

Judges 4 – 5

{Use the following as a guide to discuss this as a group.}

Judges 4:1-3 Why did the people of Israel turn to God for help this time?

Are there times when you have strayed from God and turned back to Him? If so, in what way did God respond?

Psalms 106:41-45 ; 1 Samuel 12:9-11.

4:4-5 Deborah was a prophetess. What does this mean? What does a prophet do?

What other giftings were evident in these chapters?

Titus 2:1-5, Galatians 3:26-29

4:6-10 Who gave the command to attack Sisera and his army? Who was commanded to lead Israel in battle?

What character qualities can we see in Deborah? And in Barak?

Hebrews 11:32 ; Exodus 4:10-14

4:11-16 What was so special about iron chariots? So how could Israel defeat such strong opposition? Who won the Battle?

When has God come through in a difficult/overwhelming situation in your life?

Psalms 33:16-17

4:17-24 What do you think of Jael? Is what she did good or bad?

What can we learn from this event? - Courage? Obedience? Faith?

Psalms 37:35-36

Judges 5 The song describes the victory God gave to them and describes some of the details of the oppression that occurred by the hand of Jabin and Sisera.

What poetic imagery do we see here? E.g. the stars themselves fight against Sisera, underscores the divine intervention and the cosmic scale of God's involvement in human affairs. This vivid portrayal serves as a powerful reminder of God's sovereignty and His active role in the events of the world.

Jael did the right thing, even though her husband was in an alliance with Jabin. Even if someone in higher authority over you will not do the right thing, you must do the right thing before YHWH. Just because they do not follow YHWH with all of their heart, or lead the family in the ways of YHWH, or faithfully serve YHWH, that does not mean that you should not or have an excuse to do the same.

We read about Deborah and Jael stepping up by faith into challenging situations opened up to them. We see a wonderful example from Deborah who encouraged Barak to do what YHWH has called him to do. We all at times have a great opportunity to encourage family, friends, and each other to step up to the work of YHWH.

We must be willing to get on board with the work of YHWH, carrying it out the best way we know how. This is not an account of just a couple of men who would not obey. Whole tribes did not go out to battle as YHWH commanded. The tribes of Reuben, Asher, and Dan are condemned for not joining in the victory YHWH was going to give. We must be willing to do what others refuse to do. We must be willing to step up when others falter in faith. We must not falter just because others falter, even if it is your husband or wife, your parents or children, your elders or your workplace leaders or spiritual leaders. Faith steps up and works for YHWH, and He rewards and acts upon such faith.

Second, after reading this account the declaration of the writer of Hebrews is useful for our consideration.

Hebrews 11:32-34 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. (KJV)

Barak is listed of those who followed in faith. Even with all his hesitancy and uncertainty, Barak finally goes and fulfils the command of YHWH. Barak pursues the chariots and puts all the army to the sword. For Barak to be listed as a conqueror through faith and not a failure for lack of faith tells us about the gracious God that we serve. YHWH will receive our faith and accept our obedience even if we have abysmally failed in the past. If you have not been a spiritual leader in your home, your community, your workplace, it is not too late to step up now. We may begin weak and hesitant, but God can use this to build faith in us. As we go and grow, YHWH meets us and moves in our lives. (based on a writing by Brent Kercheville)

Ephesians 2:4-10 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (KJV)