

UNLIKELY HEROES



Opening Prayer

God of Unlikely Heroes,
The hope of Your redemption, the truth of Your salvation, and Your faithful providence are daily revealed to us by Your loving Spirit. As we look into Your Word, help us to find Your personal word to each of us. Help us to become servant leaders like Deborah whose lives proclaim Your story and witness to Your love. Form us as Your disciples, so that we might be instruments of Your will and grow ever closer to You. For this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Scripture: Judges, Chapters 4 and 5

- *Have someone read Judges 4:1-24 aloud.*
- *Allow time for silence to read on your own*
- *Highlight key words, phrases, images that speak to you.*
- *Take a few moments to share those with a partner or with the entire group.*

Background

Deborah (*Deb´or ah*)

Deborah, the only female judge in the Bible, excelled in multiple areas. Clearly one of the Bible's most outstanding figures, she served ancient Israel as a prophet, judge, military leader, songwriter, and minstrel. Judges, Chapter 4 tells her story and Judges, Chapter 5 retells it in song.

These two chapters show her exemplary moral character and indicate the people gave her great love and respect. Like Moses before and David afterward, she fused in herself the roles of prophet, national leader, and military commander. Her oversight covered approximately 20 years of national hardship before the Canaanite war and then a peaceful aftermath of 40 years. Arguably, Deborah first was recognized as a prophet, then as judge/leader, next in a military role, and finally as a songstress. She judged under a palm tree—a setting, rabbinic tradition maintains, that validated her fairness, openness, and refusal to show partiality.

Deborah is introduced, as are the other eleven judges in the Book of Judges, without fanfare. The Bible records no dissent or rebellion against her. The Israelites recognized her abilities and prospered under her tenure.

The sequence described in this chapter is a recurring cycle (A B C D) in Judges.

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| A. | Apostasy | _____ | God's people turn away from God to evil ways. |
| B. | Battering | _____ | Enemies conquer and oppress God's people. |
| C. | Cry out to God | _____ | God's people call on the lord to help them. |
| D. | Deliverance | _____ | God provides a judge to rescue the people from their enemies. |

Reflect

- *Take a few moments to respond to the questions below. Share with one another as partners or the whole group.*

Digging into Judges 4:1-24

1. What do you think Barak felt about being called to action by Deborah? Why did he insist on having her go along in verses 6-8?
2. In verse 9, Deborah says that the Lord will hand Sisera over to a woman. Do you agree that Barak would have easily assumed this would be Deborah?
3. How did the prophecy actually get fulfilled?
4. How do you think Barak felt after he met up with Jael in verse 22?

Applying the Word to our Discipleship

1. What made Deborah a leader in a "man's world"?
2. What quality of Deborah's do you most admire and would like to possess for yourself?
3. Share a time when a leader has asked you to take a step of faith on what seemed to be a risky path. What happened? Did you go for it or hold back?
4. If you had Deborah's confidence, what would you attempt to do?



Skyline Presbyterian Church Zoom Meeting

Unlikely Heroes Bible Study

Thursdays | 6:00 PM Pacific Time

Meeting ID: 850 6452 1664 | Password: 796162

BY PHONE: Dial by your location

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