

“Blessed are the Peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9)

The Story of David and Abigail

Introduction

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). There are three dimensions to those who make peace: 1) There are those who make peace between God and man, 2) there are those who make peace among people, and 3) there are those who make peace within their own hearts.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, as the King of Peace, accomplished all three and leads us to this peace. Before our Lord Jesus Christ came, mankind was living in the shadow of death, with Paradise closed off. But through our Lord’s death, resurrection, and ascension into the heavens, He opened up our access to God once again. He brought peace between God and man.

Also, when He came, He taught us many commandments, especially to love one another, so that there might be peace between us. This is why, at the time of our Lord’s birth, the shepherds were greeted by the angels saying, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men”* (Luke 2:14)! Saint Augustine (4th Century) teaches us about those who make peace:

Do you see others quarrelling? Be the servant of peace between them. Say to one man what is good about another; and to the other speak well of the first. Do you hear evil spoken of one by another who is angry? Do not betray what you hear. Close your ears to the outcry of an angry man; offer him the enduring counsel of peace.

Our Lord Jesus Christ also sent us His Spirit to rule in our hearts and to give us His fruits, among them, peace. When the Holy Spirit dwells in us and becomes alive in us through prayer, fasting, and scripture reading, we are filled with peace, knowing that God guides us and dwells within us. The prophet David wrote, *“Great peace have those who love Your law; nothing can make them stumble”* (LXX Psalm 118:165).

So, the peacemaker ought to be peaceable within. He should make peace with those who are at odds with each other. Finally, just as our Lord Jesus Christ is both the Son of God and the King of Peace, those who imitate Him and follow the way of peace will likewise be called ‘sons of God.’

As an example of a peacemaker, let us turn to 1 Samuel, chapter 25 to read the story of Abigail and David.

The Story of Abigail, an Example of a Peacemaker

Now there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel, and the man was very rich. He had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. The name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. And she was a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man was harsh and evil in his doings. He was of the house of Caleb. When David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. And thus you shall say to him who lives in prosperity: 'Peace be to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that you have! Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds were with us, and we did not hurt them, nor was there anything missing from them all the while 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 comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.'" So when David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and waited. Then Nabal answered David's servants, and said, "Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from" (1 Samuel 25:2-11).

The name, 'Nabal' means 'fool,' and indeed, he acted very foolishly and senselessly. Although, he appears to be very rich on the outside, his cruelty made him very poor on the inside. In contrast to Nabal, his wife Abigail was not only considered a woman of beautiful appearance on the outside, but she was beautiful on the inside because of her wisdom and understanding. Why did Abigail marry such a man? Perhaps, her marriage was arranged. God allowed this marriage to happen to show the virtue of Abigail even more.

David sends his men to make a humble request to Nabal. He asks for whatever Nabal can provide, and in saying the words, 'your son David,' he honors Nabal as a father. David took care of Nabal's men while they were with him and protected them. David does not demand anything in return for the favor, but makes this very simple and humble request.

But look at how Nabal answers David's request. Nabal not only denies the request, but abuses David as well, and speaks as if David is insignificant and not worth taking notice of. Nabal, as a rich fool, forgets that his possessions are not his, but that he is a steward of the gifts God has given him.

So David's young men turned on their heels and went back; and they came and told him all these words. Then David said to his men, "Every man gird on his sword." So every man girded on his sword, and David also girded on his sword. And about four hundred men went with David, and two hundred stayed with the supplies. Now one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master; and he reviled them. But the men were very good to us, and we were not hurt, nor did we miss anything as long as we accompanied them, when we were in the fields. They were a wall to us both by night and day, all the time we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore, know and consider what you will do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his household. For he is such a scoundrel that one cannot speak to him" (1 Samuel 25:12-17).

Nabal's answer made David very angry, and perhaps he regretted ever showing kindness to Nabal and his servants. David was not acting like himself. David, after all, was a man after God's own heart. How could he seek the blood of Nabal and his men, just because he had been refused? How could he take revenge in this manner? Is this the same David who spared the life of Saul, when he had the chance to return evil for evil? David, who was usually calm and considerate, now became heated and angry over a few words.

Abigail is now told about all that has happened. Abigail listens carefully and will immediately take wise action to calm David and to ensure that he does not sin.

Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded them on donkeys. And she said to her servants, "Go on before me; see, I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal. So it was, as she rode on the donkey, that she went down under cover of the hill; and there were David and his men, coming down toward her, and she met them. Now David had said, "Surely in vain I have protected all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belongs to him. And he has repaid me evil for good. May God do so, and more also, to the enemies of David, if I leave one male of all who belong to him by morning light." Now when Abigail saw David, she dismounted quickly from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground. So she fell at his feet and said: "On me, my lord, on me let this iniquity be! And please let your maidservant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your maidservant. Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel Nabal. For as his name is, so is he: Nabal is his name, and folly is with him! But I, your maidservant, did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, since the LORD has held you back from coming to bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hand, now then, let your enemies and those who seek harm for my lord be as Nabal. And now this present which your maidservant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant. For the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord fights the battles of the LORD, and evil is not found in you throughout your days. Yet a man has risen to pursue you and seek your life, but the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the

living with the LORD your God; and the lives of your enemies He shall sling out, as from the pocket of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the LORD has done for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you ruler over Israel, that this will be no grief to you, nor offense of heart to my lord, either that you have shed blood without cause, or that my lord has avenged himself. But when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your maidservant."

Abigail, in her wisdom, acts quickly. She prepares the very best that her house could afford, and prepared it in abundance. With such wisdom, she speaks to David as he was coming. She speaks to him respectfully, so as not to inflame his anger, but with soothing words to calm him. She takes the blame upon herself for her husband's wickedness. She excuses her husband in blaming his natural weakness and lack of understanding. It is as if she is saying, "Forgive him, for he knows not what he does." She also points to her own ignorance of the situation, that she did not know what had happened and how David had protected Nabal's men. After all this, she commends David for his services, and confers on him the hope and the blessing that God would keep David safe, and give him victory over all his enemies.

Then David said to Abigail: "Blessed is the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand. For indeed, as the LORD God of Israel lives, who has kept me back from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, surely by morning light no males would have been left to Nabal!" So David received from her hand what she had brought him, and said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. See, I have heeded your voice and respected your person" (1 Samuel 25:32-35).

With just one speech, Abigail was able to fulfill the three dimensions of peace we mentioned earlier. In her peaceable nature, Abigail was able to restore peace to David's angry heart. Also, she prevented him from a great sin that would have separated him from God. Lastly, she brought peace among men in that David repented from his plan to kill Nabal for his wickedness. David blesses Abigail for her wisdom and advice. If we continue reading this chapter, we will find that Nabal dies, and that David takes Abigail as his wife.

Conclusion

The peace-making individual is wise and able to attract many to Christ. Let us follow the example of the wise Abigail in our dealings with others. Let us focus on the three dimensions we learned about. Let us be at peace with God, at peace with others, and at peace with ourselves.

Glory is due to God forever. Amen.