

WISDOM'S MERCY

We all need to experience the wise interventions of God.

The most beautiful example of wisdom's mercy is the intervention of Abigail, a mother in Israel, who lived up to her name in bringing joy. If she had not ministered wisdom to David, he would have become another Saul. (Let's see 1 Samuel 25 in historic context.) In verse 1, Samuel dies, the intercessor has gone! No one is praying for the future king.

The wilderness wanderings of David before the Kingdom, a period of 7 or 8 years, foreshadows the great tribulation. David has to hide and survive from the envy and murder spirits of Saul. We will have to hide and be willing to stand for The Faith against the wrath of the Antichrist. This period before the Kingdom (both in David's case and ours) will teach us to view the Kingdom in higher terms. A lot of flesh motive gets sorted out in David's heart as a result of a wise woman's prophetic counsel. We see this pivotal chapter in a series of four contrasts. God teaches David to see the Kingdom in higher terms. Young believers must cry out for wisdom.

a) Compulsion and Grace of Giving

In verse 8, David's young men said "*please give... we come on a feast day.*" Most christian workers make the same mistake with their postal demands for money, money, money. The kingdom of God is never based on compulsion, but the grace of giving prompted by the indwelling Lord. Abigail brought a present of 200 loaves of bread, 2 skins of wine, 5 dressed sheep, roasted grain, figs and clusters of raisins. Her initiative, no forcing or control. We first purpose in our hearts what to give, without being pressurized or manipulated. Then we are free to give to the Lord, rather than horizontally give to man.

In Christian meetings avoid the pressure appeals and get quiet to pray (usually after the hype) - the Lord Himself is able to speak to us about our giving. Remember the "storehouse" of Malachi 3:10 is beyond your local church, to the body of Christ worldwide. Now most of your tithe will probably go to your local church, but sometimes missions, the poor, or a special project need the tithe or part of it. Let the Lord guide, and enjoy obeying Him. If you plant your seed in the right ground, He will bring a harvest; Abigail's harvest was a new husband, the future King of Israel. Choice of wife determines a man's ministry, and by heeding Abigail, David made a wise choice.

b) Revenge and Mercy

Vengeance has a deep root in the old nature and it is a stubborn abomination in the heart - unyieldingly arrogant. In verse 13, David was about to fight a Saul kind of flesh battle and not a battle of the Lord. Vengeance belongs to the Lord exclusively:

"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" says the Lord" (Romans 12:19)

We love our enemies, and pray for them if they use us spitefully. Sometimes your best friends can emerge from your worst enemies, provided we are scriptural in our reaction. (See Luke

6:27-36). Contrast David's sudden anger of revenge, an exasperation of being forsaken in the wilderness, a frustration in the apparent slowness of entering God's purpose - with the sweet mercy of Abigail's wisdom in verse 31. She ministers to David's God consciousness and lifts his faith to grasp the big picture of the Kingdom. Wisdom's mercy speaks through her so that David as King will not be confused with the self-seeking of Saul's flesh. God puts flesh and spirit together so we, His people, can make a choice. In church life congregations are held responsible for their choice of leaders - are they men of the flesh or men of the Spirit? Mercy intervened to stop David from taking the flesh road.

c) Hurt Pride or Humility

The outburst of verse 22 is hurt pride, a curse conceived out of a wounded heart that knew accolades, but now felt itself rejected and forgotten. Contrast verse 24 the position of humility, being small in one's eyes, and finding the future king's respect (v 35). The humility of accepting her husband's meanness and identifying with it revealed having nothing in herself, but everything in Him because she knew if she had been approached by the young men, the love of God would have responded through her. Humility is the place of spiritual bankruptcy - nothing in ourselves, but everything we need found in the unsearchable riches in Christ Jesus our Lord. Without Him we can do nothing. God only dwells in two places - highest heaven and a broken, lowly contrite heart. God revives the lowly, and will perfect that which concerns them. Abigail knew the completion of all her prayers and longings the day she married David. The only mystery is how she ever got so self-deceived as marry Nabal. Beautiful women can be deceived now as in ancient times. In this age of paramount deceit, demons can cling to us, obscure the voice of the Good Shepherd and bring a wrong valuation of a relationship. It is sad that many married couples secretly long to be single again because they know in the inmost recesses of their heart they made a wrong choice. Lack of humility and dependence on the Lord Jesus produces the wrong choice of partner and years of bitter fruit.

d) Folly or Prophetic Wisdom?

Abigail knew Nabal was folly and lived in folly (v.25, v.36). Just when he should have fasted and sought God, he had a feast, got very drunk and abusive, no doubt recounting the day's events and how he sent David's men packing. His folly of castigating David as a servant who broke away from his master, caused him to side with the flesh-kingdom of an occult inspired murderer of priests. Our words ultimately speak of our lifestyle, and make it clear to others where we really stand. Watch a person's words, it will help weigh their motives. Verses 28 to 31 are pure, peaceable wisdom opening David's heart to the entreaty of God Himself. This summit of women's ministry is a gift that makes room in the spirit realm and brings the right woman before a great man.

The consolations of protection and victory over David's enemies must have ministered a deep anointing of fresh oil to his troubled mind. The counsel of a woman that embraces the gifts of the Spirit collaborates in wisdom's mercy. God came through, and David instantly recognised it (v.32, v.33). Today we need as never before women of bold faith who will announce the wise counsel of God - without it, pressures can push even good men to extreme actions that will live on as a indelible blot on their testimony. Like David, marry wisdom, and call her your sister, for it will preserve every other blessing.

Never elevate gift over wisdom and love - most ministries have done that and their spiritual progress has been halted. Cry out for discernment and read 1 Samuel 25 over and over until the lessons become part of your life. In the twentieth century character has taken second place to charisma. We are taken in by the glamour of football stars and pop stars, film stars etc. The church is in danger of going the same way.

In 1 Samuel 26 David proves he had learnt the lesson. He passed God's test "are you another Saul?" Which are we? David had the opportunity to kill Saul but refused to touch the Lord's anointed. He understood the sovereignty of God in dealing with Saul in His own timing.

The Wisdom of Timing

The time of your life is not a Saga holiday but the underlining of the Holy Spirit in Ecclesiastes 3. Is it a time to heal, to build up or break down, to gain or to lose? A wise man's heart will know the time (Ecclesiastes 8:5), the spiritual kairos time when God intervenes and does the supernatural. The time of your lift comes through discernment of the season God has put you in, and obedience to the specific times within that season. Today we see much malfunction and damage in the body of Christ because there are no Abigails or no interventions of God that stop the godly from acting or reacting in the flesh.

Remember time is never an enemy if you are in the Holy Spirit, but a friend. Jeremiah's lament was that God's people did not know the judgement of the Lord. They failed to recognize the critical moment of God's appointed time. We need to pray for a heart to gain wisdom by the numbering of our days. (Psalm 90:12).