

PP UnSung Heroes: Abigail, A Good Woman With a Bad Man

1 Samuel 25

5/2-3/2015

Illus I received a wonderful fb video link Friday of a monkey falling asleep sitting up, and it was captioned, *'When a Pastor starts Preaching'*
The best part of the video was at the end when its own tail slapped its face, startling him awake
I hope you won't need your tail today, because we are about to see an unsung hero who was a faithful wife, a wise woman and a godly example
And we'll meet her in 1 Samuel 25, so let's turn there together and jump right into the story

PP 1-She Was a Faithful Wife

The bible so often invites us into the lives of its characters when they come on stage of scripture
Yet before we look at the two people we are about to meet, let's turn this around for a moment and ask ourselves:

PP *If God was introducing you to generations of people who come after, what would He say?*
Now how you answer that, can move us to helpfully assess our lives, but know that God would be honest, and loving, for He always is ***"speaking the truth in love"*** **Ephesians 4:15**
So the loving, honest description of you would be...what??
Isn't it good to pause and think on that once in a while?
I think if God were to introduce us we would find Him so much more loving and gracious than we imagine, while at the same time, we'd be filled with a desire to serve Him more

And with that let's meet our unsung hero, and her husband: ***"And there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. The man was very rich; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. The woman was discerning and beautiful, but the man was harsh and badly behaved; he was a Calebite."*** **25:2-3**

Nabal is very rich, possessing 3,000 sheep, 1,000 goats...a lot of livestock!

He was ***'shearing his sheep in Carmel'*** which means, his wealth is about to greatly increase as he takes all that wool to the market to sell

Onto the stage enters his wife, Abigail, our unsung hero

PP Nabal's name means *dolt, or fool* and hers means *my father is joyful*

While Nabal was harsh, boorish, and ***'badly behaved'***, she was beautiful inside as well as outside, discerning, wise or morally upstanding

He was gruff, unkind, unpleasable, and just plain unloving, and she is everything in contrast

He is a disgrace to his lineage, as he is descended from faithful Caleb

Having a good name, belonging to a good family is no guarantee you will earn a good name

PP He should have known, ***"A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches"*** **Prov. 22:1**
His servants went around him to speak to Abigail, and the reason being ***"...he is such a worthless man that one cannot speak to him."*** **25:17**

He was unteachable, unadvisable, and defensive when anyone tried to say something to him

Abigail later says of her husband to David, ***"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**

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

Two possible answers is that sometimes people change, for the better, and for the worse

But more likely, marriages at that time were arranged marriages, typically 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, a true *Beauty and the Beast*

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

God can overcome even a bad marriage, and he will do so for Abigail

Nabal’s end was fast approaching, but first we see that our unsung hero was...

PP 2-She Was a Wise Woman

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

It’s the time for shearing, when the sheep would be gathered and driven from the grazing lands and delivered to the shearers, and the herdsmen would collect a fee for doing so

David claims that fee, and sends messengers to Nabal with a humble request for supplies

Notice they make the appeal, **verse 8**, on a festal day, when God’s Word commanded all Israel to share generously with those in need

But foolish Nabal rejects the request, adding insult to injury: ***“There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters.” 25:10***

He is alluding to David who was in hiding from King Saul’s attempts to kill him

David’s incensed, already grieving Samuel’s death, he’s had enough and he mobilizes his army to go kill Nabal and every male servant he has

In his anger, he forgot his own words he uttered when facing Goliath, the Philistine giant, ***“the***

PP ***LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hand.” 1 Samuel 17:47***

Abigail learns what her husband has done and immediately gathers provisions and takes them to David riding on a donkey, *an animal that signifies a mission of peace*

And she meets David, she bows down to the ground and presents the gifts of food to him

She is an incredible peacemaker

25:24, She diverts the guilt from her husband and places it on herself

25:25, She asks David to not regard her husband for he cannot help but be a fool

25:26, She bravely counsels him to not take revenge, but to let God handle what happened

25:28, That he should fight the Lord’s battles, not those who insult him

25:29, To trust in God’s protection from his enemies

25:30-31, Don’t become the King of Israel by working out your own plans

PP ***“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Proverbs 15:1***

He responds to her, ***“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***

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 is so shocking that he suffers either a heart attack or a stroke, falls into a coma

And 10 days later, God took His life

Here is a good woman in a bad marriage, who is both faithful to him and incredibly wise
 Ladies, if you are married to a foolish man, your heart may be turning bitter and hard
 Let Abigail show you how to be a faithful wife and a wise woman, and to trust God to be your

‘refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.’ Psalm 46:1

Yet her greatest impact for us, what makes her so amazing, is that...

PP 3-She was a Godly Example

As we saw last week with Jephthah, the gospel story is all through the Old Testament
 And here we see a shadow of what will be clearly revealed in the New Testament
 Once again, the OT is the NT concealed, and the NT is the OT revealed
 So look with me at this story one more time, but now, let's look for the gospel

Like Nabal, you and I have been foolish, badly behaved, selfish and sinful
 This is the great leveler of the gospel, every person is a foolish Nabal, ***“All we like sheep have
 PP 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***

How ironic that Nabal owned 3,000 sheep yet rejected David, the anointed Shepherd of Israel

God has shown kindness to all people, has guarded the sheep of our fields like David did for
 Nabal, and this is called *common grace*

***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***

Yet Nabal, like each of us, ***‘returned [God] evil for good’ 25:21***

He rejected the messengers of David, as Israel rejected the prophets, and David and his army
 strapped on their swords and were bringing certain wrath and destruction to him
 Nabal and all his house needed salvation from the wrath of David, how would it come??

Abigail interposed herself between David and her husband

Wives, do you understand this is your great power?

To pray for your husbands, to pray for your children!

To stand before God on behalf of them, and when they/we act foolishly, to mediate God's grace
 to them!

She rides to them, bows herself to them, and says to David let the guilt of Nabal be on her
“She fell at his feet and said, On me alone, my lord, be the guilt.” 1 Samuel 25:24

And suddenly we are struck with how similar she is to the ministry of Jesus, the Son of God
 Who Himself rode on a donkey, on a mission of peace just days before His crucifixion
 Who, on that cross, at noon, interposed Himself between Holy God and sinful humanity, and
 Who took on Himself the guilt of our sins

***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***

Friends, can we see the good news of God's salvation in this great story?!

But there is more!!

As Abigail is bowed down before David, her words echo the words that Christ will utter from the
PP cross to His Father, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” John 23:24
 She says to David, ***“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***

She then exalts David, with words that point to Jesus the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls
“Please forgive the trespass of your servant. 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

Jesus came to do the will of His Father, redeeming sinners from condemnation, atoning for sin, overcoming death, defeating the devil on that cross

There was no evil found in Him as He lived among us, He was the unblemished lamb of God
 God will sling out His Son’s enemies, verse 29, making them a footstool for His feet

She saw David appointed *‘prince over Israel’* as Jesus would be ***“highly exalted him and***

PP ***bestowed on him the name that is above every name”*** **Philippians 2:9**

PP It wasn’t for David to work salvation for himself, that was the work of the Messiah: ***“then His own arm brought him salvation, and His righteousness upheld Him.”*** **Isaiah 59:16**

Then David answers and in doing so reveals that Abigail is a great example of God’s grace
“Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand!” **1 Samuel 25:33**

You’ve heard the saying that says, “But for the grace of God there go I”

PP It is ***“the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age”*** **Titus 2:11-12**

Abigail shows us the power of grace, which can restrain great foolishness and sin

And that grace works in many ways, often without us realizing it

Growing up in a Christian home can restrain great sin

PP Christian friendships restrain sin, as the Bible tells us that ***“Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”*** **Proverbs 13:20**

PP Christian fellowship in a church, ***“exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”*** **Hebrews 3:13**

Sometimes God restrains sin by not allowing us to make the money our flesh wants to have

Sometimes our physical limitations restrains sin

A friend of mine just diagnosed with cancer testified of a singular desire to serve God well!

Often unforeseen circumstances, like a couple from our church walking down the street randomly meeting a lady who wanted to end her life that day

Or that unexpected phone call as you were stepping on that forbidden path of temptation

Sometimes it is a timely devotional that day, or a sermon on the radio that strengthens you to resist a temptation that you didn’t know was about to come to your life that day

The grace of God restrains our flesh, teaching us to say no to ungodliness!

As I conclude, let’s sum up a couple of great lessons of inspiration we draw from Abigail

She was married to an unloving, foolish man, yet she was faithful to him her whole marriage

There is no record that Nabal was abusing her, he just wasn’t a loving or kind man

She didn’t take revenge into her hands, telling David what a fool he was and stepping out of the way while his army crushed her husband

She didn’t pray or wish death on him, she interceded for him, 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, though he didn’t deserve it

And the flesh of an unloved woman recoils and says I'll show grace when he gives it, but there is a cloud of witnesses surrounding us Christian, and Abigail is one of them, and she is saying, *'My sister, that is not the way of the redeemed...be faithful, be wise, and be a godly example'*

God will shine His good pleasure upon you and will lift up your weary head

Be faithful, wise, and a godly example, and be the unsung hero to others that Abigail's been to us

Pray