



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

Shattered Decisions

When life goes to pieces | Part 9

Steve Lombardo | November 22, 2015 | 1 Samuel 25



Psalm 53:

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."
They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity;
there is none who does good.
²God looks down from heaven
on the children of man
to see if there are any who understand,
who seek after God.
³They have all fallen away;
together they have become corrupt;
there is none who does good,
not even one.
⁴Have those who work evil no knowledge,
who eat up my people as they eat bread,
and do not call upon God?
⁵There they are, in great terror,
where there is no terror!
For God scatters the bones of him who encamps against you;
you put them to shame, for God has rejected them.
⁶Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!
When God restores the fortunes of his people,
let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

First Samuel 25 gives us a story of a fool and a man who made a poor decision because of the fool. Then we have a story of a godly woman. Here's the big idea: **many things can lead us to make bad decisions, but God calls His people to the prudent life.** Prudent is a word that we don't use very much today. It means acting with or showing care and concern for the future. Many people are so into the day-in-day-out grind of life that they don't give any thought to the future. Rather they are prone to making poor decisions for the here and now.

One example is our children, who are prone to not being prudent. Children understand the here and now but the future is not so accessible to them. You remember when you were a kid and summer vacation seemed like a huge, long chunk of time. Christmas seemed like it was a mile away at the beginning of December. Children don't think much about the future.

I remember as a kid going to the Sandwich Fair for the first time. I had worked hard and saved up a bunch of money and when I got to the fair I went to the place where all the games were. There were all these people asking me "Come play! Look at this huge, giant stuffed animal that you can win if you just knock down these three bottles." So I paid the money, I knocked down the bottles, and they came out with a very small toy. "Here you go!" "What about the big one?" "You have to win ten times in a row to get the big one." So I went on the midway and I played, and I played, and I played. Then supertime came around and I had fifty cents left and I couldn't buy any food. I wasn't prudent. I didn't think about the future.

The holiday season is upon us. How many people will take out their credit cards and buy a bunch of stuff that they don't really need, plunging themselves deeper into consumer debt that will take the rest of the year to pay off? They're not being prudent.

Here's another example. Many people don't think about life after death. Eternity is not a topic that we like to consider. As a pastor, I have conducted about 200 funerals since I was about 25 years old. For one of these funerals I drove a very long distance with the funeral home director. After the service I thought, "I wonder where he is spiritually. He's heard lots of funeral services, lots about the Lord Jesus Christ and eternity. I'm going to talk to him about some spiritual things."

So I asked him, "What do you think about heaven and hell? What do you think about God? What do you think about Jesus? What do you think about eternity?" He said, "I'm not really sure about it." So I said, "What do you think will happen when you die and you stand before God in eternity?" He responded, "I'll just deal with it when I get there." So to be prudent is not in vogue.

In Luke 12 Jesus tells a story of a man who was a very successful farmer and had some good years, so he tore down his barns to build bigger barns to store all of his harvest. Then he sat down and said, "Now I can eat, drink and be merry." He was relaxing. And God interjects in the parable, "*Fool! This night your soul is required of you*" (Luke 12:20).

Today we have a story of a fool, a man who makes a bad decision because of the fool, and a godly woman. Let's tell the story by looking at the three main characters in 1 Samuel 25. The title of this message is "Shattered Decisions."

1. The Fool – Nabal

We start the story of the fool whose name was Nabal, starting in 1 Samuel 25:3:

Then David rose and went down to the wilderness of Paran. ²And 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. ³Now 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. ⁴David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep. ⁵So 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. ⁶And thus you shall greet him: 'Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. ⁷I 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. ⁸Ask 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.'"

⁹When David's young men came, they said all this to Nabal in the name of David, and then they waited. ¹⁰And 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. ¹¹Shall 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 scoffs at a reasonable request

Why was Nabal a fool? Because he scoffed at a reasonable request. This was a reasonable request in the ancient Near East. This was a time of fighting among tribes, and the Philistines were fighting against the Israelites. There were skirmishes all the time. We looked at the end of Saul's life last week, but at this point he was still alive. Saul had tried to kill David. Samuel had died and now we see David battling the Philistines. David was out in the wilderness with his 600 men, and it was common to have some of these warring men take care of some of the locals in the area.

Nabal was a rich man. He had many servants, workers and hired hands. So David and his men had been around them this whole time and had taken good care of them. At the very best they were great neighbors and they protected Nabal and his workers. At the very worst, they could have been seen as mafia men. They took care of them but maybe with the thought of, "I'll take care of you now, but there might come a day when I will ask a favor of you." So that's kind of what happened here. David sent his men to Nabal and said, "We need some food. It's harvest time and you have a lot. We've treated you right. What do you have for us?" This was a common practice. So what did Nabal do?

Nabal is selfish and refuses to acknowledge the rights of others

In the ancient Near East it was right of David to ask for support because David and his men had helped and supported Nabal. But Nabal was selfish. Even though he was rich and had plenty, he wanted to keep all the harvest for himself. He was loaded. You can hear the selfishness in his statement to David's men. Listen to all of the "I's" and "my's" in his statement. "*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?*" He was selfish.

He was also stubborn. The text says he was a Calebite. Remember Caleb? Remember singing this in Sunday School: "Twelve men went to spy on Canaan. Ten were bad and two were good." Let's do a quick review: after coming out of the nation of Egypt, the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Moses was still alive when they came to edge of the Promised Land. They saw the land that they were to inherit, and sent twelve spies to see what they could find out about the people who inhabited the land.

Ten of the spies said, “These guys are giants! They’re beasts. They are as big as Tim Badal. We can’t conquer them. We better just get out of here.” But there were two who stood up and said, “We can do it.” Caleb was one of them; Joshua was the other (Numbers 13).

Let’s just look at Joshua 14. God’s Word is so cool. Caleb was one of the two who said, “We can do it. This is the Promised Land! We can take the land.” Now they’re getting ready to settle the land. They have come into the land and, starting in Joshua 14:6, it says:

⁶Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, “You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God in Kadesh-barnea concerning you and me. ⁷I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought him word again as it was in my heart. ⁸But my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; yet I wholly followed the LORD my God. ⁹And Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.’ ¹⁰And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, just as he said, these forty-five years since the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. And now, behold, I am this day eighty-five years old. ¹¹I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming. ¹²So now give me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the LORD said.”

Caleb was 85 years old and said, “Give me some of the land. Send me out into the land.” Do you remember what happened? “I’m just as strong as I was then. I’ll drive out those people.”

The fool, Nabal, was from the people of Caleb. You’ve got to be pretty stubborn if you’re 85 years old and you want to have the fight come to you. We see that in a bad way with Nabal. “I’m not going to give you any of my stuff. Are you kidding me?” So he was selfish, stubborn and stupid. He ripped on David. Look at the language here: “*Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters.*” Nabal, can you be any more stupid? David took down Goliath and now you’re saying this stuff. Nabal was a fool.

2. The Hothead – David

David responds rashly

Look at 1 Samuel 25:12:

¹²So David’s young men turned away and came back and told him all this. ¹³And 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 responded rashly. “What did he say? Come here! Get your sword! He’s going down!” David experienced righteous indignation. He had made a good and common request to Nabal. It was a brotherly thing to do. Nabal was a Calebite and David was from the nation of Israel. They were God’s people. But David experienced righteous indignation which degenerated into an unrighteous spirit of retaliation. What he was aiming to do was sinful. Scripture says, “*Vengeance is mine, and recompense*” (Deuteronomy 32:25). This is also repeated in Romans 12:19: “*“Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”*” So David experienced this righteous indignation but he was going to make it right himself. He was going to retaliate. He was the hothead and because of the fool he was being tempted to sin.

3. The Godly Woman – Abigail

The story continues in verse 14:

¹⁴But 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. ¹⁵Yet 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. ¹⁶They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. ¹⁷Now 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.”

¹⁸Then 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. ¹⁹And she said to her young men, “Go on before me; behold, I come after you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal. ²⁰And 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. ²¹Now 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. ²²God 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."

²³When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. ²⁴She 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.

²⁵Let 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. ²⁶Now 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. ²⁷And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord.

²⁸Please 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. ²⁹If 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. ³⁰And 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, ³¹my 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."

Abigail acts in a godly manner and averts the consequences of her husband's selfishness and David's anger

There are lots of lords in there but here's the big idea: "The Lord God will honor you, my lord David, as you spare this foolish man, Nabal, and don't go for blood. Will you receive this gift that I've brought to you?" Abigail acted in a godly manner and averts the consequences of her husband's selfishness and David's anger. It's an amazing story.

How did this story end? What did David do? Let's pick up in verse 32:

³²And David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! ³³Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand! ³⁴For 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."³⁵Then 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."

You can read the rest of the story. Nabal found out about all this stuff and had a stroke. Ten days later he died and David ended up marrying Abigail.

These are shattered decisions. We've been talking about the shattered life in this series. The shattered life, and bad decisions, and poor choices, and not being prudent don't just happen to evil people, but also to the godly. David, the man after God's own heart, lost his temper because of a fool and went out to kill a lot of people because of his anger. But the godly Abigail stopped him.

Application One: We are like Nabal and David

We sin because we want to

How are we like both Nabal and David? We sin because we want to. We're David because we want blood. We're Nabal because we are selfish. We choose to sin. Maybe you're a Christian and you think, "We really got the raw end of the deal with the doctrine of original sin. I wasn't in the Garden of Eden. If I was in the Garden of Eden we'd still be there. I wouldn't have sinned!" If I, Steve, had been in the Garden of Eden I would have sinned. We wouldn't be talking about Adam and Eve. We'd be talking about Steve and Eve. The doctrine of original sin stinks. We're born into sin but we choose to sin ourselves.

We want our own way. Nabal wanted his own way. "This is my stuff." If we're honest, we want our own way too. We only want God's way when it agrees with our way. We want other people to want God's way when it agrees with our way. But when it goes against what we want then we have a problem with it. Let's just admit that we're like Nabal and David. We sin because we want to. "If it feels good, do it."

Let's just admit that sin is attractive to us. Sin is bad. It's ugly. Its consequences can be great and damaging, yet sin is attractive because there's something delicious about it. What sin are you dealing with today? We sin because we want to.

We have many reasons to justify our sin

What did Nabal say? He said, "This is my work! These are my sheep! It's my harvest! It's my meat! It's my men!" We can justify it. "What are you talking about, David? This is my stuff! Go to somebody else."

David could also justify his sin. "Nabal is a fool! I protected him and took care of him. I've been around him all these days and he has prospered under my care and keeping, yet he dares to talk to me this way? I'll show him!" We can justify our sin.

We justify it because people do wrong to us. "Did you see what so-and-so posted on Facebook? They went to a Bull's game with a group of my friends and I wasn't invited, and all of the pictures are there to show it." Or, "I went to the Bull's game with them and they posted a picture where I look really ugly. They did this to me! They treated me this way. They made me feel this way. They made me be embittered against them." "My mom and dad treated me wrongly. I want to love them but I can't because they don't deserve my love. I'm not going to give it to them."

In Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus says that we break the commandment of "Thou shalt not murder" when we have anger in our hearts toward our brothers. When we call our brother "fool!" it's the same as murdering him. We have reasons to justify our sins.

What about this one? "Not only did someone do something to me, but I justify my sin because even though it's wrong it's not as bad as all the other people. It's not as bad as their sins. I see horrific things that people are doing all around me and you are telling me that God is concerned about my little, petty sins? Of course I'm angry, but I'll get over it. Of course I hate that person, but that's alright. There's always somebody worse."

But as we said last week, God doesn't compare us to other people. God compares us to His own holiness and righteousness. Sin is literally missing the mark. The center of the target is perfection. It's God's righteousness and holiness. We sin and miss that mark all the time, but to make ourselves feel better, we look at other people who are missing the mark more than us and that makes us okay.

The end of our sin is death and dissatisfaction

We're like Nabal and David. We sin because we want to. We justify our sin/ and the end of our sin is death and dissatisfaction. If David had gone through with this sin it would have been death for Nabal and all of his men. But do you think he would have found satisfaction in that? Maybe he would have found temporary satisfaction. He was so angry he would have found some measure of satisfaction for a time, but do you really think he would have felt a real satisfaction in his life that he had killed all those people? No. The end of sin is not satisfaction. The end of sin is destruction. The end of our sin is dissatisfaction. When we walk the road of sin, which promises so much good deliciousness, at the end of it we're dissatisfied and destroyed.

Billy Sunday used to say that most Christians treat sin like a pastry when we should treat sin like a cobra. The end of sin is death and dissatisfaction. We are like Nabal and David.

Application Two: Jesus is the Greater Abigail

In seminary we talk a lot about how Jesus is throughout the Old Testament passages, so when we read the story of David and Goliath the application is not that we're like David and Goliath and we can overcome big problems. The application is that Jesus is the greater David. Jesus destroys Goliath. Jesus destroys sin. Jesus destroys death and the devil. If we're really going to be honest, we're the nation of Israel in that story. We're the soldiers cowering in fear. Jesus is the One out in the battlefield.

Abigail took upon herself the guilt of her husband; Jesus took upon himself the sin of all who believe

In this story Jesus is the greater Abigail. Abigail took upon herself the guilt of her husband as we see that in verse 24: "*She fell at his feet and said, 'On me alone, my lord, be the guilt.'*" Jesus took upon Himself the sin of all who believe. Jesus is the greater Abigail.

Isaiah 53:1-6 says:

Who has believed what he has heard from us?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
²For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.
³He was despised and rejected by men;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

⁶All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

Abigail made things right with David; Jesus makes us right with God

Jesus is the greater Abigail. Abigail made things right with David. She gave him all that he needed for his men. Jesus makes us right with God. Jesus not only takes our guilt, He makes us right with Almighty God. Isaiah 53:7–12 says:

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?

⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors. *

"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).
Do you have faith in this Jesus? Are you trusting in Him? Are you living for Him today? Do you see Him on the cross of Calvary, giving His righteousness, godliness and holiness for you who are sinful? You have a sinful nature and choose to sin, yet Jesus makes you holy and righteous for all eternity. Jesus is the greater Abigail.

Abigail saved David from destruction; Jesus saves us from eternal destruction

David writes in Psalm 14:1, *"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'"* We want to be prudent which means we think about the future; we give care and concern about it. There is an eternal destruction that is a reality for many. Jesus saves us from eternal destruction.

I read about a very active boy who was blind, yet was able to do a lot of things. He was out in the park flying a kite one day when a man came up to him and said, "What are you doing?" The boy said, "I'm flying a kite." The man asked, "How do you know you're flying a kite? You can't see the kite." The boy said, "I can feel the tug of the kite on the string."

We were made for eternity. We were made to live forever. God gave us eternal souls. God created all there is and said it was good and placed us in the Garden of Eden to live forever in communion with Him. He calls us into a relationship with Him now through his Son Jesus Christ and the forgiveness that He gives, to not only have eternal life now but to have eternal life forever. How do we know there is eternal life to come? I can't see eternal life; I can't see heaven. But I can feel the tug of eternity on my heart.

When I stand next to a grave of someone who has just died, there is something that is not right about it. When I hear of the terrorist stories in Paris, when I think about ISIS killing people, I think that there is something not right about it. When I sin, when I rebel, when I experience the dissatisfaction of sin, when I am prone to go down the road of destruction, I know that it's not right.

When I experience all the pain of life and the suffering that it brings, I know there is something greater — there is eternity and God and righteousness and holiness and goodness — and Jesus gives it to all who come to Him. Jesus is the greater Abigail. He saves us from our sin. He saves us for eternity, and He does it by His blood. We're made for so much more. Don't be a fool; don't be a hothead. Trust in Jesus for life, and live for Him all your days.

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