

**HARRINGAY UNITED CHURCH-BAPTIST  
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2011.**

ABIGAIL: LEVEL HEADED AND WISE WOMAN

Text: 1 Samuel 25:3-44

**Introduction:**

God compliment us with each other.

Today we are going to consider another woman with an exemplary character. God has a sense of humour; he compliments women with men so that the family is balanced. Where the husband is weak, He makes the woman strong. Where the wife is weak He makes the husband strong. So, if the husband and wife know where they are weak and they let the stronger person step in, life will be much easier for both and all that are associated with them.

**Let us examine the characters in today's text.**

**1. Nabal:** Nabal, means stupid, wicked. It is interesting to note how someone will name his child stupid. But that aside, it is one thing to be named foolish it is another to shake it off and turn the situation around. Jabez meaning sorrowful, but he cried out to God to bless him and he was blessed (2 Chronicles 4:10). After all, a blessed person cannot be sorrowful.

He was a rich man with 1000 goats and 3000 sheep; he was from the tribe of Judah and from the family of Caleb. But he was surly and mean meaning he was inclined to anger or bad feelings with overtones of menace. I have known people like that and from experience, their wealth is only for them and they do not command any respect from people. I call them rich for nothing.

**2. Abigail:** Abigail means "father's joy", she was beautiful and wise.

Their names bear witness to what they actually were. It is like their names shaped their character and behaviour.

Let me say something that is personal to me here. I believe that name is important because it has bearing to the life of the named. When you invoke the name of God on someone, God honours his name. God is always in the habit of giving names to his servants before they were born. God gave Abraham the name of his sons Ishmael Genesis 16:11 and Isaac in Genesis 17:19; In fact He changed Abram to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah. Jesus was named before He was born. Matt 1:21

So for those who want to make babies, please pray and think about the name you want to give to your children.

**The narratives:**

It was harvest time, the shearing of the fur from the animals: like any other harvest, it was a time of joy and feasting. But before the harvest, Nabal's herds and the herdsmen have been protected by David and his army who were in hiding from the pursuits of King Saul.

Naturally and rightly too it is appropriate to share harvest joy with everyone and especially those who have helped us, our neighbours and the less privileged. The scriptures command it and we do not need to wait for people to ask us we must be generous to people.

I believe that Nabal knew about David and his men that they have been very helpful to his herdsmen, but it appears to have taken them for granted and because they were in hiding for Saul they are not to be accorded any right and privileges.

However Nabal was wrong, his actions were very inappropriate, he violates God's command and was like difficult neighbour. Because he was rich is not a licence to treat people shabbily and shamefully. Nabal did not know what was right or he refused to do what is right and when he was

asked to do what was right he bluffed them. Like his name he was very stupid and I can say that he has stupidly stupid.

Proverbs 15:1-2 says that "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly. Nabal's answer turned David's anger on and he was furious. Nabal's mouth gushed out folly rather than wisdom.

It appeared that Nabal was pro Saul at least from the statement he made in 1 Samuel 25:10-11 "Nabal answered David's servants, "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?" Our wealth is not for us alone, it to help the poor, alien, widows, orphans and appreciate people who have contributed to our welfare in one way or the other.

I accept that sometime we may not know what is right but when we are being reminded of what is right we should respond appropriately and learn from it.

David was furious that he and his men had been treated shamefully, their good had been rewarded with evil and he decided to take revenge for himself. Anger is not good and when it is not controlled we take inappropriate action that often leads to regret. David said to his men "put on your swords.." and they were ready to go and destroy Nabal and his household.

Nabal's misbehaviour is not an excuse to take laws into his own hands to avenge himself. Romans 12:19 "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

Providence intervened. He prevented David from committing another crime by avenging himself, he sent Abigail to turn the situation around.

This is the way the Holy Spirit works in the life of believers, He prevents us from sinning by warning us of the danger. God prevented Abimelech from sinning when he took Sarai as his wife. Now God used a wise and level headed woman Abigail Nabal's wife to appeal to David not to lay his hands on sin.

People will misbehave to us, they will be provoke and infuriate us but we must not take laws into our hands to want to take revenge. Each of us is going to carry his/her own load and we are accountable for whatever we think, say and do. So leave those who provoke and offend you to God.

The wise woman knew what was right and she wasted no time to act. No sooner the servant told her about the behaviour of his master, she prepared enough supply, sent them on donkeys and she followed.

When she saw David, she got off the donkey, bowed down and spoke to David tenderly and respectfully appealing to him to calm down and not take revenge.

One outstanding character of Abigail was that she took the blame for her husband misbehaviour. Look at what she said in v24 "My lord, let the blame be on me alone..v28 Please forgive your servant's offence..". That is gracious, intercessory and humble. She appealed to David's emotion and spirituality by telling him that it was God that prevented David to take a revengeful action against Nabal.

She spoke prophetically and pray that David's enemies would be like Nabal. She believed that even though David did not avenge himself, she was sure that God the righteous judge will judge Nabal.

She prayed that David remember her when God has established his dynasty. This action appeased David's fury, granted her request and sent Abigail back home in peace. Abigail still showing her wisdom studied the mood which her husband was and she gauged that it was not the best time to talk. She kept her peace until the following morning when she narrated what had happened.

Let us gauge ourselves with Abigail's behaviour in these days of someone must be blame.. How many of us in this day would take the blame for what we are not responsible?

How many of us will not lashed out at our spouse because we have rescued him/her from calamity?

Like Abigail showed wisdom and grace we must show wisdom and grace. The news must have shocked Nabal, he went into coma and eventually died ten days later. That is God's judgment. He has promised to avenge for us and we should leave the judgment to Him.

### **Conclusion:**

The lessons I want us to learn from today's text are as follows:

1. It is God who gives us wealth. Deuteronomy 8:18 "But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today."

So, we must use it to help the poor, widows aliens and appreciate those whose lives have benefit to our lives. We must not cultivate Nabal's attitude of ingratitude, miserly and arrogance. The consequence may be disastrous

2. Vengeance belongs to God Romans 12:19 "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. Yes people will offend us and provoke us beyond tolerance but we must remember that our father is the righteous judge and He will not fail to take revenge. We must not act hastily and quickly, calming down and leaving things in the hands of God. When He avenge for us it is sweet. However, when we pain and hurt becloud our minds, the Holy Spirit is in us who will warn us and help us deal with it appropriately. We must listen to Him.

3. Taking the blame we are not responsible for is an absolute act of grace and as recipients of grace we must not fail to dispense abundant grace to the undeserved after all no one deserves it. It is also an act of love that Abigail took the blame that was not hers and asked for forgiveness. She was a type of Jesus who took our sins on himself and asked the Father to forgive us. I encourage us to show more grace and follow the example of Abigail and Nehemiah (Ch 1:6-7) who took responsibility for the offence they did not commit and intercede on other's behalf. Rather than blaming them, let them save face. Rather than rubbing in let them feel relaxed. Rather than lashing out at them talk to them gently it is more powerful and effective. Lashing out and getting angry at them will make them erect walls and defensive. God will help us to be more gracious.