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1 SAMUEL 25:1-44

May 20, 2001

Today we're going to see a tale of a wounded ego and a woman's intercession, but before we do that, I want us to see the death of a judge...and by the way, Samuel was the **last judge** of Israel.

Samuel was also the first to hold the office of *prophet*. Other prophets had been on the scene, but Samuel represented the office that continued on through the Old Testament and even into the New Testament. The death of Samuel marked the end of an era. Saul had become king while Samuel was judge and David had been anointed king. For the next 400+ years, Israel would be ruled by kings, not by judges.

1 Samuel 25:1...

The Pastor has been preaching on Sunday mornings from the **Book of Judges**, and we've learned from those messages that an Old Testament judge was not a man who was dressed in a black robe and sat behind a desk presiding over a court trial.

The Old Testament judges were **deliverers**. They ruled the people. They were often times military leaders who delivered their people from the enemy and often times they were spiritual leaders.

Some judges were greater than others. We know a lot **more** about some judges than others. We know that some judges fell away from their calling. We know that **Samson** did. We also know that after **Gideon's** great victory over the enemy, he strayed from God and into idol worship.

But we don't read of a dirty page in the life of Samuel. We know of no one he ever cheated...no one he ever defrauded...no one he ever deceived...no idol he ever worshiped. He was a man of integrity and of wisdom and he was thoroughly committed in his walk with God.

Samuel was born in answer to his mother's prayer.
Samuel was dedicated to God before he was even born.
Samuel faithfully served God all his life and the Bible says,
"then Samuel died and all Israel gathered together and mourned (lamented – KJV) for him..."

The **Book of Lamentations** tells us that there is a time to be born and a time to die. The Bible not only deals with physical death, but it also deals with spiritual death. Spiritually dead people have never been born again. Folks who are born only once will die twice...folks who have been born twice only die once.

Where did Samuel go when he died? Old Testament saints like Samuel went to Paradise when they died. Before the Cross, all believers went to Paradise or upper Sheol and the unsaved went to lower Sheol. Both were temporary holding places. After the crucifixion, Jesus led the saints in upper Sheol to Heaven.

By the way, where do we go when we die? Paul told us that "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord," didn't he? Lower Sheol, by the way, is still there and when

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a man or woman dies without Jesus, that's where they go to await their sentence to the Lake of Fire...

Remember the story Jesus told about Lazarus and the rich man? The rich man was in torment in fire and wanted a touch of water on his tongue.

But, praise God, believers go straight to Heaven...no "soul sleep"...no holding area...no purgatory...just being absent from this old, sick body and being present with the Lord Jesus Christ while we wait to receive our new and glorified bodies!

Do you ever look at the obituary page in newspaper? Well, I try to at least skim over them every day (some mornings just to see if I'm there...), and I'm sorry that these folks have died, and often I wonder if they knew Jesus...if someone ever told them about the Savior...

But, I don't ***grieve*** over folks who are on the obituary page unless there's someone's name there whom I've known personally.

We don't usually mourn over someone unless they have had a measure of influence in our lives...

The Bible says, "***...all Israel mourned over Samuel.***"

And they did this because Samuel's life had touched theirs.

You see, that's the purpose of a child of God. The only reason God lets us live after we're saved is so that we can become vessels through which God blesses other people.

God doesn't give the same measure of influence to all His children. I mean, Samuel's circle of influence was the whole nation of Israel.

None of us have that large a circle of influence. Most of us have a small circle of influence, but you know, God doesn't hold me accountable to influence folks He hasn't put into my circle, does He? He holds you and me accountable for the way we reach out to those He has placed in our little circle.

Samuel touched a nation...the Lord Jesus Christ touched a world...but you and I touch folks every single day as well.

And when we get to the place where we're too busy and too uncaring to touch those around us I believe God will either put us on the shelf and we'll become alone and maybe even become bitter old women just wrapped up in our own little problems, or He will just take us on home...our usefulness to His Kingdom will be over!

Thank God for the mighty men who fought battles and delivered God's children from oppression and thank God for the men like Samuel who simply counseled and advised and interceded for God's children and always did God's bidding and who touched many lives in the process. **As Charles Swindoll would say, "May their tribe increase!"**

Someone gave their time and influence for you to come to know Jesus...can you do less for those folks God has put in your path?

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So...what is death? Death comes to all human beings when their spirit and body separate...
“giving up the ghost.”

What is the purpose of a believer's life? We're to be used by God to influence and bless others.

Where did Old Testament saints go when they died? They went to a holding place...also called Abraham's bosom...and Jesus gathered Samuel and all the other Old Testament saints and carried them to Heaven.

Where do believer go when they die? They go to the Lord in Heaven!

Well, this brings us to the story of David and Nabal and Abigail.

Let's just set the stage here...

David had continued to flee from Saul. He had spared Saul's life when he could have easily killed him. As David fled, he attracted many men to himself. We saw last week that about 400 men had joined with David...men who were **distressed** and **indebted** and **discontent**. Well, the numbers of these men were growing until by the time we get to the events of **chapter 25**, David had 600 men who were following him.

Verse 1 of 1 Samuel 25 tells us that after Samuel died, David went down to the southernmost part of Judah...down to the wilderness of Paran. His presence in these borderlands of Judah had been a real help to the farmers and shepherds and all the folks who lived in those areas, because David protected them time and time again from the attacks of the Philistines.

See, the first thing we learned about David was that he was a shepherd. David had a shepherd's heart. And so it would just be natural for him to want to defend other shepherds.

Had David and his 600 troops not been down there, these shepherds and their sheep and goats would have fallen victim to the Philistines. The Philistines would have come and captured and plundered and killed and taken anything they wanted. But David and his men were down there as a buffer between these shepherds and the Philistines.

Later on we're going to see that one of the shepherds who was tending part of Nabal's sheep gave testimony that David and his army served as a wall and protected these sheep.

Well, David is doing what is very customary in this land at that time. David had rendered a service. David and 600 soldiers had rendered a service of protecting Nabal's sheep. Nabal was a very wealthy man, but his sheep and shepherds would have been nothing against the mighty Philistines.

So it seemed only right to David, when he heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, that he would send a few of his men to ask Nabal for a little recognition and compensation for their service.

These men went in David's name...

Now, everybody knew who David was.

They knew David had slain Goliath.

They knew David was the king's son-in-law.

They knew David was fleeing from Saul...everybody knew that...

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Verse 8...

Well, instead of Nabal being gracious and at least willing to find out if indeed David and his men had done anything to warrant such compensation, look at what he said:

Verse 9-11...

Do you see what Nabal was doing? He was very insulting. In fact, Nabal was accusing David of being a traitor... "You're a turncoat, David. It's nothing unusual for men to turn against their masters."

Do you see the insinuation of this statement?

Well, the men of David went back and told David what Nabal had said. By the way, do you know what the meaning of the "Nabal" is? The word "Nabal" means "fool." And we see Nabal living up to his name.

Verse 13...

Here we see David, in a fit of temper, getting ready to retaliate.

Now, think about this...we didn't have time to cover this last week, but **chapter 24** tells us that David had come upon Saul in a cave and had the perfect opportunity to kill Saul and put an end to his having to flee for his life...and what did he do?

Instead of killing him, David cut off the edge of his robe, and the Bible tells us his conscience even bothered him about doing that and yet, here David is getting ready to completely slaughter not only Nabal but every male of any who **belong** to Nabal. Do you believe David just might have been overreacting?

Alan Redpath, in his great little book, **THE MAKING OF A MAN OF GOD**, said it this way...

"David! David! What is wrong with you? Why, one of the most wonderful things we've learned about you recently is your patience with Saul.

You learned to wait upon the Lord, you refused to lift your hand to touch the Lord's anointed, although he had been your enemy for so many years. But, now look at you! Your self-restraint has gone to pieces and a few insulting words from a fool of a man like Nabal has made you see red! David, what's the matter?"

And I believe if these questions had been asked of David that day, David would have angrily replied,

"There's no reason why Nabal should treat me as he has. He's repaid all my kindness with insults. It's one thing to take this from Saul...after all, he's my superior, at least for the time being...but this fool, Nabal, must be taught a lesson."

There are several lessons we can learn from this chapter and the first one I want us to see is this...

1) **FAILURES OFTEN FOLLOW VICTORIES...**

This story tells us that however long we've walked with the Lord
And however long we may have overcome temptation

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And however many victories we may have had...nothing assures us that we will not fail tomorrow...

The victories we win...by the grace of God and through the power of the blood of Jesus...cannot impart to us strength for the future.

David didn't succumb to the temptation to slay Saul, but he was ready to mount an attack against Nabal and all his men!

And David would have done this merely because he'd been insulted...and that brings us to a second lesson we can learn from this passage:

2) **A WOUNDED EGO IS A DANGEROUS MOTIVATION...**

Now, think about it...

David had refused to kill Saul who had tried several times to kill **him**, but he was more than eager to kill the man who had merely **insulted** him and **wounded** his ego.

James would later write:

"But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger."

Nabal was a fool. God had called David to fight the battles against God's enemies...not the battles against the world's fools.

3) **DECISIONS MADE IN ANGER CAN BE DANGEROUS...**

Is it a sin to be angry? No, but God's Word tells us

"Be angry and sin not; do not let the sun go down on your wrath."

God's Word also tells us that ***"the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God!"***

Anger is a human emotion. It becomes sin when we react in improper ways and the best thing is never to make decisions when we're angry. Angry words can't be unspoken. Angry deeds can't be undone.

4) **IT'S GOD'S PREROGATIVE TO TAKE REVENGE...**

"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. If the cause is just and good and righteous, God will take vengeance...maybe not in our timing, maybe not in our way...but it will be done right and it will be done well!

And the rest of the story (as Paul Harvey says) shows us how God took vengeance on Nabal...

Verses 14-17...

Abigail obviously was not aware of what had gone on until the young man came and told her...

Verse 18...

Abigail didn't tell her husband, but she took these groceries herself to David.

Verses 23-28...

This is the longest speech from any woman found in the Old Testament, and we haven't read it all yet...

Why do you think Abigail was feeling so responsible?

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Apparently Abigail was the only one who had any influence at all on Nabal...but, as we've already said, Abigail hadn't been aware of what had happened!

Abigail says something very interesting in **verse 28**...

In effect, Abigail is saying...

"David, how wonderful it will be on the day that you come into your kingdom, that you won't have to look back to this day and know you've done a foolish thing. You won't have this blemish on your record."

But the master stroke of Abigail's entire argument is in

Verse 29...

"David, your soul is wrapped up in a bundle of life in the Lord your God, and the strength of that bundle lies in the fact that you belong to God...that your identity is in Him. He is here beside you! David, you are bound up in God's care and you are safe in His keeping."

And to put it more simply... "David, why are you on this wild tear when your life is wrapped up in God!"

That's the relationship we ought to have. Our lives should be bound in the bundle of the living with the Lord our God. We shouldn't have a casual relationship with God...our lives should be absolutely so wrapped up in God that when He moves, we move, and when He is still, we are still!

I would guess that David probably hung his head a little...after all, it wasn't every day that the anointed king of Israel gets "straightened out" by a woman! But, to his credit...look what David said...

Verses 32-35...

5) **GOD'S VENGEANCE IS FAR BETTER THAN OURS!**

The rest of this chapter tells us that Nabal got drunk and when Abigail told him what had happened his heart died within him and he became as a stone and died ten days later...

And we know when David heard this he sent for Abigail and married her.

I hope as we leave here today we hear the Holy Spirit telling us that

We are to remember our calling...

We are to remember the purpose God has for our lives...

We are to remember to minister in our circle of influence...

I hope we remember that we cannot operate tomorrow on yesterday's faith...that yesterday's or today's victories don't assure us of tomorrow's victories...

And that our life is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord our God...

And because He has identified Himself with us in Jesus Christ, we are to identify ourselves with Him...and folks should see that! Folks should see there's something different in us because we're so wrapped up in Jesus!

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I hope we remember that He always knows where we are
He knows the problems we face...
He knows the foolish people who insult us
and make things hard for us...
But we can always trust Him to make all things right!!