

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

ABIGAIL: LESSON NINE

by Sandy Harber

"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." I Sam. 25:14

While David's envoy was reporting back to him the words of Nabal, Nabal's wife was getting an earful from one of the servants. Nabal's diatribe had not gone unnoticed by his servants.

The servants were probably used to Nabal's temper. His character seemed to be such that the servants were probably subjected to his outbursts and tongue lashings. The Bible describes him as churlish. His actions depict him as selfish and arrogant. He is obviously proud and boastful, thinking himself to be better than others. There is no gratitude, compassion, or grace in the man.

One wise servant saw the confrontation for what it was: suicide. There was no way David was going to ignore the insults Nabal had hurled at his soldiers. David was a mighty warrior. He was a hero, who had defeated the giant Goliath. Nabal was a dead man. And he would not go down alone.

The servant realized that Nabal's treatment of David's men put them all in danger. David would not take his revenge on Nabal only. The entire estate was in danger. The lives of Nabal's family and servants were in peril.

It's interesting that the servant went to Abigail, a woman, for help. She obviously had a good reputation with the servants. This was probably not the first time Nabal's tongue and churlish manner had caused friction with others. Perhaps Abigail had intervened in the past with neighbors or strangers to negotiate peace. The servants had learned to trust their mistress to mitigate damage caused by Nabal's foolishness.

The servant made it clear that David's men had been polite and respectful when they approached Nabal. But Nabal had responded by insulting David and taking the soldiers to task for requesting hospitality at a time when hospitality was the order of the day. The request was reasonable and deserved. The rejection of their request was neither.

Abigail is introduced into the narrative as a problem solver. The unnamed servant realizes that something must be done quickly to undo the damage caused by Nabal's churlish behavior. It may be that the servants were used to taking their problems to their mistress to solve.

It seems that Abigail was well respected by the servants. It's not a stretch to imagine that her reputation in the community was such that people respected her patience and wisdom, even as they shook their heads wondering how she endured her drunken, loutish husband.

Nabal's servant was fortunate that he had someone to turn to in his time of crisis. A wise friend or mentor can be a blessing in trying times. God is always there to help. While His counsel often comes from the written Word, He may choose to communicate through the words of a Christian friend or pastor.

You may find yourself in the position of a problem-solver or comforter to another. The advice you give may be the result of a crisis you endured, and lessons you learned the hard way. Life is a circle. What goes around comes around. You receive help in your time of travail so that you can help someone else in theirs.

*"Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end." Proverbs
19:20*