I want to suggest that we find in Abigail two important facts that are true of every sinner who comes to Christ.
59. (a) By nature we are married to a stern husband—just as Abigail was married to Nabal, we are married to the law.
60. The Scripture describes all men by nature as married to the law—all men by nature, Old or NT, are married to the law.
61. And the law by nature is a very stern husband—now let me clarify, though the law is stern it's not evil or wicked.
62. But the law is very stern and shows no mercy—and what does the law demand? It demands perfect obedience.
63. All men are married to the law as a broken covenant of works—as such it demands perfection and condemns all imperfection.
64. (b) By grace we are married to a gracious Husband—now in the case of Abigail, she married her second husband after the first died.
65. But in our case, it's not our first husband that dies, it's we ourselves who die, and then are remarried to another.
66. Rom.7:4—"Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God."
67. Now we have no way of being certain, but it's very likely Abigail had no children with Nabal, otherwise, she would have brought them with her to David.
68. No, it's very likely that she was barren with Nabal—she bore no fruit—she lived in sorrow with her first husband.
69. And yet, having married David, Abigail bears him at least one son, and likely additional daughters (who are rarely mentioned).
70. And so it is, we all by nature are married to the law and this marriage or relationship bears no true fruit to God.
71. And yet, after our old man that was married to the law dies, our new man who is married to Christ, bears fruit unto God.
72. Thus, how does a sinner who's natively wed to the law, become married to Christ—well, the same two ways Abigail ceased married to Nabal and married David.
73. First, there needs to be a death—in the case of Abigail her first husband died, but in the case of the sinner we must die.
74. And how does a poor sinner become dead to the law? Well, look back to Rom.7:4—"you have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may marry another."
75. In other words, the only way we can be legally freed from the law to marry Christ is "through the body of Christ"—this means, Christ in His own body met the just demands of the law (in life and death)!
76. Secondly, we must accept the invitation of Christ as it comes to us through His servants, v41—"Then she arose, bowed her face to the earth, and said, 'Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of the lord.'"