Wise Woman

Day Two: The Wise Woman of Abel
2 Samuel 20:14-22

It always amazes me when people of the world make claims that the Bible is degrading to women. Christianity is told to get with the times and change to accommodate the way people treat women “now”. I really do wish they would just sit down and read the Bible. They’d get a different picture.

Take for instance, this wise woman in 2 Samuel 20:14-22.

Joab is hot on the trail of Sheba, a Benjamite who started a revolt against King David (2 Sam. 20:1-3). Sheba had run to the city of Abel Beth-maacah and Joab had him trapped there.

While Joab’s forces were working to topple the wall of the city, a “wise woman” called out from the wall, seeking to speak to Joab.

When she has Joab’s attention she asks him to listen to her for a moment and he agrees.

The wise woman reminds him that this city was one where good advice would be sought and arguments would be settled. She tells him that she is one of the “peaceable and faithful in Israel.”

She then asks why he would seek to destroy such a worthy city, as well as woman like her who is a mother. These things are blessings to be appreciated, not destroyed!

Joab tells her that is not his desire. He just needs to catch Sheba because he dared to lift his hand against King David.
Without hesitation, she tells Joab that Sheba’s head will be thrown over the wall!

She then “wisely came to all the people”. They decide to kill Sheba, cut off his head, and throw it over the wall to Joab.

Joab keeps his word and takes his forces and returns to Jerusalem.

It’s an amazing story. But consider this woman.

This wise woman had no reservation about approaching Joab. She expected that he would listen to her, and he did!

When she had his attention, she spoke respectfully. She didn’t screech “What are you doing fool?” She reminded him of the history of the place and the value of the people within the walls. She brought him back to the Lord by referencing these good traits as being “the inheritance of the Lord”.

She reminds me so much of Abigail in 1 Samuel 25!

The wise woman didn’t get emotional. She drew the needed facts from Joab – that a man named Sheba was taking refuge in the city and this was the cause for the attack.

She responded to those facts with decision – She would see to it that Sheba’s head was thrown over the wall to Joab!

What an offer! She was quick thinking. What was going to be the quickest end to the trouble?

Not only does she make this amazing offer, she goes down into the city and goes to “all the people”. She didn’t just go bust her way in where Sheba was and attack him herself. She allowed the entire city to be a part of the solution. She shows Joab that the city is exactly as she told him – “peaceable and faithful”. The city ended the dispute by killing Sheba.

Can you imagine that conversation? We are not told exactly what they discussed. But this woman’s wisdom, mentioned twice by God, would have been at play. She would have given the straightforward facts. She likely would have also reminded the city of their past reputation. Then she probably asked who was agreement with cutting off the head of Sheba – because other options really were
not options. The people agreed and saw to the destruction of Sheba – and the end of the revolt against King David.

Does this strike you as a story that demeans women? Of course not.

As women, we need to take away some of the wise woman’s confidence and make it our own.

This woman KNEW her place in Israel. She knew she was not guilty of having gone against the Lord’s anointed. She knew that Israel was God’s special people. Her knowledge gave her confidence!

She was prepared with the armor of the Word! She had God’s word written on her heart so that when her world literally began to crumble, she was ready to do something about it.

She could speak with authority, but be respectful of Joab as well.

She used her intelligence to survey the situation and made a decision, but she did not lord it over the other people in the city. She brought them in, she gave them their rightful place in the decision that must be made.

This woman is an excellent example of Romans 12:3:

“For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”

She had the right view of herself, her place towards God, Joab, and her people. Her intelligence and wisdom are praised by God, not demeaned.

This woman is our ancestor in faith! Let us draw from her strength and know that we can be the women God called us to be, living in the roles He gave us to fill, and never be less than anyone else.

My prayer today is that each of us will find the confidence to draw near to the throne of grace knowing that we are ALL one in Christ Jesus when we have put on Christ (Heb. 4:16; Gal. 3:28; Rom. 6:3-6).
And PS – whatever “Sheba” is lurking in your space of safety, whatever sin – cut off its head and throw it far from you so that you and yours remain “peaceable and faithful”.

Enjoy!