

FBS “Heroes: Man’s Rebellion & Repentance, God’s Provision & Peace— 10-2-16
Joel Breidenbaugh Deborah & Barak & the Value of Teamwork” (Judges 4-5)

Intro. When we try to work with others, we can encounter challenges because of all the different kinds of personalities. Some people are great team players & work together. It doesn’t mean that don’t raise questions, but they try to be part of the solution to problems. Some people are mavericks & just do their own thing. They aren’t necessarily opposed to the team, but they march to the beat of their own drum. Then there are those who are fighters & complainers & deliberately try to make trouble for others. We even encounter such people in the church, when our staff has asked for communication to pass through them so we can have multiple eyes on it & be aware of what people are talking about when they call the church office. Recently we caught a couple of young ladies in the act of doing their own thing, as seen here (show Dawn as Wonder Woman video). Teamwork is important in the secular world & it’s even more important in God’s kingdom. As we continue our series in Judges as “Heroes: Man’s Rebellion & Repentance, God’s Provision & Peace,” today we look at chapters 4 & 5 on “Deborah & Barak & the Value of Teamwork.”

Theme: Sin, Oppression, Repentance, Deliverance & Peace

Background: The generation after Joshua’s saw a people who did not know Yahweh’s miracles & they began doing that which was right in their own eyes, which was evil in the eyes of the Lord, because they turned from Him to other gods. In response Yahweh gave them over to an oppressive nation which caused Israel to cry out to Yahweh. He then raised up a leader (local hero) to deliver them & give them a time of peace, before they started the cycle all over again.

➤ **Principles from Judges 4-5 & the Value of Teamwork:**

1. When the faith community turns from the Lord, it is evil & will be judged (4:1-3; 5:15-17, 23)

- We should expect the world & the non-believing community to fail to worship Jesus Christ, because their allegiances are elsewhere.
- Moreover, while we may not like how far America has fallen in recent years & decades, it was never established by God the way Israel was—our founders may have wanted America to be the New Israel & started this country with Judeo-Christian principles, but God never said He would build another nation after Israel to call His own, but He did promise to build His church
- The world failing to serve Yahweh is sinful, but what is particularly evil is when those in the faith community turn from the Lord, because of all He did for them—Israel kept committing apostasy by worshiping the false gods of the surrounding nations & God’s Word calls it “evil”

Illus: The evil is rightly judged by the Lord, whether by oppression by a neighboring country or when God struck down Ananias & Sapphira in Acts 5 for lying about how much they gave or Corinthian believers in 1 Corinthians 11 for taking the Lord’s Supper flippantly

- Failure to follow the Lord’s leader is also evil & receives words of strong rebuke & cursing—Reuben, Gilead, Dan & Asher didn’t respond to the call to action (5:15-17)
- Furthermore, Meroz was a town in that region but they were Israelites who had taken their stand with the Canaanites, didn’t show up & were therefore cursed (5:23)

Illus: When someone grows up at Sweetwater & leaves & has no evidence of fruit for the Lord, though they may have become a member at one time, we are right to remove them from membership rolls (after reaching out to them) because keeping a name on a list gives them a false assurance of salvation & may bring reproach on God’s church—the warnings of Hebrews 6 & 10 are real & we must not make light of Christ’s sacrifice

2. The Lord’s judgment can affect entire nations (4:2, 23-24; 5:19-21)

- The judgment begins by the Lord giving Israel over to Jabin, king of Canaan, whose commander was Sisera with 900 iron chariots & Canaan oppressed Israel for 20 years

- Because Israel repented & cried out to the Lord for help, however, the Lord then used Israel & her leaders to press down on Canaan & her leaders (4:17-24; 5:19-21)

Illus: It's not politically correct to say God gives His people over to oppressive groups today—could God have given the Jews over to the Nazis, because they had turned their back on Yahweh? Can God give His church in America over to wicked rulers because the church failed to stand up & preach His Word while we relied on social ministries & forwarded emails & shared Facebook posts to be our witness?

Illus: Just as God's judgment turned from being against Israel to being against Canaan when Israel cried to the Lord for help, so it can happen today. A repentant & dependent church can result in a massive shift in a country's standing—the American Colonies during the 1st Great Awakening, South Korea in the last few decades, changes happening in Cuba the last 15+ years, because of the influence of Christianity

3. During chaotic times, the Lord may use unexpected heroes (4:4-5, 9, 17-22; 5:24-27)

- Yahweh used Deborah, a prophetess, to speak His Word to Barak during this time of oppression—Deborah didn't go to war, but the Lord used her to give Barak courage to go to war
- Moreover, Jael was a non-Israelite who took her stand with Israel & the Lord gave Sisera the commander of Canaan into her hand

Illus: In times when too much health-wealth-prosperity junk circulates on TV, Internet & radio, I'm glad the Lord uses the unexpected women, like Beth Moore, Kay Arthur, Lisa Terkhurst & more to remind people of the only hope in Jesus—while their ministries are aimed at women, some men have benefitted from them

4. Whoever the Lord uses must work together for the Lord's glory (4:6-10, 12-16; 5:1, 4-5, 11)

- Though the Lord spoke through Deborah & gave Sisera into Jael's hands, in between God used Barak to defeat the Canaanites & drive Sisera toward "safety" in Jael's tent—they worked together to bring victory for Yahweh's glory & then both Deborah & Barak praised the Lord in song

Illus: Over the last few years, I have shared that I believe the Lord is calling us to do a number of things to reach more people for the Lord's glory—we now have a growing Hispanic congregation we are supporting, but we have yet to offer a contemporary worship service, online video worship, multi-site places to meet, a gymnasium to have more come onto our campus—each of those are ways we can reach more people. We cannot do all of them at once & I'll say more about different ones in the upcoming weeks & months, but they cannot stay on the back-burner forever

- If the Lord has called us to reach more, we cannot delay obedience & keep expecting to do the same things we've always done but we have to work together for the Lord's glory

➤ Thank a local hero—Teachers. If you post to social media, use #Heroes #FirstBaptistSweetwater

Conc. You may or may not have heard of the British brothers who won gold & silver in the Triathlon in Rio in mid-August—Alistair (28) & Jonny (26). But did you hear what happened 2 weeks ago in Cozumel during the Triathlon World Series finale? With a few hundred meters to go, the reigning silver medalist (Jonny) was in the lead of the running portion & a victory would have secured the title. But heat exhaustion gave way & he nearly collapsed. A few meters behind lurked another runner & also brother Alistair, the reigning gold medalist. Instead of kicking it in to win the title, Alistair went over & draped his brother's arms around him & helped him secure second place, gently pushing him ahead at the finish line. Alistair could have won the title, but he cared more about his brother finishing than his own accolades. Team work cares more about the whole than the individual parts, but the individuals have to do their part to benefit the whole. Will you do your part? It starts with surrendering your life to Jesus in repentance & faith & it becomes a life of ongoing surrender to the Lord to do His will rather than your own. Trust Him today & always.