

RUNNING WITH THE GIANTS

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Discussion Notes

The Crossing Church

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OPENING

This week we are concluding a series called “Running with the Giants.” The idea for this series comes from the Book of Hebrews where the author gives a long list of people who were giants in the faith. The race of life is a constant challenge, but we don’t have to run it alone. Now we are looking at the lives of biblical giants who ran with endurance and faith, and used their stories to build our own. They forged paths that few others had walked and moved the Israelites from their denial to their disobedience to ultimate deliverance.

SCRIPTURE¹

Judges 4:1-11 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, now that Ehud was dead. 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. 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. Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. 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. She sent for Barak son of Abinoam 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.’” Barak said to her, “If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.” “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. There Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand men went up under his command. Deborah also went up with him. 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.

Judges 4:14-15 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. 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.

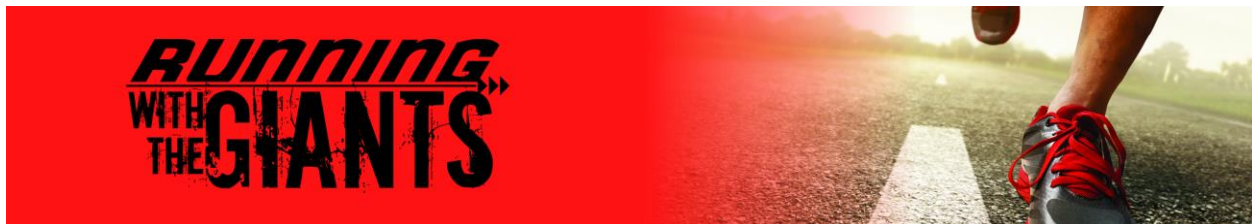
Judges 4:17-19 Sisera came to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, “Come, my lord, come right in. Don’t be afraid.” So he entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket. “I’m thirsty,” he said. “Please give me some water.” She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up.

Judges 4:21 But 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.

OBSERVATION

Wow! Another woman giant on our list of champions this week. She is honored on our path of biblical mentors who are encouraging us to lean into our calling during this series. For three hundred years, God had determined that a group of Judges would lead Israel. This was before King Saul took over because the people wanted to be ruled, not by the mighty God who had created them, freed them from Egyptian

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated



slavery, and brought them into their promised inheritance, but by a king like all of the other nations around them. They didn't want to be magnificently different under God – they wanted to be average. Deborah rose up and responded to the call of God to lead these people and there are many reasons why that was astonishing. She overcame enormous external obstacles in the patriarchal culture where she lived, but many of her greatest hindrances were actually internal – as are ours.

Question: If you had lived in Deborah's time, what internal and external obstacles would you have faced?

APPLICATION

Internal obstacles take a lot of different forms, but they generally exist because our minds are filled with lies. Truth is elusive in our culture today and this is clear as we consider the lies we believe about ourselves. We say we aren't strong enough, good enough, educated enough, old enough, young enough, rich enough, attractive enough, just not enough. And Deborah heard these voices, too. When we allow them and their lies to take root, we limit what God wants to do in our lives.

Question: What lies are you telling yourself? How are they limiting God's work in you?

Deborah leaned in to what God wanted her to be and was obedient. She leaned onto her God and drew her confidence and strength from her relationship with Him. Before she was a warrior she was a worshipper of God. In those moments she received wisdom, direction, and the confidence to guide her people. She knew the source of her gifts and strength. Her story is the amazing combination of human action and God's intervention - an unbeatable combination. We are to partner with Him in what He calls us to do just as Deborah forged a new path not traveled by many others before her.

Question: What paths do you want to forge in your future walk with God? Why have you chosen them?

Question: In your own words, what does it mean to you to lean in and lean on?

When we lean in and lean on, we also have to lean out from our limitations. Deborah leaned out from unnecessary limitations her society placed upon her.

Question: What limitations do you feel restrict you from reaching your highest potential personally and spiritually? Are any placed upon you by the Church? If so, what are they/what can you do about it?

Deborah had a husband who humbly respected her so much that he was willing to collaborate with her. There is power when we bring together our strengths and gifts for the greater good and we can all fan into flames the gifts of others.

Question: Whose gifts do you need to support and encourage today? What are your spouse's gifts?

Question: Which of your own gifts need encouragement? How will you ask for that support?

Question: What do you see in your children's futures? Which of our giants' stories do you believe would be of the greatest value to each of them? Why? Who is your favorite biblical character? Why?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we are ending our stories of the marvelous giants in Your scripture. We know You have given them and many others to us as we study Your Word, and we are grateful. They not only enrich our lives and encourage us, they teach us that, even sinful people can be forgiven and rise above their sin to become heroes. We look forward to the day when we can take a long walk in heaven with each giant and reminisce together about Your mercy and grace that sustained us during our path's journey on earth. In Jesus' name. Amen.