



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FENTON

To be a loving community of faith dedicated to helping people know Jesus Christ and grow, share and serve as his disciples.

5th Sunday in Lent

March 26th, 2023 10:00 a.m.

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GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

In this story, David and his men are literally in the wilderness, where they had retreated for their safety. In the two stories that frame the story of David, Nabal, and Abigail, David is thrust into an unexpected position of power over Saul, who is still the anointed king and hunting for David, his rival. Will David take matters into his own hands? Or will he put his trust in the Lord? God's provision in this story is not just the loads of food that Abigail brings; God's provision of grace is a person who is willing to risk herself, bare her soul, and speak truthfully to another. God's provision is Abigail in all her wisdom, authenticity, vulnerability, and resourcefulness.

PRELUDE

WELCOME

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 90:14–17

14 Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

**15 Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us
and as many years as we have seen evil.**

16 Let your work be manifest to your servants
and your glorious power to their children.

**17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us
and prosper for us the work of our hands
O prosper the work of our hands!**

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God, we gather in this place not because we are deserving of your love and not because we have lived faithfully before your face.

We gather here because you have called us. You loved us before we could love you. You have given your Son for our salvation. For this we join all creation in blessing you, praising you, thanking you.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! You are great, and greatly to be praised. As we offer our praise, we long for you to mold us in the image of your Son, whose death and resurrection give us hope.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

HYMN #39 “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

CALL TO CONFESSION: —based on Isaiah 55:6-7, NRSV
 Seek the Lord while he may be found,
 call upon him while he is near;
 let the wicked forsake their way,
 and the unrighteous their thoughts;
 let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,
 and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
 Trusting ourselves to the grace of God,
 let us confess our sins before God and one another.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

**God of compassion,
 you are slow to anger and full of mercy,
 welcoming sinners who return to you with penitent hearts.
 Receive in your loving embrace
 all who come home to you.
 Seat them at your bountiful table of grace,
 that, with all your children,
 they may feast with delight
 on all that satisfies the hungry heart.
 We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior,
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, forever and ever. Amen.**

DECLARATION OF PARDON: based on Joel 2:13; 2 Corinthians 9:15, NRSV
 Return to the Lord your God,
 for he is gracious and merciful,
 slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.
 In Christ, we are forgiven!
 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

O Christ, by remaining faithful till death,
 you show us the road to greater love.
 O Christ, by taking the burden of sin upon yourself,

you reveal to us the way of generosity.
 O Christ, by praying for those who crucified you,
 you lead us to forgive without counting the cost.
 O Christ, by opening paradise to the repentant thief,
 you awaken hope in us.
 O Christ, come and help our weak faith.
 O Christ, create a pure heart in us;
 renew and strengthen our spirit.
 O Christ, your Word is near;
 may it live within us and protect us always. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: 1 Samuel 25:2-35
Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus

2 There was a man in Maon whose property 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 was Abigail. The woman was clever and beautiful, but the man was surly and mean; 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** Thus you shall salute 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 sight, for we have 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** But Nabal answered David’s servants, “Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are breaking away from their masters. **11** Shall I take my bread and my water and the meat that I have butchered 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** David said to his men, “Every man strap on his sword!” And every one 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, “David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master, and he shouted insults at them. **15** Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we never missed anything when we were in the fields as long as we were 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 evil has been decided against our master and against all his house; he is so ill-natured that no one can speak to him.”

18 Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred loaves, two skins of wine, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs. She loaded them on donkeys **19** and said to her young men, “Go on ahead of me; I am coming after you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal. **20** As she rode on the donkey and came down under cover of the mountain, David and his men came down toward her, and she met them. **21** Now David had said, “Surely it was in vain that I protected all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, but he has returned me evil for good. **22** God do so to 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 dismounted from the donkey and fell before David on her face, bowing to the ground. **24** She fell at his feet and said, “Upon me alone, my lord, be the guilt; please let your servant speak in your ears and hear the words of your servant. **25** My lord, do not take seriously this ill-natured 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 the LORD lives and as you yourself live, since the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt and from taking vengeance with your own hand, now let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be like 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 the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live. **29** If anyone should rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living under the care of the LORD your God, but the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling. **30** When the LORD 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 having saved himself. And when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant.”

32 David said to Abigail, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you to meet me today! **33** Blessed be your good sense, and blessed be you, who kept me today from bloodguilt and from avenging myself by my own hand! **34** For as surely as the LORD 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 would not have been left to Nabal so much as one male.” **35** Then David received from her hand what she had brought him; he said to her, “Go up to your house in peace; see, I have heeded your voice, and I have granted your petition.”

ANTHEM “How Beautiful”

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Romans 8:6-11

6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. **7** For this

reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot, **8** and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. **10** But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. **11** If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

We live not by bread alone, but by every word that comes from God.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON God Sets A Table for David

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Have you ever felt defensive? Defenseless?

What would it feel like to have God defend you?

HYMN #438 “Rock of Ages”

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

OFFERING

When we give to the ministries of this church we are proclaiming that God is working in this world: to bring glory to his name and reconciliation to all creation.

Let us pray: Mighty God and Father, you overwhelm us with your great mercy. At the time of our greatest need you surprised us with your wondrous love. Jesus offered his life for us to remove our dreadful curse. As you draw us into this renewing relationship of love, may we respond with gratitude as we offer the substance of our souls to continue the ministry of Christ. For his name and glory we pray and present our gifts. Amen!

(If you would like a written prayer request included in our prayers today, please indicate that and an usher will collect them)

(Financial Offerings can be placed in dropbox located in the New Narthex)

Will the Ushers Please come forward.

OFFERTORY “This Train” Morris Fulcher

DOXOLOGY

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of all seasons,
 in your pattern of things
 there is a time for keeping and a time for losing,
 a time for building up and a time for pulling down.
 In this season of Lent
 as we journey to the cross,
 help us to discern in our lives
 what we must lay down and what we must take up,
 what we must end and what we must begin.
 Give us grace to lead a disciplined life,
 in glad faithfulness and with the joy
 that comes from a closer walk with Christ. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

TABLETALK WITH GOD'S CHILDREN

While David was in the wilderness, he asked a wealthy man named Nabal, whose shepherds David had protected, to give food to him and his men. Instead Nabal hurled insults at David. But Nabal's wife, Abigail, acted quickly. She took bread, wine, meat, roasted grain, cakes of raisins, and pressed figs, loaded them on donkeys, and went out to meet David and his men. David said, "Praise be to the LORD, who has sent you to meet me and kept me from avenging myself." He accepted from her hand what she had brought him and sent her home in peace.

-adapted from 1 Samuel 25

HYMN Lord I Need You

Verse 1: Lord I come, I confess
 Bowing here, I find my rest
 Without You, I fall apart
 You're the one that guides my heart

Chorus: Lord, I need You, oh, I need You
 Every hour, I need You
 My one defense, my righteousness
 Oh God, how I need You

Verse 2: Where sin runs deep, Your grace is more
 Where grace is found is where You are

And where You are, Lord, I am free
Holiness is Christ in me

Chorus: Lord, I need You, oh, I need You
Every hour, I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You
So teach my song to rise to You

Bridge: When temptation comes my way
And when I cannot stand, I'll fall on You
Jesus, You're my hope and stay

Chorus: Lord, I need You, oh, I need You
Every hour, I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You
You're my one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You

CHARGE —1 Thessalonians 5:23, NIV
May God himself, the God of peace,
sanctify you through and through.
May your whole spirit, soul and body
be kept blameless
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

BENEDICTION #540 “Shalom Chaverim”

POSTLUDE

Peace be with you!...and also with you!