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IN THE BUNDLE OF HIS ARMS



The future King of Israel was wandering from one place to another, not sure when he was going to lose his life in the hands of Saul or one of his men. For Saul, sought to kill David out of jealousy by all means. Saul, the very first king of Israel had disobeyed the commandment of God, and was told by Prophet Samuel that, “Your kingdom shall not continue”. (1 Sam13:14) His enmity with David began with the question, “Now what more can he have but the kingdom?” (1 Sam 18:8, 9) He decided to take the matters into his own hands and devised to get rid of David thinking that then perhaps his kingdom would endure. He was in the stage about which the word of God says, “envy makes the bones rot” (Proverbs 14:30). And then while David was on run, Prophet Samuel dies (1 Sam 25:1). It was a big loss. David then rose and went down to the wilderness of Paran. And as the events unfold in this chapter 25, I found myself doing self-evaluation with some

questions.

1. Spirituality should never be based upon our circumstances

Nabal, a descendent from the tribe of Caleb and his wife Abigail lived in Moan and he had business in Carmel. From, the Israelites, who had started their journey towards the Promised Land, only Joshua and Caleb had wholly followed the Lord and entered the Promised Land along with their descendants. (Deuteronomy 1:36-38) It was a unique blessing. But, unlike his ancestors, Nabal was harsh and evil in his doings. (1 Sam 25:3). The word of God uses the word “scoundrel” for Nabal twice in one chapter, which was also the reputation he had among his own servants (verse17,25). We read more about Nabal that, “folly was with him” (verse25). In spite of her circumstances Abigail was a woman of good understanding (verse3). She could have blamed her circumstances and not be a spiritual person. But she chose otherwise. Does our spirituality change with the ever changing circumstances in our life? Do we blame our situations? Or do we have a steadfast faith in our savior?

2. Repaying evil for good

When David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep in the wilderness, he sent his ten young men and courteously requested help from Nabal as per the custom that prevailed at that time. It was fair request. For in the past when David was in the wilderness of Carmel, he had protected the sheep as well as the shepherds of Nabal (verse7). David's humble

request was evident by saying, “please give whatever comes to your hand”. He even used the word “your son David” (verse8). But, the peaceful gesture was met with a very rude response. He responded as if he was hearing David's name for the very first time and had no idea about his whereabouts (verse11). And as per his opinion he was just a runaway servant from his master (verse10). On hearing the response David and his men gear up for a battle. David's reason for the battle was that, Nabal had repaid him evil for the good. (verse21). Do we repay evil for good to those who are good to us? Beware if we do that lest as it says in Proverbs 17:13 that “If anyone returns evil for good, evil will not depart from his house”.

3. A wisdom to do the needful in the hour of need

When one of the servants of Nabal informed Abigail about what had happened, she acted quickly, but in a really wise manner. If she had disregarded the advice, indeed as the servant had said no male would have been left in her household. For that was David's decision (verse22). For in that we see her wisdom for the very first time in this chapter. We read about the preparations she made to give a customary gift for David and his men (verse18, 19) in the hand of her servants who had testified about them that, “Yet these men were very good to us. Night and day, they were a wall around us the whole time we were herding our sheep near them” (verse15, 16).) Do we act with wisdom always or do we act

foolishly? The God given wisdom produces fruitful results. For the word of God says in James 3:17 “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.” May God help each one of us to act with wisdom from God.

4. A wisdom to calm down anger

Abigail did not tell anything to her husband Nabal (verse 19). But, she herself rode on a donkey, went under the cover of the hill and met David and his men. She fell on her face before David, bowed down on the ground and fell at his feet. She then took all the blame of her husband upon herself and humbly requested David to allow her to speak. She then gently explained how she did not know anything that happened when David sent his servants to Nabal. She uses the word “my lord” to address David (verse 20-25) she addresses herself as “your servant. And in the following verses we see that by using the right words not only did she calm down David's anger but also fulfils the divine plan God had about David. The word of God says in verse 26 that, “the Lord has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands. We see her wisdom for a second time in this chapter. “She then extends the gift for David and his men. As the word of God says in Proverbs 15:1 that” A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Do we have the humbleness and wisdom to calm down anger or do we intentionally provoke and escalate anger? May God be our judge.

5. A peaceful departure

Once addressed as a runaway from his master, David is now

being addressed as the future King by Abigail as in her words he was fighting the Lord's battle. She was certain that though Saul was on David's pursuit, he would remain safe under God's protection, whereas his enemies will be hurled away as from the pocket of a sling (verse 28). We read in verse 29 about the divine care in the words of Abigail as “*the life of my lord will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God*”.

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She was certain that God will fulfill His promise towards David and he will become ruler over Israel and requests him to remember her when he succeeds as the king. David praises her wisdom and quick action which prevented a bloodshed at his hands. David accepted the provisions from Abigail and departed in peace. The word of God says in Proverbs 12:20 that, “Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, But counselors of peace have joy “Do we tend to be peacemakers?

6. Blessings from God

Abigail then went back to her home and found Nabal drunk with the feast he was holding. So, she told him nothing and waited till the next day. Sometimes like Abigail we have to wait and handle situations at the right time. And the next day when she told him, his heart died within him and he became like a stone (verses 35-37). After about 10 days the Lord struck Nabal and he died. When David heard of what had happened, he was relieved as God had prevented bloodshed from his own hands and taken away his reproach (verses 38-39) He then sends his servant to the house of Nabal to take Abigail as his wife. An offer she humbly accepted (verses 38-42). It was not an easy life to live with David as they had to endure much difficulties before he took up the throne. She was also taken as a slave once and had to stay away from her family (1 Sam 30:1-9). But she was also blessed with a child from God (2 Sam 3:2-3) and as the word of God says in the end everything work together for good for her. Do we handle situations impatiently or do we wait for the right time?

May God help each one of us to live carefully, with wisdom and patience. Let us be peacemakers and not those who create strifes. Let us live for His honor and glory. May His name be glorified.

- Asha Chandy