

The Lord's Message: Abigail: Wise Woman in a Toxic Relationship

Date: August 30, 2026

Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: 1 Samuel 25:1-11

Many of us have had to deal with toxic people either on a job, in our families, neighbors, in the community or even in the church. This morning, we are going to look at a woman named Abigail as we continue our sermon series on Faithful Women of the Bible. Abigail had a very toxic husband named Nabal. Through her faithful life, we are going to learn how God wants us to deal with toxic people.

Let us pray.

Allow me to give you that background on this Biblical event. David is running away from Saul. Saul wants to kill him, because Saul knows that David is going to be the next king and not his son, Jonathan. Saul was the first king of Israel, but Saul did not listen to God so God decided to take the kingdom away from Saul. Samuel was God's judge and advisor for Saul and the people of Israel. In the first verse, we discover that Samuel has passed away. David sets off for the wilderness of Paran, or Maon.

The wilderness of Paran, or Maon, was in the southern Judean hills. A rugged desert place with limited water, rocky ridges, deep ravines, and lofty conical rock formations. Located about seven miles south-south-east of Hebron. A great place to hide, but with limited water and food. The town of Carmel is located in this area.

We learn in verse 2 that in this town is a very rich man named Nabal. We are told that his wealth is in sheep and goats, of which he has three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He would need to have trusted servants to take care of his animals and a large place for grazing that many animals. So, Carmel must have been an oasis compared to the rest of the area. It was an Oasis. The name in Hebrew means garden-land, plantation, or vineyard. Carmel has natural springs and fertile land. Just the right area to raise a large number of sheep and goats.

In verse 3, we are told that Nabal is a Calebite. Calebites were a clan from the tribe of Judah. Caleb was one of twelve spies that were sent to spy out the promised land. Only Caleb and Joshua came back with a report that with God's help, the Israelites could conquer the inhabitants of the land. The other ten spies brought fear to the Israelites. They told of giants and large fortified cities who would bring about their defeat and take their children. Fear was brought into the people's mind and God knew that they were already defeated. When we allow fear to rule our lives, we are defeated people. Because of their fear, God would not allow the people to cross over the Jordan into the Promised Land. They would wander in the wilderness another 40 years, until this generation, except for Joshua and Caleb died off. After the 40 years was up, this new generation with their leaders Joshua and Caleb crossed the Jordan River and took the Promised Land. In **Joshua 14:10-14**, Caleb is given Hebron. So, the Calebites have settled into this land.

Also, in verse 3, we learn that Nabal has a beautiful and intelligent wife named Abigail. By the way, Nabal in Hebrew means fool or worthless scoundrel. It also means a person that is morally bankrupt, stubborn, and stubbornly disrespectful to God and others. We are going to find out that this defines Nabal to a tee. Whereas Abigail in Hebrew means my father's joy or my father's happiness. We are going to find out that she is very respectful to others and to God.

David was raised as a shepherd boy protecting and taking care of his father, Jesse's sheep. In verse 4, while David and his army are living in this land, David goes out of the way to have his soldiers protect the sheep from wolves and other predators and from the other soldiers. The custom of the day to pay for this protection was during the shearing of the sheep, which was a great feast day. Those protecting and caring for the sheep were invited to join in the feast. David, out of respect to Nabal and not wanting to intrude in his feast, simply sent ten men to ask for some food and drink and gave them instructions on how to properly acquire these provisions, verses 5-8. David could have sent his entire army to demand that he and his army feast with them, but David did not do that. David is showing absolute respect to Nabal.

How does Nabal handle this? Look at verses 10-11. Not a good way to treat one that has gone out of their way to protect your investment.

David is infuriated by Nabal's response. In verse 13, David calls on his army to prepare for battle. David is set on killing Nabal.

Now Nabal's servants know that Nabal is mean and nasty. In verses 14-17, the servants informed Abigail about how her husband, Nabal, had responded to David. After the servants told Abigail what had happened, she responded immediately. Look at verses 18-19. Notice she did not tell Nabal. I suspect that she could tell what Nabal's reaction would be.

In verses 23-31, Abigail approaches David. She humbles herself before David and tries to turn away David's anger for her husband, Nabal.

In verses 32-35, we have David's response to Abigail's request. Abigail goes home and tells Nabal what she has done, verses 36-38.

After Nabal's death, David calls on Abigail to be his wife, verses 39-40. Abigail becomes David's wife, verses 41-42.

We will all encounter toxic people at one point in our lives. It is very easy to become frustrated and irritated by toxic people. The things they say can hurt and hurt very badly. The manipulative actions they take can take the joy right out of your day. You can easily fixate on how they treat you and fail to see why they treat you the way they do.

How did Jesus deal with toxic people? Jesus looked upon them in Love. You must look at all people this way. Including the one who brings toxicity to your life. Have a measure of compassion with them. Why do they act the way they do? Are they mean because they are hurting inside? Are they trying to manipulate me because they are lacking something in their life? It doesn't excuse or justify their behavior, but it does help you understand them and not become bitter. After all, Jesus came to save toxic people too!

Jesus declares that the believer, when struck on the face, is to offer the other cheek for another strike (**Matthew 5:38-40**). This seems so harsh! So should I just be a doormat and let people treat me however they want and I'm supposed to just take it? No, I don't think that is what Jesus means here. The principal Jesus is sharing is that there are times when we are to give up our rights, even when it is painful, for the sake of the other person who may only be thinking of themselves! This act of self-denial could be the impetus for repentance on behalf of the toxic person (**Romans 12:9-21**). Again, we must be careful that we are not enabling the toxic person to continue in their sinful behavior, but sometimes, "blessing those who curse you" instead of reciprocating, is just the action that shows them their pride and arrogance.

Finally, However, there comes a time when nothing is getting through to the toxic person and it is time to distance yourself from them. You should still “love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you,” but you do not need to continue to receive their abuse. So, stand strong in your faith. Speak the truth in love to them. Tell them that they are sinning against God and you when they are being abusive in their language or their actions. It is not only for their good that they have someone stand up to them, but also for your good as well. Toxic people prey on weak-willed people. So instead of being a push-over that allows their sinful behavior to flourish, “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of might” (**Ephesians 6:10**).

Let us continue to listen to God and do His will. Amen.