

Sermon Study Guide

Speaker: Rosemary Flaaten

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THE MAIN THING: Deborah and Jael listened to God in carrying out His mission for them, for Israel and for His glory. God created us and empowers us to live “on mission”.

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. What is a favorite memory of your mother?
2. Tell about a “gutsy woman” you know who is “on mission”.

PURSUE GOD: *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. Review the life of Deborah, and name some of her roles. (Judges 4:1-7)
2. Discuss the ways that she was a woman of faith and lived out God's mission for her life.
3. Where did Jael's allegiances lie? (Judges 4:17-21) What was unexpected about her actions?
4. How was the courage of Deborah and Jael revealed in this passage?
5. In what ways did God orchestrate events, lives and circumstances in order to give victory? How did this glorify God? (Judges 4:23)

PURSUSSION: *Seek to be the community of God's people in your community*

1. How did God equip Deborah to fulfill her mission? (Deut 18:20, 22). How is God equipping you? (Eph 4:11, Job 28:20, 28, Proverbs 2:6, James 1:5)
2. What holds women back today?
3. How can women recover a sense of their God-given potential? (Genesis 1:27, Isaiah 43:1, Jeremiah 1:5)
3. Men, what are you doing to encourage the women in your life to be all God created them to be? Discuss Rosemary Flaaten's statement: “*This isn't about doing more. This is about being who we are in the midst of where we are. It's about letting God work in us and through us wherever we are.*”

THE WORD (NIV)

Judges 4:1-7 ¹Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, now that Ehud was dead. ²So 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. ³Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help. ⁴Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. ⁵She 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. ⁶She 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.’ 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.” **Judges 4:17-21** ¹⁷Sisera, meanwhile, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was an alliance between Jabin king of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite. ¹⁸Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, “Come, my lord, come right in. Don’t be afraid.” So he entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket. ¹⁹“I’m thirsty,” he said. “Please give me some water.” She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up. ²⁰“Stand in the doorway of the tent,” he told her. “If someone comes by and asks you, ‘Is anyone in there?’ say ‘No.’” ²¹But Jael, Heber’s wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died. **Judges 4:23** ²³On that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan before the Israelites.

Deuteronomy 18:20 ²⁰But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death.”

Deuteronomy 18:22 ²²If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.

Ephesians 4:11 ¹¹So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,

Job 28:20 ²⁰Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell? **Job 28:28** ²⁸And he said to the human race, “The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.”

Proverbs 2:6 ⁶For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. **James 1:5** ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

Genesis 1:27 ²⁷So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Isaiah 43:1 ¹... this is what the LORD says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Our Mother's Day message focuses on two gutsy women from Judges 4: Deborah and Jael. Through these women, God gave Israel victory over their enemies. Both women are examples for us to live on mission and to be used effectively by God.

Deborah

1. Deborah was a **prophetess**, a person keenly attuned to God, with the tested ability to discern the ways of God. (Deuteronomy 18:18-20, 1 John 4:1). She heard God and then spoke His words of truth. We may not be prophetesses, but we all have the Holy Spirit as our counsellor. In addition, God has given each of us gifts for the benefit of others and the Church (Eph 4:11-13).
2. Deborah was **the wife of Lappidoth**. That meant she ran a household and took care of her family. In a culture that usually put restraints on women's roles, she had both an outside career and a home. *Each of us has our own path, whether with a career and home, or only at home. Embrace your path. Look for opportunities to see God at work in you and through you.*
3. Deborah was a **Judge**—who decided on matters of justice for everyone in her nation—she arbitrated disputes, made legal decisions and spoke wisdom. This meant she was a woman of wisdom—God's wisdom (Job 28:20, 28; Proverbs 2:6). *Where and how do you need God's wisdom? In the tough decisions at work? With your children? In your marriage? Ask God boldly for wisdom (James 1:5), and then watch how God will direct your path and give you wisdom over and above what you could have figured out on your own.*
4. Deborah was the **spiritual and civil leader of Israel**. She was a woman who spoke encouragement as well as decisive commands. She challenged Barak, the army commander, to come fight the enemy. She waited for the Spirit of God to whisper—"Go!" and then communicated to Barak: "This is the day the Lord has given. Has not the Lord gone ahead of you?" *Sometimes being a woman of faith means that we help others see where God is at work and remind them of God's faithfulness and promises. Who needs your encouragement to know God is with them and that He has gone before them?*

Jael

Jael was married to a descendant of Moses' in-laws. Her husband's extended family were also friends Jabin, King of Canaan—Israel's enemies. She was an unlikely person for God to use. Yet God used her home and hospitality. *God wants to use you now—at your age, stage in life, with your family demographics, your situation. Don't make excuses. Right now is the perfect time for God to use you. But sometimes women don't see themselves as God sees them.*

What holds women back from living full-out for God?

- We may have a warped sense of identity. But God has created us, formed us, redeemed us and calls us for a purpose. (Genesis 1:27, Isaiah 43:1, Jeremiah 1:5)
- We may have a warped sense of our potential. We might say, "I can't do that!" But God assures us, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13). If we give our talents, spiritual gifts, experience and passion to God, to use for His kingdom, God will answer in the most incredible ways. Our potential is to change our families, our neighbourhoods and our workplaces.

Who can you be praying for? Who needs to hear about Jesus? Who can you come alongside to disciple and encourage? How can you invite people in to your home? How can you love people at work and show them the difference Jesus has made in your life. How can you let the fruit of the Spirit overflow to others? How can you use your gifts?

Our mission is to bring glory to God by making disciples. Are you willing to be a woman who lives her life on mission?

A Note to Men

What can you do to help the women in your life become all that God created them to be—your wife, mom, sisters, etc.? How can you encourage them to live out their full potential? How can you support them with your time so that they can reach their full potential? Where can you do acts of kindness that would show you believe in them and are proud of them? How can you mentor a younger woman at work, or give her a significant project to do?

To everyone

Will you say, "Yes," to the mission God gives you?