

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

ABIGAIL: LESSON SEVENTEEN

by Sandy Harber

"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." I Sam. 25:22

David's plan is to kill every male that belongs to Nabal. That would include his family and servants. David even utters a curse of sorts enjoining God to likewise punish his (David's) enemies if he fails to destroy every male. He even sets a deadline: by dawn all the males must be dead.

David's anger had caused him to cross a line. He not only pulled his men into his plan for revenge but now he has requested divine help to punish his enemies. By referring to Nabal as an "enemy" David has moved the man into a group that makes him a target. Nabal was not just a foolish man whose ingratitude should be deplored but shrugged off as unworthy of attention. No. Nabal was an enemy to be fought and conquered.

Ironically, just prior to coming into the region of Carmel, David and his men had been running from King Saul and his army. Saul was a true enemy. He wanted to kill David. I Samuel 24 records the incident in which David spared Saul's life, proving to him (Saul) that he (David) was not the enemy. Saul acknowledged that David would be king and then he (Saul) took his army and returned home (I Sam. 24:22). This took pressure off of David and his men. It gave them the opportunity to rest and refresh. But they continued to stay under the radar in case Saul should change his mind and begin hunting David again.

Meanwhile, the Prophet Samuel died, depriving David of a close friend and advisor (I Sam. 25:1). No doubt David was tired of running and hiding from Saul's army. He was grieving the loss of Samuel. He was probably enjoying a rest in the company of shepherds in his own home area. His enjoyment was shattered by the report brought to him, which included Nabal's indictment of him having broken away from his master (i.e. Saul; v. 10).

Nabal's words angered David and the whole situation quickly escalated. Instead of ignoring the arrogance and rudeness of the ingrate, David gathered his forces. Rather than dismissing the words of a fool as untrue, David allowed them to vex him. His pride was hurt. He elevated the fool to an "enemy" and set the battle plan. Four hundred armed and angry warriors rode out into the field.

Vicious and untrue words can cut deeper than a knife. No one likes to be misrepresented. David had just proven to King Saul that he wasn't an enemy. And now this nobody sheep owner was reprimanding him for not knowing his place! It may have shocked David to realize there were ordinary citizens who viewed him as the bad guy, an ungrateful servant trying to be a king.

These were dark days for David. He'd come a long way from the shepherd boy who had been anointed to be the next king, the brave teen who had beaten Goliath and championed Israel, the warrior who fought Israel's enemies, and the national hero whose praises the woman sang. He was a fugitive, hunted by a jealous king. His companions were outcasts like himself. His mentor was dead. It would not be surprising if David was depressed. He had allowed his close connection to God to slip away. He took matters into his own very angry hands without asking for divine guidance.

We experience the same kind of reaction when we allow circumstance to overwhelm us. Sadness and depression take hold and we neglect the very thing that could relieve the situation: God's Word. When we're down emotionally we just don't feel like reading our Bibles or praying. We drift away from the One Who can provide the comfort and guidance we need. In times like these we need to force ourselves to reconnect to God. Open that Bible and read even when you don't want to. Utter a short prayer. Better yet, tell God why you are unhappy. Unload your burden on Him. Who knows? God may send you an Abigail to turn you back from making a huge mistake.

"I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." Psalm 34:4