



## SANCTUARY REFLECTION GUIDE

October 27, 2024

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**Title:** When It's Hard NOT to Be Mean

**Preacher:** Rev. Paul Rasmussen

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 25:2-33, Romans 12:14-18, Psalm 139:23

Do you ever have to deal with mean people? Of course you do, and it's really hard! As people of faith, how are we supposed to respond to the mean people we encounter? Do we return mean with mean? After all, "getting even" sounds really nice. And surely we shouldn't just tolerate meanness. That doesn't seem helpful at all either. *So what do we do?*

In 1 Samuel 25, David finds himself in this exact situation, and he is tempted to get even until a wise woman intervenes to advocate for peace. This week, we'll look at David's story and gain perspective about making peace with the difficult people in our lives.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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1. What stuck out to you about this sermon? Was there an idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?
2. How would you articulate the difference between *peacekeeping* and *peacemaking*?
3. Who in your life advocates for peace like Abigail in 1 Samuel 25? What can we learn from their example? Or maybe you are like Abigail! If so, what have you learned from your experience?
4. Sometimes making peace means giving up our desire to be right or to "get even." Why do you think we struggle to resist those desires? How does our culture encourage us to lean into them?

5. Read Romans 12:14-21 together. What are some practical ways that we can live these verses out when we interact with unkind people?

## WEEKLY PRACTICE

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Jesus teaches us to love even those who mistreat us and pray for them. This week, spend time in prayer, inviting God to speak into places of conflict or hurt in your life:

- Begin by echoing David's prayer from Psalm 139:23-24:  
*Search me, God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.  
See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.*
- Spend a few minutes in quiet, asking God to reveal any frustration, hurt, or unresolved tension you may be carrying toward others.
- Then, talk through whatever people or situations came to mind. How do they make you feel? How do you *want* to respond? Where do you need God's wisdom? Where do you need His peace?
- Close your prayer by choosing one relationship or situation where making peace feels difficult. Pray specifically for that person (or those people). Ask God to give you a heart of compassion for them and the strength to pursue peace, as far as it depends on you.