

Avoiding Foolishness

1 Samuel 25:2-38

January 3, 2010

Intro

As we get back to our study in 1 Samuel, we find David in the northwest region of Israel near Mount Carmel. While he is there, an interesting story unfolds that is filled with practical lessons and insights for all of us.

As we have studied the life of David, our faith has been encouraged as we see David's great strength of faith. We have been challenged to increase our character as we watched David make godly decision based upon the principles of God's Word. But in this story, we learn from David's failure. Here, he let pride get in the way, he loses his temper, and he comes very near to making a grievous mistake.

There are three people at the center of our story. Of course, there is David; he has been anointed to become the next king of Israel, but at this moment Saul was still the king and his jealousy over David's success and his desperate attempts to hold onto the throne have caused David to be on the run.

Then there is Nabal. His name literally means, "fool." It's hard to imagine that his parents actually named him this from birth, so we have to hope that at some point in his life, the name stuck. He is a grouchy, cantankerous, selfish man that lives out his name perfectly.

Then there is Abigail, Nabal's wife. We learn in verse three that she was intelligent and beautiful in appearance. She becomes the heroine of the story as we will see as the story unfolds.

As part of the background of this story, we need to understand that while David was on the run from King Saul, waiting for God to remove Saul, he and his small army of 600 men were going about doing good for the nation of Israel.

Nabal had about 3,000 sheep and so they would all be gathered together in late spring for shearing. David and his men became a shield of protection since such a large operation would have typically brought many bandits. David and his men had done Nabal a tremendous favor by providing this help, but Nabal, the fool, didn't exactly appreciate it.

I. Avoid the Fool Within

- 1 David sent 10 young men to ask Nabal for supplies. He was most certainly a gentleman about it. He was not making demands, but the fact that David sent 10 men suggested that David was hoping for something significant.
- 2 Nabal gives David an insulting, degrading, and disrespectful answer. In other words, in keeping with his name, he gives David a foolish answer.
- 3 But the problem is that David's response is not any better.
- 4 The lesson for each of us to understand is that we all have foolishness with us. It's

called, "the flesh."

A. Emotions make terrible masters

- 5 When David's young men report back to him with Nabal's foolish response, David loses his temper and tells his men to strap on their sword. David is about to take his army with which he has defeated powerful foreign invaders and bring all of that power and might crashing down on Nabal's farm.
- 6 Clearly the problem is that David's emotions are getting the better of him.
- 7 I am convinced that God gave us our emotions. But they are given to us to serve us, not to be our masters. There is an old saying that I like very much. "Emotions make great servants, but terrible masters."

Proverbs 16:32, He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

1 Corinthians 6:12, All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

- 8 The problem was that David's pride was hurt. Here's a man who can take insults from the King for that is actually a compliment, but is enraged at the insults of a fool. The problem; and we can all relate to this, was pride.

Illus – I look back on the first spat we had in our marriage and realize it was nothing but pride. Actually, the second one was based on pride, too. I'm thinking that the third one had something to do with pride as well.

- 9 When we take things personally, we are allowing either our pride or our insecurity to get the better of us and then everyone around us pays the price.
- 10 If David had proceeded with this they would have to rewrite the song they used to sing about him. "Saul has slain his thousands, but David has slain his 10,000's... *and one crotchety old fool.*"

B. We need God's help with the little things

- 1 It's interesting to see that David had done so well against Goliath and against King Saul, but is undone by a fool.
- 2 Why? Because David had to completely trust in God when he faced Goliath. He had to completely rely on the wisdom of God to respond to King Saul.
- 3 But now, when it came to dealing with Nabal, it's as though he were saying, "I

needed your help with Goliath and King Saul, but I'll take care of this fool all by myself."

- 4 We need to stay on the right path and rely on God's help whether we're facing giants or fools.
- 5 There is no problem so great that you can't face it with God's help. But there is also no trial so small that it will trip you up without trusting in God's ways and God's help.
- 6 It's often the small things that will get your goat. We all face this every day when we get behind the wheel of our car.

Illus – I was in Lincoln City on my way home and the two lanes were merging into one. The guy next to me decided not to give me my turn... how petty is that?

- 7 There are some great scriptures that encourage us to trust in God for all things.

Psalm 46:1, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Colossians 1:10-11, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects... strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience;

II. Listen When God Corrects

- 1 The story takes an interesting turn when one of Nabal's men came to Abigail to tell her what had happened.
- 2 She immediately took action. She sent ahead to David the provisions that he had requested; that her husband Nabal should have already sent.
- 3 She then mounted a donkey and came out to meet David as he and his men were coming toward their place.
- 4 Abigail, with great humility, began to speak wisdom to David's angry heart. And here we all can learn great lessons for our own lives today.

A. Wise is the one who is teachable

- 1 The great part about this story is not only what Abigail says to David and the wisdom and beauty of her words, but the fact that David listens.
- 2 That's what separates David from Nabal. In verse 17 Nabal's young man reports, "He is such a worthless fellow that no one can speak to him."
- 3 But David listens to Abigail and that is what we all need to gain from this story; because it is the fool that refuses to listen to wisdom.

Proverbs 12:15, The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

Proverbs 15:5, A fool rejects his father's discipline, but he who regards reproof is sensible.

Proverbs 17:10, A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding than a hundred blows into a fool.

Proverbs 18:2, A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind.

- 1 In verse 26, Abigail wisely points out that it was the Lord who had intervened and given David this warning.
- 2 This is so true. God gives us a warning before we do dumb things and the key is to listen. A fool does not listen, but a wise man will listen.

Proverbs 19:20-21, Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days. Many plans are in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord will stand.

B. Remember who you are

- 4 Abigail begins her message by pointing out that Nabal is a fool and therefore has acted foolishly.
- 5 Let's all agree here that it is generally not a good idea to throw your husband, or wife, under the bus. However, in this case, she is trying to save her husband's life and this requires drastic measures.
- 6 She then points out to David that he is to be fighting the battles of the Lord and that evil should not be found in him.
- 7 She reminds him that God has appointed him ruler over Israel. In other words, "Remember who you are, David."
- 8 The principal that she is using was recorded by David's son, Solomon. We have to wonder if he learned that from David's experience with Nabal.

Proverbs 26:4, Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will also be like him.

- 1 David had almost lowered himself to become a fool himself. But Abigail reminds him of who God had called him to be.

Illus – Raul Ries, now a Calvary Chapel pastor, had been a fighter before he was saved and at one point was going to solve a conflict the old way when his wife said, "Remember

who you are, Raul.” That was all he needed.

2 And we should also remember who God called us to be as well.

2 Corinthians 5:18, 20, Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation... Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ,

C. Don't do something you'll regret

9 Another word of wisdom that Abigail spoke to David was that one day, when God made him ruler over Israel, that this thing would cause grief and a troubled heart to David.

10 In other words, “Don't do something you will regret, David.”

11 We have seen examples in scripture of righteous anger, but most anger isn't righteous at all and one good test of that whether you lose control of your emotions.

Galatians 5:22-23, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy... and self-control; against such things there is no law.

12 When David listened to Abigail, he came to his senses and realized how close he had come to doing something he would greatly regret.

13 You can see how relieved he is by his response to Abigail in verses 32-34.

14 There is a great principle for us all. Don't do anything that you will regret later.

Romans 6:21, Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.

Illus – When we were managing apartments and had a difficult tenant that we had to ask to leave, he didn't take this kindly and actually called me out.

1 But the principle of the Lord is to trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Proverbs 3:5-6, Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.