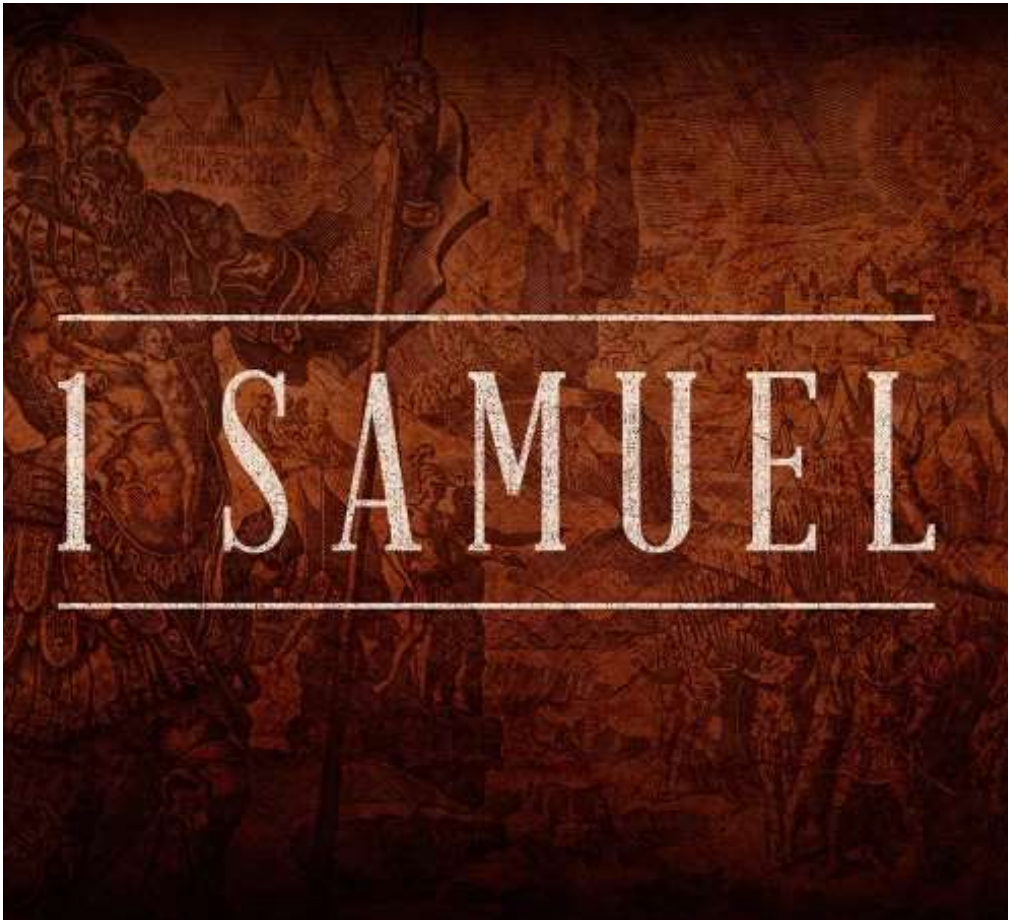


Let's Worship God

12th-16th October 2020

1 Samuel



1 SAMUEL

Monday - 1 Samuel 25 - More than an Interlude

I'm going to keep the devotion short today because I want you to read the whole chapter, and get a feel for what is going on. This chapter is about a beautiful and wise woman named Abigail who is married to a surly, hot-headed fool. It comes close to home for some of us...

In the last chapter David and Saul had what seemed like a climactic confrontation. Sitting duck Saul was surprisingly spared by David. Saul seemed to be remorseful, called off the hunt and went home. But it is not the end of David and Saul's conflict; this chapter is an interlude. Yet the story is more than an interlude. As we'll see as the week goes on, it's integral to understanding the wider message of 1 Samuel.

The incident begins with Samuel's death; perhaps this explains David's rash actions. At the very least it is an indication of a new period of flux and uncertainty in Israel. The chapter ends on the troubling note of David's polygamy, and there are several things to be said. David, like Abraham and others, were products of their culture. Christians in every culture are blind to certain sins - think of the 1700s and slavery. In addition, without in any way condoning polygamy, there are worse sins. God will not tolerate David's adultery (2 Samuel 10-11) but will forebear his polygamy. However, it must be said, polygamy never ends well in the Bible. David's family life will expose his feet of clay and shake his kingdom. It makes us look forward to the Messiah who will only have one bride: his Church.

Questions

1. Scan ahead a little into chapter 26 and make a mental note of what is before and after this "interlude".

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the Holy Spirit to light up this passage this week.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Timothy 2:5

Praise: Psalm 45:9-12 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Tuesday - 1 Samuel 25:1-22 - Fools Rush In

During this respite in Saul's pursuit of David we are introduced to two people - husband and wife, Nabal and Abigail.

We meet Nabal's possessions before we meet him. This is an ominous sign - God is more concerned with who we are than what we have. Normally, when you are getting to know someone it is not essential to know what they own. But Nabal - we need to understand immediately that he is wealthy. His name means 'fool'; this is an odd name to give a child! Perhaps it was a nickname; it certainly was a fitting name. He is described as being "harsh and badly behaved". He is cross and cruel in character, and surly and shadowy in his business dealings. Even his wife and servant describe him as "a worthless fellow" (verses 17 and 25). This description carries the idea of immorality, like Eli's sons (2:12). He is a Calebite, having links to David's own tribe, Judah; not that it seems to count for anything! His wife Abigail, on the other hand, is described as discerning - intelligent, perceptive, prudent, full of practical common sense. She's beautiful too.

David and his men are in their vicinity during sheep shearing season, a period of feasting and festivity. Earlier in the season they had provided protection to Nabal's men, and David politely asks for material recognition of that fact (verse 7-8). True to form, Nabal is "harsh and badly behaved" in response. He insults David by asking who he is, though it is clear from what Abigail says later that David is well known. In effect he says, "I don't know who you are or where you've come from." His language is full of "me", "my", and "mine". The situation quickly escalates as David and his men strap on swords and set out for slaughter (verse 22).

Here we have two fools facing off. Nabal acts like a king (verse 36) but is a fool. David is a king (in waiting) but acts like a fool. Two fools rush in - Nabal to accuse and David to avenge. Only the quick thinking and brave intervention of Abigail saves the day.

Questions

1. When have you rushed in like a fool?
2. Who has been your 'Abigail', wisely intervening to prevent you doing something foolish?

Prayer Points

1. Ask for forgiveness for times you have rushed in like a fool.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Timothy 2:5

Praise: Psalm 14 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Wednesday - 1 Samuel 25:1-22 - Respect the LORD's Anointed

The key character in 1 Samuel has been God's Anointed King (Messiah). Saul is the anointed king, though now rejected by God; David is the anointed king in waiting. In chapter 24 David was presented with a golden opportunity to take vengeance on Saul, but he won't strike him because Saul is the anointed king (24:6). In chapter 26 we will see a re-run of this - another opportunity for vengeance refused for the same reason (26:11). Chapter 25 is sandwiched in between, where David is insulted and instantly rises up to take vengeance (verse 22). Perhaps here we get a little insight into David's natural temperament. It's clear that the reason David has spared Saul is not because David is a pacifist! Why will the man who is so quick to wipe out Nabal not strike Saul? Because of who Saul is and the position he occupies as the LORD's Anointed. David respects the LORD's Anointed.

Here lies the warning of the incident to us all. Saul passed on his title as the LORD's Anointed to David, who passed it to his son Solomon, who passed it to his son, and on down the generations until Jesus, "Son of David", was anointed by the Holy Spirit at the Jordan. He carries the title "Christ" (Messiah or Anointed King) to this day. The question is: are you raising your hand against the LORD's Anointed, or respecting him?

Every sin we commit is an attempt to strike against the King. It's like you've got a sword, and you're swinging it for Jesus' head to grab the crown for yourself. David, in the contrast of how he treats Saul and Nabal, shows us that we must respect the LORD's Anointed. On the other hand, Nabal shows us the dangers of not respecting God's king. In his folly he refused to respect God's king, and God brought judgement on him - ten days later he was dead (verse 38). God may not strike you down as quick as he did Nabal, but we need to realise that Nabal's fate was simply fast-forwarded. Eventually it comes to all who refuse to respect the LORD's Anointed.

Questions

1. What does the contrast between David's treatment of Saul and Nabal highlight?
2. Where are you acting like a fool and refusing to respect the LORD's Anointed?

Prayer Points

1. Ask for God to show you where you're failing to respect the LORD's Anointed and his right to rule over your life.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Timothy 2:5

Praise: Psalm 53 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Thursday - 1 Samuel 25:14-33 - Rest in the LORD's Justice

The centrepiece of this chapter is the wisdom and discretion of Abigail. Hearing that her husband, herself, and her family are in trouble, she heads out to head-off the trouble. She is wisdom in action. In her wisdom she doesn't tell David to be reasonable, that he's overreacted or is being harsh. Instead, she reminds him that it is not for his hand to sort out (verse 26). She says to him, "Don't dirty your hand with blood by trying to sort it out yourself (verse 26). God will build you a dynasty (verse 28), protecting you and punishing your enemies (verse 29). So don't have this on your conscience (verse 31). God will do for you and to you all the good he has said he will (verse 30)." This is the same truth that David's knows and rests in (24:12; 25:30); but now he is tempted to take matters into his own hand.

The people of God need to remember that we do not bring justice for ourselves - God brings justice for us. When our names are slandered and mud is thrown, yes, we work to clear our name, but ultimately we can rest without a clear name. God knows, and will clear our name in time. When we are personally attacked and criticised, it may be harsh and unfair, but we can rest, for we know justice will be done - it is in God's hands.

I doubt we want anyone to have a stroke like Nabal, but we long for people to know the truth and feel our pain. There are times and avenues for that to happen, but we mustn't cross the line to repayment - that is God's matter.

The believer can do this because God is a God of justice and vengeance. Every sin will be brought to account. Either the individual will pay for it, or Jesus Christ has already paid for it. All accounts will be settled - we can be free from the fear of failure of human courts, both civil and church. We can be liberated from the twisting and tormenting power of the thirst for vengeance by resting in God's justice. It is all in his hands.

Questions

1. Are there any areas you are longing for wrongdoers to be brought to account, or for your side of the story to be heard?
2. What are some of the ways and means God, the God of justice, has provided for this to happen?

Prayer Points

1. Ask for a patient trust in the God of vengeance.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Timothy 2:5

Praise: Psalm 94:1-6 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Friday - 1 Samuel 25:23-44 - Realise we Need the LORD's Mediator

This incident has one of the most subtle and beautiful outline portraits of the Lord Jesus, and we could easily miss it. Consider the story from this angle: a fool refuses to give the king what is his due; the offended and insulted king sets out to bring vengeance; an individual, in wisdom, sets out to mediate and placate; she averts the wrath of the king and saves the lives of her family. Do you see it? We can't push it too far, not all the details fit, but here is an outline of how lives are saved and wrath is averted.

Think of it this way: we have two chapters either side where David spares Saul; and here David is not going to spare Nabal. How is Nabal spared? Not because he is the LORD's Anointed like Saul, but because someone comes and mediates for him.

Listen to the beautiful and wise one as she mediates for the fool. In verse 24 she asks for the fool's guilt to be charged to her account. In verse 25 she acknowledges he has done wrong, as that is his nature, but asks that his wrongs be charged to her, though she is blameless. In verse 28 she pleads for forgiveness and mercy. Do you see it? This fool is spared because someone blameless mediates for him and stands in his guilty shoes.

Do you hear the echo of the Heavenly conversation? Our folly and sin rises up in offence to God. It's in our nature - we are all Nabals (fools) really. God comes to justly avenge our insult (in contrast to David, whose actions are rash). Everyone in Adam's household (humanity) is doomed, as was Nabal's household. One who is from our household, but beautiful in the eyes of the offended King, goes to mediate and bring peace. He stands between God and his doomed family saying: "On me alone be the guilt. Yes, they are Nabals (fools) by name and by nature, but count me as the fool, and forgive. Accept my gift, not of 200 loaves and 2 skins of wine, but the loaf of my body and the wine of my blood." Jesus puts himself between us and destruction.

Questions

1. The fool, the offended king and the mediator - who are each of these characters in the story, and who are they an outline portrait of?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for a mediator willing to take our place and plead for mercy.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Timothy 2:5

Praise: Psalm 107:13-16 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

I SAMUEL

Saturday - 1 Samuel 25:32-44 - "On me alone be the guilt"

Many of us live with an deep sense of sin. We ought to! We are acutely aware of how like Nabal we are - we are fools, offending God with our selfishness and our ignorance of him. However, we also need a deep sense of God's grace. You are a sinner, but Jesus Christ steps between sinners and destruction, like Abigail stepped between David, the wrathful king, and Nabal. He takes the destruction himself and brings peace for all his people. He is the saving Mediator, wiser and more lovely than Abigail.

If you, though trusting in Jesus, are burdened by your guilt, hear him say these words, like Abigail, to his justly angry Father: "On me alone be the guilt" (verse 24). There is no reason for God to condemn you - Jesus has taken all your guilt on himself alone. He carried our sins.

A further comfort is brought to us by the contrast between this outline picture and the Heavenly reality. Here there is a degree of rashness in David's actions, though they are justifiable - Nabal has put himself under threat of destruction by his own foolishness. However, in saying that Abigail is a blurry shadowy picture of Jesus the Mediator and David like God the Father, we do not want in anyway to imply that God the Father is acting rashly, or is reluctant to avert his wrath, Jesus having to twist his arm. The Father is only too happy to hear and agree to the requests of this Mediator. Like David delights in the beauty of Abigail the mediator, so the Father delights in the beauty of his Son, and delights in showing mercy to fools who look to him for mercy.

Twice we are told of the perils of saving by your own hand (verse 26 and 33). We can't save ourselves by our own hand, we can't do what needs done. God can do it, and God has done it. We must trust that his hand has done it.

Questions

1. "On me alone be the guilt" - reflect on these words in your life.

Prayer Points

1. Ask for a deep sense of sin and a deeper sense of God's grace.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Timothy 2:5

Praise: Psalm 65 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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