

Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of May 10, 2020

Heroes In Hard Times: Fiercely Feminine

Pastor Temple, 10:30am

Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15 min)

- Anything to share about personal events since you last met or about applying last week's message on *Choosing Who You Will Serve*, Joshua 24:1-15?
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

Opener Question: How was Mother's Day for you?

Review the Sermon (15 min)

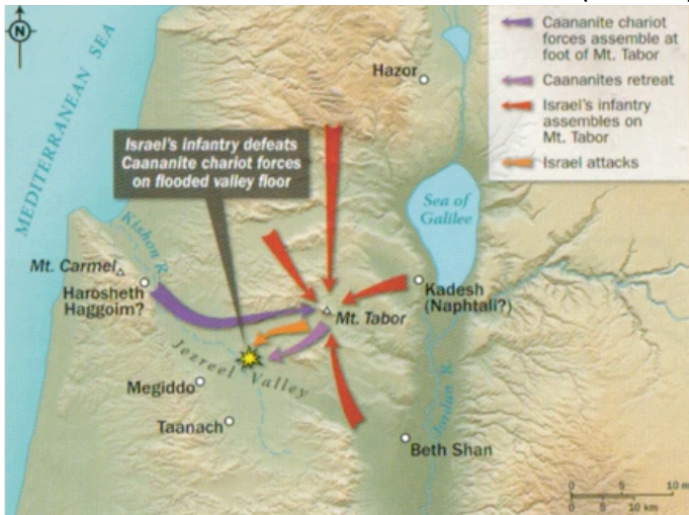
Please read aloud the sermon scripture, Judges 4:1-15. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, now that Ehud was dead. ² So the LORD sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggoyim. ³ Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help. ⁴ Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. ⁵ She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided. ⁶ She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. ⁷ I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.'" ⁸ Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go." ⁹ "Certainly I will go with you," said Deborah. "But because of the course you are taking,

the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman." So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰ There Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand men went up under his command. Deborah also went up with him. ¹¹ Now Heber the Kenite had left the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law, and pitched his tent by the great tree in Zaanannim near Kedesh. ¹² When they told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, ¹³ Sisera summoned from Harosheth Haggoyim to the Kishon River all his men and his nine hundred chariots fitted with iron. ¹⁴ Then Deborah said to Barak, "Go! This is the day the LORD has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the LORD gone ahead of you?" So Barak went down Mount Tabor, with ten thousand men following him. ¹⁵ At Barak's advance, the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot.

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?

- Background info- Deborah was a judge, political leader and prophet for Israel at a time when the northern territories were contested by an enemy nation who oppressed the Israelites. The Canaanite kingdom had a superior military force and worshipped the god Ba'al which at times involved child sacrifice and temple prostitution. How had Israel come to be subject to these oppressors (vs. 1-2)?
- Verses 3-7 describe both the people's appeal to God and a leader God had raised up named Deborah. How was Deborah leading/serving the nation and what do you think she was like?
- Why might her military advice to Barak be difficult to receive? Why would her presence on the mission lessen his reluctance to follow (vs 8-10)?



- How would descending from Mount Tabor to battle the Canaanites on the plain appear to be a big disadvantage in battle?
- What was the result and why?
- Judges Chapter 5 is called "The Song of Deborah," a song of praise to God and a poetic recounting of the battle. In 5:4-7 the details of earthquakes and downpours of rain are provided and Israel's reluctance to fight until "Deborah arose...a mother in Israel." How do these details further explain the battle?
- How did this event give glory to the Lord over Ba'al, the god of the Canaanites (possibly a god of the storm)?

Other Related Readings (10 min)

- Would a volunteer please read aloud Exodus 15:1-22. This has been called the song of Moses and Miriam that recounts the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from the hands of the Egyptians through the Red Sea. When comparing the Exodus story of God delivering Israel from the hands of the Egyptians through Moses and the Red Sea with the story of God delivering Israel from the hands of the Canaanites through Deborah and the battle in the Jezreel Valley, what similarities do you see?
- Like Deborah, Miriam is called a prophet, a nebee or nebeya, in 15:20. How do both of their examples challenge gender roles of their day and ours? What appears to be more important to God than cultural roles?
- Miriam also taught the nation the song "Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea." Why is it important to remember what the Lord has done in community?
- How do leaders in the worship life of God's people help in that regard?

Personalizing and Applying The Message (10 min)

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the scripture readings above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- How do you respond to this quote by Dr. Jack Beck, "So God directed a victory for Israel at a most unlikely place, in a most unlikely way, at a most unlikely time, and with most unlikely leaders, revealing that the battle belonged to the Lord."
- If "God uses whoever He wants, whenever he wants, however he wants," who are the unlikely ones glorifying God in their work today?
- How might god be calling you to be a hero this week? Who do you think most needs one today?
- A volunteer may lead the group in prayer about the concerns shared earlier in the meeting