



Judges 4 – The Delight of Service

Judges shows us how God can take failure and work hope, mercy, grace, forgiveness, and love in the middle of it all. Recently when I was talking about the “messes we get into our lives” one of the folks here at the Grove said, “God takes our messes and

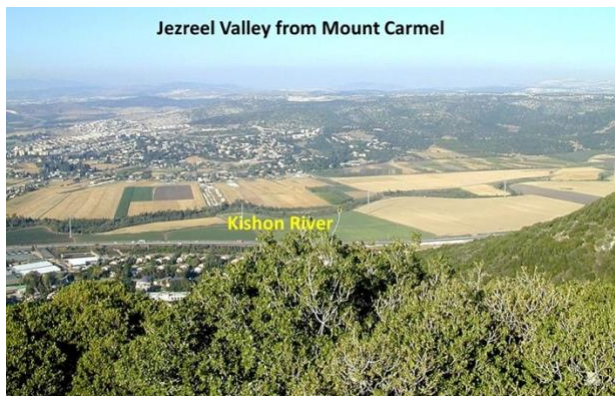
He makes messages out of them”. I added on, “not only does He make messages, but He makes masterpieces out of the mess that we have made.”

This morning, we will look on as Israel once again distances herself from God, and God sends a unique deliver. By worldly standards she was unqualified to lead Israel. She was a wife, and a mother, but she had what it took to do God’s work; she had faith. The text tells us that she also was a prophetess, meaning that God spoke to her and she relayed His Word to the people. She judged over the people in settling their disputes. And, she was a mighty and fierce warrior. She lived south of Jerusalem in the hills of Ephraim, and it was from there that she summoned Barak to boldly speak God’s plan.

Deborah

4 When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. ² So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim. ³ And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.

Remember who Ehud was.



4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. ⁵ And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. ⁶ Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, “Has not

the LORD God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; ⁷ and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand?' ⁸ And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!"

⁹ So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰ And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command, and Deborah went up with him.

¹¹ Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which is beside Kedesh.

¹² And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. ¹³ So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.

¹⁴ Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. ¹⁵ And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. ¹⁶ But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

¹⁷ However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. ¹⁸ And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear." And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket.

¹⁹ Then he said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him. ²⁰ And he said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, 'Is there any man here?' you shall say, 'No.' "



21 Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So, he died. 22 And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, I will show you the man whom you seek." And when he went into

her tent, there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple.

23 So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel. 24 And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

So, what we learn from the text is that Deborah was already serving as a judge after Ehud had died. You'll remember from last Sunday that he was the left-handed guy who killed Eglon the fat king. You might wonder how is it that God has put a woman in authority over Israel. We see a principle here that God will work out His purposes, and when men fail to step up and get the job done, God has no problem calling a woman to do the job.

She approached Barak and told him to go up against the Sisera who was the commander of King Jabin's army. We witness some foot dragging on the part of Barak (means "blessing") and then Deborah prophesied that Barak would not have the privilege of capturing Sisera, but instead it will be done by a woman. We learned in the story it was done by a woman named Jael who was a hero in the story.

We're told in verse 17 that Barak did indeed rout the enemy and all of Jabin's troops were killed, but the leader, Sisera escaped. Well Sisera ended up in front of the tent of a woman named Jael (described as the wife of Heber). Sisera asks if he can come into her tent and hide and she lets him. He is war weary and totally worn out. He asks her for some water, but she opens a jug of warm milk and gave him a drink. I guess she then tucked him in and watched him go to sleep.

At this point it's hard to imagine what all must have been going on in Jael's mind. Here he was, Israel's greatest enemy, asleep in her tent under a blanket. She eased on over to where he was and in one tremendous blow, she stuck a huge tent peg through his temple and I suppose pinned him to the ground. She basically nailed his head to the ground. Well, after this, Barak came walking up and Jael told him to come on over and she'd show him the man he was looking for. And just as Deborah had prophesied, a

woman had the honor of taking Sisera's life that day. Now, I'd like to take a look at chapter 5 and learn some things from Deborah's song of victory.