

Call to Worship (unison):

Be still and know that I am God... (pause until the chime sounds)

Be still and know that I am...(pause again)

Be still and know... (pause)

Be still... (pause)

Be... (pause)

Scripture: I Samuel 25:2-38

We will read this passage aloud. Pay particular attention to Abigail-what do you notice about her? What graces and gifts has God provided her to give her possibilities in a marriage to an impossible man? Does she connect to the women of Deborah's House? How?

- There was a man in Maon who did business in Carmel. He was a very important man and owned three thousand sheep and one thousand goats. At that time, he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. ³ The man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and attractive woman, but her husband was a hard man who did evil things. He was a Calebite.

⁴ While in the wilderness, David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep. ⁵ So David sent ten servants, telling them, "Go up to Carmel. When you get to Nabal, greet him for me. ⁶ Say this to him: 'Peace to you, your household, and all that is yours! ⁷ I've heard that you are now shearing sheep. As you know, your shepherds were with us in the wilderness. We didn't mistreat them. Moreover, the whole time they were at Carmel, nothing of theirs went missing. ⁸ Ask your servants; they will tell you the same. So please receive these young men favorably, because we've come on a special day. Please give whatever you have on hand to your servants and to your son David.'"

⁹ When David's young men arrived, they said all this to Nabal on David's behalf. Then they waited. ¹⁰ But Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is David? Who is Jesse's son? There are all sorts of slaves running away from their masters these days.

¹¹ Why should I take my bread, my water, and the meat I've butchered for my shearers and give it to people who came here from who knows where?" ¹² So David's

young servants turned around and went back the way they came. When they arrived, they reported every word of this to David.

¹³ Then David said to his soldiers, “All of you, strap on your swords!” So each of them strapped on their swords, and David did the same. Nearly four hundred men went up with David. Two hundred men remained back with the supplies.

¹⁴ One of Nabal’s servants told his wife Abigail, “David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he just yelled at them. ¹⁵ But the men were very good to us and didn’t mistreat us. Nothing of ours went missing the whole time we were out with them in the fields. ¹⁶ In fact, the whole time we were with them, watching our sheep, they were a protective wall around us both night and day. ¹⁷ Think about that and see what you can do, because trouble is coming for our master and his whole household. But he’s such a despicable person no one can speak to him.”

¹⁸ Abigail quickly took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep ready for cooking, five seahs of roasted grain, one hundred raisin cakes, and two hundred fig cakes. She loaded all this on donkeys ¹⁹ and told her servants, “Go on ahead of me. I’ll be right behind you.” But she didn’t tell her husband Nabal.

²⁰ As she was riding her donkey, going down a trail on the hillside, David and his soldiers appeared, descending toward her, and she met up with them. ²¹ David had just been saying, “What a waste of time—guarding all this man’s stuff in the wilderness so that nothing of his went missing! He has repaid me evil instead of good! ²² May God deal harshly with me, David, and worse still if I leave alive even one single one who urinates on a wall belonging to him come morning!”

²³ When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and fell facedown before him, bowing low to the ground. ²⁴ She fell at his feet and said, “Put the blame on me, my master! But please let me, your servant, speak to you directly. Please listen to what your servant has to say. ²⁵ Please, my master, pay no attention to this despicable man Nabal. He’s exactly what his name says he is! His name means fool, and he is foolish! But I myself, your servant, didn’t see the young men that you, my master, sent. ²⁶ I pledge, my master, as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, that

the LORD has held you back from bloodshed and taking vengeance into your own hands! But now let your enemies and those who seek to harm my master be exactly like Nabal! ²⁷ Here is a gift, which your servant has brought to my master. Please let it be given to the young men who follow you, my master. ²⁸ Please forgive any offense by your servant. The LORD will definitely make an enduring dynasty for my master because my master fights the LORD's battles, and nothing evil will be found in you throughout your lifetime. ²⁹ If someone chases after you and tries to kill you, my master, then your life will be bound up securely in the bundle of life by the LORD your God, but he will fling away your enemies' lives as from the pouch of a sling. ³⁰ When the LORD has done for my master all the good things he has promised you, and has installed you as Israel's leader, ³¹ don't let this be a blot or burden on my master's conscience, that you shed blood needlessly or that my master took vengeance into his own hands. When the LORD has done good things for my master, please remember your servant."

³² David said to Abigail, "Bless the LORD God of Israel, who sent you to meet me today! ³³ And bless you and your good judgment for preventing me from shedding blood and taking vengeance into my own hands today! ³⁴ Otherwise, as surely as the LORD God of Israel lives—the one who kept me from hurting you—if you hadn't come quickly and met up with me, there wouldn't be one single one who urinates on a wall left come morning." ³⁵ Then David accepted everything she had brought for him. "Return home in peace," he told her. "Be assured that I've heard your request and have agreed to it."

³⁶ When Abigail got back home to Nabal, he was throwing a party fit for a king in his house. Nabal was in a great mood and very drunk, so Abigail didn't tell him anything until daybreak. ³⁷ In the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him everything. Nabal's heart failed inside him, and he became like a stone. ³⁸ About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal, and he died.

What does God have for us from this story?

Reflections from Deborah's House: would anyone like to share their writings/drawings?
Or, in one word-how did God speak to you yesterday?

Prayer- God of courage and strength, we thank you for the Abigail's in this world. How good to know that you give hope to the weary, courage to the faint, and peace of mind to the troubled who suffer from mistreatment. We give thanks for the ministries of Deborah's House and many other American Baptist related ministries that provide safe refuge and new life for displaced, abused, and violated persons. As we continue in our ministry today, we ask that you keep their situations in our hearts and minds that we might always consider the call to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and body; then to love others as we love ourselves. Bless us in our work. Open us to the joy of your Spirit. Give us grace and guidance for the ministry set before us this day. In the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, we pray. Amen.