



QUESTIONS

- When you hear the word “dependence” what comes to mind?
- Describe a time when you were totally dependent on another.
- What was one thing you learned or were reminded of from today’s message
- How did the Lord show mercy on David when David felt angry and vengeful toward Nabal?
- How did Abigail persuade David not to seek revenge in Nabal? What does this tell you about Abigail?
- How did David receive Abigail’s apology and advice? What does this tell you about David?
- In what way(s) do we see Jesus and the love of God in this story?



1 Samuel 25

“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.” - John 15:5

(Set up lesson structure and explain the use of different translations)

INTRODUCTION

In the year 1776 on July 4th something truly amazing happened. 56 men signed a document declaring that the 13 American colonies were free from the rule of the England. That document is of course called the Declaration of Independence. It was a day where we as a nation said to England that we did not need them anymore. That we could rule ourselves. We didn't need them to tell us what to do or how to live. We were free to live our lives on our own terms. We declared our independence.

Now this was of course a marvelous thing...declaring ourselves free from the need for England to rule over us.

But something very similar happened back when God first created everything...humanity declared its independence from God. The first humans, Adam and Eve, in a single act that affects us to this very day declared that they didn't need God anymore. That they could live their lives on their own. That they didn't really need God anymore. That they could live independently of God, that they could be the gods of their own lives... “Thanks for creating us and all God but we'll take it from here.” Truthfully we are still doing it to this very day. It is the way we are by nature. There is something deep within us that longs to declare our independence from God.



We believe the lie, in so many ways, that we can do this thing called life on our own. That we have all it takes and that we can live independent of God...well, it's not true.

In the book of John, Jesus says this about himself...

“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:4-5

Can you imagine a branch saying to a tree “I don't need you anymore!” You know what happens when a branch falls off of a tree...it dies. A branch really can't live, it can't produce any fruit, when it's not connected to the tree. The tree is the branch's source of life. And friends, you and I are no different. We can't live, truly live, apart from God.

I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.”

Psalm 16:2 (ESV)

good, pleasant, agreeable, excellent, valuable, glad, happy, kind, right...

See we need to understand and come to grips with our utter and complete dependence on God for everything otherwise we are just like a branch believing we can live apart from the vine.

In a book written about the life of David called, appropriately enough “The Life of David” the author, a man named A.W. Pink, says this



“The most mature and experienced Christian acts foolishly the moment he is left to himself...as soon as communion with Him (is) broken, as soon as we cease (stop) looking to Him alone for help, we are helpless...The “best Christian” is not the one who has learned to walk alone, but he who most feels his need of leaning harder upon the “everlasting arms” of God...the “best Christian” is not the one who is no longer tempted (to do the wrong thing) but he who knows that nothing good dwells within him and that only in Jesus can true lasting purpose be found...left to themselves the wisest Christians have no better judgment than one who knows nothing about God.”

A.W. Pink

“O Israel, stay away from idols! I am the one who answers your prayers and cares for you. I am like a tree that is always green; all your fruit comes from me.”

Hosea 14:8

BIBLE

It's important to understand that as we read or look at any portion of the Bible we must ask the question “How does this apply to me?” and it is equally important to know that if we think “This portion of scripture doesn't apply to me?” we are wrong. **“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives.”** There is a practical lesson for all of us to learn from this portion of David's life, the question we must ask ourselves honestly is “what is there for me to take to heart?”so let's get to it!!!!

David went down to the wilderness of Paran. A wealthy man from Maon owned a sheep ranch there, near the village of Carmel. He had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats, and was at his ranch at this time for the sheep shearing. His name was Nabal and his wife, a beautiful and very intelligent woman, was named Abigail. But the man, who was



a descendant of Caleb, was uncouth, churlish, stubborn, and ill-mannered.

1 Samuel 25:1-4

The story begins by introducing us to man named Nabal. Nabal was extremely rich but he was also not very wise or kind. He wasn't a very nice man and he wasn't very generous either. In fact his name, Nabal, means "fool". He had no sense of honor or honesty.

but he was very, very, very rich.

Now this man is married to a woman named Abigail and she is described very differently than Nabal. She is a "beautiful and a very intelligent woman." In fact her name means "the joy of her father."

When David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, he sent ten of his young men to Carmel to give him this message: "May God prosper you and your family and multiply everything you own. I am told that you are shearing your sheep and goats. While your shepherds have lived among us, we have never harmed them, nor stolen anything from them the whole time they have been in Carmel. Ask your young men and they will tell you whether or not this is true. Now I have sent my men to ask for a little contribution from you, for we have come at a happy time of holiday. Please give us a present of whatever is at hand."

1 Samuel 25:4-8

David, who is out in the wilderness decides he will make a request to this man Nabal and ask him if he and his men can have some food. David and his men were probably in great need of food which is why he makes the request. But this would have been a good time to make such a request. First of all Nabal was a rich guy so he could easily spare a few animals to feed David and his men. Also, because it was "sheep-shearing season" it was a



time to share. Sharing food and showing kindness and hospitality was considered something everyone just did during this time of year.
(CHRISTMAS)

We also will discover that David and his men have been protecting Nabal's shepherds and sheep from thieves and bandits.

So David's request for food is given at a time where generosity was kind of expected and it was worded in a humble, respectful and courteous manner...he asked nicely :-)

So let's see what happens....

The young men gave David's message to Nabal and waited for his reply.

"Who is this fellow David?" he sneered. "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 gang who comes from God knows where?"

1 Samuel 25:9-11

Nabal is given a wonderful opportunity to show kindness to David, who he is certain to know is the one who will become king. But, Instead all we see is selfishness and unkindness. Not only does he say "no" to David's request but he is insulting David as well. He describes David as being insignificant, obscure, and a person not worth bothering with.

And look at how many times Nabal uses a personal pronoun...my bread, my water, my meat, my shearers, mine, mine, mine, mine....



Now obviously there is a warning here for all of us...there is something we can all learn from meanness of Nabal. There is definitely a lesson on showing kindness to others and recognizing that all we have truly comes from and is a gift from God...

...but it's David, and his reaction to Nabal's response to his request, that we should be most concerned with.

Let's see what happens...

So David's messengers returned and told him what Nabal had said.

"Get your swords!" was David's reply as he strapped on his own. Four hundred of them started off with David and two hundred remained behind to guard their gear.

1 Samuel 25:12-13

"A lot of good it did us to help this fellow. We protected his flocks in the wilderness so that not one thing was lost or stolen, but he has repaid me bad for good. All that I get for my trouble is insults. May God curse me if even one of his men remains alive by tomorrow morning!"

1 Samuel 25:21

Just last week we saw David with a chance to kill Saul, the one who has been trying to kill him. He had a chance to end his troubles. We even see him show great remorse that he had cut a part of Saul's robe...now he wants to kill everyone in Nabal's house because of a little insult. In the past we have seen David behave calmly and considerately but here David feels a need to end Nabal and everything he has. We just saw David show great mercy to his greatest enemy Saul but here he is moved to show nothing but revenge.



He was able to forgive Saul, who wanted to kill him, but he couldn't forgive Nabal, who only refused to feed he and his men.

WHAT'S THE DEAL?!?!?!?

He took his eyes off God. David's anger got the best of him. He didn't stop to consult The Lord. The moment we forget God, the moment we stop pondering and thinking about all that God is and all he has done. The moment we think we can do this on our own, that we don't need God anymore we are in trouble.

“Remember the Lord your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful”

Deuteronomy 8:18

“Never stop praying.”

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Other translations say “Pray without ceasing” or “Pray continually”...never stop talking to God, never stop thinking about God...friends we are but a branch and Jesus is the vine. A branch can't live, it can do nothing without connection to the tree, and friends, the moment we forget who we are and where we belong, the moment we forget who God is, the second we stop praying, we stop talking to God, we stop recognizing that He is with us at all times, that He is the truth, the way and the life, we are doomed to act foolishly and the effects of our foolish behaviors can have life altering consequences. Prayer is nothing more that recognizing your constant connection to God.

“Prayer is a constant attitude of being in the God's presence.”



As soon as we become unaware of our connection to God, as soon as our focus shifts from God to ourselves, the moment we stop looking to God for help, we are helpless.

This is where David find himself...

Thankfully, in steps Abigail, Nabal's "beautiful and a very intelligent" wife. (Not unlike my beautiful and very intelligent wife). God is about to use this woman in an amazing way.

Meanwhile, one of Nabal's men went and told Abigail, "David sent men from the wilderness to talk to our master, but he insulted them and railed at them. But David's men were very good to us and we never suffered any harm from them; in fact, day and night they were like a wall of protection to us and the sheep, and nothing was stolen from us the whole time they were with us. You'd better think fast, for there is going to be trouble for our master and his whole family—he's such a stubborn lout that no one can even talk to him!"

1 Samuel 25:14-17

One of Nabal's men, behaving very wisely, recognizing that Abigail was very intelligent and realizing that trouble was a'comin goes to Abigail and tells her what is going on...

...and Abigail does act quickly

Then Abigail hurriedly took two hundred loaves of bread, two barrels of wine, five dressed sheep, two bushels of roasted grain, one hundred raisin cakes, and two hundred fig cakes, and packed them onto donkeys. "Go on ahead," she said to her young men, "and I will follow." But she didn't tell her husband what she was doing...

1 Samuel 25:18-19



At first glance we might say “She didn’t tell her husband??? Is this not underhanded...sneaking around doing things she shouldn’t?” Not at all. Being the wife in this scene she could take and use the family provisions as she saw fit, even to the extent of sharing it with others. She isn’t stealing from her husband here, she is simply paying a debt that her husband Nabal had refused to pay, and also trying to avert destruction.

As she was riding down the trail on her donkey, she met David coming toward her...When Abigail saw David, she quickly dismounted and bowed low before him. “I accept all blame in this matter, my lord,” she said. “Please listen to what I want to say. Nabal is a bad-tempered boor, but please don’t pay any attention to what he said. He is a fool—just like his name means. But I didn’t see the messengers you sent. Sir, since the Lord has kept you from murdering and taking vengeance into your own hands, I pray by the life of God, and by your own life too, that all your enemies shall be as cursed as Nabal is. And now, here is a present I have brought to you and your young men. Forgive me for my boldness in coming out here. The Lord will surely reward you with eternal royalty for your descendants, for you are fighting his battles; and you will never do wrong throughout your entire life. Even when you are chased by those who seek your life, you are safe in the care of the Lord your God, just as though you were safe inside his purse! But the lives of your enemies shall disappear like stones from a sling! When the Lord has done all the good things he promised you and has made you king of Israel, you won’t want the conscience of a murderer who took the law into his own hands! And when the Lord has done these great things for you, please remember me!”

1 Samuel 25:20,23-31

There are so many amazing things that we could talk about here in this amazingly humble and God-led act by Abigail but I want to focus in on one statement Abigail makes...



“...Sir, since the Lord has kept you from murdering and taking vengeance into your own hands...”

Abigail takes no credit in this. Her entire plea in fact is focused upon God. She recognizes God as the one who is in charge. That He is the reason she is here in the first place...Her entire speech points to our dependence upon God in all things....

...and look at David’s response, because it is no less God focused.

**“...Bless the Lord God of Israel who has sent you to meet me today!
Thank God for your good sense! Bless you for keeping me from
murdering the man and carrying out vengeance with my own hands.
For I swear by the Lord, the God of Israel who has kept me from
hurting you, that if you had not come out to meet me, not one of
Nabal’s men would be alive tomorrow morning.”**

1 Samuel 25:32-34

APPLICATION

“Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken. My victory and honor come from God alone. He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me. O my people, trust in him at all times. Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge.”

Psalm 62:5-7

“David Reaffirms his confident trust in God. David instructed his heart to find rest ... in God alone. He called upon himself to have faith in God, a reliance that was full of hope, a Hebrew word meaning an eager waiting upon God that looked forward to his intervention. His natural tendency would be to act impetuously (impulsively), taking these matters into his own hands. But



David understood that God alone was his rock, salvation, and fortress, the one who could protect and defend him. God was his sole deliverance. God alone would uphold his honor.

David invites others to share his confident faith in God: Trust (Heb. batah, “to attach oneself to another object”) in him at all times, O people, even in the midst of difficult times. David called out to the people to pour out their hearts to him. True faith will express itself in fervent prayer to God.”

“O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in your sanctuary and gazed upon your power and glory. Your unfailing love is better than life itself; how I praise you!...I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on you through the night. Because you are my helper, I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings. I cling to you; your strong right hand holds me securely.”

Psalm 63:1-3,6-8

Is this where your heart is...really??? The churchy answer that we would give is “Oh Yeah, that is totally me” But is it??? Really???

“...Your unfailing love is better than life itself...”

Can we say this and truly mean it...

You know, as I was reading this story these last few weeks something jumped off the page...On one side you have Nabal, selfishly living for himself, not caring at all for anyone or anything other than himself...and on the other side you have David, angered by Nabal ignoring him...and in the middle of all this you have Abigail. She stands between the wrath of David toward



Nabal's sin and Nabal. She saves Nabal...she risks everything for this man who could care less...

“...But God showed his great (unfailing) love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners” - Romans 5:8

Jesus, God himself, gave up His privileges as God and came to earth, died on cross, and rose from the dead so that we might be connected to Him, so that we could abide with Him, so that we could make our home with Him simply because he loves us with an unfailing love.

You know the Bible says **“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith”** because Jesus is the proof of God's unfailing love. Let us recognize our dependence in Him, let us see our never-ending need for Him.

A pastor I love named Tullian Tchividjian says this...

“Jesus + Nothing = EVERYTHING”

We can't afford to take our eyes off Jesus because He is everything. When we are insulted, we need not become angry because Jesus is our everything. When the storms of life come pounding upon our house we need not worry because Jesus is everything. When.....

The great mistake David made was He forgot this truth...

COMMUNION...