

# The Call for Help

## Part 3

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Resuming our look at how the battle between the Israelites and the Canaanites in Judges 4-5 instructs us as followers of Christ, we finally meet the story's heroine: a housewife named Jael. To recap, Israel's leader, Deborah, had cursed the inhabitants of Meroz for refusing to come serve in battle (Judges 5:23). In contrast, Jael, a common woman, ultimately brought great victory:

*We don't fight like others fight—physically, with man-made weapons. ... We've got to fight in prayer. We've got to fight in proclamation of the Gospel. We've got to fight by reaching out into the world with the love and grace of Christ.*

***Most blessed among women is Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; blessed is she among women in tents. He [the enemy commander, Sisera] asked for water, she gave milk; she brought out cream in a lordly bowl. She stretched her hand to the tent peg, her right hand to the workmen's hammer; she pounded Sisera, she pierced his head. ... Where he sank, there he fell dead.*** Judges 5:24-27

Today, as well, there is a work to be done in the world. Jesus has given us Christians the Great Commission; we are to teach all people everywhere how to follow Him (Matthew 28:19). And whether you are a construction worker, a mechanic, an

accountant, or a stay-at-home mom, God desires to use you to spread the Gospel.

Don't underestimate what God can do! He has stationed you where you are in life so that you can represent Jesus to those around you. Some people unfortunately think, *Sunday is the day when I do the spiritual thing, but the rest of the week is taken up with work and living in the material world.* That's the wrong mentality; you cannot separate the sacred and the secular. You go to church to become prepared for the coming week of ministry—because when you wake up each morning and head out the door, you are entering a mission field.

During World War II, every able-bodied person in Britain contributed to the war effort. So many things needed to be done, and everybody helped in some way. So it must be today, spiritually; everyone needs to do something. The call for help goes out now—the Lord is calling us, just as Deborah and Barak called Israel's tribes to battle. They called out to the towns and the small villages; they summoned all to engage in the conflict. So the Lord calls us, and we must stand up.

How will you respond to the call? One possibility is to follow the example of Meroz and ignore the call to battle. We can respond like a high school principal I once knew, whose attitude was, "Yes, I'm a Christian, but I don't want to get involved. No, I won't grant permission for believers to hold outreaches on campus; I want job security. I don't want to rock the boat." That was Meroz. And what does Scripture say resulted? Meroz was cursed—barren,

desolate (Judges 5:23). That's where such a mindset leads.

Then there was the Israelite tribe of Reuben. They planned on entering the battle; they wrestled with knowing that they should get involved. They even felt passionately about it (Judges 5:15-16), but they just never really did it. How many people have good intentions but don't follow through? Intentions are not enough. I frequently meet people who tell me about intentions that sound so good. But then I watch, and they never do what they said they would. That was the Reubenites: their good intentions never materialized. In the end it was only Zebulun and Naphtali who entered the battle. They risked their lives (Judges 5:18); they went for it with all they had. Their attitude was, "This is do or die. We're going to stand up and fight."

And that's what God is calling us to do today. Of course, we don't fight like others fight—physically, with man-made weapons. Our weapons are not carnal (merely human) (2 Corinthians 10:4). But they are mighty in God. We've got to fight in prayer. We've got to fight in proclamation of the Gospel. We've got to fight by reaching out into the world with the love and grace of Christ.

After the battle, Deborah and her colleague Barak began their song with these words: "When leaders lead...[and] when the people willingly offer themselves, bless the LORD!" (Judges 5:2). When leaders have a vision, and God's people say, *We're on board; let's do it—praise the Lord!* That's when God works; that's when things happen. So I encourage you and challenge you. Evaluate where you are in life in light of these questions: Am I involved in the battle? Am I serving the Lord in what I'm doing? Have I offered myself in the cause of Christ? We're in the midst of a great battle against the kingdom of darkness. Are we contributing to the war effort like God has called us to? ↻