



“REASONS TO REJOICE”

*“Your Words were found, and I ate them,
and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” Jeremiah 15:16*

I and II SAMUEL Lesson 12

In last week’s lesson, David humbly spares the life of Saul. He knows better than to touch the Lord’s anointed, so he leaves it in God’s hands. In our lesson today, David is again mistreated, but reacts quite differently. We also meet a new character that has a lot to teach us. I pray that we will have ears to hear and a heart to receive as we study these next few chapters. Don’t forget to pray before you begin!

First Day

- 1. Read I Samuel 25:1-44. What new characters are introduced? How would you summarize this story in two sentences? What would you title it?*

Our chapter opens with the death of our beloved Samuel -- prophet, judge, and considered the “spiritual conscience of the nation.” All of Israel mourned over him. David ran to the wilderness of Paran, which was filled with mountainous and rugged passes. Perhaps Samuel had been one thing that held Saul back from completely going after David, and when Samuel died, David wanted to get even farther away.

The city “Maon” is named after Shammai, of the family of Caleb and tribe of Judah. It was in the wilderness near Maon where our drama begins.

- 2. How is Nabal described?*
- 3. How is Abigail described?*
- 4. For what purpose did David send some men to speak with Nabal?*

Why exactly did David think Nabal should help them? According to Chuck Swindoll, “David and his men employed themselves in protecting the local ranchers and their herds from invading tribes and wild animals. There is a volunteer force; no contracts are signed. But it’s customary for ranchers to compensate their protectors with a small portion of the harvest and the herds.”

5. *Why wouldn’t Nabal help David and his men?*
6. *David felt that his “rights” had been violated. How did he react? What sin did he “almost” commit?*

This story definitely does not present David’s good side! He gets in the flesh and allows his anger to get the best of him. God mercifully sends someone to stop him in his tracks before he does something that he will regret forever.

7. *With what attitude did Abigail approach David?*
8. *Explain Abigail’s plea to David. Which statement do you think may have pierced David’s heart the most?*

Abigail could’ve totally dishonored her husband in her confrontation with David, or even jumped on his team and allowed David to take Nabal’s life to free herself from this “fool.” (That’s actually what his name means!) Instead she uses Godly wisdom. She doesn’t cover for her husband, but her point wasn’t to slander him either. She not only was protecting Nabal’s life, she was keeping David from acting in a way that would dishonor God. She was a remarkable lady.

9. *What did Abigail’s actions reveal about her character?*

10. *How does David respond to Abigail? Whom did he believe sent her to him?*

*We're going to end here for today, but we will spend some more time tomorrow on the lessons that we can learn from Abigail's courageous act. God again is in control! That's a **"Reason to Rejoice"**!*

Memory Verse of the Week: *"The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned." Psalm 34:22*

Second Day

Review your memory verse.

- 1.** *Briefly read over I Samuel 25 again and answer the following questions.*
- 2.** *How is this story both a positive and a negative example of how we are to respond when we are mistreated?*

We wonder why Abigail would marry such a man as Nabal. Most likely it was an arranged marriage between their families. (Yuck!) Abigail's name means "father of joy," which described her well. I have heard this story referred to as "Beauty and the Beast." Interesting description, isn't it?

- 3.** *How did Abigail show wisdom in how she relayed the news to her husband?*

4. *How does the story have a “happy ending”? (For David and Abigail, that is!)*
5. *Whom did David also marry? Whom did he lose?*
6. *How is Abigail a model for Christian wives, especially if they are married to unbelievers?*

7. *How is this a good example of what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:14-15?*

If you are already married to an unbeliever, Abigail shows us how Godly wisdom can be applied to adverse situations. If you are single, I pray that the Lord uses this story to remind you how important it is to only make a marriage covenant with a man who knows Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. Christ should be the center of our marriage.

8. *Abigail was a good influence in David’s life. What kind of influence are you in your husband’s life; positive or negative? How can you be a better influence?*

9. *Abigail was a good counselor to David. She didn’t advise him selfishly, or look out for her own interests. She cared about David and the effect his actions would have on his integrity. Are you a good counselor for your husband? Do you advise him unselfishly, with his best interests at heart? (Do you offer more counsel or criticism?)*

10. *How are you challenged by her example? How are you encouraged?*

Even as believers, I think we all can act greedily like “Nabal,” can’t we? We all can relate to David in thinking that his rights had been violated. I pray that we would slow down, wait, and pray, before we react to situations. I pray that we would strive to be like Abigail, who seems to be a woman “After God’s heart!”

Third Day

What’s your memory verse?

1. *Read I Samuel 26:1-25. What is the main thought of this chapter? What would you say is the key verse?*

David’s break from Saul was over. He’s back! David sends out some spies that confirm what he had heard. Saul still wanted him dead. The men of Ziph had betrayed him again.

2. *Whom did David take down with him into Saul’s camp? Do you think it took courage to volunteer for this job? What was his counsel to David?*
3. *David again finds himself in the position of being able to kill Saul and end this whole thing. Why doesn’t he do it?*

Abishai, David’s nephew (1 Chronicles 2:16), wanted to protect him and hastily offers to kill Saul. David goes against Abishai’s counsel, knowing he must respect the position of the king. According to 2 Samuel 23:18-19, Abishai later becomes the greatest warrior in David’s army.

4. *Isn't it interesting that the Holy Spirit sandwiched the story of Abigail and Nabal between both of the times David had an opportunity to kill Saul? Do you think this is significant?*

5. *Why did David take the spear and the jug?*

6. *What does David ask Saul in verses 18-20?*

David used the phrase "accept an offering" in verse 19. David is suggesting that if he had wronged Saul unknowingly, the matter could be settled between him and God, without Saul taking personal revenge.

David also says that he was being kept from sharing in the Lord's inheritance. The NIV Study Bible says this: "This is a key concept in the Old Testament. It includes both the Lord's people and His land (Exodus 15:17, 34:9). David has been excluded from fellowship with God's people and enjoyment of His land. Even worse, the Israelites believed that to be expelled from the place of God's tabernacle and lawful sacrifices doomed a man to worship the gods of whatever land he settled in."

7. *How does Saul respond, in verses 21-25?*

8. *Did David hesitate to forgive Saul?*

9. *What do we learn about David's character from this chapter?*

10. *Compare this incident with the one in 24:4-15. What are the similarities? The differences?*

David was being a great example for the men who were following him at the time. He was showing respect for authority, a forgiving and humble spirit, and a reverence for God. Again, he is proving himself to be a man “after God’s own heart.”

We end this chapter with Saul blessing David and returning home while David goes on his way. I wonder if Saul was really sorry ... What do you think? See you tomorrow!

Fourth Day

Are you practicing your memory verse? How does it comfort you?

Today we come to another very sad period in David’s life. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how this chapter specifically applies to your heart.

1. *Read I Samuel 27:1-12. What’s happening in this chapter? Briefly summarize this story. What is your first impression of this chapter?*

2. *Why did David run to the land of the Philistines and present himself to King Achish?*

3. *Where did David’s eyes seem to be focused? According to verse 1, who did he consult?*

King Achish didn’t receive David the last time he sought refuge in Gath (21:10-15), but he does this time. It’s possible that he knew of the strained relationship between Saul and David and now saw David as an asset to his army. David felt like he had nowhere else to go. He was getting tired of running from Saul. It seems like David began to feel sorry for himself and trusted in his own understanding instead of the Lord’s. Why

didn't David feel like he could stay in his own land and trust the Lord to take care of him? We're not sure, but for some reason David felt as if he had no choice. The 16 months that David stays there is considered a dark period in David's life. God is never mentioned or consulted.

Instead of rejoicing over the fact that God had spared his life again in chapter 26, David's experience perhaps left him exhausted. F.B. Meyer says this about David: "It had become so increasingly difficult to elude the hot pursuit of the royal troops, whose long practice had familiarized them with his hiding places and haunts. It became more and more perplexing to find sustenance for the large body of followers now attached to him. Every day he had to provide for 600 men, besides women and children; and the presence of these more tender souls made it perilously difficult to maintain a perpetual condition of migration or flight."

David temporarily forgot that he was going to be the King of Israel. Samuel confirmed that, as well as Jonathan, Abigail, and even Saul. God had protected him so far, and He would continue to do so. Alas, David's fears caused his faith to falter.

4. *What does David ask of Achish in verse 5? What does he refer to himself as?*
5. *What city did David receive?*
6. *If David was Achish's servant, what seemed to be expected of him?*

Verses 8-12 are a little difficult to understand. David had to keep Achish convinced he was one of the Philistines, but at the same time he didn't want the Israelites to think he was a traitor. In his book, David, A Man of Passion and Destiny, Charles Swindoll says this: "To demonstrate his loyalty to the Hebrews, David and his men raided Judah's enemies in the south, 'the Geshurites and the Girzites and the Amalekites.'" He took anything of value. The people of Judah were pleased, but what would he say to Achish when it came time to make his report? To protect himself, David skirted the truth. He told the king he was raiding in the Negev (south

country) of Judah, which led Achish to believe that he was actually fighting his own people! To protect his lies, David became ruthless in his raids.”

7. *Did Achish believe David? How long did he plan on David staying?*

David’s faith was shaken, and he focused on his circumstance instead of the Lord. He also made a decision to run to the enemy’s camp for protection. It’s never right to turn to the enemy. It’s always right to wait on the Lord.

Is your faith being shaken by someone or something? Hold on to the anchor of your soul ... Jesus! Don’t make any decisions that you’ll regret. Wait on Him to show you the way out.

8. *Have you ever told a lie that forced you to continue to lie to protect the original lie? (Did you get that?) What were the consequences?*

David was frustrated, overwhelmed, and tired of running, I’m sure. He forgot the promises of God, and instead of inquiring of the Lord, “he said in his heart.” David had failed to seek God when he got angry at Nabal because he was overcome by anger, and here he forgot to seek God because he was overcome by panic. What should he have done? I like what Alan Redpath said in his book, The Making of a Man of God. He said, “Never act in a panic. If at any moment of tremendous pressure you feel that you must do something, that moment is the time when you will be apt to make the most tragic mistake in judgement. At that moment -- and may I use the word? – ‘force’ yourself into the presence of God, and I mean ‘force yourself.’ When you feel like flying off the handle, when you are a victim of depression, when you are in a mood of despair, when you are on the point of giving in, the last thing you want to do is to seek the Lord. You are too ashamed, and you feel that the only thing you can do is act. Whatever you do, stand still! Wait until you have a word from the Lord; cast yourself on your knees and cry out to Jesus for mercy and help. Wait upon God until He makes His way plain.”

9. *How do we “force” ourselves into the presence of God? Have you ever done that? What was the result?*

We'll end here for today. I pray that if you are in despair for any reason today, that you will "inquire of the Lord," instead of "say in your heart."

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory. How does it minister to your heart?

1. *Read I Samuel 28:1-2. What's happening? What is Achish asking David to do? (Oh, no, he's in a pickle now!)*
2. *Read verses 3-6. What problem did Saul have?*
3. *Did the Lord answer Saul when he inquired of Him?*
4. *What had happened to the mediums and the spirits?*

The Law commanded that those who practiced the occult be executed (Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 18:11). Saul probably had them executed or they had fled from the land. Saul gets desperate, so he decides to do something drastic.

5. *Read I Samuel 28:7-25. What is Saul seeking? Who is he referred to?*
6. *Why is she afraid to help him?*
7. *What was Saul's question?*
8. *What response did he receive?*

9. *What happened to Saul when he heard what Samuel had to say?*

10. *Why did they want Saul to eat?*

Okay, was the witch of En Dor really responsible for bringing Samuel back from the dead? Was it really Samuel, or was it a demonic spirit? What exactly is going on?

I'd like to quote Irving Jensen, who says it well: "It is evident that God accomplished this feat, not the woman. The more modern orthodox commentators are almost unanimous in the opinion that the departed prophet did really appear and announce the coming destruction of Saul and his army. They hold, however, that Samuel was brought up not by the magical arts of the witch, but through a miracle wrought by the omnipotence of God. One might ask, 'Is it possible to communicate with the dead in these days?' Resorting to such communications, when God is not part, is trafficking the world of demons. James Gray once wrote, 'These demons may sometimes impersonate the dead, deceiving the mediums as well as their clients, it may be, and furnishing another argument why we should have nothing to do with them; but they are not the dead whom we knew and loved, and never can be.' All attempts at spirit communication are decidedly wrong because God positively forbids and condemns it." Read Leviticus 19:31; 20:6,27; Deuteronomy 18:9-12; Isaiah 8:19-20; 1 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 21:8; 1 Chronicles 10:13.

The medium was afraid when she saw Samuel. Maybe she understood that she was dealing with a power greater than she had known. God seemed to allow this to reaffirm to Saul God's judgement on him and his choice of David as the next king. Although it seems strange, God can, and will, do whatever He wants to accomplish His purpose. This text in no way justifies any efforts to contact the dead or communicate with spirits from the past.

11. *Saul was desperate. At that point he would do just about anything to hear from God. (A little late, Saul.) Have you ever allowed your frustration to drive you to people, or things, that you know aren't of the Lord, for counsel? How is that dangerous?*

12. Should Christians pay attention to horoscopes?

Boy, we've had some interesting discussions today. Let's end with just one final question:

13. From chapters 25-28, what particularly spoke to your heart?

Next week we will finish up the book of I Samuel. We will read about the tragic death of Saul and his sons, which will put an end to the "David Chase."

I pray that as you read the chapters this week, you were again encouraged by God's divine and perfect plan. God is always in control, and for that, we are eternally grateful. God chose David to be king, and was using all his experiences to mold and shape him into the man he was called to be. David was definitely human, and the Holy Spirit is very honest in making that clear. We are shown David's sins so we can learn from him, I believe. We see how David will handle his mistakes, and we see how God continues to pour out His love, mercy, and grace upon His life. Let's rejoice that God continues to pour out His love, mercy, and grace upon our lives, too!

***"Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield.
For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in
His holy name. Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we
hope in You."***

Psalm 33:20-22