

Who and What Comes Next

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[0 : 0 0] is from 1 Samuel chapter 25 on page 297 in the Pew Bibles. 1 Samuel chapter 25.

We'll read the first three verses and then move on to verse 18. Now Samuel died and all Israel assembled and mourned for him and they buried him at his home in Ramah.

Then David moved down into the desert of Paran. A certain man in Mahon who had property there at Carmel was very wealthy.

He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep which he was shearing in Carmel. His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman but her husband was a surly and mean in his dealings.

He was a Calabite. Verse 18. Abigail acted quickly. She took 200 loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five sears of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and 200 cakes of pressed figs and loaded them on donkeys.

[1 : 1 9] Then she told her servants, Go on ahead, I'll follow you. But she did not tell her husband Nabal. As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending towards her and she met them and David had just said, It's been useless all my watching over this fellow's property in the wilderness so that nothing of his was missing.

He has paid me back evil for good. May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him.

When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. She fell at his feet and said, Pardon your servant, my Lord, and let me speak to you.

Hear what your servant has to say. Please pay no attention to my Lord, to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name. His name means fool and folly goes with him.

And as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my Lord sent. And now, my Lord, as surely as the Lord your God lives and as you live, since the Lord has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, may your enemies and all who are intent on harming my Lord be like Nabal.

[2 : 4 8] And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my Lord, be given to the men who follow you. Please forgive your servant's presumption.

The Lord your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my Lord, because you fight the Lord's battles. And no wrongdoing will be found in you as long as you live.

Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my Lord will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God. But the lives of your enemies, he will hurl away as from a pocket of a sling.

When the Lord has fulfilled for my Lord every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him ruler over Israel, my Lord will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself.

And when the Lord your God has brought my Lord's success, remember your servant. David said to Abigail, Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me.

[3 : 59] May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. Otherwise, as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak.

Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought to him and said, Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request.

When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until daybreak.

Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died.

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Praise be to the Lord who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head.

[5 : 25] Then David sent word to Abigail asking her to become his wife. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Friends, good morning. It's great to be with you. My name's Tim. If we haven't met, it's a great privilege to be opening up God's word. Let's pray as we come to meet God in the words of Scripture. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are a God who speaks.

And you haven't left us by ourselves to work out who you are and what you've done for us, but you've given us your word. And we pray that as we come to these words from 1 Samuel 25 this morning that you would speak to us.

Mold us and shape us to be your people, we pray. In Christ's name. Amen. Amen. I need a quick show of hands as we get started this morning.

Who has seen or read Les Mis? Okay, you can watch the musical, watch the movie, read the book for extra points. Roughly half of us, a few more maybe.

[6 : 31] Okay, for those who are unfamiliar with it, it is set in Paris in the June Rebellion of 1832. That's an uprising of the people against the monarchy, which is a common sort of theme in European history.

And as Les Mis begins, the people are planning the rebellion, the revolt, the uprising and they're working out when is the time to stage it, to have the maximum impact in the city, in the country, in society.

Jean Maximilien Lamarck was a champion of the people at the time. He was a political figure, he was a general and he'd been standing up for the cause of the people, but he was sick.

It looked like he was about to die. And so, the people decide that that will be the sign for us to stage this uprising as the song in the musical chronicles on the tomb of Lamarck shall our barricade rise.

And they choose that time because the death of a leader is an unsettling time for a nation. When you've been looking to someone to give you a sense of security, a sense of stability, a sense of hope, and that person dies, it's unsettling.

[7 : 55] There are two questions that you're left asking in a moment like that and that is, who and what comes next? That's true in our lives as well when a stabilising figure or a thing is taken away from you.

Who and what comes next? A dating relationship that you had thought was going really well and you'd start sort of thinking ahead down the track in life as to where it was going to go and making plans and all of a sudden it finishes.

Who and what comes next? The death of a spouse or separation and divorce. Who and what?

comes next. The end of uni but no clear next step forward. The loss of a job and not sure what's happening.

Who and what comes next. in verse 1 of 1 Samuel 25 Samuel has died and this is a big deal for Israel back in the beginning of the book if you remember Hannah is without child and she prays for God to open her womb and when God gives her the gift of a child she names the son Samuel which means heard by God.

[9 : 21] She gives Samuel to the work of the Lord in the temple. Chapter 3 verse 1 the boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli in those days the word of the Lord was rare. There were not many visions.

And then God speaks to Samuel and Eli doesn't hear it but Samuel does and so in Samuel Israel has proof for the first time in a long time that they can be heard by God and spoken to by God.

Relationship is once again opened up with their creator and Samuel will be the one who does the Lord's work in anointing kings and guiding history and now he is dead.

Verse 1 from our reading Now Samuel died and all Israel assembled and mourned for him and they buried him at his home in Ramah.

Who and what comes next? Now David has been anointed as king at this point but there's no human sign or indication that he's going to be able to wrestle power away from Saul and we've been seeing Saul get worse and worse and worse.

[10 : 33] Last week Robbie walked us through Saul slaughter of the priests at Nob and the whole town along with him. Is that what the next chapter of history is going to look like for Israel?

That sort of king? Chapter 25 predictably comes in between chapter 24 and 26 and these three chapters are a little bit like a sandwich.

You know how a sandwich works, there's two pieces of bread and there's some meat in the middle. 24 and 26 are the bread. In both of those chapters David has the opportunity to take Saul out but he doesn't.

In 24 he's hiding in the cave, he cuts a bit of Saul's cloth to show that he could have taken his life but he doesn't. In 26 he enters into the camp when Saul is sleeping at night and he takes the jug and the spear from his bedside but he doesn't take his life.

On both occasions David displays a remarkable self-control, integrity and an almost infuriating respect for the man who's in the position of the Lord's anointed king.

[11 : 50] Those chapters are the slices of bread in the sandwich. Our text for today, chapter 25 is the meat. So are you ready for some meat?

If you keep your Bibles open to 1 Samuel 25, there are three points for us this morning. They're in the outlines, the orders of service, the problem of power and possessions, the win of wisdom over wrath and the stability of a servant hearted sovereign.

First up, the problem of power and possessions. We're in verse 2 of 1 Samuel 25. A certain man in Maon who had property there at Carmel was very wealthy.

He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep which he was shearing in Carmel. His name was Nabal which means fool and his wife's name was Abigail.

She was an intelligent and beautiful woman but her husband was surly and mean in his dealings. He was a Calebite.

[13 : 01] That last phrase there that he was a Calebite is an indication of just how far Israel have slidden from their former glory. Caleb you might remember was there when Israel began the wandering of the desert for 40 years under Moses.

Joshua and Caleb were the two who said to God's people yes we can in fact take this land with God's help. Caleb was a picture of bold courageous faith in the face of adversity.

David at the end of verse 1 is wandering in the desert of Paran. That's the same desert that Israel was wandering for those 40 years. And so the picture here for us is that David the true anointed king of Israel is now back where Israel wandered for 40 years and the Calebites are now in the land but they're no longer like the OG Calebite Caleb they are surly and mean fools.

Who and what comes next for Israel? Verse 4 While David was in the wilderness he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep so he sent ten young men and said to them go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name.

Now different animals are good for different things horses are good for battles in the ancient world oxen pull carts sheep are not power animals but they can make you rich because of course they grow wool and so sheep are the sort of animals that you have to invest in the long term to protect them while they're not doing any good for you to cash in at shearing time so shearing time is when the money is about to roll in for Nabal David and his men we go on to read have been protecting Nabal's sheep one of the servants tells Abigail Nabal's wife in verse 15 David's men were very good to us they did not mistreat us and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing night and day they were a wall around us the whole time we were herding our sheep near them so

[15 : 18] David and his men had been fighting off predators and guarding the sheep we remember from David as a young boy he was a shepherd boy he knew this this is what he was good at and his men and himself had been doing it and so at shearing time David sends his men in his name to Nabal but Nabal refuses he pretends he doesn't know David have a look at verse 11 why should I take my bread and water and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers and give it to men coming from who knows where Nabal's heart is just like Saul's we don't hear much of Saul in this chapter but Nabal is a Saul like character and we've seen Saul throw his little tantrums over the last few weeks why isn't anybody helping me why isn't anybody telling me about what going on because the only person that

Saul cares about is himself and it's the same for Nabal when he opens his eyes all he sees is his bank balance for Saul it's threats to his power that other threat they are to be eliminated who cares what anyone or anything else says certainly don't care what God says Nabal is the same a threat to his bank balance is to be dealt with dissuaded!

cheated! you know whether it is possessions or it's power or it's some other form of earthly!

importance the concerns of this world turn honourable kings into dictatorial despots and they turn the descendants of Caleb into mean and surly fools Nabal is a fool because he doesn't realise that David has 600 men with him he's going to be easily overpowered by David and his army but more than that he is a fool because he has made the gifts of God on this earth to be the things that pull himself and pull his heart away from the God who gave them to him you know in 2023 there were three researchers into the relationship between wealth and happiness who came together Kahneman Kissinger and sorry Killingsworth and Mellors came to this conclusion wealth promotes happiness almost universally up until the point where you've got enough to cover your basic needs in life after that as income rises it gets really interesting if you are reliant on the money for your happiness that is you seek to earn more in the belief that that will make life worth living it almost definitely will not it will only benefit you if your source of happiness is elsewhere which is exactly what we would think if we read the

Bible wealth is a gift it is good but it is not God possessions are a gift to be enjoyed to be stewarded generously but they are not God and if we find ourselves trusting in possessions or power or anything else in this world to make us okay to get us through not only will they not satisfy us but they will pull us away from the very God who gifts these things to us what are the things of earth that you find luring you towards them and away from God whether you have a handful of years left in your life or if you have your whole life ahead of you!

[19 : 53] the way you handle possessions! housing assets investments will be a barometer for whether you are living for Jesus or living for yourself in this life steward those gifts generously and hold them loosely or 1 Samuel 25 might suggest to you that you are in fact a fool our second point for today is the win of wisdom over wrath and here we see Nabal's foolishness prompting a furious reply from David have a look at verse 21 David had just said it's been useless this is Abigail overhearing David saying these things it's been useless all my watching over this fellow's property in the wilderness so that nothing of his was missing he has paid me back evil for good may

God deal with David be it ever so severely him fires up doesn't he this is where the sandwich helps us David's response is understandable but it is not right in chapter 24 and in chapter 26 we rightly see David's desire not to harm Saul as moral courage the bread tells us that in the meat David is acting rashly here even though he is justified in feeling and being outraged I think there's a little lesson here for us we are at the greatest risk of doing evil and our sin will be the hardest to repent of when we feel justified in doing it you're complaining to a colleague about your boss because you've been treated unfairly you've been overlooked for recognition and promotion you are justifiably upset but your tone in the conversation with your colleague becomes more and more harsh and slanderous the longer it continues or at uni the other members of your group assignment completely drop the ball they let you down and you're now at risk of failing the subject you are justifiably upset and yet for the next week everyone feels your grumpiness spilling out from you your seven month old daughter let's call her

Olivia hypothetically is awake and crying and won't settle from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. You are well I was justifiably frustrated and yet the next day when I see a cranky little girl and I think it serves you right that's what you get for not sleeping last night that is not the tone that a father ought to have towards his little girl just because you can justify your response doesn't mean that all of your response is the fruit of the spirit working in your life it's often not David is angry here justifiably so anger is an emotion which is appropriate but in his anger he is about to spill over into recklessness Ephesians 4 26 is such a helpful verse in times like this in your anger do not sin this is what you and

I do all the time in little ways in big ways the circumstances of life happen we have an emotional response to that that's appropriate emotions are a gift to dealing with things but then in that emotion sin takes over and we feel justified in doing it and our sin is the way we rebel against God's instructions for us left unchecked it starts to control us it hurts those around us and it separates us from the God who made us to walk with him is this the who and what comes next for Israel now that Samuel is gone is David going to be just like all the others controlled by sin and deviating from God's way with all those questions hovering the hero of our chapter or the heroine steps in Abigail

Nabal's wife she is as beautiful as Nabal is surly and she is as intelligent as Nabal! is a fool verse 18 Abigail acted quickly she took 200 loaves of bread two skins of wine five dressed sheep five seers of roasted grain 100 cakes of raisins and 200 cakes of pressed figs and loaded them on donkeys then she told her servants go on ahead I'll follow you but she didn't tell her husband Nabal now for 600 men that food is not going to overwhelm them with feasting for days but it's a pretty good effort on short notice to pull it all together and more than the quantity it communicates something David you have been wronged by my husband Abigail's speech has four parts to it there's a request a blessing an offer and a prophetic plea which is pretty courageous to speak for that long given the mood that

[25 : 58] David is in so verse 25 there's a request consider Nabal a fool don't worry about him verse 26 a blessing may your enemies be like Nabal but interestingly she bases this blessing on the fact that the Lord has through her intervention prevented David from carrying out evil that's pretty bold but she will get bolder verse 27 a gift his food for your men verse 28 a prophetic plea forgive me because you will not only be the king but you will begin a dynasty from your name from your house that will rule over these people and this is the first time in the Bible that we're told about a dynasty coming from David and it comes on the lips of Abigail verse 28 please forgive your servants presumption the Lord your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my

Lord verse 30 when the Lord has fulfilled for my Lord every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him ruler over Israel my Lord will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself Abigail is wise and she is clearly in this chapter God's instrument to protect David from sin the bread of the sandwich tells us that in this moment Abigail is spot on vengeance belongs to God it is not up to us to take justice into our own hands now that can be really hard when you feel like someone has wronged you and you just want them to have a taste of their own medicine but it can be extremely comforting especially when retribution is not within your reach because in this world the authorities don't get everyone criminals escape through legal loopholes the rich protect themselves with layers and clouds of lawyers so they never have to face up to their actions when all is said and done at the end of the day when

Jesus returns justice will be done and it will be seen to be done because justice reigns from the throne of the Lord Almighty and so vengeance revenge belongs to him and him alone Abigail is right wisdom wins over wrath it brings us to our final point for this morning the stability of a servant hearted sovereign the first predicament at the beginning of the chapter was that Abigail this extraordinary woman was married to a rich idiot but that's now resolved after David grants Abigail's request and stops his murderous campaign against Nabal we read verse 37 in the morning when Nabal was sober his wife told him all these things and his heart failed him and he became like a stone about ten days later the

Lord struck Nabal! and he died when David heard that Nabal was dead he said praise be to the Lord who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt he has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head and then David sent word to Abigail asking her to become his wife it's an interesting courtship story isn't it for the years to come David shows himself to be a future king who wants to do right who wants to walk God's way who wants to be God's servant and the foolish Calebite symptomatic of Israel slide is dealt with by God and by the true king David now has a wise beautiful intelligent servant hearted wife in Abigail the future looks rosy for Israel the last few chapters are verses of the chapter sorry give a little update on

David's marital situation we're told that Ahanoam and Abigail were both David's wives this isn't endorsing polygamy then or now throughout the scriptures it is increasingly clear that marriage involving more than one man and one woman is not God's good plan for relationships even at this point any time it's happened it brings about chaos it's not a commentary on that there's another reason for including this update here we find out that Saul had given his daughter Michal who had been married to David to another man which hints that though there had been a political union by marriage between the house of Saul and the house of David there is now a clean break David's dynasty can now begin just as

[31 : 29] Abigail prophesies now if it is that you read this chapter and find David a little bit unimpressive because it took him so long to relent you need to know but by eventually stopping his actions he acts completely differently to every other king of his era and in fact just about all kings throughout human history kings with armies of hundreds who are wronged by fools with a handful of men do not let them walk away unscathed to continue partying it just doesn't happen David is remarkable for heeding Abigail's intervention and yet if we're disappointed by David's response it might be because we have a high bar for kings now and rightly so because we know that our king is one who came from the dynasty opened up in this chapter

Jesus Christ had the armies of heaven on his side and he looked at your sin and mine sin the way we gather up and hoard power and possessions the way I'm heartless to my own flesh and blood the way you feel justified in your rebellion against God he looked at that anticipated that felt that and yet he did not come in vengeance he came as a servant to die on a cross so that your sin and mine might be taken away done away with that grace would be there instead of wrath the wrath would fall on him so that our life story might become grace will prevail he is the ultimate who and what comes next for

Samuel after Samuel after David after king after king after king who let them down again and again and again Jesus is the who and what comes next darkness will not prevail but grace will and for eternity the Christians answer regardless of our life situations to who and what comes next for you is always Jesus it's always Jesus the only truly secure thing in your life is that he is on the throne and it is all you need secure in him you can withstand the death of a leader you can stand in the midst of political uprising you can work through broken relationships untimely deaths injustice fools and whatever else because Jesus is who and what comes next for you as the band comes up why don't you take a moment by yourself to reflect on you reflect on

Jesus and get ready to sing to heard