

Two Paths: Nabal and Abigail

Call to Worship: Psalm 1

1st Scripture: 1 Samuel 25:2-35

2nd Scripture: 1 Samuel 25:36-44

Hymn #700- *Trust and Obey*

Hymn Insert- *You are My All in All*

Hymn #772- *Deliver Me From Evil*

Introduction:

Nabal has foolishly scorned and spurned David's humble appeal for needed supplies. Greatly offended by Nabal's wicked and harsh response, David rashly orders his men to gird on their swords, and vows to kill all of the males in Nabal's household by morning. Having heard about all that had transpired, and David's intent to take vengeance on Nabal's household, Abigail (Nabal's wife), takes immediate action to defuse the bomb that is presently lit. Loaded with an abundance of supplies, she sets off to meet David, with the hope of convincing him not to take vengeance on her husband and his household. And with humble posture, wise words, and a gentle appeal, she wins David over, convincing him to let God avenge him, so as not to shed innocent blood, and thereby incur a lot of grief and guilt afterward. God has intervened, sending Abigail to disarm David of his rash and vengeful passion, providing David with a way out of his present temptation.

This morning, we move on to see the "end of the story," concerning the life paths of Nabal and Abigail. From a Biblical, historical standpoint, we hear nothing more of Nabal, after this point, for he dies shortly after these events. And even Abigail, other than in a handful of passing references (noted as David's wife), is hardly mentioned beyond this section of Scripture. She becomes David's wife, and is enveloped in various mentioned events, but nothing more is told of her thoughts, feelings, actions...etc. In fact, she has a son by David, named Chileab, whom we are never given any information about (beyond his name), even though we are told other very significant things about some of David's other sons. Some think Chileab may have died young. Needless to say, virtually all that we are told in Scripture, about these two biblical characters, is given to us, right here in 1 Samuel 25. But that which we are given, even right here, is very telling, enabling us to see, in a very brief span of time, two very different life paths, which pattern for us, the two life paths, upon which, every single human being ever created, walks, to their final destination. And we ought to come to the end of this chapter, asking the question, "Which path am I presently on, the path of Nabal (being of the seed of the serpent") or the path of Abigail ("being of the Seed of the woman"---Gen. 3)?"

I. The End of the Story: One Path

Having put out the flame of David's wrath, Abigail returns home, and immediately moves to inform her husband of the near consequence of his folly. However, she finds him "living it up," holding a great feast in his house (like the feast of a king). And he was very drunk with wine, incapable of receiving any manner of information, since his rationale was presently disoriented by the effects of the wine. And so, Abigail wisely decides that it

would be better to wait until the morning, when Nabal was sober, before informing him of all that has just transpired.

Stop here for a brief moment, brethren, and consider Nabal's present condition. Here he stands at the height of enjoyment, filled with the only bliss he will ever experience in his entire life, and it is only to last for a few short hours. And he must be irrational and drunk to lay hold of it. On the heels of his folly, where he has failed to secure any inkling of a godly stewardship, by providing a bit of bread for David and his needy men, he is now indulging himself like a king, and living it up for a brief moment...all for what? He doesn't even realize that in less than two weeks, he will be a dead man (incapable of enjoying the riches of his possessions ever again), and within twenty-four hours, he will never be the same.

Friends, young people, do you think a world of possessions and a few measly hours of drunken/high laughter with your friends, has any lasting value? Your life is but a vapor, and today's joys mean very little for tomorrow's reality. There is no true wisdom or lasting fulfillment in anything this world serves to you, on its large, but shallow platter of temporal joys and empty frivolity. It is a mirage, folks, do you see that? It looks like a sea of fresh water, but it is a desert of destruction. All wisdom; all true and lasting satisfaction are found in Christ alone, the Wisdom of God! In Him are found all of the jewels of wisdom; life's beginning, life's purpose, life's fulfillment...abundant life, for all who taste of the water of life, freely found in Him! Everything else is a broken cistern; a broken jug that cannot even hold any water. Nabal was at the top of his game right here, but tomorrow comes, and it is all taken away...and his life is soon, very soon, required of him. See it right here, friends, for God means to show it to you. He means for you to see reality in the Scriptures as a whole, and in the parts; in the broader events and circumstances of lengthy Books, and in the individual chapters, where never dying souls are introduced and carried away before the next chapter. The party will end, and the final hangover will be infinitely worse than spewing out an evening's liquor into the toilet bowl tomorrow morning. It will be a never ending position of eternal regret, full of agony, pain, sorrow and misery, felt by the soul and the body...a fiery course that goes on and on and on and on. This is it for Nabal...this is the height of his joy; unconscious drunkenness, soon to spill over into conscious eternal regret. And his entire inheritance will be passed on...to the very one whom he failed to aid with a little food, when he had the chance. What he has, will be taken from him, and given, in total, to the one whom he spurned. Indeed, the righteous ultimately gain what the wicked covet and cling to.

And so, the next morning, when Nabal is sober, Abigail approaches him, and tells him of all that has transpired, and how his folly nearly destroyed everything he had. And we are told that "his heart died within him, and he became like a stone" (vs. 37). The reality of what had almost happened, because of his folly, hit him like a ton of bricks. The shock of it all, sunk his heart down to an irretrievable level, and he became like a stone. He didn't move or respond to anything; he did not return to the artificial joy he had embraced the evening before...he just sat there and stared, shattered by the reality of what had just transpired. The fool, who failed to consider the consequences of his folly beforehand, now met them head on, and the reality of his folly overwhelmed him with

shock and terror.

Perhaps, this is about as close of a picture, on earth, that could be used to describe the unrepentant sinner's response on the Day of judgment; or on that day, when he stands before God, face to face. He just "lives it up," the day before; he spurned God's goodness and patience all along, but now he has been brought face to face with reality. He cannot speak or move; he is silenced before the God, whom he once spurned, all of his life. And his heart dies within him, as it were, and there is no turning back now. And for Nabal, we are further told, "Then it happened, after about ten days, that The Lord struck Nabal, and he died." Game over! Well, the news media reported that he died of some illness; that is what the obituaries stated, but, at the end of the day, it was God who killed Nabal. It was God who brought him forth to give an account. And he wasn't ready, was he? Are you? When is your time up, friends? Oh, you are going to die, aren't you? And you may be as healthy and as young as ever, right now, but God has appointed the day of your death. And it might be a lot sooner than you think. It is "appointed" for man to die once, and then the judgment. God had the day of your death mapped out from the beginning, even as He did your birth. And the "in between" period, though very brief, holds eternal relevance! Are you ready?...or are you on the path of Nabal? Are you entrenched in the world and its lusts, or are you given over to Christ? [Chris Cross singer dies at 34]

Such is the end of Nabal. He lived the so-called "good life" for a short time; wealthy, well known, "living it up," but now suffering for far, far longer than he had ever lived on this earth...and it is always only the beginning, because there is no end to it. Take a mental trip down there to hell right now, friends. See the former rich man [see his face, reminiscent to the wealthy and ungodly of our day], and ask yourself, "Was it worth it?" "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and yet loses/forfeits his own soul" in the process? What will you give in exchange for your soul?" Such was Nabal's path, and such is the path of *all*, who die in their sin, apart from obtaining the free salvation, offered in Jesus Christ!

David then hears of Nabal's death, and realizes that God has avenged David, for the great sin, which Nabal had committed against David. [Read verses 39a & b]

David left vengeance to God, and God returned the wickedness of Nabal upon the head of Nabal. God faithfully pleads the cause of His servants, when they are persecuted or oppressed by their ungodly, unrepentant enemies. And brethren, while we would ideally love to see the wicked repent, it is a breath of fresh air, to know that justice will always be fulfilled in the end. God will recompense the wicked, and He will vindicate His precious sheep. In their suffering on earth, they seemed unnoticed and left as prey to their enemies, but God will confirm His undying love for His sheep [for His church], when He returns the evil of their enemies, upon their own heads. There will be a Day of reckoning! And most noteworthy to this end, is the recompense that will come upon all who have spurned, and failed to subject themselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ! David could very well be a foreshadowing, or a picture of this ultimate end!

II. The End of the Story: The Other Path

And then, lastly, there is the *other path*; the path of Abigail. [Read verses 39c-44]

Abigail had requested that David remember her when he comes into his reign, for the good that she had done, in keeping him from sinning, in the shedding of innocent blood, and in the personal vengeance he would have taken upon Nabal. And indeed, David remembered her...but she did not have to wait for him to come to the throne. Following the death of her husband Nabal, David sent for Abigail, to take her as his wife. She would now remain in his immediate protection and care.

Could David not, in some sense, picture Christ here as well, who grants us immediate fellowship, comfort, protection and care, when we flee to Him for grace? Indeed, we long for the final consummation of His Kingdom, when we will be with Him in body and spirit, but we are, even now, presently joined to Christ as His Bride! Our Nabal; our sin, has been conquered in Christ, and we are no longer slaves of sin, but rather servants of the living God! David sends his servants to Abigail, with the proposal for her to become his wife. And, of course, she accepts. But her response is indeed telling, as well, is it not?

In verse 41, we are told, "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.'" The great honor was hers, and though she had great wealth in this world, she counted the worthiness of being united to David, as of more value than all of it. She went forward in humility, offering and considering herself as a servant to David and his men. And is that not reflective of the attitude that Christ's redeemed sheep, have toward their Beloved Shepherd? We, with whatever number of earthly trinkets we have (combined), come, recognizing that we are the ones who greatly benefit in this covenant agreement. We are the privileged, to be loved and embrace by King Jesus, having nothing of value to offer Him, whatsoever. And we come humbly, offering ourselves as His servants, desirous to serve Him and His cause. And brethren, does not Abigail reflect here, the attitude that we ought to have toward His servants...our brethren? "Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." Now, where have we seen such a heart, exemplified in the NT, brethren? Was it not exemplified by Christ Himself, in John's Gospel, just prior to our Lord's crucifixion? Our Lord girded himself with a servants loin cloth, got down on his knees, and washed the filthy feet of His disciples. And He commanded us to do the same, brethren. He commanded us, out of love for Him; to express that love toward Him, not in mere words, but in action, by humbly loving and serving His sheep. Indeed, the privilege we have been given, in our union with Christ, outweighs all of this world's goods and happiness combined...and we are beyond honored to commit our lives to serving Christ! Abigail pictures this, right here, in a most profound way, to the lesser David.

She immediately gets up, mounts a donkey, and with a group of her maidens, follows David's messengers, and becomes his wife. She heeds the call, and goes to David.

What was Abigail's attitude toward riches? With her husband being out of the picture now, she found more joy and honor in the *person of David* than in anything else. Her husband took no interest in David...he mocked the biblical prophecies concerning

David, and saw David as nothing more than a lowlife, escapee servant. "Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse?" "How many servants flee from their masters and then depend upon others to care for them...etc?" But Abigail believed, at a time when it would have been very easy to doubt...David was a fugitive.

Friends, what path are you on this morning? What is your view, *not* of David, but of the greater Son of David, The Lord Jesus Christ? Do you despise the prophetic Word of God concerning the death, resurrection, ascension and glorious reign of Christ? Do you live in defiance of King Jesus, clinging to the world and all of its temporal lusts, like Nabal? Or, have you left all to follow Christ? Have you humbled yourself before God, repenting of your sins, while subjecting yourself to the authority and reign of Christ? What path are you on? You see, there are only two paths: the path of Nabal, which most are on, and which leads to everlasting destruction, and the path of Abigail, which few find, and which leads to everlasting life! We are all naturally born on the first path, but some, few, but some, enter the narrow gate that leads to life in Christ! Count the costs, friends! Count the costs! Your days are numbered, and the party will soon be over. Eternity is the duration, and your never-dying soul is in the balance!

Conclusive Comments

At the end of the chapter, we are given two more pieces of information, concerning David's relational status. First, we find that David had also taken Ahinoam of Jezreel as his wife, more than likely, before he had met Abigail. Indeed, we will find that David takes several wives throughout the course of his life. And while our present context does not serve to criticize David for this, we can presume that this was one manifestation of the imperfection and fallen humanity of David, leading us all the more to remember that David, though righteous in many respects, was yet imperfect, always serving as a far lesser shadow of the impeccably perfect, Lord Jesus Christ. David gives us a lot to consider as a pattern for godliness, but David is *not* Christ, and this is one instance, where such a deduction can clearly be made. We love David, but we hunger for the true Messiah, who will be worthy to take away the sins of the world. All that happens with Bathsheba, later on, will highlight this in the most compelling way.

And then lastly, we find that King Saul had unjustly given his daughter Michal (David's wife), to another man in marriage; a man named Palti, the son of Laish, from Gallim. No doubt, Saul had probably incurred some benefit from doing this, as he was often predisposed to taking such action, when it was to his advantage. But, needless to say, this was an additional, painfully, unrighteous slap to David, who had done no wrong to Saul. Following the death of Saul, David will get his wife, Michal, back, but let this further testify to the ongoing, unrepentant nature of Saul's hardened heart.

AMEN!!!

The Lord's Supper!