



Overcoming Sin through the Unlikeliest of Heroes Judges 4-5

The Bad News: Turning Away from God has Consequences Judges 4:1-2

"Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, after Ehud died. And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan..." (Judges 4:1-2)

- Israel didn't obey God's commands to remove the Canaanites from the land (Judges 1:27-36)
- God warned the Israelites that as a result, the Canaanites false gods would "snare" them (Judges 2:3)
- After Ehud died, Israel turned from God and fell into Canaanite oppression (Judges 4:1-2)

"Man's nature, so to speak is a perpetual factory of idols." – John Calvin, French Theologian, 16TH Century

The Good News: God repeatedly hears our cries of repentance and brings us forgiveness and freedom (Judges 4:3)

"The sons of Israel cried to the Lord..." (Judges 4:3)

- God never tires of you running to Him in repentance (Judges 2:18, 3:9, 3:15, 4:3)
 - Lie #1: God doesn't see your sin
 - Lie #2: God grows weary of your failures and gives up on you
 - Truth: God sees your sin ("The sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD") but delivers you by His mercy and grace when you repent of your sin and turn to Him (7x in the Book of Judges!)

"Nothing is easier to do than sin. Nothing is harder to believe than that God loves and forgives sinners."
-Tullian Tchividjian (Pastor in Florida, Grandson of Billy Graham)

God delivered Israel from sin through the acts of unlikely heroes Judges 4:4-5:31

"Deborah said to Barak, 'Arise! For this is the day in which the LORD had given Sisera into your hands; behold, the LORD had gone out before you.'" (Judges 4:14)

- The Team of Unlikely Heroes from Judges 4-5:
 - #1 – Deborah – "The Mother of Israel" (4:4-7; 5:1-11)
 - #2 – Barak – "The Overmatched General" (4:8-16; 5:12-23)
 - #3 – Jael – "The Wife of a Bedouin Shepherd" (4:17-24; 5:24-31)

The Ultimate Unlikely Hero – Jesus Christ (Isaiah 53:2-5)

"He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)

- Jael pierces Sisera to deliver Israel temporarily (Judges 5:26-27)
- God pierces Jesus to deliver all who would believe by faith, permanently (Isaiah 53:2-5)

"God broke the vicious cycle of violence by absorbing it." –Miroslav Volf, Theologian

Digging Deeper:

1. God used two powerful women in Judges 4 and 5. Note how God uses women in Scripture and today in “**The Role of Women in Scripture**” insert in the bulletin.
2. **Respond:** Judges Chapter 5 is a musical poem, reflecting on God’s hand of deliverance as detailed in Judges Chapter 4. Take some time this week to write a song or poem based on your story of how God has delivered you. If you are more of a right brain thinker, perhaps create a spreadsheet or list the ways God has delivered you over the course of your life.
3. **Worship:** Find this song on YouTube or simply make the lyrics your prayer this week.

“My Deliverer” – Chris Tomlin (2008)

I will wait for You to move
For Your mighty hand to save
When the trouble water rise
You are my hiding place
You are my hiding place

You walls are salvation
Your gates are praise

My Deliverer, My Deliverer, My Deliverer
Is the Lord

Who is like You mighty God
Who can take me from Your hand
As I walk with You in freedom
You’re the Rock on which I stand
You’re the Rock on which I stand

LifeGroup Discussion:

1. Read Judges 1:27 thru 2:3 and Judges 4:1-2. Why didn’t the Israelites drive the Canaanites out of the land when they had the chance? What was the result of the Israelites lack of obedience? What is the result of our disobedience?
2. Read Judges 4:3. Pastor (and Grandson of Billy Graham), Tullian Tchividjian writes, “Nothing is easier to do than sin. Nothing is harder to believe than that God loves and forgives sinners.” Discuss your thoughts about this quote. Read Judges 2:18, 3:9, 3:15, 4:3 to see God’s repeated mercy on the nation of Israel in the first few chapters of the Book of Judges.
3. Read Judges 4:4-23. The team of unlikely heroes in Judges 4 includes the first and only female Judge (Deborah), a overpowered General (Barak) and the wife of a Bedouin shepherd (Jael). What stands out to you about each of these unlikely heroes? One of history’s greatest oppressors of women (Sisera, Canaanites) are defeated by 2 women (Deborah, Jael). What does this story reveal to us about God’s heart for oppressed women?
4. Read Isaiah 53:2-5. The story of Judges 4 and 5 point us towards the ultimate hero, Jesus Christ. How is Jesus’ rescue of us unlikely according to Isaiah 53? Spend some time as a group in prayer, praising and thanking God for sending Jesus to be our ultimate deliver.

Next Steps:

1. **Have questions about Christianity and following Jesus?** Join the Alpha Course on Wednesdays, February 4 – March 25 from 6:30 – 8:30 pm in the Lobby. Alpha is an 8-week course where you can explore some of life’s big questions over a relaxed time of dinner, honest conversation, learning and group discussion. Use the invite card in today’s bulletin to invite a friend. calvarylife.org/alpha
2. **Place your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord today!** During our response time or after the service, come to the prayer stations in the front of the room to pray with a prayer counselor or use the booklet called, “The Way to Connect with God” in the seat rack in front of you.
3. **Do you feel stuck in a cycle of sin or addiction?** Come to the Celebrate Recovery free lunch today in Fellowship Hall at 12:30 pm to discover more about our 12-step biblically-based program or visit calvarylife.org/cr



The Role of Women in Scripture

God used two powerful women in Judges 4 and 5.
Note how God uses women in Scripture and today.

God has used women in many leadership roles throughout biblical history:

- Miriam, a prophetess and worship leader for Israel. Exodus 15:20-21
- Deborah, a prophetess and judge over Israel led both men and women in worship with a song she wrote with Barak. Judges 4:4-5
- Hannah, a prayer warrior in the house of the Lord for men and women. II Samuel 2:1
- Huldah, prophetess who prophesied before the High Priest and men of King Josiah to instruct them. II Kings 22:14-16
- Anna, a prophetess who served in the temple day and night. Luke 2:36-38
- Mary, the sister of Lazarus, sat at Jesus' feet and learned, a privilege granted only to men at that time. Luke 10:39
- Women were the first to declare the resurrection of Jesus and evangelize. John 20:11-18; Luke 24:8-11
- Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside and taught him the Word of God. Acts 18:26
- Euodia and Syntyche were co-workers with Paul. Philippians 4:2-3
- Phoebe is called a deacon at her church. I Timothy 3:11 seems to indicate that women had the role of deacon in the church. Romans 16:1
- Philip had four daughters who were prophetesses. Acts 21:8-9

Scriptural insights from Pastor Dave:

- **Can a woman serve as an elder?** I Timothy 3:1
This office is for men only. Women do not serve as elder in a church. In Calvary, the Senior Pastor is an elder, so this role would not be filled by a woman. I Timothy 3:1 states that elders are men. Paul said, "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do..."
- **Can women pray and prophesy in the church?** I Corinthians 11:5
"But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved."

"prophesy" = The word prophesy according to Strong's Lexicon can mean: speak forth by divine inspirations, to predict, foretelling future events, declare, a thing which can only be known by divine revelation, to teach, refute, reprove, admonish, comfort others.

Paul assumes that women will "prophesy" in church and calls for order and submission as women exercise their gift. Therefore, women may pray and prophesy in the assembly of the church if in submission to the proper authority. Acts 21:8, 9—women prophetesses.

- **Are women to be silent and not speak in the church?** I Corinthians 14:29-40
Is this consistent with I Corinthians 11:5? In some specific services, women should be silent and not disrupt. Paul's primary concern was not with a woman's role, but with the disorder, confusion, lack of submission in the church.
I Corinthians 11:14-16, 18-19; I Corinthians 14:33, 40
- **Can women teach in authority over men?** I Timothy 2:11-12
“*exercise authority*” = usurp authority of those in charge.
Yes, women can teach, but are prohibited from usurping authority.
- **Can women be pastors?**
Women are called to live like Christ, our “good shepherd,” and shepherd His sheep in the church. In many ways, women carry out the role of pastor as they shepherd the sheep and it would not be unbiblical to reference them as pastors. Culturally, that will be difficult for some people and it should not be a cause for division in the church. The Greek word for pastor, poimen, is usually translated as shepherd. In Acts 20:28 and I Peter 5:1 poimen is translated “shepherd” as it refers to the pastors/elders. In one place, Ephesians 4:11, poimen is translated “pastor” which is the term we have adopted. So, a pastor is one that shepherds believers. It makes no reference to the gender except as it is used for the elders, which are men. Both men and women do serve as “shepherds” in the roles described below:
 - **John 10:2-4** - A shepherd, knows the sheep and leads them by example.
 - **John 10:11-14** - A shepherd loves and serves the sheep sacrificially.
 - **Matthew 25:32** - A shepherd, discerns the spiritual condition of the sheep.
 - **Matthew 9:36** - A shepherd, has compassion on people by healing and encouraging them.
 - **John 10:16** - A shepherd reaches out to others who are not yet saved.

I am thankful for the many roles that women serve in our church. Each of them deserves our respect and appreciation. It is abundantly clear in today's passage that God puts women in positions of power and leadership. We too need to find ways for all in our body to serve the Lord based on God's calling and gifting in their lives.

Perhaps the most difficult area of this discussion for us is what title to use for the women that lead in major areas of our ministry at Calvary. Scripture does allow the use of the term “pastor” for any that shepherd other people. There is no restriction in the use of the term for women. But we also need to protect the unity of our body and not quarrel over titles for those that serve.

Therefore, based on all the ways God uses and treats women in the Bible, we all should treat women as Jesus did and recognize their important role to help shepherd the sheep in His Body, the church.