

A person with long, dark hair is sitting on a grassy bank, looking out at a large body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow over the scene. The person is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt. The background shows a calm lake and distant hills under a clear sky.

DEBORAH

FAMILY DEVOS

Jael

Scripture: Judges 4:8-24

Memory Verse: James 1:22

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

For My Family

If we trust God’s Word, He can use us to do incredible things in His Kingdom. In today’s passage, we will see a man who struggled to follow the Lord and missed out on the blessing. We will also see two women that God holds up before us as faithful and righteous, even though the way they were used might seem a little unusual to us.

In part one of our study on Deborah, we saw that she received the Word of God and spoke it faithfully to the people around her. Specifically in verse 6, Deborah told Barak, a man who appeared to be leading the soldiers of Israel, to go up and fight against Sisera because the Lord was going to give them the victory. Like in our study of Gideon, Barak was hesitant to trust this message from God, and seeking some assurance (just like Gideon), Barak asked Deborah to come up to the battle with him. Deborah agreed to go despite the fact that she was not a warrior, but she told Barak that because of his lack of faith he would not receive the glory of the victory. Instead, it would go to someone else.

Deborah, Barak, and the army went up to fight Sisera, and again Deborah faithfully spoke the Word of God to the soldiers, telling them that the Lord had gone out before them to fight with them. The soldiers, encouraged by this word, went out and defeated the army of the Canaanites, but Sisera, the leader of the enemy soldiers that had been plaguing Israel, escaped on foot from the battle.

Fleeing from Barak and his men, Sisera turned to one of his allies, a man Heber and his wife, Jael. Unlike Barak, Jael was decisive and acted swiftly for the Lord. She tricked Sisera into hiding in her tent, then when he fell asleep, WHAM! Jael, not Barak, had won the victory for the Lord and for Israel.

Our lesson today does not teach us to go around slamming people in the head with giant hammers and tent stakes. God has put people around us to bring his judgment to those who do evil (police officers, judges, etc.) What it does teach us is that when we know what the Lord is calling us to do, we should do it. James 4:17 tells us, “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” Let’s be like Deborah and Jael, these two great women of the faith, who heard God’s Word and obeyed in faith.

Questions for Young Children:

How did Barak show that he didn't fully trust God?

What are some things that you know that you *should* do today (as opposed to not doing things you are not supposed to do)?

Questions for Teens and Pre-teens:

Why was it okay for Jael to kill Sisera? Would it be different if Sisera had died in battle with Barak? Why did she receive 'glory' for this?

Why is it NOT okay for you and I to act in the same way (read Romans 13 for more on this)?

What are some other things that God's word tells us that we *should* do (e.g. love our neighbors, worship Jesus, etc.)?