



Judges: Unlikely Leaders

Lesson 3: January 27th & 28th

Read Judges: 4-5

Sermon Reflection Question: What captured your attention from Sunday's sermon?

Observation and Interpretation Questions:

1. Read Judges Ch. 4: 1-7: How is this oppression the worst yet (4:1-3)?

2. What do you learn about Deborah from:

- v. 4-5

- v. 6-7

- v. 9-10

- v. 14-16

Of all the judges, Deborah is the greatest pointer to the monarchy; to effective, godly, just rule. And she is a great pointer to Jesus, our “Wonderful Counselor ... Prince of Peace” who is “establishing and upholding [his kingdom] with justice and righteousness, forever” (Isaiah 9: 6-7)

Here in the heart of Judges, a book of great battles, we’re reminded that God’s people do not only need a mighty Rescuer; we need a wise Ruler, too.

3. What happens if we don’t view Jesus as both our ruler and rescuer?

4. Read Judges 4: 8–16. Who was Barak? Share his character, motives, his faith etc.

Reflection:

5. Faith is listening to God's word, obeying in trust, and not seeking honor for ourselves. How do the words of Judges 4:15 "the Lord routed Sisera" impact your faith and God's call for obedience on your life?

Observation and Interpretation Questions:

6. In 4:9, God has told Barak that he "will hand Sisera over to a woman." We may first assume this refers to Deborah. Instead, who is Jael? Why did Sisera flee to Jael's tent and what were the results?

7. During this time, pitching a tent was a woman's job so a tent peg was equivalent to a traditional household item like a vacuum. How does this make the manner of Sisera's death all the more ironic and what does this teach us about how God deals with the proud?

8. How do you feel about Jael's actions? Should they be praised, criticized, or both?

9. In Judges 5, the victory over Sisera is commemorated in a hymn of thanks to God called the "Song of Deborah." What additional perspective did you observe from chapter 5?

- V4-5 regarding the Lord:

- V6-8 regarding Israel's circumstances prior to battle:

- V24 regarding Jael:

10. Deborah and Jael were unlikely heroes who subverted cultural expectations of women in ancient Israel. What does God say about his purposes for all his children, regardless of any social demographic?

11. God uses the humble, overlooked, and the flawed to accomplish His purposes. How has God overcome obstacles in your life through the most unexpected people and/or ways? How does this impact your response when new obstacles come your way?

12. Chapter 5 is a song likely written by *both* Deborah and Barak that recounts Israel's great victory. How does faith and wise leadership impact those around us?

Fasting Reflection:

RELAX: Take a moment to relax. Close your eyes and breathe deeply - inhaling slowly, then exhaling slowly. Repeat this several times as you imagine yourself coming into God's presence. As you finish and get ready to read, pray something simple like "Lord, speak to me through the words of your gospel. Amen."

READ. Read this story about Jesus two times. Read slowly, pausing at the line breaks:

Matthew 12: 15-21 (NIV)

Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. He warned them not to tell others about him. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

"Here is my servant whom I have chosen,
the one I love, in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will proclaim justice to the nations.
He will not quarrel or cry out;
no one will hear his voice in the streets.
A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,
till he has brought justice through to victory.
In his name the nations will put their hope.

REFLECT. After the reading, take some time to reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:

- What word or words in this passage caught your attention?
- What in this passage comforted you?
- What in this passage challenged you?
- What is God inviting you into?

RESPOND. Read the scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, questions, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

REST. Soak in the moment, rest in it, don't rush through it. Do you sense anything that Jesus is inviting you to know, see, believe, or do? Pray: Thank you, God, for meeting with me in this time. Give me courage and faith to follow you this day.