

February 12, 2016

“God’s Gracious Provision”

1 Samuel 25:1-42

FCF: Needing the reminder that God does provide

PROPOSITION: (magnet) Because of the Lord’s provision for us,
(anchor) we should rejoice and be assured of His care.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

Valentine’s weekend casts attention on relationships - really of all kinds. And how we do relationships is changing, sparked and sped on by technology. Just ask your grandparents how much they used GroupMe and Instagram. But whatever novelties may come, the fact of and need for relationships has not changed. And it can’t because we are all hard-wired for it.

The Scriptures are very clear on that. And the Lord would have us to pursue what He has made us for. In fact, He provides for it. This dynamic between relationships and His provision is something we’re going to look at this morning - His provision for and through relationships.

SCRIPTURE READING: [1 Samuel 25:1-42](#)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

First, some background. Samuel had anointed David to be king. Saul, the current king, saw this as a threat and wanted to kill David. Samuel has now died. David, alarmed at the loss of the only figure standing between him and Saul, flees into a wilderness region. But his men need food and supplies. So David sends a few of them out to ask for assistance from the locals.

They meet a man called “Nabal” – a nickname for “fool.” And a fool is what he was – fixated on himself and his things with no concern for God and others. Law and custom would have demanded hospitality, especially on such a feast day. Yet David’s voluntary service and protection goes ignored. And worse, Nabal proceeds to ridicule him. It’s shocking behavior.

How will David respond? He blows a gasket. Taking it from Saul was one thing. Taking it from Nabal was another. These men are on a collision course. The drama is now a crisis.

How will this crisis be resolved? Enter stage left the discerning and beautiful wife of this harsh and badly behaved man. Nabal had clearly married way out of his league. The solution comes through Abigail. Put another way, the Lord provides through the provision of Abigail.

It’s an astonishing turn of events pointing to the Lord’s provision for His people. And He has not stopped providing for us. And, in view of that, in view of His provision for us, we should rejoice and be assured of His care. Now we’re going to look at two facets of that provision. First, the Lord’s provision of wisdom. And then, beyond even that, His provision of a Savior.

I. GOD’S PROVISION OF WISDOM

So, first, let’s consider the Lord’s provision of wisdom. Think with me as to what we see in this exchange between Abigail and David as she counsels him away from going off a cliff.

A) *Abigail's Intervention*

Abigail's beauty was inner and outer. Her intervention was as wise as it was crucial.

1. Preparing

After learning what has transpired, she prepares a meal for David and his men - the very thing he had sought. But surely she has prepared more than a meal. She has prepared her words as well.

2. Disarming

And what she says disarms David (**READ 1 Samuel 25:24-25**). She not only owns her husband's offense, she takes the blame. David is in an impossible position. As one scholar noted (**READ**), "*Though she speaks as a 'handmaid' to her Lord, Abigail is the master of the situation.*"

3. Appealing

She then goes to the heart of her appeal - David's own interests (**READ 1 Samuel 25:26, 29-31**). Her wisdom shows itself at two levels. First, if David had carried out this Saul-like attack, he would have lost all hope of the support of the local populace. But there was something beyond even that. Abigail is saying, "*My Lord, you already have the promise of the LORD of Israel. Leave this to Him. Do not take vengeance into your hands. Leave it in His to do what He will.*"

Illustration:

Abigail has the skills of a negotiator. She knows what the presenting issues are – the concerns and questions at hand. She knows the positions of each side and their perspectives. And she knows the underlying interests as well – what concerns them, what they want, what they value. And so she speaks. And she speaks in ways that David can hear, that he can understand.

B) *David's Response*

Which he does. Her words slow him down and move his heart. How does he respond?

1. Praise of her

He praises her (**READ 1 Samuel 25:33**). David saw he had crossed the line. There is a place for anger, things for which it would be sinful not to be angry. But care must be taken in how we express that anger. And even more, we need keep in check how we personally take offense. David had crossed that line and was so grateful Abigail had counseled him back from the cliff.

2. Praise of the One who sent her

But even before the praise of Abigail and her wisdom, David praises the One who had sent her (**READ 1 Samuel 25:32, 34**). David recognizes that behind her appearing and her appeal was the Lord's power, protection, and provision for him. God had provided this counsel and this wise, discerning, humbling, utterly beautiful counselor at just the right time and in just the right way.

This account is a case study of God's provision of wisdom, one we need still today.

Application:

For He continues to provide counsel for us, calling us back from the cliff. His power, His protection, His provision are real and true. And the thing is that we don't deserve it any more

than David did. But God gives it – through the Scriptures and the truth of the Scriptures mediated to us through the larger body, brothers and sisters in the faith that He puts around us. The Proverbs speak to this ([READ Proverbs 13:10; 13:20; 14:12; 15:12; 25:11-12; 27:5-6](#)).

The LORD continues to provide counsel for us. How? Often in the context of community. Which then leads us to some questions to consider. To whom might the Lord be sending you as an Abigail? Who are the Davids to whom we need to go and speak? How might the Lord intend to work through us in one another's lives? And will we be bold to go?

But, coupled with that, who has He provided? Who are the Abigails we need to hear and heed? How might the Lord be speaking through them to us? And will we be bold to listen?

Because of the Lord's provision for us, we should rejoice and be assured of His care.

II. GOD'S PROVISION OF A SAVIOR

Certainly that's one way we see the LORD's surprising provisions in this text – of counsel that comes in the midst of our folly. But there's something else as well. And as great as the first thing is, the second is even greater – the provision of a Savior in the midst of our sin.

A) David, the Son of Jesse

Now I need you to think with me, to take a step back and to take in the big panoramic picture, the full scope of what's transpiring here. Who is this David and why is he so important?

1. To be admired by us

At one level he is our model, a man to be admired and emulated. David's courage in battle, His faith in the LORD, His love and longing for God's glory and honor – all so very praiseworthy.

2. Yet as broken as us

But the son of Jesse was no porcelain saint. His fear and anger, his discontentment and lust, his quickness to murder to cover his sin and slowness to stem the sins of his sons – all reminders he was like us. David was no superhero. He was a deeply flawed man whose life testified that God's grace is what we need and all we need. We don't need just a hero. We need a Savior.

Illustration:

David's life is more than just a moral tale, just another entry in The Book of Virtues. Such stories are good as far as they go but they don't go far enough. They may tell us much of the "what" we are to do but they can never really reach the "why" or the "how." Which is the way many of us approach this text. Which is flat as a flannel board and fundamentally flawed.

Think about the account of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17. This is more than just a story of how we too should be brave or how little guys can do big things too. It's more than even an encouraging tale of what God did for David. Ultimately, it's about Jesus, the Son of David.

So what are we to make of that showdown? The Philistines were mocking the God of Israel. David steps forward as who? The Lord's anointed. He boldly states that "the battle is the LORD's" whom Goliath had defied. And so as David implants that smooth stone into Goliath's

head, as the giant then falls and David cuts off that head, it all points to the One who would later stand in our stead and crush the head of our greatest enemy, Satan himself. That account is about the ultimate giant killer, the Son of David, the greater David, the one true and eternal King.

B) Jesus, the Son of David

Back then to 1 Samuel 25. What does this have to do with David and Abigail?

1. God's immediate purposes

Certainly, the LORD's immediate purposes for David were to provide for him and his men, to protect him from himself, to consolidate his power, to establish him in Jerusalem, and to prepare him to rule over the nation of Israel. Certainly those were part of the LORD's purposes here.

2. God's larger purposes

But those immediate purposes were intended to serve much larger ones – providing not just for David but for us as well. For the Messiah to come was to be a descendant of David, One whose throne would be eternally established. So what would have happened if David, right here in 1 Samuel 25, had gone ahead with his rash plan? Remember what I said earlier about how that would have undone his hopes of becoming king. This moment was something of a crossroad.

All this is to say that the LORD's provision of Abigail for David was essential - for him and for us. Abigail's counsel was a critical and instrumental means in the hands of the LORD to bring about His good purposes for David, for the nation of Israel, and for us. For us.

Application:

“What then shall we say to these things?” Follow the logic. Trace the trail. God in His mercy is dropping an anchor into deep waters to steady us no matter how terrible the storm.

Look at the events of 1 Samuel 25 and the sweep of history in which they fall. See how He loves you! See His provision for you! Ah, the trouble and pains He has gone to for you and for me! To plan as He has - to orchestrate, design, craft, write it all out before the beginning of time. To ensure as He has - over the ages in the rise and fall of kings and whole civilizations, positioning and protecting to bring all this about, as Paul declares in Galatians 4, “when the fullness of time had come.” To then communicate as He has - choosing men to write by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, working in the early Church to establish the canon, preserving that inheritance as it was passed down through the ages. To then enlighten eyes and enflame hearts as He has - men and women, boys and girls of all nations and peoples, rejoicing in forgiveness and freedom from their sin, living now as citizens of His kingdom even as we await its full coming. Ah, my friends, do you see the trouble and pains He has gone to for you and for me?

Follow the logic. Trace the trail. Do you think that He could even think of leaving you, of forgetting and forsaking you, child of God? Whatever it is behind your questions or doubts, whatever problems that plague and press in upon your heart, do not forget this - God's good provision of not only wisdom but a Savior. We should then rejoice and be assured of His care.

CONCLUSION:

Some of you may know that, after 146 years, Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus is holding its final performance in May. The decision to fold the tents was brought on by several factors - declining ticket sales, increasing travel costs, decreasing attention spans, and last year's decision to retire the elephant acts. That was a move that, despite the controversy, many said was like taking Mickey Mouse out of Disney World. It just isn't the same without them.

But surely one of the other memorable parts of the circus is the trapeze act. The solo artists are impressive. But the duos and teams are beyond belief. Have you ever ridden a tandem bicycle? This is so far beyond that. How do they do it? Trust in one another. Trust built up over countless practices and performances in which each proves to be steady and reliable. Which then builds confidence for the next time, the next challenge, the next great leap. So you have but to call back and remember who is there to grab hold when you're flying through the air.

It's the same for us, by fellow Flying Wallendas. We have not just a seasoned ringleader cheering us on from below. In Christ, we have the certainty of One with us whose reach and grasp is never too short or weak and whose heart is linked to ours. Which then frees us to leap.

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