

“The Great Value of a Wise Woman”
1 Samuel 25:14-44
(Preached at Trinity, February 18, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we entered **Chapter 25** we were introduced to a man by the name of Nabal. The author describes him in detail. He was from Maon but did business in Carmel. He is described as “very rich” with three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. In an agrarian culture this was a sizeable fortune.
2. We are also introduced to Nabal's wife, Abigail. She is described as “intelligent and beautiful in appearance.” She is the most significant figure in this chapter.
3. David sends ten of his young soldiers to Nabal to request provisions. David felt perfectly justified in this request since he and his men had provided protection to Nabal's shepherds and his flock.
Nabal responded harshly:
1 Samuel 25:10-11 NAU - "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are each breaking away from his master. ¹¹ "Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men whose origin I do not know?"
4. David's men returned to him and reported Nabal's insults.
 - A. David's response was impulsive. Once again, David was acting according to his own reason, taking matters into his own hand rather than trusting God. David was about to execute revenge by executing Nabal and all his household. God graciously restrains him.
1 Samuel 25:13 NAU - "David said to his men, "Each of you gird on his sword." So each man girded on his sword. And David also girded on his sword, and about four hundred men went up behind David while two hundred stayed with the baggage."
1 Samuel 25:22 NAU - "May God do so to the enemies of David, and more also, if by morning I leave *as much as* one male of any who belong to him."
 - B. It was only by the gracious intervention of God that David was held back from this avenging act.
1 Samuel 25:26 NAU - "the LORD has restrained you from shedding blood, and from avenging yourself by your own hand"
God's command is:
Deuteronomy 32:35-36 NAU - "Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, In due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near, And the impending things are hastening upon them.' ³⁶ "For the LORD will vindicate His people,"
Romans 12:19 NAS - "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord."

- C. God often restrains us from the folly of our heart, keeping us from sin. This is at the heart of the Lord's Prayer – "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." We are to pray that God would restrain us from sin, from falling into the temptation of Satan.
The means God used in this passage was the prudence and wisdom of a woman who intervened.
5. The modern feminist movement argues forcefully that there is no difference between men and women and there must be no difference in their roles. Today we are sending our women to fight in combat roles in the military. The Bible describes gender-based role differences. There is a consistent principle of male headship taught in Scripture. This principle carries forth into the New Testament and masculine leadership within the church. While we recognize the distinction between men and women, we must resist any notion that the role of women is unimportant. The Bible frequently displays the significant contribution of women throughout history.
We read in **Proverbs 31**
Proverbs 31:10 NAU - "An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels."
Proverbs 31:30-31 NAU - "Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, *But* a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. ³¹ Give her the product of her hands, And let her works praise her in the gates."
6. We find such a woman here in **1 Samuel 25**. She is the heroine of the chapter. She soon learns of David's determination to destroy all of Nabal's house. By her bold action, David is delivered from a murderous act that would have surely had long-lasting consequences, but also saved the lives of many men.
7. I title tonight's sermon, "The Great Value of a Wise Woman." A man is blessed indeed who is able to marry such a woman. The godly young woman is a treasure to find, a rare jewel.
Psalms 45:13 – "The king's daughter *is* all glorious within: her clothing *is* of wrought gold."
A. The daughters of our Heavenly Father (who are also the bride of His Son) are clothed with a beautiful disposition of soul and manner of life.
They are "all glorious within" characterized by purity and holiness.
B. We need to pray that God will bless our young men with the treasure of a godly woman.
8. Tonight, I want us to observe some of the qualities of excellence from the life of Abigail.

- I. Abigail was a woman of good reputation
- A. Nabal's reputation was known far and wide
1. His servants knew him well as being one who was consistently unreasonable
1 Samuel 25:17 NAU - "he is such a worthless man that no one can speak to him."
 2. His wife also knew him well
1 Samuel 25:25 NAU - "Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him"
- B. Abigail also had a reputation
1. She had a reputation of being a woman of reason and wisdom.
1 Samuel 25:3 NAU - "And the woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance"
 2. It is significant that when this situation of dire seriousness arose the servants came to *her*, not Nabal.
- C. The Bible continually stresses the importance of having and maintaining an excellent reputation.
1. Paul states in **1 Timothy 5** that an excellent widow worthy of the care of the church is one with a reputation for good works.
1 Timothy 5:9-10 NAU - "A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, *having been* the wife of one man, ¹⁰ having a reputation for good works"
 2. One such widow is described in **Acts 9**
Acts 9:36 NAU - "Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated *in Greek* is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did."
 3. Boaz described Ruth as a woman known by many for her virtue
Ruth 3:11 NAU - "Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence."
 4. A good reputation is one of the qualifications for leadership in the church
1 Timothy 3:7 NAU - "And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."
1 Timothy 3:10 NAU - "These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach."
First deacons:
Acts 6:3 NAU - "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task."
- D. Sadly, the one flaw upon the reputation of Abigail was being married to Nabal
1. Long after the death of Nabal and years after becoming the wife of David, she was still referred to as the "widow of Nabal."
 2. This should cause our young ladies to give careful regard to whom they marry.

II. Abigail was a woman of great faith

A. Abigail had heard of the promise of God and she believed it

1. She trusted herself to it.

1 Samuel 25:30-31 NAU - "And when the LORD does for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel, ³¹ this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause and by my lord having avenged himself. When the LORD deals well with my lord, then remember your maidservant."

2. Nabal had also heard and despised it.

3. It reminds us of Rahab's confidence in God's promise to give Canaan to Israel.

Joshua 2:11-13 NAU - "For the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. ¹² "Now therefore, please swear to me by the LORD, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's household, and give me a pledge of truth, ¹³ and spare my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death."

B. It was an act of faith to come before David and plead his mercy

The Godly woman trusts herself into the hand of God

Proverbs 31:30 NAU - "Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, *But* a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised."

III. She bore the marks of a woman of character

A. She was a woman of generosity

1. In a great contrast to Nabal, Abigail prepared a generous offering to bring to David.

1 Samuel 25:18 NAU - "Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred *loaves* of bread and two jugs of wine and five sheep already prepared and five measures of roasted grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded *them* on donkeys."

2. This is displayed as one of the virtues of the excellent wife in Pro. 31

Proverbs 31:20 NAU - "She extends her hand to the poor, And she stretches out her hands to the needy."

B. She understood the importance of humility

1. She came and bowed down before David. Her family was wealthy. She would have been a woman of prominence, yet she was not too proud to bow. **1 Samuel 25:23 NAU** - "When Abigail saw David, she hurried and dismounted from her donkey, and fell on her face before David and bowed herself to the ground."

2. We can see this displayed again when David sends to receive her as wife **1 Samuel 25:40-41 NAU** - "When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, "David has sent us to you to take you as his wife." ⁴¹ She arose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, "Behold, your maidservant is a maid to wash the feet of my lord's servants."

3. We can also see it in her willingness to bear the guilt of her husband
1 Samuel 25:28 NAU - "Please forgive the transgression of your maidservant;"

C. She was a woman of great wisdom and resourcefulness

1. "Intelligent" is from two words טוב and שָׂכֵל - literally "good understanding." It speaks of wisdom, discernment, or prudence.
2. She was a woman of action, but she also knew when to act.
3. She would have understood her duty towards Nabal as a faithful wife
 - a. A Godly wife will understand her divine calling to affirm her husband's leadership
 - b. It is not an absolute surrender of the will. In fact, in marriage there must be interaction, a sharing of ideas. Headship refers to the husband's ultimate responsibility for leadership in home and the wife's recognition of that leadership.
 - c. There are times when it is permissive for a woman to stand against her husband
 - Matters of sin
 - When the actions of the husband pose a dire threat to the family
4. She also knew the importance of the tongue. She knew when to remain silent and when to act with bold words. If she remained silent or if her words failed to sway David, all of the males in Nabal's household would die.

The Bible speaks often of the tongue. It is the hardest part of the human being to control.

James 3:5-8 – "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! ⁶ And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. ⁷ For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: ⁸ But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."

- a. This is particularly difficult for women
 - Women by nature are more vocal
 - Girls want to talk, express their feelings
 - Boys express themselves in action
- b. Paul describes the danger
1 Timothy 5:11-13 NAU - "But refuse *to put* younger widows *on the list*, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, ¹² *thus* incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. ¹³ At the same time they also learn *to be* idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper *to mention*."

- c. We must never diminish the power of the tongue, both in doing good and in the capacity of inflicting great evil.
Ephesians 4:29 NAS - "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a *word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, that it may give grace to those who hear."
1 Peter 3:10-11 NAS - "Let him who means to love life and see good days Refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile. ¹¹ "And let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it."
- d. Abigail used her tongue to humbly offer David wise counsel
1 Samuel 25:30-31 NAU - "And when the LORD does for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel, ³¹ this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause and by my lord having avenged himself."

Conclusion:

1. Abigail's wise words turned the heart of David from his rage and purpose of revenge.
1 Samuel 25:32-35 NAU - "Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, ³³ and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand. ³⁴ "Nevertheless, as the LORD God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from harming you, unless you had come quickly to meet me, surely there would not have been left to Nabal until the morning light *as much as one male*." ³⁵ So David received from her hand what she had brought him and said to her, "Go up to your house in peace. See, I have listened to you and granted your request."
2. David was immediately stirred by Abigail's excellent character. As soon as David heard of the death of Nabal he praised God for avenging him of Nabal's slanderous words, and then he sought Abigail to be his wife—**Verse 39**.
 Such a woman is a treasure indeed.