

Abigail – A Wise Wife

Text : **I Samuel 25**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Our text is in a section describing three temptations of David.

1. David spared the life of Saul in the cave.
2. He is tempted to kill Nabal.
3. Spared Saul while he slept. (*God was training David to wait on Him.*)

B. David was dwelling in the wilderness of Paran apart from Israel.

1. It was the land where Ishmael dwelt. (**Gen. 21: 21**)
2. Israel was there during the wilderness wandering. (**Gen. 10: 12 ; 12:16 ; 13: 3, 26**)

C. Nabal pastured his sheep in the wild and untamed land.

1. He was outside the protection of his king's domain. (*great risk to use free*)
2. It took a great amount of land to feed 3000 sheep and 1000 goats.
3. This was an unwise act.
 - a. There were many raiders there.
 - b. He put his wealth at great risk without adequate protection.

D. David and his men performed a valuable service for Nabal.

1. Nabal's men used David's camp as a shield.
2. David's men could have eaten from the flocks of Nabal, but didn't.
3. Culturally, the owner of the flock was expected to reward its protectors.

E. Nabal's refusal to give what David requested was a major insult.

1. David should not have had to request; Nabal should have given w/o request.
2. David was considerate in only sending 10 young men, rather than going with his army.
3. Even in refusing, Nabal could have been respectful.
 - a. Forgive me, but we cannot afford to ...
 - b. I'm sorry, but I don't think it would be appropriate ...
4. Nabal went out of his way to insult David.
 - a. The attitude of Nabal was to look down on and to talk down at David.
 - b. He implied that David was nothing more than a runaway servant of Saul.
 - c. His response was indicative of the deficiency of his character.

F. Nabal was about to reap what he had sown.

1. David had to respond to such a dramatic insult.
 - a. David was a leader of fighting men.
 - b. The men would not follow a leader who seemed weak.
2. It was a bad time to insult David.
 - a. He had been in bad circumstances for an extended length of time.
 - b. David and his men were tired and in need of lifting up. (*Morale problem*)
3. There is never a good time to insult a man.
 - a. It had been a long time since the prophet had anointed David as King.
 - b. David had to have been frustrated because God had not yet set him on the throne.

G. Nabal had done nothing to earn the respect of David or anyone else.

1. Nabal used his wealth to bully those who had less than him.
2. Nabal could not even defend his own flocks. (*Had put flock at risk w/o defense*)

H. David was a respected man of war and was known by all in Israel. (*Songs about*)

1. David had defeated the giant Goliath.
2. David had defeated the Philistines and other enemies of Israel.
3. David had 600 trained and battle-hardened soldiers.

I. Nabal's arrogant belligerence was the act of a very foolish man.

1. The name "Nabal" literally means "Fool." (*Imagine having a name like that.*)
2. His servants knew him to be a foolish man.

I Sam. 25: 17- Now therefore, know and consider what you should do, for evil is plotted against our master and against all his household; and he is such a worthless man that no one can speak to him.

3. His wife knew him to be a foolish man.

I Sam. 25: 23- Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent.

J. This is about to prove to be Nabal's final act of stupidity.

1. Nabal thought because he was rich he could act like a king.
2. David had the ability and the determination to destroy Nabal and all he controlled.

It is at this point that we are introduced to Abigail.

I. Abigail was an exceptional woman trapped in difficult circumstances.

A. She was most likely given as a bride for Nabal by her father.

1. Women did not always have a voice in who they were given to as a bride.
2. She would have come from a comparable family.
3. Her physical beauty would have made her more valuable in the transaction.

B. Her marriage was a total mismatch.

1. Nabal was a fool, but she was intelligent.
2. She was skilled at dealing with people, but Nabal was not.
3. Others respected Abigail, but Nabal was held in contempt.

C. How would you handle being married to a man like Nabal ?

1. Abigail had to live with the shame of Nabal's reputation.
2. She was affected by the consequences from Nabal's misdeeds.
3. She had to be cautious when dealing with him. (Vs. 36)

D. Though it was difficult, Abigail honored her marriage covenant.

1. Nothing in the text suggests that he treated Abigail any better than he did others.
2. Her circumstance was not for better or worse, from bad to worse.
3. Even so, she worked in his best interest.

II. Abigail was a strong woman in the face of her circumstances.

A. The workers knew she was more to be trusted than her husband.

1. Vs. 14-18
2. They came to Abigail for a solution.
3. They identified their boss as “a worthless man.”

God defines a “worthless man” as follows :

Prov. 6: 12-15 A worthless person, a wicked man, is the one who walks with a perverse mouth, ¹³ Who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet, Who points with his fingers; ¹⁴ Who with perversity in his heart continually devises evil, Who spreads strife. ¹⁵ Therefore his calamity will come suddenly; Instantly he will be broken and there will be no healing.

B. She acted decisively.

1. Vs. **18- 22**
2. She did not procrastinate, but acted quickly.
3. Decisiveness was her character.
 - a. Vs. **23** .. When she saw David, she sprung into action. (Cf. **32** *speed saved*)
 - b. Vs. **41-42** .. Quickly went to David when asked to marry him.

C. She was a woman of courage.

1. Vs. **23** ..
2. She took action that she knew would invoke her husband's wrath.
 - a. Her actions were in direct opposition to what her husband had already ordered.
 - b. She lived in a time when the husband had the right of life and death over his wife.
3. She faced the angry enemy face-to-face without protection.
 - a. She did not know David.
 - b. She knew that David was angry and bent on destruction.

III. Abigail put the interests of others about herself.**A. She accepted the blame for her husband's foolish and rude actions.**

1. Vs. **24** ... *Abigail was offering her life for others.*
2. She could have thrown her husband under the bus, but accepted person responsibility.
3. It was her husband's responsibility and David's men knew it.

B. Her actions were to preserve her family and household.

1. David had no plan to hurt the women. (cf. Vs. **22**)
2. She was saving her foolish husband's life.
3. Her actions also saved the lives of all of her male workers.

C. Her actions prevented David from sinning.

1. Vs. **25-28** (**24-31** *is the longest discourse by a woman recorded in the O.T.*)
2. David was determined to sin by taking vengeance on one who had sinned against him.
3. God provided Abigail as the way for David to escape temptation. **I Cor. 10: 13**

D. Abigail was concerned about David's spiritual welfare. Vs. **29-31**

IV. The providential hand of God continued to prepare David for the throne.

- A. Vs. 32-35 ... David was restrained from sinning.**
- B. Vs. 36-38 ... God avenged David so he didn't have to strike down his enemy.**
- C. Vs. 39-44 ... The wife that David lost was replaced with a better one.**
- D. Vs. 1 ... Abigail was able to replace Samuel as David's advisor.**

CONCLUSION :

- A. Abigail is truly an example which can be followed by women of all generations.**
 - 1. Remember ... Rom. 15: 4**
 - 2. God endorsed her when he gave her to the "*man after God's own heart.*"
- B. We need more women with the character of Abigail in the church today.**
 - 1. Women who will act with wisdom.
 - 2. Women who will have the courage to do what is right no matter what.
 - 3. Women who will not be held back by un-spiritual or foolish men.
- C. These same character traits are needed in men as well as women.**
- D. As David protected Nabal, we all need Jesus to protect us from evil.**

INVITATION :

Lesson text :

I Sam. 25

1 Then Samuel died; and all Israel gathered together and mourned for him, and buried him at his house in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

Nabal and Abigail

2 Now *there was* a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel; and the man was very rich, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And it came about while he was shearing his sheep in Carmel **3** (now the man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. And the woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance, but the man was harsh and evil in *his* dealings, and he was a Calebite), **4** that 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, visit Nabal and greet him in my name; **6** and thus you shall say, 'Have a long life, peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. **7** Now I have heard that you have shearers; now your shepherds have been with us and we have not insulted them, nor have they missed anything all the days they were in Carmel. **8** 'Ask your young men and they will tell you. Therefore let *my* young men find favor in your eyes, for we have come on a festive day. Please give whatever you find at hand to your servants and to your son David.' " **9** When David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in David's name; then they waited. **10** But Nabal answered David's servants and said, "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are each breaking away from his master. **11** "Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men whose origin I do not know?" **12** So David's young men retraced their way and went back; and they came and told him according to all these words. **13** David said to his men, "Each *of you* gird on his sword." So each man girded on his sword. And David also girded on his sword, and about four hundred men went up behind David while two hundred stayed with the baggage. **14** But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Behold, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, and he scorned them. **15** "Yet the men were very good to us, and we were not insulted, nor did we miss anything as long as we went about with them, while we were in the fields. **16** "They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the time we were with them tending the sheep. **17** "Now therefore, know and consider what you should do, for evil is plotted against our master and against all his household; and he is such a worthless man that no one can speak to him."

Abigail Intercedes

18 Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred *loaves* of bread and two jugs of wine and five sheep already prepared and five measures of roasted grain and a hundred

clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded *them* on donkeys.

19 She said to her young men, “Go on before me; behold, I am coming after you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal. 20 It came about as she was riding on her donkey and coming down by the hidden part of the mountain, that behold, David and his men were coming down toward her; so she met them. 21 Now David had said, “Surely in vain I have guarded all that this *man* has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him; and he has returned me evil for good. 22 “May God do so to the enemies of David, and more also, if by morning I leave *as much as* one male of any who belong to him.” 23 When Abigail saw David, she hurried and dismounted from her donkey, and fell on her face before David and bowed herself to the ground. 24 She fell at his feet and said, “On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant. 25 “Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. 26 “Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, since the LORD has restrained you from shedding blood, and from avenging yourself by your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek evil against my lord, be as Nabal. 27 “Now let this gift which your maidservant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who accompany my lord. 28 “Please forgive the transgression of your maidservant; for the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and evil will not be found in you all your days. 29 “Should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God; but the lives of your enemies He will sling out as from the hollow of a sling. 30 “And when the LORD does for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel, 31 this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause and by my lord having avenged himself. When the LORD deals well with my lord, then remember your maidservant.” 32 Then David said to Abigail, “Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, 33 and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand. 34 “Nevertheless, as the LORD God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from harming you, unless you had come quickly to meet me, surely there would not have been left to Nabal until the morning light *as much as* one male.” 35 So David received from her hand what she had brought him and said to her, “Go up to your house in peace. See, I have listened to you and granted your request.” 36 Then Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal’s heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; so she did not tell him anything at all until the morning light. 37 But in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him so that he became as a stone. 38 About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died.

David Marries Abigail

39 When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Blessed be the LORD, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal and has kept back His servant from evil. The LORD has also returned the evildoing of Nabal on his own head.” Then David sent a proposal to Abigail, to take her as his wife. **40** When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, “David has sent us to you to take you as his wife.” **41** She arose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, “Behold, your maidservant is a maid to wash the feet of my lord’s servants.” **42** Then Abigail quickly arose, and rode on a donkey, with her five maidens who attended her; and she followed the messengers of David and became his wife. **43** David had also taken Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both became his wives. **44** Now Saul had given Michal his daughter, David’s wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was from Gallim.