

Sunday 18 July: God gives David what he needs - and more!

If you were forced to live out in the wilds, I wonder what you would long for most.

Young David was probably used to sleeping rough – after all he had been a shepherd and would have slept in front of the sheep fold at night. So he probably didn't miss a comfortable bed or a house. But I think he really missed having friends around him. He had had to say goodbye to his best friend, Jonathan, and Saul had forced his wife, Michal, to marry someone else when David left the court! Even David's parents were not there for him as he arranged for them to live in a neighbouring country so that Saul couldn't hurt them. He was very alone.

But God provided him with new friends. 400 other young men joined him. Most of them were in trouble of one kind or another and they were sad and lonely. David became their captain and tried to lead them according to God's rules. God was preparing him to be in charge of a country and to rule over people.

Of course, this meant that David needed lots of food. But David didn't let his men steal or raid the farms for food. Instead he asked the farmers for help. One of the farmers near where they were living was a rich man called Nabal. During the shearing season David sent some men to him. They reminded him that they not robbed him at all although his sheep had grazed near their caves and asked if he would donate them food so they could have a feast – God's law instructed people to be especially generous at shearing time.

But Nabal disobeyed God's rules about generosity and refused point blank. David was so angry, that he forgot to ask God what to do. Instead he and his men planned a revenge attack on the farm. Fortunately God stepped in in an amazing way before David could make this mistake.

Nabal had a most attractive wife and intelligent wife, Abigail, who heard about Nabal's rudeness and was horrified. She knew her husband wouldn't listen to her so she simply called on the servants to pack up a feast and she set off to find David in the hills. When she found him, she pleaded with him to accept the gift of food and to forget about Nabal who couldn't help being foolish (Even his name meant 'fool'!). David was grateful – not just for the food but because she had stopped him from taking revenge when he knew that God tells us not to do that.

In time, God dealt with Nabal and, when Nabal died, David married Abigail.

There are lots of lessons for us in this story, but I think the biggest is to remember to trust God even though things don't seem to be working out. God will sort things out for us. This week we have seen all kinds of trouble in South Africa. But if people take revenge, then they are not trusting God to help them. God's plans are bigger and better than ours can ever be and we must trust him to act for us.

Readings: (All from 1 Samuel)

Monday: ch 22:1-2 (God provides friends)

Tuesday: ch 25:1-8 (Nabal is asked to provide food)

Wednesday: ch 25: 9-13 (Nabal refuses and David is angry)

Thursday: ch 25: 14, 18-19; 28 (Abigail talks sense!)

Friday: ch 25: 32-34 (David realizes what God has done)