

Taking Bold Steps for God

Series: Judges – When All Else Fails...
Pastor Scott Reeve
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Getting our bearings:

- Sometimes God puts things on our hearts that require us to take bold steps for Him. We may be pushed out of our comfort zones.
- Israel is once again under bondage because of their sin (**Judg. 4:1**). They were oppressed (squeeze, press together) by Jabin, king of Canaan (**Judg. 4:2-3**), through Sisera, the king's commander.
- Jabin most likely was a title, not a name. Joshua had defeated a previous king by this name (**Josh. 11:1-10**) and this new leader had restored his capital and grown in power.

Taking Bold Steps For God

Be aware of the situation but not overwhelmed by it

** Let's meet Deborah and Barak:

- **Judg. 4:4** introduces Deborah, the prophetess. We know nothing of her husband beyond what is mentioned here. Deborah judged Israel and settled disputes under a palm tree (**Judg. 4:4-5**).
- Deborah was from the tribe of Ephraim. Ephraim was a son of Joseph. This was a leading tribe in Israel (**Josh. 17:15; Judg. 3:27**). Like other tribes, though, they have a spotted history.
- We meet Barak in **Judg. 4:6**. He was of the tribe of Naphtali, one of the sons of Jacob. We do not know much about Naphtali but we do read of his descendants. They seemed to have a spirit of independence and were more than capable warriors (**Judg. 5:18**).
- Deborah gives Barak a message from God in **Judg. 4:7**. I believe both Barak and Deborah are mentioned in **Heb. 11:32, 34**.

** A few practical things about being aware:

- Taking bold steps means thinking through what is before us. At times the odds may seem against us such as in **Judg. 4**.
- Get wise counsel, pray, study the Word, seek wisdom from God, but don't let the situation overwhelm us.
- **Practical:** Know, if we can, what we are dealing with moving on, but do not allow it to overwhelm us. God is aware of everything. If He has put something on our heart He will help us. We need to do our homework, know as much as we can and then move forward.

Faith is crucial to take bold steps

- If God has put something in our hearts, do we believe Him? Do we trust Him to lead us? Do we take Him at His Word?
- We must believe what God says. Barak was given instructions (**Judg. 4:7**). He seems to have hesitated, though he did go.

- In **Judg. 4:8** Barak says he will only go if Deborah goes. Because of that, Deborah tells him a woman will receive the honor for what would happen to Sisera (**Judg. 4:9; 17-22**).
- We must remember that Barak did go and do what was told him. Note **Judg. 4:10-16**. At times, we need a push to step out in faith. The more we know about God, the more we learn to depend upon Him.
- **Practical:** Take steps to continue growing. Step out and trust God to guide us if He is leading us.

Bold living requires tunnel vision

- When we step out for God, there will be things that try to stop and discourage us. We have to, at times, tune out the noise.
- Tunnel vision does not mean forsaking responsibilities.
- Deborah was respected by the people and a leader.
- Leadership is concerned for people above anything. To do what God wants us to requires focus.
- Success in God's eyes is found in obedience and availability.
- We keep moving forward, following God's leading. God gave the victory over Sisera (**Judg. 4:15**). He turned the battlefield into mud (**Judg. 5:20-22**). The word "routed" means "confuse, unsettle."
- **Practical:** Stay on task. God asks for obedience. Follow up on what God wants us to do and hang in there. Don't let the noise from people or situations dissuade or discourage us.

Bold steps require looking at the facts, past and present

- It is good to celebrate what God has done. It reminds us that He is at work in the world.
- Deborah wrote the song mentioned in **Judg. 5:2-31**.
- **Judg. 5** points to the fact God is in charge and in control (**Judg. 5:5**). We see His holiness in His chastising Israel.
- Deborah led the people (**Judg. 5:9**). She commends those who stood for the people (**Judg. 5:10-15, 18**). See also **Judg. 5:19-22**.
- **Practical:** Learn lessons from the past and present to apply to the future. Meditate on what God has done for us and praise Him.

When taking bold steps for God, remember the need we have for Him to help us as we follow Him.