

“Abigail”
1 Samuel 25
October 27, 2019
Faith Presbyterian Church – Evening Service
Pr. Nicoletti

Our text this evening is from First Samuel, chapter twenty-five. It is a rather long chapter, but it tells us one story, and so we will take it as a whole.

Please do listen carefully, for this is God’s word for us this evening:

^{25:1} Now Samuel died. And all Israel assembled and mourned for him, and they buried him in his house at Ramah.

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

⁹ When David's young men came, they said all this to Nabal in the name of David, and then they waited. ¹⁰ And 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. ¹¹ 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?” ¹² So David's young men turned away and came back and told him all this. ¹³ And 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.

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

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

²³ When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. ²⁴ She 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. ²⁵ Let 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. ²⁶ Now then, my lord, as Yahweh lives, and as your soul lives, because Yahweh 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. ²⁷ And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. ²⁸ Please forgive the trespass of your servant. For Yahweh will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of Yahweh, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live. ²⁹ If 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 Yahweh your God. And the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling. ³⁰ And when Yahweh has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel, ³¹ my 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 Yahweh has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant.”

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

³⁶ And Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until the morning light. ³⁷ In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. ³⁸ And about ten days later Yahweh struck Nabal, and he died.

³⁹ When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Blessed be Yahweh who has avenged the insult I received at the hand of Nabal, and has kept back his servant from wrongdoing. Yahweh has returned the evil of Nabal on his own head.” Then David sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her as his wife. ⁴⁰ When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her, “David has sent us to you to take you to him as his wife.” ⁴¹ And she rose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, “Behold, your handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.” ⁴² And Abigail hurried and rose and mounted a donkey, and her five young women attended her. She followed the messengers of David and became his wife.

⁴³ David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and both of them became his wives. ⁴⁴ Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was of Gallim.

This is the Word of the Lord. (Thanks be to God.)

Let's pray ...

Lord, our eyes long for your salvation
and for the fulfillment of your righteous promises.
Deal with us, your servants, according to your steadfast love,

and teach us your statutes.

We are your servants, and so we ask you to give us understanding,
that we may know your testimonies.

As we attend to your word now,
help us to love it more than gold, even much fine gold.

Make us to hold to your precepts as right,
and to hate every false way.

Grant this, we ask, in Jesus's name. Amen

[Based on Psalm 119:123-125, 127-128]

Our text is a longer one this evening, and to get at its implications for us, we will begin by walking through the various stages of the narrative.

We might think of it in four basic stages. In verses one through twelve we have the offense of Nabal. In verse thirteen and also verses twenty-one and twenty-two we have David's response to Nabal. In verses fourteen through thirty-one we have Abigail's ministry. And finally, we have David's response to Abigail (along with its aftermath) in verses thirty-two through forty-four.

So – we will consider Nabal's offense, David's response to him, Abigail's ministry, and David's response to her.

First, there is Nabal's offense.

Nabal, we read in verse two, was a very wealthy man. And it was a festival time – both a time when people in Israel were feasting, and a time when men like Nabal were shearing their sheep and from it enjoying some of the profits of their wealth.

David sends a messenger to Nabal, and as we read in verse six, he greets Nabal with great respect. In the verses that follow David explains the service he has provided for Nabal, and then asks if there is something Nabal would be willing to provide for David's men as a provision for them, and an expression of thanks.

David's request can seem odd to us, but it wasn't to Nabal's servants. We read in verse fifteen and sixteen that David's men had provided real protection to Nabal's men. When we read how the servant describes it, we can appreciate that David is not exaggerating what he did for Nabal, but he is being modest about it. The servant says that David and his men were like a wall to Nabal's servants and the sheep, and he makes it sound like the servants intentionally stayed close to David's men in order to have their protection.

David asks now for some provisions for his men for their work, as a return for what they had done. The implication is that Nabal would not have as many sheep to shear that day if it had not been for David's men. David does not ask for anything exorbitant, but for "whatever [he] has at hand."

Nabal's response is to insult and attack David. He dismisses David and his significance. He describes him as a slave who has rebelliously broken away from his master, Saul. He emphatically tells David that all his possessions are his and he has no intention of sharing them, even with those who have served him – he uses the first-person pronoun eight times just in verse

eleven – he identifies what he has as “*my bread*,” “*my water*,” “*my meat*,” and “*my shearers*” and his actions as “*I take*,” “*I slaughter*,” “*I give*,” “*I know*”. [Leithart, 141]

Nabal has refused to share with those in need at a festival time. But more than that, he has refused to compensate those who had served him and whom he had profited from. In addition to that, he has insulted and degraded David and his men. And on top of it all he has emphatically declared his right to all he has. Nabal’s offense is real.

How then does David respond?

Well ... we already know the answer to that. But let’s take a minute and imagine we didn’t. Let’s imagine we did not know what comes after verse twelve. But we knew everything else David had done up to this point. What then would we *expect* David to do? How would we *guess* he would respond?

What I want to suggest is that we would expect David to receive the insult and the refusal graciously. And that’s because we’ve seen him do that time and time again in First Samuel up to this point. We’ve seen him graciously handle multiple murder attempts from Saul. Nabal’s offense is bad ... but not as bad as how Saul has treated him. And so we’d expect David to respond with patience and self-control.

Instead he declares his intent for a slaughter. In verse thirteen he gathers four hundred soldiers, he tells them to take up their swords, and then he begins to lead them to the house of Nabal. In verses twenty-two and thirty-four we learn that David’s intent was not just to take by force what he felt was owed to him and his men ... but his intent was to kill every male in the household of Nabal – among his family and presumably his servants! In a household of Nabal’s size that would be many people!

David’s response should knock us off-guard a bit. It should confuse us and perplex us.

And I think that is part of the point. You know, we might ask why this story is even here. A lot of things must have happened during this period when David and his men were in the wilderness. Why tell *this* story? Why *this* series of events? And why tell it in such a long form, emphasizing its importance?

The results of this encounter with Nabal will have no major political consequences for David’s progress towards the throne in Israel. We learn how he marries Abigail, but the author felt no need to tell us where Ahinoam came from. Why is this story included and emphasized?

I think it is in part because of how David’s response here is completely unexpected to us. And that tells us something about David, and about human nature, and about you and me.

David, who has been the example of virtue again and again in First Samuel to this point, with really only minor failings, now makes a massive mistake. David, who has seemed at times like the ideal of patience and self-constraint, responds to a situation now with murderous rage.

This story is so important because it reminds us that *all* human beings are prone to sin that will lead to the judgment of God. *All* human beings are prone to sin – to terrible sin even – to sin which will lead to God’s judgment.

And that is important because we can tend to think that we, or those we trust, or those we admire, are, or will be, above the possibility of such failings. But David reminds us that we are not.

We are *all* prone to sin that leads to God's judgment ... but that doesn't mean that our susceptibility to such sins comes out of nowhere. There are a few factors that may have contributed to David's response.

For one thing, the death of Samuel before these events, mentioned in verse one, may not be a coincidence. Samuel served as a source of direction and accountability to Saul, and we would imagine to David as well. But now the situation has changed. Now Samuel is gone. And we wonder if David will continue to act rightly without Samuel watching on in Israel. Perhaps the knowledge that Samuel would find out about such a violent overreaction would have helped David restrain himself, *if* Samuel had been alive. But he was not alive. And David does not, at first, restrain himself.

For a second factor, we should note how similar Nabal's sin towards David was to Saul's sin towards David. We're told that David had been faithfully serving Nabal, he had done nothing against him, and Nabal had prospered because of David. All three of those things were also true of how David had acted towards Saul. And then, like Saul, Nabal responded not only with ingratitude, and a refusal to do good in return, but also with outright contempt for David, with accusations of rebellion, and with a general thrust of returning evil for good. Nabal treated David in the exact same way that Saul had been treating David. And maybe that pushed David, and tempted David, more than we might at first think.

Maybe it was not unlike the man or woman who deals with disrespectful coworkers or customers all day, and keep their cool while at work, and then they get home, and the moment their spouse or one of their children gives even a hint of disrespect to them, they completely over-react. In a similar way, David has experienced this treatment again and again from Saul, the king. He has endured it. He has persevered. And now it comes from this arrogant landowner. And David flies off the handle and completely over-reacts.

We might speculate about other possible psychological factors, but the point is this: No one is above temptation. No one is above sin. Not me, not you, not David. We are *all* prone to sin that will lead to the judgment of God.

And the judgment factor is there. Had David acted as he intended, judgment would have come. We have seen that pattern in Saul's life. Abigail points out in verse twenty-six that if David did this, he would be guilty before God. David agrees in verse thirty-three. And in verse thirty-eight we are reminded that the judgment of God is no idle threat, as God strikes Nabal down for his sin.

Sin brings the judgment of God. And we are *all* prone to sin that will lead to such judgment.

And that might seem obvious. That might seem like Christianity 101. But while we confess it in our worship and in our theology, we so often act like we do not really believe it. We so often act like we, or those we love, or those we admire, are above temptation to significant sins.

We see this in ourselves every time we tell ourselves we can let our guard down about certain sins because we have overcome them ... and then we fall. We see this in ourselves when we are quick to condemn others for their sin and do not consider if we could be susceptible to such sins ourselves.

Proverbs says, “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

How often have you fallen into sin – whether anger, or lust, or covetousness, or gossip, or greed, or something else, because you acted as if you were not prone to sin when in fact you are?

We can do something similar towards those we love when we assume that those who are close to us are above some kinds of temptation. When we say or think things like “My child would never ...” or “My spouse would never ...” or “My sibling would never ...” or “My parent would never ...” or “My friend would never ...” or “Members of my church would never ...”

And we might finish those sentences in a range of ways: “would never abuse drugs or alcohol” or “would never cheat at school” or “would never be dishonest at work” or “would never get into pornography” or “would never have sex before their wedding” or “would never steal from their employer” or “would never be convinced by that anti-Christian worldview” or “would never bully or abuse others.”

When we make such statements, we functionally deny the Biblical doctrine that we are *all* prone to sin that will lead to God’s judgment.

We might as well say “David would never slaughter a household of males after being insulted and slighted.”

And we can be tempted to do the same thing with those we admire. Whether those around us – our mentors, or those who taught us the faith, or our elders, or our deacons – on the one hand, or the well-known Christian celebrities on the other, we want to believe our heroes of the faith are above temptation to serious sin. But they are not.

David was not. You are not. Those around you are not. Your heroes are not. David’s response to Nabal reminds us that we are *all* prone to sin that will lead to God’s judgment.

That is what we see in the first two movements of our text: Nabal’s offence against David, and David’s response to Nabal.

Now we come to the ministry of Abigail. Which is really quite extraordinary.

Abigail rushes first to correct the sin of her husband. She then makes her way to David, and when she reaches him, she openly acknowledges Nabal’s sin ... and she boldly exposes David’s sin – that if he continues with his plan, David will bring bloodguilt on himself. And she redirects David to the calling the Lord has placed on him.

This is Abigail’s ministry for Nabal and for all of her household – but it is especially her ministry to David, because she is seeking to keep him from sin.

And then in verses thirty-two through thirty-five David responds to Abigail. And he responds by seeing Abigail as a messenger sent by God to minister to him.

He says “Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! ³³ Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand! ³⁴ For as surely as Yahweh, 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.” ³⁵ Then 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.”

David *listened* to the voice of Abigail, David *recognized* that God was confronting him through the voice of Abigail, David *acknowledged* that Abigail was right and that he indeed was about to sin grievously, and David *obeyed* the voice of Abigail.

First, we should note that he listened. There were all sorts of power dynamics between David and Abigail that would have tempted him not to listen to her – but despite the temptation to use his power or authority to disregard her, David *listened*.

Second, David recognized that God was the one confronting him through Abigail. David says openly that he realizes that God sent her to him. David sees God’s hand at work in restraining him from sins, and pays attention accordingly, while also rendering Abigail the honor and dignity of a messenger of the Lord.

Third, David acknowledges that Abigail was right, and he was indeed going to sin. David makes no excuses, he gives no extenuating circumstances, he does nothing to minimize his intention. David owns the sin he was set to commit.

And finally, David obeys Abigail’s voice. That is the phrase he uses in verse thirty-five. Recognizing that she is right and that she has confronted him with the truth of God, David responds with obedience. He turns from the sin he was going to commit. He is delivered.

What we see in Abigail’s ministry and David’s response is that while we are all prone to sin that will lead to the judgment of God, God desires to deliver his people from their sin, and often uses unexpected messengers to do so.

Though we are tempted to various sins, God desires to deliver his people from their sin, and often uses unexpected messengers to do so.

There are three things then for us to consider for how this applies to our own lives: Because God desires to deliver his people from their sin, and often uses unexpected messengers (Abigails) to do so:

- We must *hear* the Abigails who are in our lives,
- We must *be* the Abigails in other people’s lives, and
- We must *seek* Abigails to add to our lives.

Let’s take a few moments to consider each of those.

First, we must *hear* the Abigails whom God has placed in our lives. We need to *hear* the unexpected messengers the Lord sends to us. And we, each one of us, struggle with this. We struggle to respond as David does.

When God uses the people in our lives to confront us with our sin, we are often experts at coming up with reasons not to listen to them. And we usually do that by finding a way to place them beneath us.

We might do that morally – we might try to point out sin in their own lives and then ask what on earth *they* are doing confronting us.

Or we might try to do it intellectually. We try to point out what we know, and what we have studied, and what we have read, and what experience we have, and we pile up our intellectual credentials and gifts and then we ask the other person what on earth *they* are doing confronting us.

Or we might focus on how we in some other way outrank the person confronting us. You are older and they are younger. You are in church leadership, and they are not. You are a man, and they are a woman. You are an adult, and they are a child. And so on, and so on.

We are tempted in a variety of ways to place the other person beneath us and then disregard them. But here is the key: David does not. David doesn't do that. Instead, he listens, and he recognizes that Abigail is God's messenger, and he admits that she is right, and he obeys her voice.

When we are attempted to assert our place to those who confront us, we must remember that at the very beginning of the Book of Samuel, in Hannah's song, in chapter two, we were told that the Lord, that Yahweh, delights in bringing down the proud through the humble. He can do that in judgment, or he can do it redemptively. In either case, we should not be surprised when God sends the weak to bring down the strong. David certainly was not surprised.

And we should not be either. After all, we confess that it was a meek Jewish peasant who, by the power of God, defeated sin, death, and Satan. Christ is the greater Abigail, who confronts each one of us. We must listen to him. And as we do, we should not be surprised that he uses other weak and overlooked people to get our attention.

Our text calls us to be a people who listen to the voices of those who confront us, and not place ourselves above them in order to disregard them. Instead, our text reminds us that God often delivers his people from sin by using unexpected messengers. We must *hear* the Abigails that the Lord has placed in our lives.

Second, we must *be* the Abigails whom the Lord has placed in the lives of others. We need to *be* the unexpected messengers God uses in the lives of other people.

As we consider that, we might note a few things about Abigail in our text.

Our culture can tend to reward two different patterns when it comes to confronting others. One is the harsh critic who elevates themselves as a noble crusader for truth or goodness. Another

pattern we reward – one that we don’t necessarily praise openly, but we still reward – is the quiet person who keeps to themselves or looks the other way when wrong is being done.

And Abigail does not fit into either of those patterns. She is characterized by courage, by humility, and by concern for the good of others.

First, Abigail is characterized by courage. Picture the scene. On the right, four hundred soldiers advance. Four hundred hungry soldiers. Four hundred angry soldiers. Four hundred soldiers with their swords strapped on. Four hundred soldiers who have decided to shed blood. They advance from the right.

And on the left, a single woman falls down before them, accompanied only by servants and donkeys. She knows the soldiers came in anger, but she does not know what damage they intend to do. As one commentator puts it: “In a world where an angry king could massacre every man, woman, and child in Nob, Abigail has no way of knowing whether David will have an impulse to kill her on the spot.” [Alter, 156]

Even so, when the servant tells Abigail what has happened, she does not flee from Nabal’s household, running away from the soldiers before they get there. Instead, she hurries towards them, and falls to the ground before the four hundred armed men.

Abigail is characterized by courage.

Second, Abigail is characterized by humility. When Abigail sees David, she falls on her face and bows before him in humility. Like Nabal, she begins her speech with first-person pronouns, but in her case, rather than claiming goods for herself, she claims the blame for herself. She repeatedly refers to David as “my lord” – in almost every sentence of her speech. [Leithart, 142] She does not denigrate David for his sin, but she reminds him of the high position that the Lord has called him to and urges him to live up to that role faithfully. She neither tears David down nor puffs herself up. She is characterized by humility.

Third, and flowing from that, Abigail is concerned with the good of others. Though she obviously hopes to spare her household, she asks for nothing for herself personally, but works to make peace. She confronts David so that he will not bring judgment on himself. She confronts David to spare the members of her household. She confronts David to save Nabal, even though it is fairly clear that she would be happier without him. She confronts David to save David’s call to the throne, even though at this moment she may have doubts of his fitness to rule. Abigail confronts David not only for her own good, but for the good of others – including those she is confronting!

Courage, humility, and concern for the good of others. This is what characterizes Abigail-like messengers in the lives of others.

And so ... before you ask *who* God might be calling you to confront, you might first ask whether you have cultivated these virtues. You don’t need to wait until you are perfect before God might call you to such a confrontation, but your calling is to be the kind of person that he *could* use for a peacemaking confrontation characterized by courage, humility, and concern for others.

And as you pursue those virtues, consider if there is someone the Lord may be calling you to be an Abigail towards. Someone you might bless with a firm, godly, and loving confrontation, but you have not done it because you lack courage. Or someone you may be called to confront gently, but you have been too harsh with them instead, because you lack humility. Or someone whose sin you should be doing *something* about, but you haven't because you're not as concerned as you should be for the wellbeing of others.

Where might you be called to be an Abigail in the life of someone else?

We must *hear* the Abigails who are in our lives, we must *be* the Abigails in other people's lives, and third and finally: We must *seek* Abigails to *add* to our lives.

Growing out of our knowledge of our own weakness – our admission that we *are* in fact prone to sin that will lead to God's judgment, we must seek and gather other Abigails around ourselves.

That means we must find the kind of people who will courageously and humbly confront us for our good, and we must cultivate relationships with them. It also means that we must give the people who are already in our lives permission to confront us about our sin, asking them to serve as Abigails to us and confront us for our good.

David gets this to an extent ... but also not as much as he needs to.

David gets it to an extent, because after the Lord strikes Nabal down, David sends for Abigail and immediately proposes marriage. David announces his intention in verse forty, and she accepts in verses forty-one and forty-two.

Abigail, we are told, is beautiful, but David praises her in verses thirty-two and thirty-three for her wisdom (her discretion, he says), and for her willingness to be a servant of the Lord. David recognizes that he needs Abigail in his life.

So David gets it. And yet ... not as much as we might hope.

Because in verse forty-three and forty-four we are told that Abigail was David's second wife at the time ... and would in a sense be his third when Michal was brought back to him.

This is to be a trend with David. He will continue to multiply his wives, so that by the time he becomes king in Hebron he will have six different sons, each with a different mother (2 Samuel 3:2-5). [Leithart, 144]

As one commentator puts it "By the time of the Bathsheba episode, David had an ingrained habit of taking whatever woman attracted him and adding her to his collection. He had begun to 'take' [...] and so why not take Bathsheba also?" [Leithart, 144]

Verses forty-three and forty-four serve as a bit of foreshadowing of a problem to come, and as a sign that David did not gather enough Abigail-like friends and advisors in his life. He either did not surround himself with the kind of people, or did not listen to the kind of people, who would confront him for taking many wives – something which Deuteronomy 17:17 explicitly forbid for the king. David needed fewer wives, but more Abigails.

Our text tonight gives us an exciting story – one that makes us feel admiration for Abigail and relief for David. Though sin is crafty and in each of us, we applaud Abigail’s courage, humility, and concern for others, and we rejoice in the repentance it led David too.

That is a good response to this text.

But we should also recognize that we are much better at applauding Abigails in stories we read about than we are at applauding them in real life.

When Abagails, when unexpected messengers of the Lord, confront *us* about *our* sin, or confront someone we care about with about *their* sin ... then applause are not usually our first response. When God calls us to confront someone else like Abigail did, we rarely respond by thanking him for the opportunity to show courage, humility, and love. As we live our lives, we more often avoid than invite in those who might confront us when we need it.

Our story tonight is a good one. The key – the challenge, is to not let it stay locked up in a book, but to make it real in our lives. To truly hear the Abigails the Lord sends to confront us, rather than dismissing them. To step up and be an Abigail rather than simply look out for ourselves. And to value our relationship with God enough to invite others to keep watch over our life and speak to us about it.

Thankfully, we have help from the One who sends such Abigails – the One whom every Abigail is derived from. Remember our text this morning – Jesus was hated because he testified that the works of the world were evil ... because he confronted them ... because he is the ultimate Abigail.

And so, let us ask our Lord to help us – to help us love him enough that we might hear and seek the messengers he sends us ... and to help us value his love for us enough that we can be his messengers to others, in courage, humility, and love.

Amen.

This sermon draws on material from:

Alter, Robert. *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.

Davis, Dale Ralph. *I Samuel: Looking on the Heart*. Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2000.

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