

Message #13

Kurt Hedlund

Life of David

3/8/2020

DAVID AND DEALING WITH FOOLS

1 SAMUEL 25

I.

Adolfo Orozco has a rags to riches story. He was born and raised in central Mexico. He moved to Napa Valley when he was fifteen. He was a diligent student and became the first person in his family to earn a college degree. After graduating in 1998, he became a second grade teacher in California.

In the early 2000s he began buying property in Las Vegas. When the Great Recession hit, his real estate dealings really took off. In 2009 alone he bought ten homes in foreclosure. He began making a lot of money. He and his wife were able to buy a little 6000 square foot home in southern Henderson. One of the properties that Adolfo Orozco purchased was the Alpine Motel.

Orozco began acquiring a reputation that wasn't so good. He was late in mortgage payments. He failed to pay utility bills. He was late on tax bills. His properties were cited for multiple code violations. He didn't pay workers what he promised. He claimed that he couldn't pay some of the bills, but he showed up at his properties in a variety of luxury cars. A plumber who worked on one of his residential properties said that he was instructed to make cosmetic fixes but ignore bigger and more chronic issues. Residents called Orozco a slum lord.

Then a few days before Christmas, the Alpine Motel burned down. Six people were killed and many more were injured. Some of them died while trying to get out of the back entrance, which was barred. Investigators found forty code violations, including no smoke alarms and sprinklers which did not work. Adolfo Orozco is under criminal investigation. Multiple wrongful death lawsuits have been filed. His empire is crumbling around him. Adolfo Orozco has characteristics of the fool described in Jesus' parable and the fool in our story today. (*Las Vegas Review Journal*, 3/1/2020)

The fools whom we encounter in life are not always rich. Some of them are poor. They are foolish because they make bad decisions. They become addicted to gambling or alcohol or drugs. They never

acquire an eternal perspective. We need to learn the lesson that David did from his encounter with a fool in the passage before us.

We have seen from our study of the life of David that David is on the run from jealous King Saul. God has made it clear to both David and Saul that David is to be king. David, in the passage last week, had a chance to kill Saul, but he refused to do it. He was committed to doing the will of God and entrusting his enemy to the Lord to deal with as He will. Today we find that David learns a new lesson in God's program to prepare David to be king of Israel.

I.

In the first seventeen verses of 1 Samuel #25, which are found on p. 247 in the black Bibles under many of the chairs, we are taught this: DON'T LOSE YOUR TEMPER IN DEALING WITH A FOOL. (PROJECTOR ON-- I. DON'T LOSE YOUR TEMPER...) According to v. 1, **"Now Samuel died. And all Israel assembled and mourned for him, and they buried him in his house at Ramah. Then David rose and went down to the wilderness of Paran."**

Samuel was the prophet whom God directed to anoint Saul as the first king of Israel. He was also the one who told Saul that God had rejected him as king because of his disobedience. Samuel then anointed David, who was just a teenager at the time, to replace Saul. In Samuel's earlier career, the people had not been responsive to his warnings to turn back to the Lord. But now a large crowd shows up to honor him. I doubt that David was among them. He doesn't want Saul to have a chance to nab him.

(PROJECTOR ON--- DAVID 7B MAP) Ramah was just a couple miles north of Gibeah, the capital of Israel and hometown of Saul. David has been hanging out farther south near Maon in a wilderness area in territory assigned to the tribe of Judah. In #24 David and his 600 men had an encounter near there with Saul and his 3000 Army Rangers.

Look at v. 2: **"And there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. The man was very rich; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He was shearing his sheep in Carmel."** This guy has 3000 sheep. Saul had 3000 soldiers with him. We are told about this guy's possessions before we learn his name. Carmel was apparently near Maon.

(PROJECTOR OFF) According to vv. 3 & 4, **“Now the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. The woman was discerning and beautiful, but the man was harsh and badly behaved; he was a Calebite. David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep.”** The original word for “badly behaved” is “evil.”

So this couple is a study in contrasts. Nabal is rich. He is apparently a smart guy, like Adolfo Orozco. He has acquired a lot of stuff, but he is hard and evil. His wife is discerning and beautiful. How did these two ever get together? We do not know. Perhaps they were subjects of an arranged marriage.

The Hebrew word for “Nabal” means “fool.” I doubt that his parents originally gave him this name. My suspicion is that this is the nickname that his servants used for him behind his back. That Nabal was a Calebite means that he was a descendant of Caleb, who was the spy from the tribe of Judah who gave a good report to Moses. He was commended by the Lord for his faith. Nabal lacks the character which his ancestor possessed.

Verses 5-8: **“So David sent ten young men. And David said to the young men, ‘Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal and greet him in my name. And thus you shall greet him: “Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. I hear that you have shearers. Now your shepherds have been with us, and we did them no harm, and they missed nothing all the time they were in Carmel. Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David.”””**

We know that David has 600 men with him by this time. Some of these men may have had additional family members with them. According to v. 1, they are living in a wilderness area. They have been on the run from Saul. So they are not in a position to cultivate crops. Maybe they have some animals with them. But living in a wilderness area as fugitives presents obvious problems of food supply. How do you feed all of these people?

David’s forces have been really nice to the neighborhood rich guy. There is a long Jewish tradition that at times of feasts and celebrations, good Jews should be generous to the poor, especially their countrymen. According to Deuteronomy #15 v. 11, **“For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, ‘You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.””** David and his forces are materially poor, and Nabal is rich. But Nabal is selfish, and he is a fool.

We read in vv. 9-11 (PROJECTOR OFF), **“When David's young men came, they said all this to Nabal in the name of David, and then they waited. And Nabal answered David's servants, ‘Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters. Shall I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers and give it to men who come from I do not know where?’”**

Nabal must know something about David. He calls him the son of Jesse. So he knows something about his background. King Saul has just had 3000 troops traipsing through the area. He had to know that King Saul had been chasing David. He indeed makes reference to people breaking away from their masters. Nabal also must know that David has a lot of men who are living in the area, men who have been involved in fighting. If he had any sense, he would avoid dissing them. If you are not going to tip your server 20%, at least give her 10%, so that she won't put something inappropriate in your food. But Nabal is a fool. He can perhaps cover his greed by claiming that he is being loyal to the king.

Verse 12 & 13: **“So David's young men turned away and came back and told him all this. And David said to his men, ‘Every man strap on his sword!’ And every man of them strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword. And about four hundred men went up after David, while two hundred remained with the baggage.”**

David is ticked off. He has just exercised admirable restraint in dealing with Saul. He is losing it here. Perhaps it has something to do with a power differential. Saul was the king and his father-in-law. David had served in his court. Nabal is rich, but has no claim upon David. He is simply a rich fool. There appears to be little downside risk in dealing with him harshly.

You might remember in #23 that David learned that one of the towns of Judah was being attacked by the Philistines. Before he took action, he consulted with the priest, who used the Urim and Thummim to find out what the Lord wanted them to do. He doesn't do that here, does he? He is acting upon emotion. That is not always such a good thing.

According to vv. 14-17, **“But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, ‘Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he railed at them. Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them. They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were**

with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore know this and consider what you should do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his house, and he is such a worthless man that one cannot speak to him.” A common characteristic of a fool is that he, or she, doesn’t listen very well. At least he doesn’t listen to wise counsel or common sense. He lacks a realistic perspective.

Abigail stands in stark contrast to her husband. She is approachable. She listens to wisdom. While David often listened to wise counsel, he has not in this situation. There is no indication that anyone tries to restrain him. That is unfortunate. He hasn’t checked with the Lord. He has lost his temper. There is such a thing as righteous anger. We see that in Jesus when He cleans out the temple. But it is not what is about to happen here.

David’s son Solomon later collected wisdom sayings that were put together in the Book of Proverbs. Consider what the Proverbs have to say about losing one’s temper:

(PROJECTOR ON--- PROVERBS 14:17) Proverbs 14:17: **“A man of quick temper acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is hated.”**

Proverbs 14:29 (PROVERBS 14:29): **“Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.”**

Proverbs 15:18 (PROVERBS 15:18): **“A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.”**

Proverbs 16:32 (PROVERBS 16:32): **“Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.”**

Proverbs 19:11 (PROVERBS 19:11): **“Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.”**

Proverbs 29:11 (PROVERBS 29:11): **“A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.”** Don’t lose your temper in dealing with a fool. The danger is that losing our temper may make us into the fool.

II.

The lesson of vv. 18-35 is this: LISTEN TO THE GODLY PERSON WHO URGES RESTRAINT IN DEALING WITH A FOOL. The story continues in v. 18: **“Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys.”** Nabal is stingy. Abigail is generous. Where does she so quickly get all of this stuff? I suspect that she takes it from the provisions set aside for the harvest celebration.

A shallow understanding of the principle of submission of wives to husbands might suggest that Abigail should just shut up and let things happen as they will. I suspect that a better understanding of the idea of submission means doing what is right for the husband and the family, even when the husband might not be thrilled about it. Abigail is here saving the lives of her family members.

According to vv. 19-22, **“And she said to her young men, ‘Go on before me; behold, I come after you.’ But she did not tell her husband Nabal. And as she rode on the donkey and came down under cover of the mountain, behold, David and his men came down toward her, and she met them. Now David had said, ‘Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good. God do so to the enemies of David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him.’”** Perhaps David was planning to attack at night.

A little understanding of Hebrew is helpful here to get the complete sense of what David is saying. He does not use the normal word for “man” or “male” here. He uses a rare term that is used elsewhere in the Old Testament only in 1 Kings. The term literally means “one who urinates against the wall.” I had a conversation several years ago with Bill Douglas, who worked in Saudi Arabia. He said that this was still the common practice of Arab men wearing robes and working out in the desert. They would look for the opportunity to urinate against the wall so that they would not splatter on their feet.

Why does David use this term here? Look back at v. 16. We are told that David and his men have been a wall to protect Nabal's people. What does Nabal's snub mean? By their refusal to help he and his people are urinating against that wall.

Verses 23-25: **"When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. She fell at his feet and said, 'On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant. Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. But I your servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent.'"**

Notice the Christ-like character of Abigail. She is the one without sin in this. Yet she takes the blame. She stands in the place of the guilty one. Isn't this the story of the Gospel? Jesus, the God-man, was sinless. Yet He stood in our place in dying on the cross. For He was paying the penalty for the sins of mankind. He took the blame for our violations of God's law. When we put our trust in Him, we receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life.

Abigail is urging David to exercise restraint. In dealing with a fool, he does not want to act foolishly himself. Remember, a couple of chapters ago, we saw that David pretended to be a fool in dealing with Achish, the king of Gath.

We are told in vv. 26-29, **"Now then, my lord, as the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, because the Lord has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal. And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. Please forgive the trespass of your servant. For the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live. If men rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living in the care of the Lord your God. And the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling."**

Abigail is a rather amazing woman with keen spiritual insight. She is assuming that David will now exercise restraint and that he will recognize the Lord's providential involvement in this meeting with Abigail. In this last verse she calls upon the Lord to group David with those whom God would not allow to be killed. The phrase "bound in the bundle of the living" has much significance to Jewish people. It is a phrase used of deceased loved ones. The first letter of each of these Hebrew words is often placed on the tombstones of the dead. (HEBREW TOMBSTONE) On this tombstone it is the line right above the

name of the deceased woman. The letters and words are read from right to left. It is a nice tradition that expresses faith in God.

Look now at vv. 30 & 31 (PROJECTOR OFF): **“And when the Lord has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel, my lord shall have no cause of grief or pangs of conscience for having shed blood without cause or for my lord working salvation himself. And when the Lord has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant.”**

Notice the awareness that Abigail has of God’s promises concerning David. Probably the conflict between Saul and David in this area has made people aware of what the issues are. Abigail clearly has a trust in YHWH, the God of Israel, and she believes the promises which have been made to David. She is now calling David to have behavior that is fitting for this future office. Nabal may be deserving of death, but there are many innocent and unfortunate people who would be killed in this attack. David’s reputation might adversely be affected when news of this massacre gets out. In effect, Abigail says that the prospect of David’s future glory should regulate his actions in the present.

There is a lesson in this for us. The New Testament assures us Christians that we will rule with Christ when He returns to earth. The prospect of that future rule should likewise affect our behavior now. We are kings and queens in waiting. We should act like it. That prospect should restrain our temper in the meantime.

Abigail finishes her discourse with a plea for David to remember her. He indeed will. She is an attractive woman in every way.

This part of the passage concludes in vv. 32-35: **“And David said to Abigail, ‘Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand! For as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male--- this is that unique term again for “man”.’ Then David received from her hand what she had brought him. And he said to her, ‘Go up in peace to your house. See, I have obeyed your voice, and I have granted your petition.”**

David is teachable. That is one of his redeeming features. It is a godly woman who restrains David. In #24 it was David who restrained his men from killing Saul. Here it is Abigail and the providential hand of the Lord which restrains David from killing Nabal and the people around him. Nabal may be a fool and deserving of death, as is Saul, but killing Nabal and company is not justified by Nabal's lesser position. Violence is not justified, especially when innocent people are adversely affected.

So it is with us. We may be able to see that restraint is justified in many situations. But we can lose our temper in other situations, sometimes with our kids or our mates, sometimes with foolish drivers, or people who say hurtful things, or with people who have a foolish political position, whatever that may be. Do we listen to the godly person who urges restraint?

III.

The last lesson from our passage comes in vv. 36-44. We should TRUST GOD TO DEAL WITH A FOOL. (PROJECTOR ON--- TRUST GOD TO DEAL WITH A FOOL.) Look at v. 36: **“And Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal’s heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until the morning light.”**

Abigail has just pledged her loyalty to Israel’s future king. At home she is dealing with a husband who is acting like a king. But Nabal is a drunken fool.

Verse 37: **“In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.”** Hebrew was originally written just with consonants. If Nabal’s name is given slightly different vowels, it means “wineskin.” This fool is nothing but a wineskin, a drunk. More accurately, I believe, the text says that while Nabal, the wineskin, is emptying his bladder, Abigail informs him about the disaster she has just helped to avoid.

As a result of this information, Nabal’s heart becomes like a stone. This may mean that he became very frightened. It could imply more--- that he had a stroke or heart attack or some other health challenge.

Verse 38 describes what happened next: **“And about ten days later the Lord struck Nabal, and he died.”** Nabal is a picture of another fool in David’s life, King Saul. Seeing how the Lord deals with Nabal should be an encouragement to David to continue to be restrained in his dealings with Saul.

Verse 39: **“When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, ‘Blessed be the Lord who has avenged the insult I received at the hand of Nabal, and has kept back his servant from wrongdoing. The Lord has returned the evil of Nabal on his own head.’ Then David sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her as his wife.”** David has learned the lesson about restraint and losing his temper. He has also remembered Abigail.

The story concludes in vv. 40-44: **“When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her, ‘David has sent us to you to take you to him as his wife.’ And she rose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, ‘Behold, your handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.’ And Abigail hurried and rose and mounted a donkey, and her five young women attended her. She followed the messengers of David and became his wife. David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and both of them became his wives. Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was of Gallim.”**

By giving away his daughter and David’s wife to another man, King Saul treats David as dead and gone. His confessions of wrongdoing to David in #24 are once again forgotten.

David’s acquisition of Abigail as a wife seems like a good thing and a happy ending to the story. Yet David’s acquisition of another wife is a violation of the prohibition in God’s law in Deuteronomy 17 about a king acquiring multiple wives.

The main lesson here is that we should trust God to deal with fools. We have seen the New Testament application of this principle in Romans #12 v. 19 where Paul urges Christians not to take their own revenge but to allow God to deal with evildoers. The Old Testament basis for that principle is Deuteronomy #32 v. 35. (DEUTERONOMY 32:35) There Moses quotes the Lord, saying, **“Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.”**

What is bound up in this entrusting fools to God is forgiveness. The New Testament word used most commonly for “forgiveness” means literally “to let go.” It is what we need to do with the fools in our lives.

Victor Marx (VICTOR MARX) grew up with lots of fools in his life. His father was a pimp and a drug dealer. Four stepfathers abused and even tortured him. At age five Victor was left for dead in a cooler.

To escape the emotional pain, he began taking drugs as a teenager. He attended fourteen different schools and lived in seventeen different homes.

In order to escape these fools and tormentors, Victor joined the Marines. He transferred his anger to enemy soldiers. He learned martial arts so that nobody could ever hurt him again. While he was still in the Marines, he received a letter from his father inviting him to visit. He shocked his son by telling him that he had turned his life over to Christ.

Victor went to church with his father and heard the Gospel. For the first time in his life, he regretted the bad things that he had done. In 1986 he invited Jesus into his life. He began to confront his past by finding his first stepfather. The old man was still a fool. He was addicted to alcohol and drugs. Victor read to him from the Bible and told him about what Jesus had done for him. Just before he died, the old man accepted Christ.

In the years that followed, Victor married and had five children. He met with a trauma specialist, who helped Victor confront the memories of abuse. He learned to forgive those who had hurt him. He also started a ministry called "All Things Possible Ministries." He has brought this ministry and his own story to thousands of incarcerated kids. He has taken high risk trips to Iraq to minister to traumatized children rescued from the clutches of ISIS. He has also witnessed to captured ISIS soldiers.

Victor Marx says, **"The worst things in my life, the greatest injustices, have actually been turned around for good."** (Breakpoint, 2/23/2018) (PROJECTOR OFF) Such is the outcome of learning to trust God to deal with the fools in our lives. It often requires forgiveness. The basis of that forgiveness is the forgiveness that most of us have found through trusting in Jesus, who has forgiven us for our sins.