

A future king, a fool, and his wife.

Reading 1 Sam 25.2-42

This is a true story of a future king, a fool and his wife of understanding. One that if the lesson, contained in it, is truly learned, it will show a person the seriousness of obstinacy, inaction and rebellion against God. It will also show how a different path will lead to salvation of the soul.

The Author behind all the Scriptures- the very Spirit of God- has so orchestrated events in this historical narrative in order for us to see how we must come into the kingdom of heaven.

The future king is the famous David, who killed the mighty Goliath with just a stone shot from a sling. He became a great warrior and was chosen by God through Samuel the prophet to be Israel's king. The Messiah would come through his bloodline. However, the present king - king Saul, gripped with jealousy, has pursued him into the wilderness in order to kill him. Those who followed God, instead of men, knew of the prophecy and were on David's side. Those men chose to honour David as God's anointed one, and many even came to him to serve under him as mighty men. Others cared little about all this and chose to just serve their own interests. Living a life with little meaning or purpose, just to gratifying their earthly desires. Living for worldly, fleshly appetites and the amassing of material possessions. Many people still do this today, missing the real point of life because they're foolishly driven by their more base desires..They have no real purpose or cause in their life.

This brings me to Nabal the fool. That's what his name literally means; 'fool'. And it's by no accident Scripture notes him as this. He was such a person as I have just described. He is introduced as, evidently, a rich man with many sheep and goats. But, as is true of many rich men, he was clearly proud and arrogant and dismissive of anything other than what would serve his own interests. For example, he would know nothing of self denial for a noble cause. He is described for us as *"churlish and evil in his doings"*.

Then we have the wife of Nabal, her name was Abigail. What a contrast! No wonder Christian parents often choose this name for their children. She is described as *"a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance"*. She was one of those who noted the prophecy about David, and knew how he came to be in the wilderness, but trusted he would come to his kingdom eventually in God's timing. Clearly she had come to be a God fearing woman, unlike her husband, who she must have constantly struggled with. He was 'churlish', that is, hard hearted, obstinate, stubborn and severe.

So what happens? How do these three people's lives become interconnected? Well, Nabal, as I've said, isn't much interested in anyone other than himself, and clearly isn't interested in God or His anointed. What is he interested in? Money and possessions. But what use are those if you're going to lose your soul? He wasn't thinking about that though. His lack of concern for those deeper things in life would be his undoing; don't let it be yours. Do you love the rich and famous? Do you long to be like them and live for cars and clothes and riches? For a lavish lifestyle that the world will admire and call 'great'. Nabal was called a 'great' man, but he was also greatly mistaken about the priorities of life, and he was a great sinner. Don't envy those men or seek to be like them. Nabal was a fool.

It was because of this that he got into trouble with David. Now David is a 'type' or foreshadowing of Christ, and that's significant here. You see David's young men had need of Nabal's service, they needed him to give out of his plenty for the 'cause', and so he sends his men, who have protected Nabal's shepherds and done them good when they were in the vicinity. However Nabal isn't interested in the 'cause', and, when they ask him, this is his response;

"Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be"

An untrustworthy man trusts no one else. He doesn't want to believe in these men, and men today don't want the message of the Bible to be true either, and hide behind their own arguments. They should at the very least pay homage to God, but often consider Jesus to be just as anyone else in history. Men may say of Christ - "He was just another man who upset his people." He says *"Who is David"*, but a moment later reveals he knows full well who he is *"the son of Jesse"*, and atheists may claim ignorance (the fool saith there is no God), but knows full well there is a God. Nabal seems to be trying to make a reasonable argument, but it is a thinly disguised excuse designed to cover the fact that he doesn't want to give away any of, what he sees as, his hard earned goods. He thinks he'll lose out, as people think the same about becoming a Christian. He has no concept that God gives to men from *His* earth by providence, and allows them to increase, in order that they may use their God given possessions, gifts, and abilities to bear fruit for His glory, and be rich of soul. David's men had been like a wall of protection for him, like the angels working providences for us. Overruling protections from God we may be completely unaware of. To live for your own selfish ends is nothing short of robbery against God. And David, being the figure of Christ, stands here as God. How Nabal acts towards David is how he thinks of God. He's proud and dismissive.

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes:" Prov 12.15

Not surprisingly, Nabal's foolish ways don't go down well with David and we should see how our rebellion, and disregard of God, is really viewed by Him, and how serious it is taken. But Nabal is oblivious to the seriousness of offending David or God. He should have known David was a mighty warrior, and been fearful of making an enemy of him. Instead he provoked him and wasn't mindful of the offence. Don't men do the same today? They make off-hand remarks, laughing about God and Christ, even blaspheming, thinking nothing of it. They provoke God to anger, but they're ignorant of Scripture when it says *"it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* and *"the wrath of the Lamb"* and to *"kiss the Son lest he be angry"*. We are sinners in the hands of an angry God. God is not only sad at sin, but angry at it. But Nabal might as well have spat in David's face. David tells his mighty men to put on their swords. Nabal has no idea what he's about to bring upon himself, blinded by his own hubris. This churlish farmer has provoked elite soldiers and brought an army against his household. And we have done worse with the God of the hosts of heaven, whose way is in the whirlwind and the storm. We better hope His sword remains in its sheath and isn't drawn. But, make no mistake, Christ's sword is strapped on against the sinner and hope needs to have something to hope in. Psalm 7.11-13

However, there is hope for Nabal's household in the person of his wife and what she is about to do. If David is like Christ and Nabal is like our own foolish sinful nature, then Abigail is like

a God given awakened concern for salvation. A new nature convicted to call upon God to plead clemency, mercy and grace.

This she does. She has been told by her own young men what has happened and, unlike her foolish husband, can see the consequences clearly. She springs into action, and this is what we should do as soon as our conscience warns us from the Gospel in preaching and reading of the word. She knew about David and the royal line. There is hope for this household, that stands here for a soul.

Abigail takes the provisions her husband should have given and she goes to meet David. This isn't a picture of earning or buying your forgiveness with God, that's impossible, but it's a picture of paying homage to God and bringing respectful words in prayer, like a sweet savour. She was wedded to Nabal, as much as we are wedded to our sinful nature. You must lay all you are at his feet, as it were, and say "Use me for your service, I give obeisance to you. You are my King, I dedicate myself to you." How fearful she must have been to go on a donkey to these soldiers on the warpath. And it may be that you are fearful to go to the God of vengeance, and ask Him for mercy; but you must ask if you want forgiveness. Go now while the sword of God's wrath is still in its sheath, or wait til it's too late and it's drawn - thirsty for your blood. David had said that he'd kill all that were part of Nabal's household in vengeance. They were in grave danger.

She falls on her face before David, and bows herself, and this must be our attitude in prayer. She owns the sin of her husband as her own as his wife, acknowledging Nabal is a fool. She asks the goods be given to David's young men and:-

"bowed herself to the ground, And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid (and we must own our sin, as she does the sin of her husband), I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid...I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid."

She asks for her greatest need (even using the phrase "*I pray*") - don't multiply many words in prayer but forget to ask for the obvious.

"for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days."

Surely she has faith in David coming into his kingdom and sees him as one who has fought the battle of the LORD as a righteous man- just like we must come to Christ in faith knowing He has fought and won the great battle on the cross as the sinless Saviour.

"Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God ; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling."

This 'man pursuing' is a reference to Saul. She sees David's soul as the life of God. The reference to a bound bundle of life, pursued by an enemy, could even be the Holy Spirit using her words to refer to Christ coming as a bound baby whilst enemies seek His life - ultimately Satan - but protected by God. She refers to David's victory over Goliath with a sling as proof she trusts in Him to defeat his enemies, as Christ defeats the Enemy of souls for us.

"And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid." She says God has caused her to

prevent his actions and asks that she should be remembered when he becomes king, just like the thief on the cross said to Christ *"remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"*. And we plead clemency, and for His forgiveness to be remembered on Judgement Day. For why should a soul, whose sin has been avenged already, be punished twice in injustice.

David is quick to accept her and forgive, saying she has turned him from avenging (for vengeance is God's). He said go in peace, just like Christ said to the woman taken in adultery.

And Christ *"said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."*

"And (David) said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person"

The household is saved.

This is how ready Christ will be to receive you, if you go humbly, and sincerely, to beseech Him in prayer.

Meanwhile, what is Nabal up to? Surely, if he's unrepentant he can't be let off? If he's a symbol for the old nature of sin in this household of the soul, doesn't the Spirit put the old nature to death?

Indeed he does.

"if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom 8.13

"Mortify therefore your members... put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;" Col 3.8-9

Nabal (like the 'old man'), true to form, is ignorantly throwing a drunken party and indulging his fleshly appetites, and living as if there's no consequences to his rebellion to God's ways. It reminds us of Belshazzar's feast just before he died. Abigail can't talk to him while drunk, but sadly even when sober no one could tell this stubborn man anything, even his own men said of him *"for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him."* He was unteachable, not like it says in proverbs 12.15

"he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

No, this man was truly a son of Satan. Everyone could see his folly except him.

"when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he (showeth) to every one that he is a fool." Ecc.10.3

So don't be unteachable like him, otherwise you'll end up judicially hardened like him. When he was told what had happened it says *"his heart died within him"*, his reaction was to be colder and harder in consternation, he was broken, but unmoved spiritually, and God finally withdrew. The day of grace was over for him, and he was as good as dead, his heart was like a stone. Ten days later God Himself took his life, Nabal was now 'twice dead', as it is put in Jude 12. And at conversion our old nature dies within us, but is not truly dead until we go to the 'marriage supper of the Lamb' in heaven. What a pitiful end for a man the world saw as 'great'. It's often the case, so don't admire or wish to be like these foolish 'great' men of the world. They never see their eternal end. I well remember a rich and successful business man, I once knew, whose response to Christianity was, "Oh, I don't know much about that." A few years later he died of cancer. Nabal didn't know much about David, saying, *"Who is David?"*. Why die of ignorance?

What became of Abigail? Well, just like we become wedded to Christ after conversion, in the Church, and enter His kingdom, Abigail is asked to become David's wife and enters His household. What a powerful picture of the salvation of a soul in this narrative.

Learn the lesson of the King, the fool and the wife. Be the one with understanding who acted swiftly to save her household. Let your conscience speak to warn you, and, a newly enlivened spirit within, call upon the King of salvation. He's full of mercies, go and see if it isn't so. You've heard of His victory at Calvary, you know He's mighty to save, trust in Him, give yourself to the cause, and let the old nature die and the new bear fruit in a life of real meaning and purpose. Instead of vain, earthly glory and corrupting, short lived and costly pleasures, find real joy and satisfaction, after forgiveness and peace in a priceless but free salvation for your eternal soul.

"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool, but whoso walketh wisely, shall be delivered."
Prov 28.26