

## Victory of the Lamb- Family Matters – The Joy of Serving – 1 Samuel 25:23-33a

September 23, 2018 – Pastor Bill Limmer

Last year, the husband and wife team of Matt and Renee decided since they were getting older to buy cemetery plots for each other of their birthdays. This year, Renee didn't buy anything for Matt's birthday. When Matt asked her why, she responded: "because you haven't used what I bought you last year." And, that is when the fight started.

This morning we are continuing our Family Matter series. So far, we have seen the main ingredient for any person's life and for any family is Jesus! Last week we saw that marriage isn't about you and that husbands then are to love their wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. (Eph 5) Later in this series we will look at the blessings of singleness, parenting, sibling rivalries and more. But today we are continuing Family Matters by looking at essential nature of woman and most specifically wives.

This morning I want to share with you a modern-day story based on a true historical account. Abby. Abby is a woman of great beauty, character, sensitivity, intelligence and wisdom. Abby is married to a very wealthy man, Nate. But Nate is a man who is obstinate, stubborn and harsh. He made life tough not just for his employees but for his family as well. So, if you are tracking with me, we have a winner who is married to a self-centered jerk.

Nate had a man named Dave and his company protecting his assets. There was no formal agreement, but Nate knew what was going on and so did Dave and his associates. Dave and his company were doing the right things for Nate and his assets. Dave and his company protected this man's assets, his livelihood. When it was time to sell off part of those assets it was customary, as well as ethical, for the one protecting the assets to be compensated. It wasn't mandatory, but it's kind of like when you go to a restaurant, it is expected that you and I will tip our waiter or waitress. Nate receives the profits from the selloff of some of his assets but doesn't compensate Dave. In fact, he plays off that Dave and his company didn't really help him in the first place. You can imagine this didn't go over so well with David and his company. And so, they plan a hostile takeover which will ruin him, strip the man of his assets and undoubtedly lead this man into a pit of despair of which he will not come out alive. When Abby learns of the plot to ruin her husband, Abby takes matters into her own hands. She intervenes. She spares no expense. At great cost and effort of her own, Abby prepares a white linen, 6 course dinner, extravaganza for David and his entire company because Family Matters.

You can read the whole true story in 1 Samuel 25. Samuel is a book in the Old Testament and keep in mind that a chapter in the Bible is not alike a chapter in one of the books we buy today. A chapter in the bible is usually one page or so. And here is what happened next: 1 Samuel 25:23-33a <sup>23</sup> **When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground.** <sup>24</sup> **She fell at his feet and said: "Pardon your servant, my lord, and let me speak to you; hear what your servant has to say.** <sup>25</sup> **Please pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means Fool, and folly goes with him. And as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my lord sent.** <sup>26</sup> **And now, my lord, as surely as the LORD your God lives and as you live, since the LORD has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, may your enemies and all who are intent on harming my lord be like Nabal.** <sup>27</sup> **And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my lord, be given to the men who follow you.** <sup>28</sup> **"Please forgive your servant's presumption. The LORD your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my lord, because you fight**

the LORD's battles, and no wrongdoing will be found in you as long as you live.<sup>29</sup> Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my lord will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God, but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling.<sup>30</sup> When the LORD has fulfilled for my lord every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him ruler over Israel,<sup>31</sup> my lord will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the LORD your God has brought my lord success, remember your servant."<sup>32</sup> David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me."<sup>33</sup> May you be blessed for your good judgment.

One thing I want to note for you that in this Scripture account, we don't have any indication of Nabal crossing the line into physical, emotional, mental or spiritual abuse. abuse of his wife. Sometimes the best way we can help our spouse is to lead them to get counseling and sometimes that may even mean moving out until the counseling has accomplished its goal. There is nowhere in Scripture where it says that it is ok to abuse your spouse. Scripture does say, **Ephesians 5:21 and 22 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.**<sup>22</sup> **Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.** I think it is disheartening that we gravitate to the second verse and mostly skip over the first verse. Why do we do that? Sin leads us to want to have authoritarian rule or to rebel. The first passage doesn't allow for it. The second doesn't really either but our hearts are always looking for an edge.

What would you have done? Abigail was in a less than desirable situation. Maybe your marriage is less than desirable right now. Do you think Abigail had to try hard to make her marriage work? She is a princess married to a frog, but the kiss didn't work. Here is what Abigail didn't do: She didn't use her kids to vent about what a worthless guy she married. She didn't use crying, yelling or the silent treatment to manipulate her husband.; She didn't nag and pick fights with her husband hoping that he would eventually turn into the godly man that he needs to be. She didn't pack her bags and leave. Because she knew, 1 Peter 3:3-4 **Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes.**<sup>4</sup> **Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.**

Today we all, men and women – married and single, try to get our value by our roles instead of our identity. Abigail received her value not by what she did, not but what her role was, but by whose she was. She was a child of God. Her name means "My Father is joyful." Women were created in the image of God just as men were. In Genesis 2:18 it says, "The LORD God said, "**It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make Azer Kenegdo for him.** Forgive my Hebrew. But I wanted to use the Hebrew because I think we have too much cultural baggage with what the English says. In English the word Azer – helper seems patronizing. In Hebrew it elicits an inherent strength. Kenegdo means corresponding, suitable, essential. Side by side these two terms mean means "essential counterpart, indispensable companion, or one who comes along to lend strength." I want to emphasize this point by letting you know that Azer is used 21 times in the Old Testament and not exclusively for women. In fact, most prominently for God. The word is used twice in the creation account, 3 times as a military word, and 16 times God identifies himself as Azer. Azer is not a weak word: It is a strong word. An Azer is for us. Abigail was reflecting God's glory when she is doing what she was designed to do, helping her husband Nabal, because Nabal like all of us – didn't deserve help. It was unconditional love.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century there was an architectural innovation called the [flying buttress](#). (pic) The flying buttress provides essential support that preserves the architectural soundness and integrity of a building. The buttresses bear the weight and relieve pressure from the wall which allows for ornamentation in the design. Like these powerful structures, a woman provides an undergirding of

strength within the context of relationship that empowers another to become and achieve great things that might otherwise have been impossible. She is an essential counterpart providing necessary, load bearing support. The azer kenegdo is a woman's God given identity.

In my own life Jacky has been that azer kenegdo day in and day out for over 30 years. I couldn't wait to get married and have a family. I was going to rock this. Piece of cake. Well like a crumb cake, I crumbled under pressure. To highlight one example would be when our daughter was on her deathbed. Jacky was incredibly strong not only for Alyssa, our son Andrew but for me. She watched over Alyssa and stuck by me even though I was coming unglued. Jacky fulfilled her God given identity because Family Matters.

This past week someone set a fraudulent email account using my name. Someone was appearing to be me. Our identity has been stolen by sin. We sometimes act, look, and think like anything but image bearers of God. The consequences inside relationships are internal and external separation on one hand and co-dependency on the other hand. Neither are a working or lasting solution. God has this directive for us in Scripture: **Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.** As you look around at all your relationships, there is often a sticking point, a point where there is a rub, I will go this far but no farther, a break in what was once a great relationship, a fear, a comparison, a I'm going to protect myself, a selfishness, a settling. Because of sin, men often choose passivity and women often choose autonomy.

We need a counterpart to our sin. Remember when I let you in on the secret that Azer refers to God more than to anyone in Scripture. Psalm 146:5 **Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob. Whose hope is in the LORD.** Jesus is our essential counterpart. He is essential. Jesus, the God man, did something amazing, he bore the image of God perfectly in every way. Jesus is just like us. Yet Jesus is completely different than we are. We sinful, he is sinless, we are imperfect, he is perfect. We don't have the capacity to pay for one sin Jesus has the capacity to pay for the sins of the world. And in fact, he paid for them in full, including those where we have trashed God's identity but being anything but image bearers of God. He did this for you and me, so we could live for eternity because Family Matters.

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