

**Sermon Series: After God's Own Heart:
A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments**
To be used with Honor Life
Sermon Title Possibilities: Vengeance Belong to God
Scripture: 1 Samuel 26:7-11, 22-25

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study "After God's Own Heart: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments," this sermon focuses on believers restraining from repaying evil with evil when it appears that God has opened a door of opportunity. We must learn that just because an open door is before us, walking through it is not always God's will. The door may be a spiritual test of our biblical convictions.

Introduction: David rose to stardom in the eyes of Israel because the Lord placed him on the battlefield to defeat the Philistine giant Goliath. Not only did he find favor in the eyes of the people but also in King Saul's eyes. Yet, David's rise was short-lived because, with every victory on the battlefield, the king felt threatened, which eventually led to David running for his life. This text represents one of the times where David had to remember that vengeance belongs to the Lord.

What should we do when life seems to be unfair? How will we respond when the systems of this world seem to be against us? As we look at the text before us, we will put it all, the good, the bad, the unfair, the ridiculous, and the ugly, in His hands.

1. RESIST BAD COUNSEL (vs. 7-9)

David and Abishai were in the camp of King Saul, who was hunting David to kill him. At the same time, Saul and his men were sleeping. Abishai surmised that the LORD had given his enemy into their hands to eliminate. David's servant possibly made this recommendation based on the Scriptures, which says, "How should . . . two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them?" (Deut 32:30). Yet, David knew the sound of competent counsel. Abigail advised him that the LORD will fulfill His promise and make him king. He will not have a troubled conscience by seeking his revenge (1 Sa 25:30-1).

As saints, we may receive counsel from different people, some worldly and some Christian. Yet, that counsel must first be biblical. Ask the question. Does it come from the Word of God? Second, does it truly apply to your situation? Third, are there other scriptures that need to be considered? Fourth, have I taken this situation and His Word to Him in prayer to receive wisdom from His Spirit?

2. RECALL BIBLICAL CONSEQUENCES (vs. 9-11)

After receive counsel from Abishai, David responded by saying, "who can lift a hand against the LORD's anointed and be innocent?" (v 9). The Bible commands, "Do not touch my anointed ones" (Ps 105:15). Saul was appointed and anointed to be king by God Himself, not David. Although Saul made life difficult for him, David could not remove him. In his encounter with Abigail, David understood this because he stated that she kept him from avenging himself by his hand (1 Sa 25:33). The future king could not kill Saul and be innocent because he had learned not to "take revenge or bear a grudge against members of your community but love your neighbor as yourself; I am Yahweh" (Le 19:18).

3. REST IN THE BELIEVER'S COMFORT (vs. 22-25)

David also knew that the LORD would do what is right. The Bible states, "He will take vengeance on His adversaries; He will purify His land and His people" (De 32:43). Taking matters in his hand would not keep him in good standing with God. Therefore, David declared to Abishai, "I will never lift my hand against the LORD's anointed" (1 Sa 26:11). He also told King Saul, "May the Lord repay every man for his righteousness and loyalty. I wasn't willing to lift my hand against the Lord's anointed, even though the Lord handed you over to me today" (v 23).

David later wrote a psalm declaring that one will reap what they have sown. He said, "The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; He repaid me according to the cleanness of my hands. For I have kept the ways of the Lord and have not turned from my God to wickedness" (Ps 18:20–1). What should comfort every believer is that God will repay one's righteousness.

Conclusion: David received terrible advice, but he recognized it. He remembered what the LORD commanded from His Word that vengeance belongs to the LORD. God will right the wrongs. He will repay those that have acted wickedly and those who have acted righteously. My father told me that this is a dog eat dog world. Yet, we don't have to think, feel, work, or live the way the world does. We are called to be wise as serpents but harmless as doves.

Brian M. Carmichael Sr. is married to Stacey of twenty-seven years. They have four grown children (3 boys and 1 girl) and two grandchildren. He is the pastor of Holy Temple Baptist in Memphis, TN and is an adjunct professor at Baptist College of Health and Sciences, Union University (Jackson, TN), and Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. He received his BSOL from Union University (Jackson, TN) and his MDIV and PhD from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.