

Abigail

Preface

This booklet is about a woman who loved God profoundly and sincerely. It is the story of someone who pressed past their own darkness and flesh to embrace a life outside of themselves. It is the journey we all must make in breaking with the “old man” and choosing to identify as one with Jesus even before fruit from that union manifests. In no way or in any means was this book written in reference to earth marriages or relationships, for that is not the context in which it was given from the Lord. We must be clear that Romans chapter seven and verse four declares that we are become dead to the law of the old man by the Body of Christ so that we might be liberated to become married to Jesus and fruitful by Him. Nabal, therefore, represents the “old man” of our old fleshly nature that was crucified with Christ. His tyranny is referred to in this article as a manifestation of our own flesh until Christ is Life manifestly and the Son is formed within.

At times it can feel like we are still joined to the old man (Nabal) because we feel the motions of sin still manifesting in our members. It grieves the inner man of our hearts because we love God so much and the sin in our members is so contrary to Him. We want to do good because we delight with our inward man in His ways, but our members go another direction. Only Jesus Christ can save us from the wretchedness of the sin and death that dwells in our members. Through union with Him, the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus will make us free from the law of sin and death. Therefore if we live after the flesh we will die, but if through the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus we mortify the deeds of the flesh, then we shall live by Christ as our Life (See Romans 7&8). These are the issues that not only this article is referring to, but issues we confront everyday within ourselves, and the decisions we must make in relationship to who we will join to and ultimately be conformed to.

Introduction

Blessed transformation, beautiful manifestation...this is a story concerning the process of Abigail and David's conformity to Christ (I Samuel 25:2-39).

As David and his men were living in the wilderness and dwelling in caves fleeing from a murderous Saul who was not truly the head of Israel anymore, so also at this same time did a woman in Maon dwell in a house that must have felt like a prison under the tyranny of a man who, in spirit and nature, was no longer her head anymore. Nabal, whose name means “foolish”, was this man. He had many possessions, yet greatly lacked in all that pertains to the character of the Lord. Abigail, though beautiful, intelligent, and tender-hearted, was nonetheless joined to such a man as Nabal in a marriage-like relationship.

Abigail Notices David's Ways

It is apparent that David had been traveling around the area where Abigail lived, and that she had noticed that David did not take any of their things. She may have also heard

of David's kindness towards Saul in the wilderness and somehow begun to understand David's way in dealing with a wicked head through how he had responded to Saul, not by overcoming him with might but through the spirit of the Lamb. David's way with Saul may have deeply impacted Abigail, for she lived daily in a very similar situation. Living with Nabal would have produced such an environment that Abigail continually would have opportunities to respond to Nabal either in irritation and anger or in the submission of laying down her life. In this sense, she could have been choosing in these daily situations with Nabal to respond like Nabal or to respond like David. In her heart there was always the choice of which way she would go: the way of the flesh or the way of the Lamb. To respond in the flesh would be conformity to the kingdom that Nabal was a part of. To respond by the mind of Christ would be conformity to the kingdom that David was a part of. These kingdoms do not have anything to do with mere loyalties to men, but rather the choice to partake of and bow down in yieldedness to one of two different natures. Flesh or Spirit, Lamb or goat, self first or God and others first - these are the issues of allegiance that truly motivate men's hearts towards one king or the other. Whatever and whoever one's heart has been receiving as its way, nature, and mind in daily and small situations will eventually manifest in a oneness that overflows from the heart into actualization. In that sense we are speaking of something working deeper in Abigail than her outward title of "Nabal's wife", for she had been receiving the headship of Christ.

Oppressed by Circumstances or Pressed into His Image?

Abigail could have chosen to give up hope of ever being free from Nabal's oppressive attitude and government. Who knows how long Abigail had been joined to Nabal before David came. And though the depths of her heart may have grieved at his presence so intimately in her life, her heart pressed past Nabal's constant influence into the image of Christ, the One she loved.

David and Nabal

Now let's look at the situation precipitating Abigail's encounter with David. As David was dwelling in the wilderness, the time came when he heard of Nabal's prosperity and that he was shearing his sheep. So David sent forth ten young men in his name to bring greetings of peace and a request for provision.

Nabal's answer to David's men reveals that he neither knew nor honored David, the true king and head of Israel at that time. "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse?" Rather than viewing David as the Lord's anointed he sees him as a servant and a criminal, "there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master" (*I Sam. 25:10*). Obviously his loyalty and submission was to the man he referred to as the master, Saul. Nabal saw no reason to give any of his increase to David and his men, for he "knows not whence they be" (v. 11).

When David and his men heard of Nabal's response, they all put on their swords, and four hundred of them set out against Nabal. David began to speak, "Surely in vain I have guarded all that this man has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him; and he has returned me evil for good. May God do so to the enemies of

David, and more also, if by morning I leave as much as one male of any who belong to him” (v. 21-22).

Abigail's Beauty

At the time David's men had come to request provisions, Abigail still was titled Nabal's wife; however, she no longer received Nabal in her heart as the one to whom she was conforming, for she had a different spirit altogether than Nabal's.

It was for this reason that when Abigail heard David and his men were coming in anger due to her husband's brutish response to their requests, she quickly gathered provisions to bring out to them. She rode out to David and his men laden with gifts and fell at his feet, bowing herself to the ground. Then she speaks forth as one joined to the Lamb, asking for Nabal's iniquity to be laid upon her. Abigail proceeds to speak forth, even to flow forth with words that are filled with the spirit that David recognized, for these words come from the heart of the Lord he loves supremely. She has become so formed in oneness with the Lord that she speaks David's heart and spirit to him, even in the presence of his men that should already know David in this way. But even when David's closest men know not the spirit that David was of, Abigail was able to release the Lord's fragrance to cover over this king, a ministry that is flowing out from a continual communion in her heart with the same Lord David loves.

Abigail has seen the Lord in David as he has responded to Saul by Christ, and so she shines forth in this same image as she says to David, “Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God” (*I Sam 25:29*). For as truly as David is “God's king”, not just in title but in spirit, so does Abigail remind him of the Lord's choosing according to the heart within David that would be grieved to avenge himself and dishonor the Lord. David is deeply moved within and receives of the Lord he loves through her, also receiving her person as of the same kind that he is (*I Sam. 25:32-35*). Abigail has truly manifested the depth and completeness of her separation unto the headship of Christ, as well as the completeness of her rejection of Nabal as her source of nature.

No More Nabal

Abigail returns home to find Nabal feasting the feast of a king, becoming drunk and devouring his increase upon his own lusts rather than pouring them out to David and his men. The next morning when he wakes up, Abigail tells him what has happened, and Nabal's heart dies within him, and he becomes as a stone.

In the presence of the living God that was dwelling in Abigail, Nabal fell like Dagon before the ark of the Lord, whose head and palms were cut off (*I Sam. 5:1-4*). He no longer had place in Abigail, for truly the Ark of the Lord had found a home in her heart, and there was no more room for idols.

Inside of her heart, Abigail had no more union with Nabal. Her transformation had become apparent to all, surely undeniable to even her own personal fears. Abigail, inside of her heart, had joined to the Spirit of the Lord, the same spirit that David was of. And

so when David heard that Nabal was dead, he sent for her to become his wife, manifesting their oneness which was the Lord in His nature and way.

A Wilderness or a Wedding Feast?

Both Abigail and David's wildernesses had become as a place of sweet communion, not because of the fall and defeat of their enemies, but because of the inward enthronement of the Lamb. We may wonder why the Lord would allow those with hearts like David and Abigail to be put into such horrible circumstances with men such as Saul and Nabal. But imagine the joy of the Lord, Who is seeing their hearts and watching a great divide happening concerning which kingdom they are allowing to motivate them. They were coming into union with the Lord regardless of title, daily environment, an apparent throne, or outward recognition. They were choosing to conform in oneness of heart and nature to the Lord because of their love for Him.

We are not to fear this process of conforming to the image of Christ that may bring with it harsh or uncomely circumstances in which we may find ourselves. Rather we should understand the glorious things that are happening in our hearts as we love the Lord and allow ourselves to be transformed by receiving His mind in the midst of these things. Truly the Lord is in control and understands that all these things are working together for good to conform us to the image of His Son (*Rom. 8:28-29*). Whether we bear the outward title of "Nabal's wife" or "King David", may our true identity be found written upon the tables of our hearts. Despite all outward labels and hindrances, what is in us will flow out of us and over many when we choose to press past old dead identities and press into the image of the Son that we are now one with.

A Stone Cold Dead Idol

Abigail's deliverance from Nabal did not come the day that he fell as dead, but through the daily embrace of union into the Spirit of the Lamb as her Life. We wait for manifestation to come forth to prove what we are in relationship with, but truly that proof should come as we observe from which mind we daily partake. Manifestation speaks of a relationship to which we have already joined into so deeply that it is able to bear forth in the form of fruit. Jesus said concerning himself that unless you eat his flesh and drink his blood you have no life in you (*Jn.6:53*). It is not a title that we have received but Another Life. Abigail had been so deeply embracing the Lamb as her Life that she was delivered completely out of this relationship with Nabal through oneness. In one sense, to keep something alive you have to nourish it, and that nourishment can come from a relationship that joins to it. But to cut off that source and no longer strengthen its flow into your life would be to see it eventually fall as though dead. There are many things that we hold forth as alive that the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ has rendered completely dead, STONE cold without the tiniest pulse of life. If Nabal is a representation of the old man, we would see that the only thing keeping him alive in our lives is our relationship with him. But to realize that "this husband is dead" (*Rom 7:2*) is to see that we are free to be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (*Rom 7:4*)! Truly I am not referring to earth marriage and its sanctity but rather to the union referred to in the scriptures concerning our relationship

with the old man or Christ. *“Little children keep yourselves from idols” (1 Jn.5:21). “Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is Thy fruit found” (Hos. 14:8).*

Liberated Through Oneness

How liberating not only to understand that the old man is dead, but to continually “walk in the Spirit”, embracing our relationship of oneness with Christ. He is our True Vine and we have been made His branches, the vessel of His fullness. May our joined-ness to Him become apparent to all, understanding that this eventual flow of fruitfulness comes, not from a title, but from our abiding in Him that He might abide in us.

David's Training Camp

God spun this whole universe into existence in order to get something. God desires sons conformed to the image of His Son. The Son desires a Bride that is after His kind in oneness of nature. The Lord was seeking for a King that would be governed by His nature. David's training in the wilderness included David deciding of which table he would partake. David was on his way, breathing out slaughter, to eat some of Nabal's sheep and take what he felt should have been given to him and his men for their kindness and protection to Nabal's men and stuff. But God had another Lamb prepared for David in the person of Abigail. This is the true Kingdom coming, and this coming forth of the Lamb of God in Abigail speaks of the true table of which those dwelling in God's Kingdom partake from, the table from which they live.

David may not have realized the depth of “following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth” and how all-encompassing that would be, but the Father knew how to lead this son into Christ in all things. David may have felt that he was really making some headway when he blessed Saul instead of taking his life in their previous encounter at En-gedi (*1 Sam. 24*). He had been living in discomfort and persecution, finding himself hunted and unable to live a “normal life”. But not shortly thereafter he is out to avenge himself in a murderous rampage that would have destroyed Nabal. Lo and behold, here in the middle of the desert, bowing before him is this little lady who has endured life with Nabal constantly for years and years, who bore his name and served him and his household daily with no hope of change. She comes asking David to put Nabal's iniquities upon her. She comes bowing down in the lowest fashion to carry the sins of her enemies, to not exalt herself or her needs for deliverance or justice, but to embrace the Lamb as her Life and government. There, in the middle of the wilderness, in the midst of David's rage and vengeance, God provides the Lamb. And David stops in his tracks and “returns” to himself. She has spoken the depths of his heart to him. She has brought before him in Spirit and Life the Lord he loves.

Thy Kingdom Come

David was one that was set towards the Lord's heart. His relationship with the Lord was not centered around ministry and offices or being a king and fighting battles. He found the Lord in a way that made the Lord Himself everything. Yet David was still in the process of knowing the Lord Whom He loved. David was discovering that true victory was not Saul's head on a platter, but the Lamb enthroned within. This Nature that

David loved was to become that which governed his own heart. And so, on his way to Nabal's house looking more like Saul than David, up comes Abigail in the Spirit that is the purpose and fulfillment of all things - the Lamb. Abigail is representing the true Kingdom of God and the true victory, which is Christ inhabiting His people. She is as one who carries the banner before the troops declaring the cause of the battle. The spirit of our battles is not to be in violation of the very government we are trying to bring forth. David is being taught many lessons in his wilderness flights; David is being prepared for the throne.

God was seeking a man that would be governed by God, a king after His own order. Government is speaking of that which motivates us, truly turns our hearts, possesses our inward being, and orders our outward actions. David may have really felt that he was making some major progress of entering into the Kingdom when he was merciful to Saul at En-gedi instead of killing Him. But so soon afterwards he is found seeking his own vengeance as he angrily hunts down Nabal. It is at this very point that God interjects with an example of one who is governed by the Lamb. In this way Abigail is a picture of what God is trying to bring David into. We have already mentioned that she lived with her persecutor daily, constantly enduring Nabal's harshness with the tenderness of Christ. She covered Nabal and bore his blame even with no hope of deliverance. Greater than just monumental acts of showing mercy, she was constantly in this state of living by the Lamb in her daily life. This contrast between the occasional act of mercy and a continuous lifestyle of the Lamb speaks of one who is learning government and of one who is governed. The end of all things isn't the straightening up of all circumstances and the defeating of all foes, but it is Christ all and in all. God was looking for a King that would desire oneness with Him above all things (*Ps. 27*).

The King is Still Quirky

As we look back to chapter 24 in I Samuel, (just one chapter behind Abigail's story), we can consider the possibility that David is probably still feeling pretty good about himself having been so "humble" and "lamb-like" towards vengeful Saul who was out to kill him. Perhaps as David is returning from his encounter with Saul he may have been thinking, "What a merciful and just king I will make. I will not be as evil king Saul was. When I have to deal with my enemies I will not seek my own vengeance for I will trust the Lord. When it comes to ruling the people, I will protect and cover them. I will not have to demand their care and loyalty for they will willingly follow such a good king as I will be." And if he possibly continued to meditate upon his own goodness and maturity he might have thought about how honorable and good he was to take care of Nabal's men and sheep without even being asked. And then he passes by Nabal sheering his sheep. At this point he may have thought, "Praise God, surely this is the provision of the Lord for me and my men!" Throughout his flight from Saul, David was always having to take into account the needs of his men also. It may not be all of Israel yet, but he still had those he was leading even in the desert. You have to remember that David was riding around with 600 men, that that's a lot of mouths to feed every day, even if it does look like just a band of renegades in exile.

And so, with what David considers to be his best intentions, he sends off ten of his young men to accept provisions from Nabal who is certain to be grateful for David's care. When the men return with Nabal's response, David finds himself feeling unappreciated, not honored, unrecognized, and without provision. None of that fits into the picture of how a good king should be treated. His men were hungry to eat some "Lamb" for they had been being "lamb-like" in their relationship to Nabal. Yet it is here in David's response of revenge and power at the moment his favor is not returned that he realizes his need to be fully governed by the True King.

It is not our best intentions and kind acts that God is interested in. God wants to truly form His Son in us Who will shine forth under even the most trying pressures and unjust circumstances. This was the Lamb the Father wanted David to eat of that day. Moses had a similar wake up call when he killed an Egyptian and found himself also sent to the wilderness school of training for God's true leaders.

We have been looking at aspects of David's journey into knowing the Lord and conforming to His image. This same process was also happening within Abigail, who also deeply loved the Lord and desired to be one with Him in all things.

Abigail's Preparation

There was a beauty deep within Abigail that was the Lord Himself. The image of Christ is found hidden deep in the hearts of those who have received Christ at new birth. Yet, many times we are encompassed with the flesh within and without trying to press us into conformity to the world and our own selfishness. It may be that there is a Saul or Nabal without that is revealing the Saul and Nabal that is still within. It is then that we can choose to allow the beauty of the Lord that is deep within to break forth and begin to fill us as we conform to Him Who is our Life. The pressure of it all can cause us to choose to press deeper into His image and conform to Christ rather than yielding to the tyranny of the old man and our unrenewed minds (*Rom. 12:2*). God allows these things to become our workers rather than the tools of our own destruction. They allow our true motivations to manifest so that God can try our hearts, allowing us to seek the Lamb to be enthroned above all fleshly governments within. The preparation for a true king in God's Kingdom would be first concerning that which is within, for His Kingdom is in us (*Lk. 17:21*). Let us remember that God has made us a kingdom of kings and priests, those that are governed by the Lamb and ministers of His nature. In like manner, a bride adorns herself for her husband by knowing what he loves and preparing accordingly. Jesus said of his bride that she is bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh (*Eph. 5:30*). She is one with Him, and the Book of Revelation says that if you look at her you can see the Lamb in her shining out (*Rev. 21:23*). The Word of God describes this as the perfection of beauty, God shining out of Zion (*Ps. 50:2*). She is clothed in Christ and filled with Christ, for she has prepared herself for Him by embracing His mind and nature as her very Life. She has chosen to be joined to Him in all things.

Up to this point David may have understood the need for a helpmate and the joy of having a wife. But when he saw Abigail, he may have begun to understand what a wife really is in God's heart. Here was more than a woman with wisdom and love; here was a

woman filled with the Life and nature of the Lord. She bore more than a name, she bore His nature. The union she had with the Lord radiated His Life. Her relationship with the Lord went further than companionship and duty into the extension of Himself in oneness. God sought more than a successful king with David but one who would be an extension of Himself and a true representative of His Kingdom. David saw the same principle in Abigail, one would be more than a good helpmate but who would actually be of one heart and mind with him.

Abigail's Treasure

When David sent for Abigail to be his wife, Abigail was elevated from her previous affliction with Nabal. When this happened to Abigail, she did not gloat in her high position or begin to lose her spiritual embrace of the Lamb as Life because she was delivered from her oppression. Rather she manifested the true spirit of exaltation as she bowed herself down and asked to be as one that would wash his servants' feet. May we continue to understand that the highest seat in the universe is manifested in him who is least. She is not called the "Queen of heaven" but rather "the Lamb's wife". Abigail was this in nature with or without the title for she had embraced the Lord as her life. Our name may not always be our nature, but Christ's nature in us is our true name, a name hidden in heaven and written in the Lamb's book of Life.

Our calling isn't to become a queen sitting on a throne; rather it is for His Spirit to flow out of us forever and ever. Washing each other's feet, bearing His nature, and abiding as one with the Lamb is its own reward, for He is our portion in the Land of those that live, those who are written in the Lamb's book of Life. If we had all the titles such as "Queen" or "David's Wife", and we don't have the nature that comes forth from the communion of a relationship of being made one, then we do not have the true treasures. When all exterior and temporal things are removed and put away, we have oneness with the Son that will endure forever. And to understand the One Who the Son is would be to "Behold the Lamb of God" and become changed into that same image.

Her Knowing Is Flowing

Out in the wilderness of Maon, out from the wilderness of her circumstances, out from Abigail's innermost being flowed forth rivers of living waters. This desert blossomed for someone had found oneness with the Lord in the midst of it. And out from the barrenness of her own self came forth the riches of Christ able to strengthen even a young king. Once again the Lord prepared Himself as a table in the wilderness, able to bring forth Life out of the darkest and driest regions of the earth.

It is not the depths of Christ that we comprehend that makes us spiritual but the depths of His Life that can flow forth from us that makes us spiritual in our walk. Quite possibly Nabal did not regularly visit the temple or dedicate much of his life to a pursuit of God. Abigail's environment may not have been one that would allow her to seek out the Lord as deeply as was in her heart to do. But it would be hard to dispute that she knew the Lord in a deep way for the flowing forth of His nature could only have come forth from a heart that responded to the Lord as deep crying out unto deep. A knowledge that is only satisfied by the Lord Himself flowing out of our depths, a knowing that surpasses

knowledge. “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God (*Eph. 3:19*).”

The Lord Our Portion in the Land of the Living

There is a place where the waters are sure and the land is always flowing with milk and honey. Peace resides there, for all is fulfilled and filled full with the One for Whom all things were made. When we leave our lives to join to His, it is not worthy to compare the things we suffer for the glory of Him who swallows us up of Life. We trade our wilderness for His fulness. We lose ourselves in this life to be found in Him Who is Eternal Life. Let us consider David and Abigail, and ever continue to choose the Lamb above all else. ***