

(10-11-15)

ABIGAIL: FEMINIST ROLE MODEL?

TEXT: 1 Samuel 25:2 And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

3 Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman **of good understanding**, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

4 And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.

5 And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:

6 And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.

7 And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

8 Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.

1 Samuel 1:14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

16 Count not thine handmaid for a **daughter of Belial**: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

9 And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

10 And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.

11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?

12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.

13 And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David

about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.

14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them.

15 But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields:

16 They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

17 Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.

18 Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.

19 And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.

"...for the preservation of herself, and husband, and all the family from imminent ruin. And surely that **real and urgent necessity** which dispenseth with God's positive commands, might well dispense with the husband's right in this case."
(Poole)

20 And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them.

21 Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.

22 So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

23 And when Abigail saw David, she hastened, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground.

24 And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.

25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

"It may be thought a great crime, that she [condemned]...her husband in this manner; but this may be said for her, that she told them nothing but what they all knew concerning

him, and that she only seemed to take away that which he never had indeed, to wit, his good name, that she might preserve that which he had, and which was more dear and important to him, even his life and soul."

(Poole)

26 Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

30 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;

31 That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

32 And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:

33 And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.

36 And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.

37 But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.

38 And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.

39 And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

"She does not excuse her husband ; but what does she ask? Let the sin, i.e., the punishment for the sin, be upon her...Just as Moses at Mount Sinai prayed God to spare Israelites, but punish him (Ex. xxxii. 32). Just as Jesus bore the sins of others (Is. liii. 5). She was also a (4) Peace-maker...Let children see in Abigail an example of a God-fearing woman, ruling her house well; showing kindness to strangers; shielding her husband as far as possible; rewarded by prosperity, and a good conscience..."

(The Quiver, Volume 14, 1879)

2 Peter 2:10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and **despise government**. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin...

Jude 1:8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

Ezekiel 16:30 How **weak** is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman;

Proverbs 9:13 A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing.

"In an effort to save her husband from being murdered, a concerned wife initiated the bold plan which relieved him from the immediate threat. Although her action was motivated by good intention, it was destined to bring ultimate tragedy and grief, which would last for the rest of her life."

(*Character Sketches*, Institute in Basic Life Principles, Gothard)

"Her conduct would have shocked the Apostle who laid such stress on the motto, 'Wives, obey your husbands'...Neither Michal nor Abigail seem to have made idols of their husbands; they did not even consult them as to what they should think, say or do. They furnish a good example to wives to use their own judgment and to keep their own secrets..."

(Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible*)

"[Gilbert] Bilezikian makes it appear as if Abigail disobeyed her husband...[but] nowhere does Nabal say one word to Abigail about David!...Had he known of the impending attack, **he very likely would have approved Abigail's action to save his life!**...Bilezikian reads into the beautiful story of Abigail much that is simply not there."

(Wayne A. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth*)

"When Nabal heard of the imminent danger, to which his own folly had exposed him, at the very time when he was stupified with drunkenness...his terror and vexation were so great that they sunk his spirits; and in ten days, by the just judgment of God, he ended his life either by the effect of his intoxication and subsequent horror and anguish of mind, or by some more immediate stroke of the power and indignation of God..."

(Thomas Scott, 1831)

"He was thunderstruck, and was so terrified at the apprehension of what he had escaped, that the fear overcame his mind..."

(Clarke)

"For fear of the great danger."

(*Geneva Notes*)

"He probably fainted from horror at the perilous situation in which he had unconsciously placed himself..."

(JFB)

"He was oppressed with grief, and fainted away through the fear and horror of so great a mischief..."

(Poole)

"...more likely through excessive terror at learning the danger from which he had so narrowly escaped. He became as a stone...utterly paralyzed with horror and fear."

(M.S. Terry, 1875)

"Abigail's example was extraordinary, and therefore not imitable **but in such like extraordinary cases**...Among wives Abigail deserves great praise, that forgot not her duty, though she were married to a churlish, covetous, drunken sot, a very Nabal in name and deed."

(William Gouge, *Of Domestic Duties*, 1622)

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