Forward with Simplicity: Lessons from Deborah

**Key Scripture**

Judges 5:6-7, 12 (NIV)

“In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were abandoned; travelers took to winding paths. Villagers in Israel would not fight; they held back until I, Deborah, arose, until I arose, a mother in Israel. … **‘**Wake up, wake up, Deborah! Wake up, wake up, break out in song! Arise, Barak! Take captive your captives, son of Abinoam.”

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The story of Deborah in Judges 4 and 5 begins like many of the stories in the Book of Judges—the Israelites sinned against the Lord, and he sold them out to King Jabin of Canaan. This went on for 20 years until the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help. At that time, Deborah was leading Israel as a judge. YES! Ladies she was a professional woman in a leadership position! She sent for Barak, a commander in Israel’s army, and told him to go and fight Jabin’s army led by Sisera.

Deborah was a busy woman. Judges 4:5 says, “She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided.” Deborah was a woman of great wisdom, revelation, and discernment. She also had a prophetic gift, including knowing the times and seasons of the Lord. She clearly heard the voice of the Lord.

Yet Judges 5:12 says, “Wake up, wake up, Deborah! Wake up, wake up, break out in song! Arise, Barak! Take captive your captives, son of Abinoam.” Deborah and Barak needed to “wake up and arise” to a new revelation and dimension of their callings. The Lord was telling them to be alert and pay attention, as he was about to move in an extraordinary way.

Judges 5:7 says, “Villagers in Israel would not fight; they held back until I, Deborah, arose, until I arose, a mother in Israel.” Of all the things Deborah could have legitimately called herself—judge, prophetess, deliverer, —she chose to call herself a mother, but it is unclear who her children were: she was a mother “in Israel,” but also a mother “over Israel” (it can be translated both ways). She saw all of Israel as her children and longed for *all* her children (literal and figurative) to experience peace and security. **Notice the verse says no one in Israel would fight until Deborah “arose.”** The Israelites were beaten down by 20 years of slavery. They were too tired and discouraged to fight. They needed someone to inspire them, and the Lord chose Deborah. She used the place of trust and authority she had been given as a judge to inspire Barak to raise up an army. *She Moved Forward with Simplicity!*

**So often we are afraid to step out of our comfort zones and become everything the Lord has called us to be.** It’s a blessing the Lord doesn’t give us the whole plan for our lives in advance, because most of us would answer with a resounding “No!” Don’t let the enemy get in your head and tell you God will never use you to do great things. Don’t let your fear of what others may think get in the way of being obedient to God.

The Lord prepared Deborah in the secret place of her worship, which helped her grow in confidence in hearing God’s voice. Her intentional connection to God through worship gave her confidence as she discerned the time to go to war. The Lord will do the same with us. **As we go deeper in relationship with God, God will guide us to clarity around our call for this season of kingdom work.**

### Conclusion

Women of God, it’s time for you to be bold and courageous and do the unique and amazing things God is calling you to do. **Wherever the Lord has placed you, will you accept the challenge to be a light in the darkness for the Kingdom of God?** Will you encourage others to do it, too? Wake up and rise to shine the glory of God everywhere you go! You carry the hope this world needs—the hope of Jesus Christ—and it’s time to stop hiding and playing small. It’s time to move Forward! A dying, hopeless world is waiting for you to be obedient. Believe and trust God has the very best plan for you and follow him to where he is working today.

### Reflection Questions

* What kinds of prayer practices have been helpful as you seek to draw closer to God?
* Describe a time when God helped make clear something you were called to do.
* What do you hear the Spirit saying to you/your family/your church/your community?
* How can you move *Forward with Simplicity*?