

PP The Wonder Woman series: *Abigail*

Part 4-1 Samuel 25 (p. 247 Pew bible)

7/7-8/2018

I hope you are enjoying this summer series, I know I have been
 We are a multi-siting church, meaning we are one church that meets in more than one location at
 different campuses, each of which have a campus pastor
 While I preach normally 75 % of the time, when our schedules all align, the campus pastors
 preach the first weekend of each month
 Last week Pastor Matthew preached on Ruth and I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did
 This week, the wonder woman we are looking at is one who had everything in life but a good
 marriage, yet rose above it to be an extraordinary hero
 I'd like to ask a question before we begin: *Do your circumstances define who you are and
 what you do?*
 Maybe you have a difficult job that you really don't like at all
 Perhaps you're single and increasingly frustrated with it
 Maybe you are in a financial hardship, barely making it week to week
 Or, like Abigail, in a marriage that you thought would be so different on your wedding day
 Do your circumstances define who you are and what you do?
 You are about to meet Abigail, who refused to be defined by her circumstances, and rose above
 them to do great things in life

1 Samuel 25 opens on a supremely sour chord: ***"Now Samuel died."*** **25:1**

Samuel was the greatest and most beloved leader of Israel since Moses and Joshua
 He had recently anointed David king of Israel, yet the current king, Saul, took objection
 Saul's disobedience to God cost him the throne, and Samuel served as a restraint on Saul whose
 efforts had been to find and kill David and protect his throne
 But with Samuel dead, David suspects he will renew his murderous ways, so he travels to the
 wilderness of Paran, and then to the region of Maon, below Mount Carmel

Verse 2 introduces us to a very wealthy man in that region, financial portfolio consisted of 3000
 sheep and 1,000 goats which is quite a large portfolio
 When the bible is this precise in numbering your holdings, it is often a clue to character
 This is like the man who obsessively checks the stock market, account balances, and constantly
 thinking about how much you have and how can you increase it
 Well, that increase is about to happen as it was the annual time for shearing sheep, and all that
 wool from thousands of sheep was about to make it to market and money would flow
'Nabal' means *dolt, or fool* and one wonders what kind of parents would name their son this
 It makes more sense that Nabal had become his nickname, and an appropriate one as we will see
'He was a Calebite', excellent family tree but this man was a rotten branch
 He was so prideful and unapproachable that even his servants said of him, ***"...he is such a
 worthless man that one cannot speak to him."*** **25:17**

The narrative continues and we meet our wonder woman, whose name was ***'Abigail'***, which
 means *joy of her father*
 These two are the original beauty and the beast
 While Nabal was harsh, boorish, and ***'badly behaved'***, she was ***'discerning and beautiful'***

You might be asking, *How could she be ‘discerning’ if she married this guy?!!*

One possible answer is that sometimes people change in marriage for the better, or the worse
But more likely, hers was an arranged marriage, commonly done for financial or political
purposes rather than for happiness: *She was beautiful, he was wealthy*

A boon for her father, and a definite marrying up for Nabal

Yet Abigail is nothing but faithful, uncomplaining, and loving to this man!

But our story takes a serious turn for the worse

“David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep. 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. And thus you shall greet him: ‘Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. 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. 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 you have at hand to your servants and to your son David.’” 1 Samuel 25:5-8

David, the future king of Israel is nearby with his 600 men and they had been guarding Nabal’s
sheep and shepherds, bringing no harm to man or animal

Loss of sheep from thieves and predators was rampant, so an armed guard would have been
welcome and given a token of gratitude for their efforts

It’s the time for shearing, payday, and celebration so David sends a group to Nabal to collect the
customary fee with a humble request for supplies

David pronounces a blessing upon Nabal and his entire family and servants and holdings

But we learn later how Nabal responded

“Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he railed at them.” 1 Samuel 25:14

‘railed at them’ is a Hebrew word for a shrieking bird of prey swooping down to kill an animal
The word was used to describe Saul’s hungry men as they fell on the plunder of a defeated army,
slaughtering animals and eating the meat before it was even cooked

Making matters worse, we learn in **verse 8** that it was a festival day, when God’s Word
commanded all Israel to share generously with those in need

But foolish Nabal rejects the request, insulting David by scornfully ridiculing David’s anointing
to be the future king of Israel, that he was a rebellious servant of his master Saul

Worse, being a Calebite, he belongs to the tribe of Judah, which is David’s own tribe...David is
a distant relative and he knows it for he calls him the **‘son of Jesse’**

Furiously, David mobilizes his army and is on his way to kill Nabal and his male servants

Our Wonder Woman catapults into action when she learns of Nabal’s actions and David’s plan

“Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys. And she said to her young men, ‘Go before me; behold, I will come after you.’ But she did not tell her husband Nabal.” 25:18-19

She gathers together a quantity of food and drink, that which was rightfully owed to David
She sends that ahead immediately and personally follows behind at a slower pace

“When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. She fell at his feet and said, “On me alone, my lord, be the guilt (23-24a)... Please forgive the trespass of your servant (28).”

She wisely goes to David on a donkey, an animal that represents a mission of peace
 She explains truthfully that it is woven in her husband’s nature to be a fool
 She diverts the guilt and blame from her husband to herself, twice
 She humbly refers to herself 6 times as David’s servant, calling him ‘my lord’ 14 times
 She lovingly pleads for the life of her husband and those in her household as well
 She bravely encourages him to not take revenge, but to let God handle what took place
 She courageously reminds him to fight the Lord’s battles, not those who insult him
 She brilliantly in verse 29 reminds David that God will deal with his enemies by citing the very
 weapon he himself used to defeat Goliath, a sling
 She calls David to trust in God’s protection from his enemies
 She advises him to let God work out the plans to make him king, not his own effort
 What was David’s response to this incredibly wise woman?

***“Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt
 and from working salvation with my own hand!” 25:33***

Friends, our wise discretion can actually keep those we love from sinning

Now watch what happens as she returns to her bad marriage, to her foolish husband who is
 happy with all his new money, holding a feast, and very drunk
 After his hangover is gone, she tells him what she had done in averting his death and destruction
 The news shocks him, he suffers a heart attack, languishes for 10 days, then God took his life

What a story, what a wonderful woman, and we haven’t even yet seen her greatest contribution
 in the bible

There is a principle in bible study: **PP** *The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and
 the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed*

All through the Old Testament are hints of the gospel that draw us forward to Jesus Christ
 They foreshadow the greatest event in human history!

Let’s begin with Nabal, and see ourselves in him, though it may be painful
 His nickname could’ve been ours as we each have been foolish, badly behaved, selfish and sinful
PP ***“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the
 LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:6***

David pictures the kindness that God has shown to each of us, guarding and watching over us
 His grace extends to all people, even those who are selfish and reject Him

PP ***“For [our Father in heaven] makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends
 rain on the just and on the unjust.” Matthew 5:45***

However, we like Nabal have all ***‘returned [God] evil for good’ 25:21***

Nabal, as well as each of us in our sin, have earned the sentence of death for our crimes
 He had not only sinned against a fellow man, and a fellow Jew, but against the one God anointed
 to be king of all Israel

We too have sinned most terribly against the King of all kings, God Himself
 David’s wrath was coming against Nabal just as the wrath of God was certain for each of us

Abigail steps between David's wrath and her foolish husband, bound up in foolishness
 As Abigail bows before David, she says, ***"Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him."*** 25:25

Can you not hear Jesus on the cross praying to His Father: **PP** ***"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."*** Luke 23:34

What a picture of a praying saint, pleading for someone who deserved punishment
 She stood before David, in the place of her husband, and said let your wrath fall on me
 Christ did no less, and actually so much more as **PP** ***"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed."*** 1 Peter 2:24

She came to David on a donkey on a mission of peace, as Jesus would come into the city of
 David on a donkey to make peace between God and humanity
 She lifts up David as her Lord and she his servant even as Jesus would say, **PP** ***"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me."***
 John 6:38

She said of David, ***"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."*** 25:28

Peter wrote of Jesus, **PP** ***"He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth."***
 1 Peter 2:22

Abigail was married to an unloving, foolish man, yet she was faithful to him her whole marriage
 How easy it would have been to simply step aside and let David's wrath deal with this man
 She would be free!

But instead, she interceded and saved his life from David, and God took matters into His own hands

Whether justice will be seen in this life or in glory, God will see justice done!
 She showed grace to her husband, who truly did not deserve it

She possessed great wisdom, great humility, great faith and God supremely blessed her!
 David, amazed by this woman, hears that Nabal had died, and asks her to marry him
 What did Abigail do?

"And Abigail hurried and rose and mounted a donkey, and her five young women attended her. She followed the messengers of David and became his wife." 1 Samuel 25:42

While certainly an inspiration to all Christian women, Abigail is an example for us all
 One who will not let circumstances define her or what she does, but instead despite them, does what it pleasing to the Lord

Amen?

Pray