**God Keeps David From Bloodshed**

1 Samuel 25:1-44 1 Sam 25:33

**May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands.**

From last Sunday’s message, we learned how David spared Saul’s life because Saul was God’s anointed, showing the corner of his robe and thus proving his innocence. David’s conscience was so clean and stricken even by just cutting the corner of Saul’s clothes. Saul’s heart was moved to regret by David’s action but he did not truly repent, thus there was no change of his action. There are such people. In spite of them, may God help us to overcome evil with good in this perverse and corrupt generation.

Have you lost your temper? Yes, I have done so many times. What were the consequences of it? In today’s passage, David lost his temper and could make a mistake, but God sent one woman to stop him with her humble and wise counsel. Let’s look into it. There are two parts.

1. **David Lost His Temper** (1-13, 21-22)

Look at verse 1. **“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.”** Samuel died and was buried in his hometown. People mourned for their shepherd. There was no more shepherd except the one God was raising. David moved down into the Desert of Paran.

Look at verses 2-9. In that region, there was a descendant of Caleb named Nabal, who was wealthy with 1,000 goats and 3,000 sheep, and his wife, Abigail who was an intelligent and beautiful woman. Nabal was bad tempered and mean. But he was shearing his sheep with others in Carmel.

When David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, he sent his men to Nabal in order ask him to share some of his provisions with him and men, as his men had protected Nabal’s sheep and goats as they come to feed them nearby his place, as he had to take care of 600 men and their family. Sheep-shearing was **a vital economic activity**, as wool was a primary material for clothing and trade. The festival marked the culmination of a year's worth of shepherding labor, and the yield of wool was a measure of wealth and prosperity. The event was often accompanied by a feast, reflecting the joy and relief of a successful harvest.

The **social aspect** of the sheep-shearing festival was a time for **community bonding**, where people would gather to celebrate, share accounts, and strengthen social ties. The festival provided an opportunity for hospitality, as seen in the interactions between David and Nabal, and was a time when generosity was expected and appreciated. Therefore, David’s men were waiting for a favorable answer from Nabal, as they have been not only a neighbor but became the wall of protection for his sheep and goats, and his shepherds knew about it.

What was Nabal’s answer? Look at verses 10-11. Nabal answered David’s servants, **“Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. 11Why 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?”** As custom of the time, Nabal should have shared something with David and his men. He did not lose any of his sheep or goats because David’s men protected them. Nabal would not recognize any of their labor but insulted David saying that he was a rebel fugitive. Nabal probably thought that he got everything by himself, of himself and for himself. He was not thankful to God and did not know how to love his neighbors. He was like the selfish rich man who did not share anything with a beggar Lazarus and went to hell, begging for a drop of water. Later in the passage, we see that his wife Abigail knew about how God anointed David as king over Israel and how David acted righteously with Saul. Nabal probably knew about that. But he treated David as scum. He did not believe in God who keeps his promise no matter what. Truly his action proves his ungodliness.

What was David’s response? Look at verses 12-13. Though David’s men heard Nabal’s insult to David, they did not do anything to Nabal but went back to David and reported everything Nabal said. When David heard them, he lost his temper, asking his men to be ready to attack Nabal. In verses 21-22, David gave his reasons why. It was David who gave order to his men to protect Nabal’s property in the wilderness so that nothing of his was missing. David was resentful for what he and his men did for Nabal’s men and property, saying that Nabal did evil for good, so he decided to avenge him, killing every male belong to Nabal.

Though Nabal was unthankful, mean and insulted David, David cannot justify himself to avenge him. Even though you did good to some people, not everyone will appreciate what you have done, saying thank you and sharing their blessings you have contributed to. If so, we would not need a special day to celebrate the Mother’s Day because everyday would be mother’s day. Often sinful human beings do the opposite, instead of giving thanks they repay evil for good deeds. We are human beings who may lose our temper when people insult us for the good we have done. What should we do at such a time? Eph 4:26-27 say, **“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.”** The Bible says that you can be angry. There is nothing wrong with being angry when someone does wrong to you or when you see injustice as God was angry (Psalm 7:1) and Jesus was angry in Mark 3:5. But we must learn to control anger; otherwise, we will sin and give the devil a chance to get us. How? The Bible says, **“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.” (Ro 12:17-19)** If we are followers of Christ, we must learn to trust in God who knows everything and everyone’s good and evil and will avenge for us. When we trust in God and his promise, we can live in peace in spite of others’ mistreatment and insults as Jesus did. In the next part, God shows that this promise is true.

1. **Abigail’s Humility and Wisdom** (14-20, 22-44)

Look at verses 14-17. One of the servants told Abigail what David’s men did for them. They did not mistreat and protect them so that they did not lose any of their goats or sheep. They also told her how Nabal did mistreat David’s men, and suggested to think it over and find what she can do about it so that disaster wouldn’t come to them.

What was Abigail’s reaction? Here we learn several characteristics of a wife of noble character from Proverbs 31. **First, she is diligent, hospitable and generous.** Look at verses 20-22. She acted quickly. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, 60 pounds of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. She prepared a lot of food for David and his men and hurried to meet them on their way.

**Secondly, she is humble.** Look at verse 23-24. When Abigail saw David, she humbled herself, bowing down before David with her face to the ground, calling herself “your servant” and David “my lord” and asking David to give her his permission to speak.

**Thirdly, she is apologetic.** Look at verse 25, **“Please pay no attention, 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.”** She called Nabal a wicked man and fool, and she admitted that she missed David’s men.

**Fourthly, she was a woman of faith.** Look at verses 26-27. Abigail knew how David did not kill Saul though he could have in the previous chapter. Moreover, she knew God’s anointing on David to be the king of Israel. Look at verses 28-29. She believed that God will raise David’s kingdom because David fought the Lord’s battles and the Lord will fight for him. She also knew that David was a fugitive though he did not do any wrong and he will not do any wrong. God will protect him and his men but his enemies will be destroyed, including Nabal.

**Fifthly, she had a godly wisdom with faith.** Look at verses 30-31. **“When the Lord has fulfilled for my lord every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him ruler over Israel, 31my 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 success, remember your servant.”** She reminded David that the Lord fulfilled 1) every good thing and 2) will raise him as he promised at first. Then, she spoke to David’s conscience that it is needless bloodshed, avenging himself by killing Nabal and his men. For the final touch, she added the assurance of David’s success by the Lord. She asked him to remember her at that time. It was icing on the cake and a spiritual checkmate. Moreover, it became a prophecy.

What was David’s response to Abigail? Look at verses 32-34**. “David said to Abigail, ‘Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. 33May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. 34Otherwise, 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.’”** Through Abigail’s humble and wise godly counseling with faith, David’s heart was melted and his eyes were opened. David saw the situation from God’s perspective; so 1) he praised the Lord who sent her to him. A lot of men do not like to change their course of action even if it is found wrong clearly, but David did not harden his heart in his hot temper. When he saw the situation in God’s eyes, he could not but thank God for sending Abigail to meet him.

2) He blessed Abigail. He praised her good judgment, keeping him from bloodshed and from avenging himself with his hands. Many Christians say that they only worship God and do not care what others say and do. So they live by themselves and die alone without fellowship in Christ. But we must learn to give thanks to God and to others as well. We should bless their good work as David did here. If Abigail did not come by faith with a humble attitude and wisdom, David could have made a great mistake, avenging himself, which is sin, done not by faith but by hot temper. What a blessing one woman brought to David! He truly appreciated it. Finally, David accepted all gifts from Abigail and sent her in peace as his acceptance of her request.

Yet, Abigail had some work to do. Look at verses 36-38, When Abigail arrived home, Nabal was still having a party with high spirits and alcohol. She did not say anything when he was drunk because he probably would not listen to her. In the morning, when Abigail told Nabal everything she did and how David’s anger was subsided and retreated his army, Nabal had a chance to repent but he had a heart attack and died in ten days. Yet, it was the Lord’s work, avenging David.

When David heard that Nabal was dead, David thanked God that the Lord upheld his cause against Nabal. And the Lord kept his servant from doing wrong and avenged Nabal’s wrongdoing. David learned that the word of God is true as it is written, **“It is mine to avenge; I will repay.”** Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife. She accepted David’s proposal humbly and quickly. Even though David had many wives, nothing was written about them like Abigail’s story with such faith, humility and wisdom. Abigail’s story reminds me of Proverbs 31:26-31,

**She speaks with wisdom,
    and faithful instruction is on her tongue.
27She watches over the affairs of her household
    and does not eat the bread of idleness.
28Her children arise and call her blessed;
    her husband also, and he praises her:
29“Many women do noble things,
    but you surpass them all.”
30Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
    but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
31Honor her for all that her hands have done,
    and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.**

I thank God for sending such women of God to us, Missionary Mary Bahn, Missionary Mary Kim and Missionary Anastasia Perry, who have given us their wise and godly wisdom. Among them, I cannot but appreciate Missionary Mary who has borne my hot-tempered incidents and assisted me with her humble and godly wisdom by faith. By the grace of God and her humble coworking, I am what I am today. I pray that God may raise 12 Abigail-like women of God as we pray to raise 12 shepherds like David!