

Abigail

My name is Abigail. I was married to Nabal. I guess in your language, it would be called an abusive relationship. My parents, may the LORD rest their souls, chose him for me to be sure I was well cared for – materially. He was a descendant of Caleb – a national hero – but there was nothing heroic about his character. I only met him at the wedding and had been told that he was very rich but difficult to live with.

I mostly stayed out of his way and tried to also keep the neighbors away – especially when Nabal was drinking. A nearly catastrophic event took place when David, due to be the next king but on the run from King Saul, was in the neighborhood with his men.

David selected ten young men and said to them, “Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. Say to him: ‘Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours! Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore, be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.’”

What a kind and respectful message from the most successful military leader in all of Israel, who could have taken whatever he wanted by force. But look at what my foolish husband said, "Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?"

When a servant told me what Nabal had said, I thought, “Here we go again!” We had gotten similar threats from the neighbors. But this was a man who could actually do it! This time we were about to be annihilated! I quickly put together a large order of food to feed David’s army and rushed out to meet him. David had just vowed to exterminate the household of Nabal. I didn’t know that when I left but was not surprised.

I met David just in time and bowed down before him. I had been through this drill many times because Nabal made enemies on a regular basis. Yet I spoke words, in this case, that I am sure were given to me by the LORD.

"On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you and listen to the words of your maidservant. Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, since the LORD has restrained you from shedding blood, and from avenging yourself by your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek evil against my lord, be as Nabal. Now let this gift which your maidservant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who accompany my lord. Please forgive the transgression of your maidservant; for the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and evil will not be found in you all your days. Should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God; but the lives of your enemies He will sling out as from the hollow of a sling. And when the LORD does for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel, this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause and by my lord having avenged himself. When the LORD deals well with my lord, then remember your maidservant."

David, I think, appreciated the fact that by following my suggestion he was prevented from tarnishing his reputation by taking personal vengeance. He said, "Go up to your house in peace. See, I have listened to you and granted your request." David is a merciful man and twice showed mercy towards Saul when he had chances to kill him. Killing Nabal would have been uncharacteristic for him.

When I got home Nabal was feasting and very drunk. I did not tell him anything about what happened until the next morning when he was sober and hung over. The news of what had happened must have gotten through because it was as if he froze. There must be a name for the condition but he became like a statue – frozen in horror. If he ever experienced remorse in his angry life, that must have been the time. Then, in ten days he was dead.

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he sent a proposal of marriage to me. I did not hesitate. Can you say I hardly knew him? Perhaps, but I think I got a pretty good glimpse into his character. And did I marry him on the rebound? Certainly, but it was a bounce from the bottom to the top. My son was one of the lesser sons of David. He was not in line for the throne but was also not involved in incest, murder or any plots against his father as his half-brothers Absalom and Amnon were. I was honored to have had a part in producing a descendant of David and be a participant in the team that ruled Israel for 40 years. I like to think that the wisdom given me by the LORD had an influence on David.

1 Samuel 25