

# Where Were the Men?

by Denny Kenaston

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*Denny Kenaston's sermon explores the critical need for male leadership in the church and the dangers posed by complacency in the second generation of Christians.*

**Duration:** 1:30:29

**Scripture:** Judges 2:7, Judges 2:10, Isaiah 3:8, 1 Corinthians 10:6-14

**Topics:** "Call Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Barak and Deborah from the book of Judges. The sermon highlights the potential and heart of God that is revealed in this story. It emphasizes the importance of responding to God's call and not forfeiting the honor and blessings that come with obedience. The sermon also emphasizes the assurance that the Lord will fight for us and fulfill his promises.

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## Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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Praise the Lord for this morning already, the way the Lord has led, the challenges, the exhortations that we've received, the examples that we have seen. All of this God blesses us in. You know, I was thinking the other day, talking about Emmanuel's little challenge to us, how that evangelism brings revival and revival brings evangelism and those two kind of work together.

Well, it says there in Acts 1.8, ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you and then ye shall be witnesses unto me. And that's like the flow of God's grace this way into my heart reaches out into people's lives. But would you also consider it the other way around that Paul said in Romans 1.17,

I believe, that the gospel is the power of God.

And if you get active in preaching the gospel, you will find that it is the power of God coming upon you. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy or the prophetic word of prophetic spirit or the spirit of utterance comes forth when we testify about Jesus. Amen.

So that's not the sermon this morning, but that's the overflow of Emmanuel's exhortation to us. And I was staggered a bit with Jeremy's sharing in light of the message that God has laid on my heart. I mean, he's quoting things that are in my sermon in his little exhortation to us this morning.

So that thrills a preacher's heart. You know that when you wrestle with something and you prevail before the Lord about it and, you know, we're men and we're insecure and sometimes we're not sure if we're hearing from the Lord. And then you get into a service and you go to a prayer meeting and you hear the things and it all just kind of unfolds and you say, yes, Lord, this is the way.

Walk ye in it. So let's have a prayer before we get into the message this morning. Oh, Father, so many blessings upon us already today.

Thank you, Lord, for the team. Thank you for their shining faces. Thank you again, Father, for all it does to us here and all it does for them there.

God, I do acknowledge again these things are our salvation. God, they keep the fires burning in the hearts of this congregation. God, we thank you for it.

Now, God, I pray that you will continue to enlighten our hearts this morning. Give encouragement where encouragement is needed. Give challenge where challenge is needed and rebuke where rebuke is needed.

Father, fill me with the Holy Ghost. God, I don't want to stand up here by myself. God, I trust you for this.

I thank you for hearing me. In Jesus name. Amen.

Well, this morning's sermon flows out of several days of family devotions for us. And I want to say, we have been studying the first few chapters in the book of Judges in family devotions. And this sermon this morning kind of flows out of that.

We kept seeing in these first few chapters, and you will see it all the way through the book of Judges, by the way, but we kept seeing this plague of grievous absentee leadership in the book of Judges. We just saw it again and again until the cry came up out of our hearts as we sat there in family devotions in a circle. Ah! Where are the men? Where are the men? And as we were discussing these different aspects of the lessons that we could learn out of the book of Judges, all of a sudden it dawned on me, as it does sometimes in family devotions, this is a sermon.

This is not just family devotions. This is a sermon. And we discussed it a bit more, the importance of what God was teaching us out of the book of Judges.

And my whole family wholeheartedly rose up and said, you must, you must give that in a sermon. And I told them, I said, well, what do you call it? What do you give the title of the sermon? I mean, we've already given a sermon called, Where are the Men? So you can't give that title again. What shall I give for a title? And David spoke up and said, call it Where Were the Men? And I said, yes, David, yes.

Where Were the Men? In chapter one and chapter two and three and four and five. Where Were the Men? And so, this is kind of a family sermon this morning, if you can endure that. It's, I think it also flows out of ten days of family ministry trip, where we again saw the crying need for men to rise up and take the lead in whatever their responsibilities may be.

So, the title of the message this morning is, Where Were the Men? And I'd like to give it a subtitle, Dangers of Second Generation Christianity. Where Were the Men? And the Dangers of Second Generation Christianity. And before we get into the book of Judges, I want to read just a few verses out of the book of Isaiah chapter three, probably familiar verses, but let's read them in light of what we're looking at today.

And I think these verses will be guiding verses in our hearts as we look at some lessons we can learn about leadership and followship in the book of Judges. Now Isaiah chapter three, God is decrying through the prophet Isaiah the condition of his people, because they have turned away from him. That's always where everything begins to go down.

When God's people begin to turn away from him, then everything else starts falling out of place. God is speaking words of judgment here in chapter three. Consider these words.

Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread and the whole stay of water. Also, verse two, the mighty man, the Lord doth take away from Jerusalem and Judah the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge and the prophet. The Lord doth take away from Jerusalem and Judah the prudent man and the ancient, the captain of fifty and the honorable man and the counselor and the cunning artificer and the eloquent orator.

Now, that's pretty sad when you read that list. You know, I wrote it in my Bible, what's left? When God takes all those things away, what is left? And the next verse answers that. And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them, and the people shall be oppressed every one by another and every one by his neighbor.

The child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient and the base against the honorable. And down to verse twelve, and as for my people, says God, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. Children are their oppressors, and women rule over them.

I just want to remind you that this preface, our message this morning, with these words. Now you can turn to Judges, chapter one. Judges is one of the saddest books in the Bible.

It's filled with sad stories. Oh, the sad ups and downs of Israel's second generation in the land of Canaan. The book of Judges is a record of the sad ups and downs of Israel's second generation in the land of Canaan.

And the saddest part of the book of Judges is the fact that it follows Joshua, the book of victories. How can these two books be so close together? What a puzzle! Joshua, Joshua the book of battles, the book of war, the book of victory after victory, and then oh just like that, we're in the book of Judges, where we have the record of the sad ups and downs of Israel's second generation in the land that floweth with milk and honey. The book of Joshua, as I recollect, has only one failure in battle in the whole book of Judges.

And that failure in battle was because of the sin of Achan at the battle of Ai. Consider that brothers and sisters. Out of the dozens and dozens and probably hundreds of battles that took place in the land of

Canaan, there's only recorded one failure.

And that shouldn't surprise us because God said to the children of Israel, no man shall be able to stand before you. That's what God said. So it should be as God said, amen? The book of Joshua.

Hundreds of thousands of soldiers trained in the rigors of wilderness life for forty years appear. These men range from the age of twenty to sixty. They're the ones who were born and grew up in the wilderness.

These are soldiers. These are not men of ease that we find in the book of Joshua, but rather they are trained soldiers. The book of Joshua we find multitudes of miraculous victories.

In fact, we see the Lord's hosts fighting for Israel and with Israel. Now I don't know exactly all the details of what that meant, but I know that God gives these records in the book of Joshua that he will send hornets before their enemy. And if you could just imagine Israel lined up, setting the battle in array, everything is ready to begin.

And just like that, when Israel blows its trumpets and God told them, when you go to war, blow your trumpets and I will come in and fight for you. They blow their trumpets and just like that, millions of hornets descend on the enemy. Now I don't care how big you are, or how tough you are, or how long your sword is, if you've got hornets all over you, you are discomfited, amen? And in the midst of that, Israel went forth and got the victory over and over and over again.

We have accounts of God bringing storms and lightning and thunder down upon the enemy just when the battle was set in array. Who knows what else God did? I can imagine God did all kinds of miracles. I can imagine those men standing out there on the field of battle with a sword in their hand and a shield in their other hand and doing battle against the enemy.

And just like this, some big fella comes over up here on his right-hand side and he's looking over on the left and he's about to get his head cut off and there's an angel standing there in the hidden sides where you can't see him and he just goes, boom, like that. And the man rolls over and falls dead. And you know, the soldier here, thank you Lord, thank you, and he keeps on going.

I can just imagine those things happen over and over and over again. Amen? I mean, let's meditate on the Scripture. God said, I will fight for you.

God said, I will go out on the battlefield. The Lord's hosts are the Lord's hosts from heaven. And if they're out there on the battlefield, you can go out on any battlefield.

Amen? This was Joshua. Truly a generation of victorious warriors, age 20 to 60. But times have changed now that we come into the book of Judges.

It's 30 years later. Joshua has died. The first generation are now 50 to 90 years old.

It's 30 years later. And that first generation, the first generation of Israelites in the land of Canaan are now 50 to 90 years old. Which, that shouldn't surprise you, Joshua lived to be 110.

There they are. This is the generation that heard Moses' words as he expressed them to him in the book of Deuteronomy. Raise up a godly generation, Moses said.

Deuteronomy chapter 6, Deuteronomy chapter 7, Deuteronomy chapter 8. Beware of complacency about five or six times in the book of Deuteronomy. When you get into the land, and everything is nice, and there's lots of food to eat, and you have a nice bed to sleep in, and everything is beautiful there, beware. They heard those warnings.

And this is the generation that heard Moses' words say this, don't allow the Canaanites to live among you. Destroy them. If you live among them, they will destroy you.

This is the generation that heard those words. But times have changed. There's no more war.

This fighting generation, the first generation, have laid down their swords, and they've laid down their armor, and they're relaxing in the land of Canaan. Amen? They have laid down their swords, and laid down their armor, and they're relaxing in their newfound land of Canaan. There's no more fighting.

All that, and all that that does for you is gone. All the things that Jeremy spoke to us about this morning, all those effects are gone. Because there's no more war.

When there's no more fighting, complacency sets in. When there's no more fighting, there are no more mighty victories. When there is no more fighting, there is no next generation of valiant men.

When there is no more fighting, materialism sets in. When there is no more fighting, a life of ease and comfort takes over. And that's where we find Israel as we drop in at the beginning of the book of Judges.

Now I'm glad the book of Judges starts out the way that it does. In chapter one, let's read verse one and two. It shows the potential of what God wants to do, and would have continued to do with the children of Israel.

It says in chapter one, verse one, Now after the death of Joshua, it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first to fight against them? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up. Behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. Now I don't know what that means to you, but those words are powerful words.

When you're ready to go into a battle, and you hear the Lord tell you, this is who should go, and by the way, I've already delivered them into your hand. It's very easy to go to battle. And verse four says, And Judah went up, and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand, and they slew of them in Bezach ten thousand men.

So we see from these few verses, it shows the potential of what could have happened in the book of Judges. It also shows us the heart of God. That's what God wanted them to do.

There was, it seems, a right response, a beginning response to what should have been done. And maybe that was a beginning response from the exhortations that Joshua gave them just before he died. It also shows us that the Lord's promises are still sure.

Remember the promises that he gave them. I will drive out all of the enemy before you. Every place where the sole of your feet shall touch, it shall be yours.

No man shall stand before you all the days of your life, if thou wilt serve the Lord thy God and walk in his ways. God made those promises to Israel, and we can see right here that those promises are still sure. And we can also see that the people knew what they should do.

But the end of the chapter is not quite that way, and therefore we begin to say, where were the men? The challenge was there. The purpose was there. The promise was there.

The power was there. And there was a few men who were started out right. But as you look further into the chapter, and we're not going to read all these verses, but you find these words appearing several times.

Neither did Manasseh drive out. Neither did Ephraim drive out. Neither did Zebulun drive out.

Neither did Asher drive out. Neither did Naphtali drive out. And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain, for they would not suffer them to come down into the valley.

So something went wrong. We begin to see that immediately. This is just now that Joshua has passed off the scene.

And we see immediately already, something is not right. This next generation is not taking the battle serious like the generation before them. Well, as we were studying these things, and it first began to dawn on us, it came as a question.

What happened to the next generation? Something happened to the next generation. And this question mark came up in my own heart. Does war or no war have anything to do with this loss from one generation to the next generation? And I just give you that as a question as we start into the main bulk of this sermon.

Does war or no war have anything to do with this loss that we clearly see in the next generation of those soldiers who were valiant men for God? Chapter two, verse one. And the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Vulcan and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt and have brought you under the land which I swear unto your fathers. And I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

And you shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land. Ye shall throw down their altars, but ye have not obeyed my voice. Why have ye done this? Wherefore, I also said, I will not drive them out from before you, but they shall be as thorns in your sides and their gods shall be a snare unto you.

Now, the Bible says that the people wept when they heard those words. They wept. It was a reminder to them.

Oh, yes, that's right. Yes, you did tell us that. That's right.

The people wept when they heard those words. But it doesn't appear to me that they repented. They had worldly sorrow.

They had pity sorrow. They had self-pity sorrow. But they did not have godly sorrow that brought them to repentance.

They surely could have. Amen. They surely could have repented right there and said, whoa, wait a minute.

What's going on? He's right. Let's do something about it. He didn't repent.

Verse seven through ten. And here's where the light started going off as we were studying this at home. And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua.

Now, let's look at that for a moment, what that says there. The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua. Joshua was a hundred and ten when he died.

And all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua. That's all those other people. See, when they came to the land of Canaan, Joshua was 80 years old.

And the people, the warriors, they were from, oh, what did I say? I'm going to get this right here. 30 to 60. 20 to 60.

Now, it's 30 years later. And they're the old men. And they're the elders.

And these are the men who were tested in the battle. And these are the men who were out there on that battlefield. And they saw that hidden angel take care of them in the middle of the battle.

They saw God send those hornets in there. They watched God discomfort the enemy before their face. These are the men.

And the children of Israel served the Lord all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel. And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died being a hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-Herez in the mount of Ephraim on the north side of the hill, Geash.

And also, all that generation were gathered unto their fathers. And there arose another generation after them, which two things, knew not the Lord and knew not the works which he had done for Israel. Now, we've got a generation who has not been tested in battle.

They don't know the Lord. Somehow, something was missing there. Here's a generation who grew up with the generation who fought for the land of Canaan.

And they know not the Lord and they know not the mighty works that God did. They are on dangerous ground. A few observations just for now.

Number one, the first generation laid down their weapons and had rest from war. Was that God's will? The first generation laid down their weapons and had rest from war. Though there was land yet to possess, they relaxed.

And I may say, there's a tendency to do that. I am a first generation Christian and I know what it is to fight. But I also must admit, once you've been fighting for many, many years, there is a tendency to lay down your weapon and rest from war.

There is a tendency to say, I've done my share, let someone else fight for a while. And so, we see the first generation laid down their weapons and had rest from war. Number two, the first generation failed to inspire the next generation to possess their own land.

Neither did they train them and lead them into the battle. And by the way, that's how the next generation learns to fight. We don't just sit on the bench and say to the next generation, go fight.

But the next generation learns to fight from this generation. But somehow that didn't happen. That connection was not made.

They laid down their weapons and because they relaxed and no more fought for any more land, the next generation that grew up there didn't know what war was all about. They never got to see God miraculously deliver them and save their neck from the enemy. They never saw that.

They never tasted the victories that the other generation had tasted. And the first generation failed to transfer that whole thing to the next. Number three, the second generation was content with their parents' possession.

You see, not only did the first generation fail to inspire the next generation to go get their own piece of land, but also the second generation was also content to just dwell on the piece of land that mom and dad fought for. Sound familiar? Oh, it's a nice piece of land we have here and fighting is difficult. And when you go to war, you live in tents and you live out under the stars and you know, there's a lot of sweat and there's a lot of toil and people get hurt out there and you know, dad's land is a pretty nice piece of land.

I think we'll just settle down here and we'll be close to mom and dad. Mom and dad won't mind if we're close to us, close to them. And so the second generation also contented themselves to be satisfied with the land that mom and dad.

Young people, don't do it. Don't do it. There's much more land to possess and you only get it by fighting.

Don't settle down and be content with mom and dad's piece of land. God has a piece of land for you. The next point, no war weakened the first generation and ruined the second generation.

No war weakened the first generation and it ruined the second generation. And lastly, the first generation failed to teach the next generation the words and works of God. Psalm 78.

They failed to teach the next generation the words and the works of God. Look at God's heart on this subject of war. Chapter 3 verse 1. Verse 1 through 4. Now these are the nations which the Lord left to prove Israel by them.

Even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan, only that the generations of the children of Israel might know to teach them war. At the least, such as before, no war. The next generation knew nothing thereof.

Now the wording of that is little funny, but basically what God is saying there is, okay, you're not going to drive them out? Then I'll leave them right where they are. But what is my purpose for leaving them there? So that the next generation has something to fight for. And dear young people and dear fathers and mothers, there is yet land to fight for.

There's beautiful land to fight for. There's souls to fight for. If you are a young people and you find yourself here today and you say, my heart and my life is free.

Praise God for the inheritance that I have. The joy of the Lord is my strength. My mom and dad were Christians and my life has been preserved.

Praise God! But, don't you settle down on that nice piece of grassy land and just enjoy that life that's preserved. God wants you to go out and fight. There's souls to save.

There's an enemy to fight against. And it seems to me that God knew the next generation needs this or it won't come out right. Verse three, again, these are the nations.

Namely, five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Zidonians and the Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon from Mount Baal Hermon under the entering of Hamath. And they were to prove Israel by them to know whether they would hearken under the commandments of the Lord which he commanded

their fathers by the hand of Moses. Now, how can we apply that to where we live here? Well, brother, sister, God has left us in the world.

We are not Old Testament Israel, all living in some place, in some country with walls around it, protected from everything else around us. We are the church of Jesus Christ and we've been planted and we've been scattered in places all over the world. And the world is everywhere around us.

And sometimes you might look at it and say, this world, if we just didn't have this world, you know, everything would be okay. Wrong way to look at it. God has left you here for many reasons, but one of them is to prove us to see whether we will hearken under the voice of the Lord our God in our generation and walk in all his ways in the midst of a wicked and a perverse nation where we live.

God has left us here to prove us. What will we do with that? So, from chapter 3 following, we begin to see the reality of what happens when that relaxing takes place. Verse 5 through 7, we have to say, where were the men? Where were they? And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

And look at verse 6. Oh, so sad. And they took their daughters to be their wives and gave their daughters to be to their sons and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and forgot the Lord their God and served Balaam and the groves.

And we look at that and we think, what a sick tragedy. And we may think, oh, we would never do that. May I remind us this morning that we live in a land that is filled with idols.

And the gap between the world and Christianity has greatly narrowed to the point where thousands of Christians marry professing Christians and find out by tasting the bitter cup the rest of their life, I married an unbeliever. Thus began a cycle of sin, suffering, supplication and salvation or deliverance. Then rest again.

You look. You look. It uses those words.

And the land had rest again for this many years. But what happened during those years? Did Israel rise up? Did Israel take the lesson? Did Israel look and remember and say, wait a minute. This is not what God wants.

We have just got the yoke off of our neck from these guys who have done these things to us. We are not going there again. Up, Israel.

Let's be about the work of driving these guys all the way out of our land. But they did not do that. God's promise was just as sure to them then as it was when they first entered the land of Canaan.

But they did not do that. We got the yoke. Oh, that yoke is off of our neck now.

Those 20 years are over with. Oh, yeah. Let's just relax.

My. In this beautiful land of Canaan, my grass weather is so nice here. And they just relaxed again.

And this whole cycle just took place again all the way through the book of Judges. It's there, but it's there. Everyone relaxing, sin, suffering, supplications or begging.

Then they cried unto the Lord. Then salvation and deliverance. And after the salvation and deliverance.

Oh, relax again. Do you suppose we could learn some things from the mistakes that these people made? I think we can. That leads us to the sad story that I would like to draw some lessons from in chapter four.

And if you'll turn there, we're going to read chapter four there. Here we begin with a oft repeated phrase in the book of Judges. And the children of Israel again, again did evil in the sight of the Lord when Ehud was dead.

And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor, the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Horeshef of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord for he had 900 chariots of iron and 20 and 20 years. He mightily oppressed the children of Israel that mightily oppressed their means very actively oppressed them.

He didn't just put them in their place and then just let them, you know, enjoy life. He actively oppressed them. They lived in fear all the time.

In fact, in the song of Deborah, which we won't have time to read this morning in her song, she says, the highways were empty in Israel because Israel was afraid to walk on the highways. They all stayed close in. He mightily oppressed them for 20 years.

And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Rachel and Bethel in Mount Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

But let's consider this lady just a little bit here. Deborah, a prophetess. God sought for a man.

God sought for a man to stand in the gap and make up the hedge. And he found how many? None. He found none.

But he did find a woman on whom the spirit of God rested. And her name was Deborah. Now, it's clear to me, and I studied this out fresh and new just to make sure that I'm speaking rightly.

It's clear to me in Leviticus through Deuteronomy that it was God's heart and command to the children of Israel that men were to be their judges. They were to seek out godly men, men of wisdom, men of integrity and honesty to be the judges in Israel. But here we have Deborah, the prophetess, judging Israel.

Think about it. Picture it. They all go to her.

Now they got different complications and maybe they saw some of them in their own cities, but when they hit the hard ones, we're going there's a lady over there and she is a wise woman and the spirit of God is upon her and they go to her and lay their situation before Deborah. And Deborah judged Israel. I just want you to see that picture, that picture in your mind.

Because that's part of the sad story of the ups and downs of the second generation Israelites in the land of Canaan. Verse six. And she sent and called Barak, the son of Abinoam, out of Kadish-Naphtali and said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward Mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun, and I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon, Cicero the captain of David's army with his chariots and his multitude, and I will deliver him into thine hand.

Now before we read on, let's look at that for a moment. This lady is anointed with the Holy Ghost. She has the word of the Lord.

She's the only one it seems that has the word of the Lord in Israel, but she has the word of the Lord. And she's speaking prophetically here. She saw in the spirit this whole thing already done.

She got the word from the Lord. Get Barak and get him to get ten thousand men out of these two tribes, and I will deliver them into his hand. She had the word of the Lord.

Verse eight. And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go. Imagine that.

If thou, a woman, wilt go with me, then I will go. But if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. Barak, the reluctant leader.

When men have not led, they are reluctant to lead. When men have not led, there is a tendency to hold back, and we as men need to recognize that as we consider our present states, as we consider how we were raised, as we consider where we are in our own life, we should remember that men who have not led or who have not been led, taught to lead, have a tendency to hold back when it's time to go forward. And Barak is a good example of that.

Barak, the reluctant leader. And she said, I will surely go with thee, but notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor, for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kadesh.

And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kadesh, and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet, and Deborah went up with him. Now Heber, the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent on the plain of Zanan, which is by Kadesh. And they showed Sisera that Barak, the son of Obinuun, was gone up to Mount Tabor.

And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Haraseth of the Gentiles unto the river Kishon. Now we're ready for a war. We're ready for a war.

And Deborah said unto Barak, again, the spirit of the Lord is upon this lady. And she says, Barak up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thy hand. Is not the Lord gone out before thee? Now this lady, she sees.

She sees behind the scenes. And she's trying to encourage this man. The Lord already went out on the battlefield.

Get you up to the battle. And that should encourage anybody. I mean, if the Lord's out on the battlefield, what else do you need? And Barak went down from Mount Tabor, ten thousand men after him, and the Lord discomfited Sisera and all his chariots and all his hosts with the edge of the sword before Barak, so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot and fled away on his feet.

But Barak pursued after the chariots and after the hosts unto Haraseth of the Gentiles, and all the hosts of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword, and there was not a man left. Hallelujah. God's promises never fail.

What God said he would do, he always will do. And he did in this situation. Howbeit, Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, for there was peace between Jabin the king of

Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

And Jael went out to meet Sisera and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me, fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle, a blanket, and he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty. He's been fighting a battle all day long, and he's been running for his life.

He's tired, he's exhausted, and he's thirsty. And instead of giving him water, she opened a bottle of milk and gave him drink and covered him. Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? That thou shalt say, No.

Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it to the ground. Now this is the temples right here. Right here, that's a soft spot.

I mean, if you go right in through here, the skull just splits right, right open, you go right into the brain. She knew right where to put that nail. He was sound asleep, he was in a deep sleep, and she took that nail and drove it into his temple, all the way through and out the other temple and into the ground.

Imagine a woman doing that. Talk about men's work. Talk about women doing men's work.

Wow. And he was fast asleep and weary, so he died. And behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said unto him, Come, I will show thee the man whom thou seekest.

And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples. So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel, and the hand of the children of Israel prospered and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan. Jael, blessed above women, is what Deborah said about her two times in her song.

Jael, blessed above women, because she was a vessel open, willing to be used by God. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jael, and she had the courage and the strength to do what a woman couldn't do. Amen, sisters? Take a nail and pound it through a man's head.

A few lessons from this story. Number one, we have a very sad state. No men.

No men. They have lost their way, and they have lost their heart. And when men lose their way, they usually also lose their heart.

And by that I mean the heart to do that which is right. The heart that causes a man to rise up and do that which is right. They lost their heart.

Point number two, God used women to do a man's job. Isn't it interesting that Jeremy quoted those statistics about missionaries this morning? God used women. And I think it's very clear in this text that in both examples, God used women to do a man's job.

You say, well, Brother Denny, what about the theology of that? Yeah, what about the theology of that? How? You know, you think, now God, how could you do that? I've read your word. How could you do that? That doesn't fit my theology. And it doesn't fit my theology.

But it's there. Very clearly it's there. And so are those statistics.

Eight out of ten missionaries are women. And I'm not saying it's wrong for a woman to be on a mission field, but I'm telling you what, a lot of those women on the mission field are in places where they shouldn't be. Doing things that God did not ordain them to do, but yet they're there.

What do you do with that? Oh, we can sit here on our bench and complain and grumble about the theology of it until we're blue in the face. But the fact is still there that God is using women where men are not willing to go. I think of the illustration of Mary Slessor, that missionary to Africa.

You know, I've read it a couple of times and I've quoted it a dozen times, but here's number 13. She had a burden for missions. Nigeria, totally closed field back in the days when she heard the voice of God calling, saying, whom shall I send? And God, you can be sure, God sought for a man, but no man was willing to go.

But there was a little lady named Mary who was in tune with the Spirit of God and she heard that voice which continually speaks from the throne of God even today. She heard that voice and said, I'll go. She went.

She went to Africa. She went to Africa in the midst of lots of criticisms. And she was there for 30 years.

For 30 years she wrote letters home pleading for men to come. No man came. For 30 years.

So for 30 years she opened up Nigeria to the Gospel. That little fireball, I mean, she walked the African jungle. She listened to the lions roar while she walked from one village to the next in the middle of the night.

She stood before big African warriors who were filled with anger and looked right up at them and said, Hyah! And they backed away. She solved many of their problems. She stopped.

She stood right between two chiefs about ready to break out in a tribal war. She stood between the two of them and stopped the whole thing and preached the Gospel to them. And I could give you stories for another hour about what that little lady did.

Was God with her or not? Did God want her to go or did God want a man to go? I think God wanted a man to go. But there was no man to go. She said, well Brother Denny, that doesn't fit my theology.

Well, it doesn't fit mine either. The Scriptures are very clear. Suffer not a woman to teach, nor do you serve authority over a man.

See? The Scriptures are very clear. But it seems like God's heart is so concerned about the souls of men that if nobody is willing to go, He'll reach beyond that and use somebody that He would rather put a man in their place. I can't figure it all out.

All I know is history is full of that example that I just gave you and I don't believe it's the will of God. Number three. Deborah tried to stay in the background.

Did you notice that in the reading of the text? She did hear the word of the Lord. She got a word from God. And she tried to stay in the background and called Barak to her and said, this is what I heard the voice of God saying and God is calling you now.

Go do it. He wouldn't have it. He wouldn't have it.

So up she went. Right out there on the battlefield. Right out on the front lines.

But she tried to stay in the background. Number four. Barak lost the honor that he should have had.

It should have been his. I believe if he would have responded at the first call that God gave, it would have been him with Cicera and he would have cut his head off and he would have gotten the honor. But he lost the honor.

He forfeited that place of honor which God was giving to him because he wasn't willing to take that step of faith and hear the word of the Lord and go. Point number five. The Lord will fight for us.

Settle that in your mind. Whatever the battle is, whatever we may be facing, the Lord will fight for us. He has not left us alone.

He will fight for us. The promises are still there, but no man believes them. And so, there they sat, oppressed for twenty years until a woman heard the voice of God.

Kind of an uncomfortable thought, isn't it? But it's there. It's there. Again, point number six.

The issue is the battle. The issue is the battle. God is calling us to war.

If we rest, if we take our ease, if we allow ourselves to become complacent, it's not going to come out right. The issue is war. And point number seven.

Where were the men? That's a good question. In the song of Deborah, we get a little bit of insight into where some of the men were. The song of Deborah we cannot study here this morning, but it is a song that blesses those Israelites who willingly gave themselves for the cause of the battle and for the cause of Israel and the cause of the glory of God.

But it is also a song which brings reproof to those Israelites who wouldn't go, who didn't go, who didn't feel it was right to go. Whatever their reasons were, it also brings that out. Where were the men? In verse fifteen, we find these words and the princes of Issachar were with Deborah, even Issachar and also Barak.

He was sent on foot into the valley. Now look at the next part. For the divisions of Reuben, there were great thoughts of heart.

Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben, there were great searchings of heart. Reuben didn't go. Reuben didn't go.

He stayed with his sheep. He stayed by the stock. But I want you to notice that it says twice there, with Reuben, there were great thoughts of heart.

He had lots of aspirations. He may have talked about the war. He may have talked about the great need.

He may have stirred, they may have stirred each other up about the great need that is there. But they stayed by the sheep. They stayed by the sheep.

Where were the men? Oh, they were taking care of their own business. That's what they were doing. They were focusing on those things while they should have been out on the battlefield.

That's what they were doing. Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds to hear the bleatings of the flock when you should have been out on the battlefield, Reuben? Verse 17. And she's blessing the ones that went.

But we're looking at the ones who didn't go. Gilead abode beyond Jordan. He didn't go.

He was on the other side of the river and he said, that battle's over there. Things are pretty nice here. I think that's fine for them to fight.

I'm staying on this side of the Jordan. He stayed on the other side of the Jordan. Who knows what his reasonings were? Maybe he said, I'm not sure about this war.

This lady called the war. What's she doing out there anyway? And I'm not going. So he didn't go.

And why did Dan remain in ships? Now the tribe of Dan lived on the Mediterranean. See, he stayed by his business. And Asher continued on the seashore and abode in his breeches.

Where were the men in this little story that we have? They were simply busy about other things. Somehow in their own minds, it was okay. We're in bondage.

The enemy is oppressing us. You can't walk out on the highways alone at night. You know, it's tough.

We know it's tough, but got a good business going here. The shipyards are full. There's lots of goods coming and going.

We have a lot of sheep to take care of. So we'll just keep on taking care of our sheep. And, you know, we don't need to get free from our oppressors.

We're just, you know, we'll just make money and everything will be okay. Reminds me of the Russian Mennonites who did somewhat the same thing and promised the Queen Catherine, I think her name was, that they would not evangelize. They would just do their own business there in Russia.

If she would give them a place where they could live and they could be quiet and raise their families and love God and serve God. They agreed, we won't evangelize. We won't make any trouble here.

We'll just take care of our own. Well, that's kind of how these guys were. That's where the men were.

Let's look at a few practical applications in closing. First of all, we first generation Christians. By the way, how many of us are first generation Christians? Let me see your hands.

Get them way up there so I can look around. We first generation Christians dare not lay down our arms. We dare not.

It will have devastating effects upon us and upon the next generation. I wonder how many stories, histories could be given of churches who rose up and stood for God and faced the enemy and faced the battles and got themselves a name and then laid down their weapons and the next generation grew up in that church and there was no more battles to fight and the next generation, you know what happened to the next generation. We dare not lay our weapons down and I'm preaching to myself.

You know, it's harder to keep on fighting. I don't go so fast anymore. I'm more tired than I used to be and the temptation is there to just lay my weapon down.

We dare not lay our weapons down, brothers and sisters. Number two, second generation Christians get in the thick of it. Now I know I'm talking to two groups here this morning of second generation Christians.

Some of you are young people sitting here in this room. Some of you are 10 years old. Some of you are 15.

Some of you are 20. But there's also another group in this room of second generation Christians that are sitting in this room. Married, just married, two little children, maybe three.

Get in the thick of it. We must. You must.

If you don't, you will lose your way. Go possess your own land. Second generation, go and possess your own land.

In fact, it's fine with us if you get a sweeter piece of land than what we got. It's okay. Go and do it.

That's okay with us. We won't feel bad if you get a beautiful piece of land way more beautiful than the one that I fought for. It's okay.

Do it. You have every reason to do it, second generation. We have lots of things to overcome because we're first generation.

You don't have as many to overcome. You have every reason to go get a piece of land far more beautiful than the one that I got. So I challenge you this morning, get in the thick of it.

Number three, men. Us men. God is waiting on us.

God is searching us men. We must engage our hearts and rise up and take the lead. Know this.

If there is a reluctance in you to lead out, it is there because you don't or didn't learn how to lead. Don't let that reluctance hold you back for another generation. Don't do it.

God is waiting on us. And lastly, wives and mothers. This encouragement to you.

Leadership is developed. It grows as men and boys lead. It doesn't happen any other way.

I'm sorry. It just doesn't. It would be nice if we could just get a book and read the book and after the book is shut, presto, instant mature leader.

But that's not how it happens. Leadership grows and develops as men and boys lead. So that means you're going to have to get out of the way and let them go.

Just get out of the way and let them go. And I'll tell you, they're not going to do it all right. They will not do it all right.

But don't forget, leadership grows as we lead. If we don't lead, it will not grow. Let them lead.

We will make mistakes but we will grow if you will let us lead. Just give you a secret. Men don't like to fail.

And if you will just get out of the way and let him lead, he may fail a few times but men do not like to fail. He will learn from his failure and get up and keep going. Support him.

Encourage him. Be that hidden woman. Be his fire of admiration and see how far he will go.

And remember, leadership is developed. We're not just talking about your husband. There's lots of boys in your house.

It's the same with them. Leadership develops as it is exercised. So even with those boys, you have to get out of the way and let them go.

Amen mom? Let them go. May God help us all. All of us first and second generation Christians to be always pressing forward because the battle doesn't end until we lay our head down on our pillow and die.

There is no discharge in this war, Ecclesiastes says. There is no discharge in this war. Sad story that we have been judged there.

Deborah rising up to take her place. God forbid that should happen to us in my generation or in my children's generation or then in my children's children's generation. So let us take to heart the words of the Lord to us this morning as we consider being vigilant, keeping the sword ever at hand as leaders in our home.

And I also had to think of the trumpet. Being vigilant and then having the trumpet ready and available to blow. It's all part of leadership.

Part of taking your place as a leader. Part of taking the responsibility that God has put upon every father in this congregation with his little flock at home and other responsibilities that we might have. Thank you Brother Denny for sharing that message with us.

It was good for my heart to be reminded of those things again. These things in the Old Testament were given to us for an example. Not as something to follow but as an example that we not go that way.

I really believe that. Maybe someone has something else to share, add to the message or a testimony to share, confession to give. Just raise your hand.

The ushers will bring a microphone to you. Brother Duane, you can go ahead. Yes, I want to thank Brother Denny for the message this morning.

I am greatly encouraged. I feel myself, I consider myself as a second generation Christian this morning. I was born and raised in a Christian home.

I feel myself flouting a bit sometimes as I think about my past and my father and my mother passing this on to us. I want to be as one that will continue to fight the good fight of faith and to get that piece of land to be ours. Another thing I want to say is I want to bless my wife this morning for being the encouragement she has been to me for the last, especially the last couple of months.

She really encouraged me to step out and be the leader of the home. God bless you. Thank you Brother Denny for sharing your heart.

My parents are first generation Christians and I just praise God for them and for my, especially my father, who have not been satisfied with the ground they have claimed, who have gone forth. And for me, it's a lot easier for me to learn by example, by seeing other people in action, take for missions and witnessing as an example. I have been listening to preaching and teaching on that for nine years now, but I've never

seen it in action.

It's just been a teaching until recently and it has meant so much to me. And I was sitting here this morning thinking of that question, where are the men? The term that kept coming to me was AWOL, they're away without leave. And I kept thinking, what does the government do with men who are AWOL? And it caused me to wonder, what does God do with those men as well? And as Brother Jeremy shared, I was thinking of, as I read in a book, it said that we were created as men, as godly men, to be a witness to those around us.

Why do we settle to be kings, to be rulers, or even plumbers? Thank you Brother Denny for challenging us. The sister's side, Sterling, go ahead. Yes, I just want to thank Brother Denny for this message.

It seemed like he was painting my husband and I's life. I had wrote down some of these points that he had. The first point, we had a sad state.

My husband and I, it felt like I was the one that was leading out, and that God was using me to do my husband's part. The third part, I just got so weary and I laid down those swords and just let go, not training and not doing anything. So I just tried to stay in the background.

And then I would rise up and somebody would say, oh your children are doing so good, you know, they listen well and they're doing good. And I would rise up. Yeah, it's because of me, you know, taking the honor.

But, praise the Lord, God has put a burden on my husband's heart for our family. He said to me the other day, he said, honey, we are not doing this right. Our children are not right.

We're not raising them as missionaries. We are too comfortable. Something's got to change.

And I praise God that he said that to me. You know, we're ready to take up our battle and fight our battle. And I want to just praise God that my husband is doing that and he's rising up and being a man and being his leadership.

And he asked me, he said, are you willing to let me lead or you can, I forget what he said, something like separate and not divide or divide the house. And I'm just here to say, yes, I'm going to be with you all the way and behind you and let you lead. Thank you, Brother Denny, for reminding me that men do not, it's hard for them to take their responsibility and lead, that it comes through practice and experience.

Thank you. Sounds like the Lord is working in your home. Praise God for that.

Husband is rising up. If you find yourself at that place this morning, husband, listen to the testimony of a wife. Rise up, O man of God.

Is there another mic somewhere? I thank God for his clear word to our hearts this morning. And I just found myself pondering this morning as Brother Denny was preaching, where are we at in that 30 year period? I don't know what went through your mind and heart, but my mind was drawn to verses here in 1 Corinthians 10, and Paul quoted part of this verse. Now all these things happen unto them, and it's referring to the children of Israel in the Old Testament, for in samples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.

That's us today. The ends of the world have come upon us. That verse goes on to say, wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest we fall.

Paraphrasing that verse, wherefore let the church that think that they stand take heed lest they fall. Just plead with all of us to take seriously this example, that we not continue the cycle of fulfilling things that have happened in the past. I thank God for the message this morning.

I'm very blessed, and take it to my heart as a challenge. As Brother Denny was sharing, I had to think of my day yesterday, and I don't want to take away from the message at all here, but I just want to share a little bit what I faced yesterday. I went to what they call the Anabaptist Reconciliation Meetings with the State Reformed Church in Switzerland, which were held here at Pedra in the last three days.

What I noticed here in Judges is that when the people relaxed and didn't drive out their enemies, they ended up making leagues with them, and once they had made leagues with them, then the end result was that they began to take their daughters to be their wives and gave their daughters to their sons and served their gods. I don't believe that we as a church would make a league with the State Reformed Church in Switzerland at all, but maybe we are making some leagues with those around us in the world that are affecting us and our children. I know we want to be aware of that.

I'd like to share a little bit about what we faced yesterday. What I saw there was, in that meeting, there was a lady who got up, and if you're not familiar with what's happening, there's some Anabaptists who are endeavoring to reconcile with the State Reformed Church in Switzerland, and I believe that that's wrong, because our forefathers died over the doctrines of the Bible, over infant baptism, over separation of state and church, and there yesterday, this lady got up in one part of the service and she said that our forefathers, Conrad Rebel and Felix Mons, did wrong when they left the state church because of their impatience and their haughtiness, and she was saying, we have sinned, and we, our forefathers have sinned and have done wrong when they left that state church, and she said, we have rebelled. And then she had the whole congregation stand to that and bow to that.

Now that's making a league with the state church there. That's making a league. And I just want to declare here today that we absolutely are not a part of that league.

We as a church, I as a minister of this church, refuse, I refuse to take part of that yesterday, even though I was there. That's making a league, and the State Reformed Church over there, they just recently have okayed gays and all the rest of the stuff that goes with that. Do you want your sons and daughters to be a part of that? That will be the end result of that marriage there.

But I thank God there was someone there yesterday who was blowing a trumpet. There was some, they had put a sign out there right next to church property, and one side it said, wherefore come out from among them? The other side said, beware that you be not deceived. And they said, free info here.

So I went there, looked at their free info, and I realized they were on the other side of the church property. I blessed them. They were blowing the trumpet.

And I know that we're not that place where we're making a league with that kind of a reformed church. But maybe there's other areas that we are making leagues with in our everyday life. Just the world, just the ways of the world and so forth.

And so I thought that would interest some of you. I know that some of you knew that was happening, and I do believe we need to blow our trumpet, make it clear. We are not a part of that.

Go ahead in the back. Yeah, I was deeply challenged this week. I felt God speaking very clearly.

And even this morning, you know, with Denny's message, I felt challenged again to step out and to be a man. And I was challenged with these words this week. Ephesians 5 verse 14, wherefore he said, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

I was so deeply challenged by that. I had to look into my heart. Am I awake? Or am I kind of dozing off? I know it's so easy for me to... Well, first, when I became a Christian, the only way to be a Christian then, for me, was to really fight.

I know it's so easy. It's just going to get half-hearted and kind of rest. But I want to go on, be wholehearted, and keep fighting like I used to.

God bless you, Elam. The microphone on the sister's side again. Good morning.

I'm very glad to be here this morning. We've been gone for two weeks, and it feels like a month. I'm happy that I can come and be encouraged by brothers and sisters in the Lord.

I just wanted to share something that God was speaking to my heart a couple of days ago when a family member was talking to me and just telling me something that another family member was going through with their teenage daughter, saying how he was getting ready to do the worst thing that he's ever had to do in his life, and that was put his daughter into a home because of the way she was behaving and running around with different guys and all. But she was up at the mission, the rescue mission, everywhere we live. It's a place where a lot of homeless men go.

And she was saying how they were standing outside there, and my cousin was sharing with her this, you know, about his daughter. And, you know, she really was lost for words, you know, how to help him or what to really say. But she said this Spanish man was sitting there and kind of listening to what they were saying.

And here, come to find out, my cousin kind of knew him distantly. But this man started talking to him that was staying at the mission. And she was just saying how he just started really encouraging my husband, my husband, cousin, I'm sorry.

And just she was saying how he just went on and on and every word out of his mouth was about the Lord and the Lord and the Lord. And she said, and at the end, he was just encouraging my cousin on what to do and go and tell your daughter you love her and this and that and put your arms around her. And, you know, and which my cousin, you know, his upbringing wasn't good either.

And I can, you know, I can see where his daughter has been gone astray and why she has. But, you know, I just thought to myself, because my cousin had said to him, you know, you're the first one that's ever encouraged me this way, you know. And she was even amazed at how the words kept coming out of this man's mouth, you know, about the Lord.

And I guess what my point is, is I thought here my sister is standing there with the covering on and I'm not certainly judging her in any way. I'm like this myself as far as the fear of man. But, you know, and I think

here's a Spanish man, a homeless man, you know, and he's sitting there encouraging her or encouraging my cousin, you know, as far as the Lord.

And, you know, I know in my heart that's what I want. I want the fruit to show and I don't want to hide behind my clothes and my veil. And I want it to come out the way God wants it to come out.

I don't want to be a hypocrite. I know in my own life, I feel a lot of times when I share with, you know, whoever I might meet at the store or whatever. And I think to myself, who am I? Who am I to be sharing, you know, telling you you can have victory in Christ when in my own life I don't have victory.

And I know I'm still striving for that. And I want that with all of my heart as much as all of you do. And I also just want to apologize again to my husband for not being that wife that God wants me to be.

But I'm I'm pressing on and I want to be. And I look to a lot of you for, you know, that example and most of all, Christ Jesus. And again, I'm thankful for being here.

God bless you.

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