

## Connection to Passage

Nabal's wife Abigail interceded on her wicked husband's behalf and was blessed by God through the mercy of David. God's love and justice are always working in tandem.

## Introduction/Opening

When it comes to the love and justice of God, there are two extremes. Some overemphasize the love of God and downplay His justice and wrath, making God look like a kindly grandfather who is a pushover when it comes to sin. On the other hand, others overemphasize God's justice and downplay His love, portraying God as an angry bully hurling lightning bolts down from heaven looking for His next victim. The Bible teaches us that God's love and justice are two sides of the same coin and are complementary attributes of His nature. You can't have true love that is void of justice.

## Outline

- I. The Hardness of Nabal (1 Sam. 25:14-17)
  - a) We are warned in the Bible to not harden our hearts (Ps. 95:8; Heb. 3:8,15). We harden our hearts when we habitually turn away from God and His Word. The danger of hardening our hearts is that nothing can penetrate it. We become cold and closed off from God and others. But even worse, we place ourselves in the path of God's justice.
  
- II. The Heroism of Abigail (1 Sam. 25:32-36)
  - a) Abigail showed incredible courage as she mediated between Nabal and David. Abigail's courage actually saved her own life (v. 34). Abigail is an example of grace in action, interceding for her worthless husband who didn't deserve her intervention.
  - b) In some ways, Abigail is a picture of Christ, our mediator. As our only hope, Jesus mediates for worthless sinners before God (Heb. 9:15).
  
- III. The Hand of God (1 Sam. 25:37-38)
  - a) Nabal found his joy in drunkenness but not in grace. When he was drunk, his heart was glad. When he learned about Abigail's mediation, he became paralyzed. His physical condition now matched his hard heart.
  - b) God provided Nabal grace through the intervention of Abigail, but instead of receiving it, he became more hardened and faced the full vengeance of God's justice. God's love and justice is demonstrated in the cross of Jesus. When we, by faith, receive God's mercy, we are saved. However, when we reject God's mercy, we place ourselves in the path of God's wrath.

## Conclusion

The story of Nabal's rebellion is played out today thousands of times over. Week after week, people hear the good news of Jesus Christ, our Mediator who bore God's wrath for our sin and who in turn gave us God's unearned righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). Yet week after week, that message bounces off hard hearts like the seed planted in hard soil (see Matt. 13:1-9,18-23). But if we allow God to soften our hearts through His love and trust in His Son alone for salvation, we can be saved. So today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart (Heb. 3:15). Listen and avoid the plight of Nabal.

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