

Abigail Defuses A Deadly Bomb

Call to Worship: Matthew 5: 3-12

1st Scripture: 1 Samuel 25:2-11

2nd Scripture: 1 Samuel 25:12-35

Hymn #400- *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

Hymn #3 (Supp)- *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

Hymn #70- *Praise My Soul the King of Heaven*

Introduction:

David has sent ten of his young men to humbly and graciously make an appeal before Nabal, hoping that he would be willing to spare some much needed supplies for David and his men. The young men greet Nabal in David's name, wish him great peace and prosperity, inform him of how they have protected Nabal's shepherds from harm (such that not one of his sheep or goats have gone missing), and then make an appeal, asking Nabal to spare whatever he would be willing to spare, for David and his men.

Nabal utterly spurns David's appeal, not merely refusing his request, but greatly insulting him with the wicked and harsh response he gives to David's young men. The men then do a "180," head back to their camp, and report to David all that had happened. And needless to say, David is furious; so furious, that he makes a rash decision and vow, which could very well come back to hurt him later, if he follows through with his immediate course of action.

I. A Deadly Bomb is About to Explode

And so, David receives the report from the young men, and immediately, seemingly without much thought, he orders his men, "Every man gird on his sword." David is obviously deeply offended by Nabal, who has trampled upon David's kind and gracious appeal, and so, he sets out with four hundred men (two hundred remain at the camp with the supplies), in order to take vengeance on the wicked Nabal.

Now brethren, without going further for a moment, notice that David does something here, that is completely out of character for him. Letting his anger get the best of him, he has not sought the Lord here, has he? There is no calling for the priest and the ephod, or any evidence that David has sought the counsel of God here, concerning how he should handle this. And I believe, to be confirmed in a few moments, that David, at least for a short time, has let his personal interest here, rise above his concern for the glory of God. In other words, brethren, David had a right to be angry, but he is more focused on the personal insult that has come upon him, than anything else. And if this is not brought into check, the results of such a rash decision could be disastrous and full of regret. David needed to address this matter, but he was in no condition to address it just yet. He needed to evaluate his motives; he needed to pray and ensure that the glory of God was the priority of any final decision to be made, on how to proceed.

At this point, David is going to go with his men to barbarically kill Nabal and every male belonging to him. A lot of innocent men are about to be killed, both for the sin of

Nabal and for the lack of wisdom and restraint on David's part, if God does not intervene in some way. And this could greatly serve to impede David's favor among the people of Judah, the support of which he greatly needs later on, when he comes into his reign. And furthermore, this might give Saul some valid reason for pursuing David for such crimes.

Now brethren, I say all of this not to pick on David. I say this because David looks a lot like the rest of us here (or at least me), does he not? How often are we so quick to respond, to even legitimate offenses that come against us, only to cause more damage by responding out of vengeance, rather than, out of a sincere desire for the glory of God. More often than not, our anger is not righteous, but rather it is dished out, out of pride, because of the personal offense/s that have come upon us. We would do better to let vengeance belong to God, entrusting that He will carry out justice, rather than avenge ourselves because of personal hurts, which infringe upon our pride. How often have we immediately responded to some unkind word or email or FB post, by pulling out the sword of our tongues (or pens), only to deeply thrust it into the heart of someone, thereby losing a great opportunity to glorify Christ at our own expense? Needless to say then, brethren, David here responded rashly and without seeking the Lord's counsel, first as a means of examining his own heart in the matter, and then as a means of seeking wisdom on how to proceed.

So, off they go, and we have a recording of David's rash vow, given in verses 21-22, "Now David had said, 'Surely in vain I have protected all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him. And he has repaid me evil for good. May God do so, and more also, to the enemies of David, if I leave one male of all who belong to him by morning light.'" David is intent on carrying out personal vengeance, and he vows unto that end. And so, the fuse is lit for a deadly bomb, and the consequences of the explosion will bring about much bloodshed and guilt, if nothing is soon done about it. Enter Abigail! Enter God's rescuing grace! [David's vow- enemies blessed]

II. Abigail Defuses the Deadly Bomb

Back in verse 18, we find that one of Nabal's young servants (one of the shepherds whom David has guarded and protected at Carmel) has somehow come to find out about all that has happened. He was probably present when Nabal had spurned David's gracious appeal, and furthermore, he knew that David and his men would return to wreak havoc on Nabal and all that he owns. And so, he reports to Abigail, Nabal's wife, all that has happened. [Read verses 14-18]

Here, we find that positive confirmation of the testimony of David and his men, confirmed by one of the young shepherds who benefitted from their protection. Notice, he informs Abigail that:

- 1- David sent messengers to Nabal, seeking assistance, and Nabal scorned him.
- 2- David and his men were very good to Nabal's shepherds; they were not hurt nor did any one of the animals go missing from them, as long as they were among David's men. David and his men were like a protective wall around the shepherds, both by night and day, the whole time Nabal's shepherds were among them, keeping the sheep. David's care for them was very intentional, kind and generous.

3- Because Nabal has spurned David's appeal, harm is determined by David. David and his men will come against Nabal and his whole house.

4- Nabal is impossible to reason with (he is a fool; a wicked scoundrel), and so, it would be pointless to attempt to convince him of the severity of the matter.

All this being said, the young servant appeals to Abigail, to see if there is anything that she might attempt to do, in order to defuse the bomb that is about to go off, once David and his men arrive. And Abigail, who is full of wisdom and understanding; who stands as the exact opposite of her foolish husband, takes immediate action to defuse the bomb. Notice, the specific actions that she takes, brethren: [Read verses 18-20, 23-31]

1- She immediately organizes a grocery list of supplies, which she sends before her, to be carried to David and his men, by the hand of Nabal's servants. And she wisely does not inform her husband of her doings. There is a time women, to do something contrary to your husbands knowledge and desire... when doing so, involves obedience to your greater Authority and Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ. In this case, she is stepping forward to preserve life and to keep David from sinning against God, in the light of her husband's blatant and wicked foolishness. There is a time to disobey authority, and that is only when you are seeking to obey a higher authority. (vss. 18-19)

2- She mounts a donkey and sneaks away to where David and his men are, so that she might make a humble appeal to the one whose humble appeal has been grossly scorned (vs. 20).

3- When she finds David, she dismounts quickly from the donkey, and immediately shows him the utmost respect, indeed, the respect due to a king. She falls down to the ground, and bows before him, in humble reverence. She honors David, in the way in which David had honored Saul, near the cave. And she does this, right at his feet, offering the most humble posture imaginable, to go along with what she is about to say (vs. 23).

4- She asks David to transfer the iniquity of her husband to her own account, so that she might seek his mercy and forgiveness for it, on his behalf, ultimately sparing his entire house from the consequences of his sin [Christ-like in some sense--Christ delivers us from Adam's curse] (vs. 24, 28).

5- She asks that David disregard Nabal's foolishness because he is a scoundrel and a fool, and it would not be worth causing all manner of bloodshed on his account (vs. 25).

6- She informs David of her own ignorance concerning all that had taken place between David's young men and Nabal (vs. 25).

7- She reveals God's providence in using Abigail to keep David from vengeful bloodshed, rightly encouraging David to let God be the avenger of this wrong.

She is confident that God will right this wrong, Himself, dealing directly with Nabal, sparing all who are innocent in this matter, lest David destroy the innocent with Nabal (vs. 26). "Let your enemies and those who seek your harm be as Nabal" ("Let your enemies be as this cursed man").

8- She offers the many food items that she has prepared, as a means of correcting the gross wrong of her husband, presenting them as a gift to David's men, in answer to his original appeal (vs. 27).

9- Completely contradicting her husband's willful scorn of David, when he responded with the words, "Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse," Abigail acknowledges her confidence in God's proclaimed truth concerning David. In other words, she expressed faith in the Word of God, unlike her husband. [Read verses 28-31]. She acknowledged David's innocence in all that had happened between him and Saul. She had faith in the Word of God, concerning David's sure reign, and the victory he would be given over his enemies. [Nabal and Abigail certainly reflect the mindset of the unbeliever and the believer, respectively here, one failing to trust in the reality of Christ's present Authority and reign, while the other expresses and lives out of a sincere faith in Christ, both in the face of that which is not yet realized. And ten days later, Nabal is dead and Abigail becomes the anointed David's bride!--We ought to take heed to the picture herein given us!]

10- Abigail points out the great benefit of David leaving vengeance to the Lord here; she points out what David had failed to think about in his haste, namely, that when David comes into his reign, he will not have innocent blood on his hand, and he will be able to reign with a clear conscience, knowing that he did not exercise unrighteous vengeance upon his enemy. Self-control here, could spare him a lot of grief later on, but once he goes through with his original plan, he will never be able to change course later.

11- Having been used by God to spare David from bringing such grief upon himself, and confident that David will realize this when his adrenaline has stabilized, Abigail requests that David remember her, when he comes into his reign. "When the Lord has dealt well with you, remember your maidservant, who has been used to keep you back from making this serious mistake." [Abigail speaks as if to undo David's oath]

Conclusive Summary Thoughts:

And so, brethren, Abigail, both in her outward demeanor and in her words, has effectively presented David with a humble appeal, in order to disarm him from his vengeful mindset, so that she could defuse the deadly bomb that is presently lit, and about to explode. Notice, that by her appeal, she is opening a large safety net, seeking to save both, the innocent lives of her husband's household, and David, a lot of later grief and guilt. She is a wise woman, and she is willing to humiliate herself and her own interests as a means of delivering others (again, Christ-like!). Young men, single fellas, take note of Abigail! While she was a beautiful woman in appearance, her heart far out-shined everything else! Don't set your sights on the glamour girl, who knows her own beauty. Rather, look for the precious soul, within whom dwells the Spirit of Christ, who evidences a sure confidence in the Word of God, outwardly willing to sacrifice her own pride for the sake of delivering others! [Solomon's dilemma over who is the real mother of the child...]

But brethren, let's peel away Abigail for a moment, and get to the heart of the reality that is here given us. For, there is a principle given here, to which we can all shout, "Amen" (if we are honest), when we consider the underlying reality of what has happened here. And this underlying reality and principle is given to us, in David's humble response to Abigail. [Read verses 32-35].

Notice brethren, that David begins his response by blessing the Lord...why? Because David realized and affirmed what Abigail had stated in verse 26, namely, that the *Lord* had stepped in, to stop David from committing a gross and heinous crime. And how did the Lord do this? By sending Abigail. Now, He didn't come to Abigail in a dream and order her to go, but rather, He moved Abigail to consider what David himself had failed to consider in his rage. God moved Abigail to consider the consequences of what David was about to do, concerning the bloodshed of innocent men, the unlawful vengeance in David's heart, and the way in which all of this would later hinder David's reign over Israel.

And so, brethren, herein is the two-fold principle that I want you to recognize here: First, notice how God graciously steps in and intervenes, even when David has unwisely acted in haste. God here provides David with a way out...and David takes it [sadly, he does not do this with Bathsheba]. And I say this, brethren, not to encourage us to presume upon God's grace, by ever letting our guard down, but rather, to encourage us to bless and praise God, for the many times that He has graciously spared us from the disastrous consequences of our unwise and hasty decisions. Brethren, let us never "thank our lucky stars," as the world does, when viewing some of the fascinating providences that work in our favor, and let us never see them as "coincidences," because they aren't. They are God's gracious interventions, often times, protecting us from ourselves, because He remembers that we are but dust. How often, have we acted without prayer, responding in the heat of the moment; how often have we lit bombs and dumped them all over the place, only to witness God defusing them...to our shame. Give glory to God, brethren; bless Him with David. How often He has lovingly unplugged our mouths, minimizing the damage, when we have stuck our foot in them!

And secondly, notice that God here uses Abigail as His means of rescue, for David. How blessed we are, brethren, when we surround ourselves with the people of God, who housing the Holy Spirit with us, can often be used, to prevent us from igniting devastating bombs in our lives. We require the eyes of others, because we have a hard time seeing ourselves clearly. Our emotions and passions tend to cloud our judgment, when we are dealing with issues that relate to us...especially, when we have been wronged in some sense. But praise the Lord for the brethren, who are able to observe us, without being blinded by *our* felt emotions and passions, especially when things get real hot. David was not too proud to consider the sound advice of a woman, and his listening ear, served to deliver him from great sin and guilt. Would it be that we would exercise such humility, esteeming our brethren, as means of grace, whereby God would instruct us and lead us in His ways, when our subjective feelings begin to overpower our own processing of God's objective truth. David was about to shed innocent blood, being given over to the passion of revenge. But Abigail was used to rescue David, enabling him to see what he could not see in the heat of the moment, that innocent lives were at stake, and that vengeance belongs to the Lord!

And so, David blesses God (the divine cause behind Abigail's entreaty), and then Abigail for her wise advice and faithful service, in being used as a means of keeping David back from committing gross sin. Had she not been used to intervene, a mass slaughter would have surely taken place, and David would have put on the shoes of Saul, who

wickedly and unjustly killed all the priests of Nob, not too long ago.

"So David received from [Abigail's] 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' (vs. 35).

III. Concluding Applications

1) Beware of rash, emotion driven responses and decisions. Stop and pray! Stop and pray! Get counsel!

2) Look for Abigail at all times, and never hold the means of grace, found in the brethren, in contempt!

3) Recognize the necessity of humility, in order to be useful unto God. We have seen it in David, in Jonathan, and now in Abigail...but not in Saul or Nabal.

4) Beware of making rash oaths, but if and when you have made a *sinful* oath, you must be prepared to break it. Indeed, repent before God, but a sinful oath is never to be kept. [Jephthah's oath to sacrifice whatever came into the door of his house first---his daughter walked in...etc]

5) Let us be "Peacemakers" in a society that loves witnessing *others* in conflict.

6) Beware of a vengeful heart. Such a heart lacks faith. Vengeance belongs to The Lord. Absorb the offense, and wait upon the Lord. He will repay with judgment, either against the opposition or in Christ (preferably, in Christ, from our end).

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25