

## **A Woman's Decisive Wisdom    2 Samuel 20:1-2, 14-22**

April 17<sup>th</sup> was just another day at the office for Tammie Jo Schultz as the captain of the Boeing 737-700 airliner that she flew regularly between Dallas, Texas and New York. This was the return flight home. She'd joined the US Navy and had been the first female to fly a fighter jet. She had married, had two children, and left the air force to become a commercial pilot. At age 56 she had many years experience. Her husband was also a pilot for Southwest airlines and she had actually swapped this flight with him so that she could get home earlier and watch her son at a track meeting. She takes off from New York and 20 minutes later is cruising at 32,000 feet. There is a loud bang, the plane vibrates, loses cabin pressure, starts listing and falling. Unknown to her and her co-pilot, Ellisor, the explosion was a fan blade on the left engine breaking off, tearing the engine apart and blowing out a window. A lady was sucked halfway out the shattered window, and it took two others to pull her back into the plane and then try to keep her alive during the descent. Their efforts failed, and the passenger and mother of two, was the flight's lone fatality. But the 143 other people lived.

Shultz credited teamwork with her co-pilot, training and focus for surviving an immediate descent of 20,000 feet in six minutes and completing the emergency landing in Philadelphia 22 minutes after the explosion. "You just realize, obviously, we're at the front end of the aircraft, so we're in charge," "I don't remember anything other than starting to think through what the plan is. And it worked well." Social media reports by surviving passengers hailed Shultz as having "nerves of steel" and being "a true American hero."

After landing she walked down the aisle hugging passengers. Shultz "biggest goal" amid the emergency landing and subsequent media coverage has been as a Christian that she can share her faith and have it resonate and awaken people's eyes to how great a God we have. She wants people to know that God was there with her on Flight 1380, that he helped her in getting control of the plane and landing that plane. She said it was because of him, not her. She was just a teammate and a co-captain. He was the captain. In other words, Jesus was in control of her life and definitely at the controls of the airliner that day.

What a wise person to have Jesus at the head and in control of your life to rule and reign over your life on a daily basis including

all the knowledge and expertise that you have gathered and grown in over the years. We never know what will happen each day, what challenging and testing circumstance that we might have to face. Trying situations that call in an instant for calmness, wisdom, logic, humility and fearlessness in order to avert disaster or tragedy. Such is the calibre of Tammie Jo Schultz born of God and his word. You can trust such a person who is wise enough to put God in control in the face of a disastrous tragedy, which I believe, puts her in the same league with...

*The Wise Woman of Abel Beth Maacah* who, along with her fellow citizens were facing their own pressure cooker situation. 'Able' is the name of the region where the northern most city of Israel was located called Beth Macaah – which means 'House of Pressure'. Never in its history had this city faced such a dire situation. Surrounding them was King David's army lead by the single most aggressive and violent man in Israel. Joab the commander-in-chief who had fallen out of favour with David in his latter reign being recently demoted and replaced by Amasa, who Joab believed wasn't doing a good enough job in hunting down the rebel Sheba. So Joab decided to take over the army by murdering his own cousin in cold-blood. This ruthless man had now tracked Sheba to Able Beth Macaah, had built up a siege ramp against the outer wall, taken that and was now starting to batter and bring down the second inner wall. The city faced destruction.

In doing so Joab had not followed the law of God regarding the rules of warfare. When you came to besiege a city, before putting it under siege you had to offer peace, you had to deal with the inhabitants of the city - and if you did make an agreement with them, you were to abide by that agreement. In other words, you were to seek peace before war- such was the law (Deut 20:10). Add to this point the fact that no man, let alone any woman had ever tried to negotiate with this fierce warrior, a man who did whatever he was commanded to do, and he did it in the way that he deemed necessary in order to make sure David's rule as King endured, even when the King did not approve of his methods. No one had ever called him out before, and he's never had to explain anything to anybody.

Enter the wise woman of Able Beth Macaah. In a patriarchal society how does a woman deal with such an impending disaster let alone with a guy like Joab coming to destroy the city?

Now we don't know this woman's name, let alone her occupation - it may well be that she was a judge in the city following in the tradition of Deborah. She may have even had a position of leadership, but whatever her occupation, she was a person of influence who had a degree of spiritual authority, and was well versed in God's Law. She more than likely followed in the Wise woman of Israel tradition. Joab was aware of this tradition as he had previously called on the services of the Wise Women of Tekoa [2 Sam 14] to help change the King's mind on an issue. What it was that made this woman truly Wise in the first instance was that she feared God and not man according to God's own Word. For her in this situation and in her own life the fear of the LORD was the beginning of all Wisdom. Which is all the encouragement she required to do what she needed to do!

Off to the wall the Wise woman goes in the middle of the battle to confront her nation's chief military commander. In her wisdom she is calm, fearless, logical and humble in her approach to Joab. See just how she addresses him 20:16-19 **Keys to approaching men:**

**1. She [remain]'s Calm** -no crying, no anger, over reacting, show of emotion, instead she is playing it cool putting this blood thirsty killer at ease. In doing this...

**2. She is Fearless** –She goes to the wall that was being battered at that time. She calls out to the soldiers. It has been said that a fearless woman is irresistably attractive to men. Imagine the surprise the soldiers got with her appearing and calling out to them for their leader, the most feared man in Israel, “Listen! Listen! Tell Joab to come here so I can speak to him.” And she remains standing before them waiting for him to appear. He must have been nearby because almost immediately he's right there before her. She wastes no time in confirming his identity and getting down to business. “Are you Joab?” “I am he answered.” In her approach she's calm, she's fearless and now she displays-

**3. Humility.** “Listen what you servant has to say.” As soon as she confirms it's Joab the wise woman knowing that she has his attention and may only have one shot at this, she submissively refers to herself as a servant. In response to such a display of humility, Joab lets her know that he is listening...

**4.** The wise woman is ready to speak- **Logically**. She shares briefly (v16) a story from Israel's history relevant to Able Beth Maccaah to illustrate her logic which certainly sails past any defenses Joab may have had. She then makes her case (v17) establishing the credentials of the city, her fellow citizens and herself – not only as purveyors of wisdom, but also as peacemakers. It is in this way that she is able to call Joab out over his decision not to talk or negotiate but lay siege to the city, even accusing him of trying to destroy a city that is a "mother in Israel". She asks a very good logical question "why do you want to swallow up the Lord's inheritance? In this way she didn't command him about anything. She asked him some well-appointed questions. She let him know that while they were chipping away at the wall, there were living, breathing peaceful people inside these walls, people of wisdom and faithfulness, people who are God's heritage and here we stand while you prepare to slaughter us. We are innocent and we belong to the LORD."

Joab is impressed by the logic of the woman as well as her sincerity and he not only relents but goes as far to categorically deny, "Far be it from me that it is my intention to destroy the city" "I'm only interested in apprehending Sheba the rebel you are harbouring from down country. So all the people of Beth Maccaah have to do is hand over this one man and my troops and I will go." Which seals Sheba's fate with the Wise woman replying, "His head will be thrown to you from the wall."

Down from the wall she goes to relay her proposal which was a call to immediate action by the people of the city. Impressed by her wise advice, Sheba is immediately executed and his head is thrown over the wall. Joab blows the trumpet, his army retreats, returns to Jerusalem. His mission is accomplished, the city is saved, and a potentially disastrous situation has been defused with Able Beth Maccaah's pressure released!

**Lessons from this little-known lady of the Bible**, the first thing we need to see which is quite obvious is her wisdom. One thing is for sure: as Christians, if we are wanting to use our opportunities well for the Lord Jesus and for God's glory, one thing we will need is wisdom for how to use our opportunities to witness!

Her wisdom is staggering - but do you know something?

We see from her example that it is not enough to possess wisdom. What do I mean by this? Well, in this woman we see that her wisdom was active. She had wisdom and she put her wisdom to good use. God had called her to act in this moment of time, and she did, and God was with her in the midst of it. God blessed it, God honoured it. Through this woman God saved innocent inhabitants of the city. Now here's a good lesson, and if you can grab hold of this I believe it will be a great help to you in the everyday issues of your life, and it's simply this:

Ultimately how we behave in a crisis or a dilemma is determined by what we do the rest of our time. Have you got that? When the heat is on and we find our backs to the wall, how we react will be determined according to what we do or have done all the other moments in our lives.

I think it can be used of sport in whatever team sport you think of. The players' spontaneous reactions on the field are determined, if they are a professional sports person, according to what they were trained to do in practice. So in the heat of the moment they will behave as they have been programmed to behave in any given situation. Now if they go into the match cold without any training, or missing the team practices when there's no glory, when there is no praise, no cups to be won, their own reactions will come out according to their emotional reflexes and not disciplined tactics. It is the same with a soldier, who is trained in the heat of the battle to behave in a certain way under fire because discipline has been put in at great pains through regular training and exercises.

What determines how you spontaneously react in a crisis is what you do every other day of your life. When you're faced with a dilemma and you don't know what decision to make, and the decision you have to make has to be made quickly - just like this woman - it's too late trying to prepare for the crisis when you find yourself in the middle of it! Ask Tammi Jo Schultz. You mightn't have time to fall on your knees and pray. You mightn't have time to get your Bible out and look in the concordance or index to topics at the back of it to see what God's Word has to say in such a circumstance. But if you are channelling the word and wisdom of God into your heart and mind day and night, moment by moment, month by month, year by year, the Holy Spirit brings it out when you need it - in a split second, in that moment! The Woman of Able Beth Macaah's active wisdom was spontaneous, not willing to wait for someone else to maybe come along and try to save the city.

Because she knew if she didn't act the city would be sacked, her children would be killed, so she acted quickly and decisively.

To wrap things up, the challenge for us remains:

May we each learn to live wisely and put ourselves in a position before God and man to do the same in acting wisely and decisively in the fear of God and not man whatever circumstance confronts us or situation that we face. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom!