

41. The Book of 1Samuel—25:1-42

“Abigail—Joy of the Father”

(3/20/16)

There is so much going on in this chapter that we could focus our attention on and learn from that it was hard to pick one topic to develop.

I prayed all week for God to show me what He wanted to focus on and I kept coming back to Abigail, to her godly character, her humility, and her wisdom.

She was able to live with a husband who was a selfish, obnoxious unbeliever—and yet she still loved him and put his welfare above her happiness.

She was, through her humility and wisdom, able to turn the wrath of David away from her husband and every other male living in her household—those that David would have certainly slaughtered in his fierce anger.

The name Abigail means *“joy of the father”* and certainly she was a joy to her Heavenly Father and, as we’re going to see, a virtuous woman to those who came into contact with her.

1Samuel 25 opens up with the death of Samuel—

1 Samuel 25:1 (NKJV)

¹ Then Samuel died; and the Israelites gathered together and lamented for him, and buried him at his home in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the Wilderness of Paran.

Samuel was a prophet of God and the last Judge in Israel before the Monarchy was established—in fact Samuel himself anointed Saul to be Israel's first king.

Samuel had served the Lord from the time he was three years old but had been semi-retired the last few years of his life living in his home town of Ramah.

He was a good man who served the Lord faithfully all of his life—and so when he died the people lamented for him as a greatly beloved prophet and leader of the nation.

After Samuel's burial David and his men went down to the Wilderness of Paran which was more than a hundred miles south of Masada—

And it was while they were there that they came in contact with a wealthy man living in the area.

I. David and Nabal—v.2-13

1 Samuel 25:2-3 (NKJV)

² Now *there was* a man in Maon whose business *was* in Carmel, and the man *was* very rich. He had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. ³ The name of the man *was* Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. And *she was* a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man *was* harsh and evil in *his* doings. And he *was of the house of* Caleb.

So here we have the O.T. story of '*Beauty and the Beast*'.

The man's name was *Nabal* which means 'fool'—and he certainly lived up to his name being a carnal, evil, unbeliever—possibly the very man that David had in mind when he wrote Psalm 14—

Psalm 14:1 (NKJV)

¹ The fool [*Heb.*- '*nabal*'] has said in his heart, "*There is no God.*" They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.

Abigail, on the other hand, comes across as one of the most beautiful women, inside and out, in all the Bible—truly a virtuous woman, lifted up in the text by the Holy Spirit as the kind of woman and wife God honors.

You say, "*How did a guy like Nabal ever wind up with a woman like Abigail?*"—no doubt it was an arranged marriage. (Explain)

A. The request—v.4-9

1 Samuel 25:4-9 (NKJV)

⁴ When David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, ⁵ David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. ⁶ And thus you shall say to him who lives *in prosperity*: 'Peace *be* to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that you have!' ⁷ Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds were with us, and we did not hurt them, nor was there anything missing from them all the while 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 come on a feast day. Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.' " ⁹ So when David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and waited.

At first glance it may appear to you that David's request was out of line.

I mean Nabal didn't ask him to watch over his sheep, David did that on his own, and now he wants Nabal to pay him for his services—many find fault with David's request in this matter.

You need to understand—in that culture when someone did you a kindness it was customary to reciprocate and do something kind for them.

Also the time of year when the sheep were sheared was a festive time, occurring each spring and early fall, where people would throw celebrations (wool was sold and the money was used to enrich the family) and so typically they tended to be in a good and giving mood.

But even more to the point of the story—it was the time of the year when thieves were roaming around stealing sheep for their wool.

So with all of this in mind David's request wasn't out of line—he and his men had been a wall of protection for Nabal's flocks watching over and caring for them.

Would it be too much to ask Nabal, who owned four thousand heads of livestock, to show a little kindness to them by giving them a few animals to eat and some other provisions—anyway David didn't think so and therefore sent ten of his men to Nabal to make his request.

B. The refusal—v.10-12

1 Samuel 25:10-12 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Then Nabal answered David's servants, and said, "*Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master.*

¹¹ *Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?"* ¹² So David's young men turned on their heels and went back; and they came and told him all these words.

Not only did Nabal refuse David's request in a harsh, condescending way—but he went so far as to insult David in the process.

His statement, *“Who is David the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away from their master”* was Nabal’s way of saying he sided with King Saul against David.

He was accusing David of being an evil servant to Saul, a rebel that had broken away from his master Saul and was now trying to extort money from Nabal to support his rebellious lifestyle.

Well David became furious when he heard these words from Nabal—

C. The retaliation—v.13

1 Samuel 25:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Then David said to his men, "Every man gird on his sword." So every man girded on his sword, and David also girded on his sword. And about four hundred men went with David, and two hundred stayed with the supplies.

Now here is where David was wrong (which he later admits)—seeking to take revenge on Nabal and every man in his household for his refusal to compensate David and his men for their kindness (and for Nabal’s insulting remarks).

Just last week we did an entire message on how godly David was in not retaliating against Saul, for not taking vengeance upon Saul when he had the chance—but left him to God to deal with (1Samuel 24).

And then he turns right around and wants to kill a man for insulting him and for not buying him dinner—when he let Saul off who was trying to kill him—what gives?!

I’ll tell you what gives—us walking and living in the Spirit is what often gives—when someone puts us down or does us wrong.

It's amazing how we can be walking in the Spirit one minute—and be totally in the flesh the next!

There are times when I'm driving down the expressway with my praise music on singing to the Lord, all full of the Spirit—when some guy cuts me off and I instantly go from beauty to beast—from saint to ain't and it's not a pretty thing to see!

Look, there were times when David shined as a man of God, times when he prayed for his enemies and didn't seek to take vengeance upon them.

And then there were times when he let his flesh get the best of him (like right here) and acted carnally and vindictively toward those that had done him wrong—just like we do at times.

Now it is at this point that God, in His mercy, brings a godly woman into the picture to bring David back under the control of the Spirit and keep him from doing something he would regret for the rest of his life—

III. David and Abigail—v.14-44

A. The wise woman—v.14-35

1 Samuel 25:14-19 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Now one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master; and he reviled them. ¹⁵ But the men *were* very good to us, and we were not hurt, nor did we miss anything as long as we accompanied them, when we were in the fields. ¹⁶ They were a wall to us both by night and day, all the time we were with them keeping the sheep. ¹⁷ Now therefore, know and consider what you will do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his household. For he *is such* a scoundrel that *one* cannot speak to him." ¹⁸ Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred *loaves* of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs of roasted *grain*, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs,

and loaded *them* on donkeys.¹⁹ And she said to her servants, "Go on before me; see, I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

Now there are those that take issue with Abigail for doing this behind her husband's back.

They maintain that a truly godly woman would have been up front with Nabal—as his wife she was under his authority and therefore should not have done this without his consent.

Look, that sounds spiritual and she eventually did tell her husband what she had done—but if she had told him what she wanted to do Nabal would have stopped her and wound up dead along with every other male under his roof.

Sure she was under her husband's authority—but that authority wasn't absolute, it didn't mean she couldn't act independently if she believed God wanted her to.

Paul said to wives in Ephesians 5:22, "*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord*" implying that all delegated authority (government, church, marriage etc.) is ultimately subject to God's authority—and here I believe Abigail was obeying God.

She was doing the very thing that Peter would do many centuries later when he was commanded by the leaders of Israel (those that God had placed in authority over Peter) not to preach anymore in Jesus' name even though Jesus had commanded them to go everywhere preaching the gospel—

When the Jewish High Counsel commanded Peter not to preach the gospel he told them "*I must obey God rather than man*"—indicating that sometimes disobeying those placed by God in authority over us is legitimate if God tells us to do otherwise.

Here I believe Abigail is doing God's will in saving her husband, all the male servants living under her roof, and David's reputation as Israel's future king in keeping him from shedding innocent blood.

1. Her appeal to David—v.14-31

1 Samuel 25:20-22 (NKJV)

²⁰ So it was, *as* she rode on the donkey, that she went down under cover of the hill; and there were David and his men, coming down toward her, and she met them. ²¹ Now David had said, "Surely in vain I have protected all that this *fellow* has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *belongs* to him. And he has repaid me evil for good. ²² May God do so, and more also, to the enemies of David, if I leave one male of all who *belong* to him by morning light."

And so once again we see that David is totally in the flesh here, he feels he has been wrongly treated by Nabal, his pride has been wounded and he wants revenge—not only upon him, but also upon the innocent men servants that belong to him.

Revenge has little to do with justice (getting even) and everything to do with avenging my pride.

We see it here with David—he doesn't want to get even with Nabal—he wants to destroy him and every man that belongs to him. (Relate to us)

1 Samuel 25:23-28a (NKJV)

²³ Now when Abigail saw David, she hastened to dismount from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground. ²⁴ So she fell at his feet and said: "On me, my lord, *on me let this iniquity be!* And please let your maidservant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your maidservant. ²⁵ Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel 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 held you back from coming to bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hand, now then, let your enemies and those who seek harm for my lord be as Nabal. ²⁷ And now this present which your maidservant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. ²⁸ Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant..."

Notice how Abigail, in her humility, shifts the guilt from her husband to herself—

“David don’t hold my husband responsible—what do you expect from a guy named ‘fool’? Please hold your maidservant responsible (she calls herself that six times in her speech to David)—it’s my fault for not seeing your men when they came with your request...”

She didn’t come to David as a superior (as the beautiful, rich, and privileged often do) or even as an equal—she came to David as his humble servant.

How could David be angry with a woman who humbled herself to him like that? (The fact that she was drop dead gorgeous didn’t hurt either!)

Proverbs 15:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. ² The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.

After Abigail puts herself down (humbles herself)—she then lifts David up! (This gal is wise!)

1 Samuel 25:28-31a (NKJV)

²⁸ **Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant. For the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord fights the battles of the LORD, and evil is not found in you throughout your days.** [“David I know that you fight for God; that you are righteous and not evil, as my husband has suggested, and that God will preserve your name and family by making you king.”]

²⁹ **Yet a man has risen to pursue you and seek your life, but the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God** [“I know that Saul has risen up against you to kill you but God won’t let him prevail for you belong to God and you will be king in Saul’s place”];

And the lives of your enemies He shall sling out, as from the pocket of a sling. [“Just as God destroyed Goliath with a stone slung from your sling—so He will destroy all of your enemies”]

³⁰ **And it shall come to pass, when the LORD has done for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you ruler over Israel,** ³¹ **that this will be no grief to you, nor offense of heart to my lord, either that you have shed blood without cause, or that my lord has avenged himself...** [“David, you’re a better man than to shed innocent blood in the heat of the moment. I don’t want you to look back on this when you’re king in the years to come and regret that you avenged yourself instead of letting the LORD deal with your enemies.”]

And then she makes a very interesting statement at the end of v.31—**“But when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your maidservant.”**

Does Abigail know something we don’t?

She acknowledges to David that God will kill his enemies and then says *“when He does remember me.”*

Does she have her own husband in mind when she said this?

I mean it almost sounds like she knows that God is going to judge her wicked husband and take his life (v.26).

In fact some go as far as to suggest she’s offering herself to David as a future wife when God removes Nabal from the earth.

Now I don’t know if that’s true—it might be reading into the text more than is there—

But I do know one thing—in spite of all her husband’s faults and the fact that he was a difficult man to be married to—she still intercedes for his life.

Sure she puts him down to David as a *scoundrel*—but only as a means of turning David’s wrath away from him—*“David what do you expect from a scoundrel whose name is ‘fool’ ...etc.”*

Look, if Abigail had been a different kind of woman, when she heard that David was coming to kill her husband she could have said to herself, *“Good, it’s about time! I’ve been praying to be set free from this fool!”* and she could have sat back and done nothing to save him.

I wonder how many Christian women today who are married to crude, obnoxious, unbelieving husbands would have done nothing to save their husbands if they found themselves in Abigail's place?

2. Her acceptance by David—v.32-35

1 Samuel 25:32-35 (NKJV)

³² Then David said to Abigail: "Blessed *is* the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! ³³ And blessed *is* your advice and blessed *are* you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand.

³⁴ For indeed, *as* the LORD God of Israel lives, who has kept me back from hurting you, unless you had hastened and come to meet me, surely by morning light no males would have been left to Nabal!" ³⁵ So David received from her hand what she had brought him, and said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. See, I have heeded your voice and respected your person."

B. The widowed woman—v.36-38

1 Samuel 25:36-38 (NKJV)

³⁶ Now Abigail went to Nabal, and there 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; therefore she told him nothing, little or much, until morning light. ³⁷ So it was, in the morning, when the wine had gone from Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became *like* a stone. ³⁸ Then it came about, *after* about ten days, that the LORD struck Nabal, and he died.

Some believe that Nabal got so angry with Abigail for doing what she did that he had a heart attack.

Others believe that when he heard that he had come that close to death he had a heart attack—maybe it was a little of both.

Either way we read that **ten days later the LORD struck Nabal and he died.**

C. The wedded woman—v.39-42

1 Samuel 25:39-42 (NKJV)

³⁹ So 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 His servant from evil! For the LORD has returned the wickedness of Nabal on his own head." And David sent and proposed to Abigail, to take her as his wife. ⁴⁰ When the servants of David had come to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her saying, "David sent us to you, to ask you to become his wife." ⁴¹ Then she arose, bowed her face to the earth, and said, "Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." [This woman is incredible!] ⁴² So Abigail rose in haste and rode on a donkey, attended by five of her maidens; and she followed the messengers of David, and became his wife.

Now ladies there are many lessons you can learn from the godly example that Abigail set in her marriage (don't worry ladies we'll get the guys next time!)—but there is definitely one lesson you shouldn't take from this story.

And that is that if you act like Abigail—maybe God will take your beastly unbelieving husband (or even your beastly Christian husband) off of the earth and give you a handsome prince, like David, to marry in his place!

That would be the wrong lesson to take from this story—and one I'm sure the Holy Spirit isn't trying to teach!

We said when we started this message that this was the O.T. version of *Beauty and the Beast*.

But if you remember—the beast became (turned into) the handsome prince that the woman in that story married!

Look, God does want to kill your husband—and He wants to use you to do it.

He wants you to kill him with kindness—the kindness, love and humility that comes from being the godly woman He wants you to be to him—

1 Peter 3:1-6 (NKJV)

¹ Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, ² when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. ³ Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel-- ⁴ rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. ⁵ For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, ⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

God wants to turn that beast of a man you're married to, into a godly prince—one of the King's sons.

If you will treat him with agape love God will use it to 'kill' the fallen man you're married to and resurrect in his place a godly prince.

And in the process you will become an *Abigail*—"Joy of the Father!"

It all depends on whether or not you're willing to say—

"Lord I am Your maidservant. I will do whatever You command. I will love him with Your love, and I will humble myself and be the godly wife to him that You want me to be."