

Women of Deliverance (Birmingham Conference)

by Gary Wilkerson

Gary Wilkerson's sermon highlights the vital role of women in God's plan, using the story of Manoah's wife to illustrate their significance and calling to deliverance.

Duration: 24:24

Scripture: Judges 13:1-3, Judges 13:10-11, Judges 13:22, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Deliverance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Manoah's wife from the book of Judges. She was a woman in need, feeling unproductive and longing for something. The angel of the Lord appeared to her and she consecrated herself to the Lord, setting herself apart as a Nazarite. The preacher calls upon women in the congregation to also set themselves apart and be devout to the Lord. The sermon emphasizes the importance of consecration and living a lifestyle that others would desire to emulate.

Transcript

In your name we pray. Bless this word. Amen.

Amen. Turn with me to the book of Judges, if you would, the 13th chapter. Judges chapter 13.

I want to speak about women of deliverance. Judges chapter 13, verse 1. Again, the Israelites did evil in the sight, in the eyes of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for 40 years. And a certain man from Zorah named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was sterile and remained childless.

And the angel of the Lord appeared to her. Here was a woman in need. Here was a woman in crisis.

Here was a woman who felt like she wasn't being productive. Here was a woman who felt like her dreams, her desires, her aspirations weren't coming true. Like many of the women characters that they talk about in scriptures, she was longing for something.

She was crying out to God for something, but it wasn't being produced. And you know what that feels like. The Bible, and I'm not talking about just a physical birth either.

There are dreams for ministries. There are dreams to be used by God. There are dreams to be a blessing to others around you.

And sometimes you feel frustrated, and you feel as if things aren't going well for you. But how many of you Bible scholars, how many of you experts in the law out there can tell me Manoah's wife's name? Is there anybody that studied this in depth? Anybody know Manoah? Nobody knows Manoah's wife's name. Do you know why nobody knows her name? She's not mentioned in the Bible.

I mean, she's mentioned, but they don't take time to even give her name. Figures it's probably written by a man. And not even taking the time.

The whole story in Judges 13 is about her and the baby she's about to have. But they don't even take the time to mention her name. Oh, women, how many of you feel like that sometimes? You do more than half the work and get less than a tenth of the credit.

And not that you're looking for credit, but wouldn't it be nice every once in a while for somebody to say, job well done. Wouldn't it be nice for somebody to say, it's because of you that God is doing the things he's doing in our church, in our city, and in our nation. It's because God is using you as women to touch many lives that this place we are in is a different place.

There are many women in this place right now that have gone for years just being unthanked, unnoticed, unrecognized, unappreciated. You have done so much. And it's not, again, please understand, I know your heart.

You're not looking for, I wish they'd give me credit. I'm going to quit if they don't give me credit. It's not an idea of wanting credit.

It's an idea of knowing that God sees. And he hears and he knows the cry of your heart, the desire to be used mightily as a deliverer, to be effective in a way that really ministers to many people around you. Manoah's wife, we know about Manoah, but we don't even get her name.

And there are people, as I said, in this place that you appear nameless, but you're not hopeless. You're not without hope in this world. You're not without a voice.

You're not without a cry. You're not without a calling on your life. And God speaks to Manoah's wife.

Did you read that with me in here? It didn't say she was childless. And there's probably a longing in her heart. And the Bible says that the angel of the Lord appeared to her.

Wow, this is exciting. These amazing things happen. Once the Lord appears to her, God says to her, you are going to have a child.

And just before you have this child, I want you to enter into something that we don't have time to go into, but you probably have understood this, Numbers chapter 6 talks a lot about this. The Nazarite vow. The Nazarite vow was a separation vow, a consecration, a devotion vow that says, I am giving my all to God and no one else.

And taking this vow, you would not cut your hair, you would not drink wine, and you would not go around or touch anything that has death on it. And so this Nazarite vow was set apart for the most holy, the most consecrated, the most devout of all people. And God comes to this woman and says, you're about to have

a son.

You're about to have a boy who's going to grow up to be a mighty deliverer in Israel. For years now, you guys have been under the bondage of the Philistines. For 40 years, and you are about to be a free people.

And the means that God is going to bring forth this deliverance is this childless, barren woman. This nameless woman who doesn't feel like she has much to offer maybe. She may not feel like she is making an impact on the world.

She may feel like the things she does is unrecognized and unthanked. But God comes and speaks to her and says, before you have a Nazarite, you give yourself to this Nazarite spirit. And the angel of the Lord says to her, don't drink any wine.

Don't eat anything unclean, because before you raise up a Nazarite, you need to be somewhat of a Nazarite yourself. Moms, do you hear what I'm talking about? Before you tell your children how to live before the Lord, you better be living it yourself. It's not enough just to tell your kids, don't do this and do this.

Live this way. Pray this way. My father, when he started Teen Challenge, used to be so frustrated over moms that would come into the Teen Challenge Center and said, I've been praying for my son.

I can't get him to... He's smoking pot. He's smoking weed. He won't stop.

And my father found out that this woman is socially drinking. And the kids are saying, what difference is my marijuana joint compared to your alcohol in a cup? And there's this sense of parents trying to tell their kids what to do but not living it out themselves. And God says to Manoah's wife, before you're going to have Samson, before a deliverance is gonna come, there has to be a consecration in your own heart, a separation in your own heart.

You can't ask of your children what you aren't willing to offer to the Lord yourself. And sometimes there has to come in our life where the soap operas be put aside and the novels be put aside and the things that are in excess just put away so that we could consecrate ourselves to the Lord so that our children see something unique, dynamically different in us. They begin to covet.

They say, I want what she's having. I want to live that kind of lifestyle. I want to give myself to that kind of lifestyle.

Manoah's wife gets this vision of her truly consecrating herself to the Lord. And I want to call forth women in this building today to be Nazarites, to set yourself apart, to be devout to the Lord. Don't worry about what the men in your life are doing.

Don't worry whether your husband is a good pastor, a bad pastor, a lazy pastor, whatever. You get up, get on fire for God and maybe even some of the men in your life might soon follow. I have a testimony of my own life.

When I was pastoring and I got kind of slothful and just playing around a little bit and I noticed my wife started getting up at four in the morning praying every day. And that'll put some conviction in a pastor's life. When the wife knows everything there is to know about God and prayer and you're running around trying to make things happen.

She convicted me. Manoah's wife comes to Manoah. This is a beautiful story.

She comes to him and says, Manoah, an angel of the Lord appeared to me. And this angel told me that I was going to have a child. His name would be Samson.

He's going to be a Nazarite totally devoted to the Lord and he's going to bring deliverance to Israel. Okay, now put yourself in Manoah's shoes. And look at verse 8. Then Manoah prayed to the Lord.

O Lord, I beg you, let the man of God you sent come to us again. The one you sent, bring him back again, Lord. In other words, here's what I think Manoah is saying.

It doesn't say it exactly like this in the text, but I think this is what I'm suspicious. If I put myself in Manoah's shoes, hear what I'm thinking. Now wait a minute.

This is big news. We're talking about the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines. We're talking about national overthrow of a different party and bringing into power godly leadership and godly people.

And this is a great deal. This is significant. And this is something.

I think what Manoah is thinking to himself was, Lord, this woman, she said something. You know how these women are, God. And she's got these big visions of grandeur and she thinks you're going to use her mightily.

And she's talking about deliverance and being a Nazarite and not drinking anymore and setting herself apart in prayer and having nothing unclean in her life. And she says this angel visited and she's going to have a child even though she's barren. And I think he almost is suspicious maybe that, and I hate to say it this way, but I wonder if he's thinking, God's out of order here.

Because if God's going to do something mighty, if God's going to be powerful, if he's going to do something in a nation, he's going to come to the man of God. So come to, and here's Manoah, come to the man of God and speak this word, if this word is true or not. He doesn't trust the woman.

He doesn't really think that he has anything to hear from her. He doesn't think that he can learn from her. Now, I don't know what your theology is, and I'm not here to discuss your theology or your doctrine today about what you think about women in ministry or women that preach from the pulpit or women that have this kind of gifting or that kind of gifting.

I don't know what your theology is. It doesn't matter to me what your theology is. The truth is that God speaks to women.

It makes it crystal clear here that the angel of the Lord came. There were two people in this family. There was Manoah and Manoah's wife.

And for some strange reason, God decided, I think Manoah's wife is the right one to tell this story to. But Manoah seems to get offended by this, and he's saying, No, God, you've got to speak to the man of God. I'm the man of God.

Things are in line and in authority here. I'm the head of my household, and I will not be super... What's the word? I don't even know the right word. I will not be overthrown.

I don't care. She's not going to get the word. I've got to get the word.

And so he gets all excited about this angel coming back and visiting. So the angel of the Lord does what he says. He comes back.

Look at this. I love this. In verse 9, God heard Manoah.

Wow. Finally, God's going to get in line with this man's dreams, this man's aspirations, this man's desire. God heard Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman.

Women, you missed a great opportunity to say, Praise the Lord. Hallelujah. Glory to God.

Here's Manoah. God, come to the man. Clarify this truth.

God says, Okay, I'm coming again. And he speaks to the woman again. The Bible says she's out in a field.

I don't know what he's doing. Maybe he's sitting there in his chair, kind of reading Scripture and waiting for God to speak to him. And she's out in the field working.

And she hears the voice of the Lord again. God comes to her again. And the Bible says, I love this, she comes running out of the field to where Manoah is, maybe in the tent, and says, Hey, remember that you wanted to speak to that guy that was talking to me? He's here again.

Do you want to hear him? And the exact words, it says in verse 10, it says, He's here, the man who appeared to me the other day. She's telling him, if you want to hear, look at this verse 11, And Manoah got up and followed his wife. Ouch! That's unbiblical.

Now wait a minute, it's in the Bible. I don't know what to do with this. I'm the head of my household.

Where's my wife? She's standing over there. You're going to follow me. Do what I tell you to do.

But sometimes God speaks to the woman. Sometimes women are a lot more sensitive to hear God. Sometimes women have this ability to say, God, whatever you want to do, so be it.

Some women have a greater ability to be like Mary, Be it done unto me according to your will. Where the man seems to have a stronger agenda. I want it done this way, God.

And we're going to wrestle until you get it right, God, and do it my way. Sometimes women are more sensitive and will hear God say things like he says to Manoah's wife. So Manoah gets up and he follows his wife.

And the angel begins to speak and says what God's going to do. He's going to bring forth a deliverer. He's going to bring forth Samson and your wife.

And he begins to speak about, he says to, the angel says to Manoah, Do what I told your wife to do. Follow the instructions I've given to her. In other words, she's on track.

She's got it right. Listen to her. For once in your life, you knucklehead, listen to her.

And he begins to listen to her. And the story goes on even in maybe some stranger ways. In verse 18, excuse me, let's go to verse 22.

The angel of the Lord comes and appears and he realizes what's happened now. Now, Manoah's wife seems to be accustomed to the presence of the Lord. Manoah finally gets the presence of the Lord.

The angel of the Lord comes to both of them. And then when he comes to both of them, he leaves. He goes up in this amazing pillar of fire.

And in verse 22, Manoah says to his wife, We are doomed to die, he said to his wife. We have seen God. You know what this is saying.

Manoah's scared to death. What are we going to do? I'm so worried. I don't know what's going to happen in the church.

I don't know what's going to happen with our finances. I don't know what's going to happen. I'm scared.

The man... This story is really reversed. It really should be. If this was written correctly, it would be the woman was afraid.

And all those guys that shouted earlier, I'm the man of God. You guys would be protecting your wife who's afraid. But in this story, we're going to die.

We saw God. Nameless wife, come here. We have seen God.

Verse 23, But his wife answered, If the Lord had meant to kill us, He would have not accepted the burnt offering and the grain offering from our hands. He goes, Oh yeah. That's a good point.

How many of you pastors, leaders have been worried and stressed and striving and you turn to your wife or somebody that God's put in your ministry and the woman says to you, It's going to be alright. They have more faith. They have more confidence.

They have more boldness. And there are certain times... Man, I just want to tell you, if you're married here today, you need your wife. You need your wife.

She's smart. She's clever. She's skilled.

She's wise. She's loving. Some of you husbands are saying, You don't know my wife.

You're talking about somebody else. No, I'm talking about your wife. I'm talking about... There's some single women in this place and you have so much to offer the men in the ministry and in the church and in the community around you because you hear from God.

God speaks to you and when people are frightened or troubled or concerned about where to go or what to do, you have this keen wisdom and insight. It's going to be okay. And there's this ability to... My wife has this ability to look at a situation and I sort of have... I have it all compartmentalized.

This is this and that and that. She just says, No, it's this. Oh, that makes total sense.

It's this wonderful ability and that's exactly what Manoah's wife has. God's not going to kill us. The woman gave birth and named him Samson and he grew and the Lord blessed him and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him.

Her child was stirred. She brought forth deliverance. Women, I want to tell you here today, God speaks to you.

I want to tell you unequivocally, God has a calling on your life and I want to tell you with the full force of the Holy Spirit and the authority of the Word of God, you are not a second class citizen. You are not in a kingdom that prefers one gender to another. You are not in a kingdom that where you have to be somehow do all the work and not be seen as somebody who does something for the kingdom of God.

You are valued in God's eyes. He loves you. He appreciates you.

He longs to bring you into His company under His voice to speak to you in ways that are creative and unusual and you see things that a man could never see and God will sometimes take you out to a field and begin to speak to you and don't be afraid to speak to the men in your life. Now please don't be one of those and I don't want to get in trouble with the women here either. I'm only in trouble with the men but please don't be one of those know-it-all women, okay? God speaks to me and I'm always right and I don't need a man to tell me what to do.

We don't need any Christian women in libers either, okay? So that's just my two cents on that side of the story but it's true. Don't take the word that we're hearing here and all of a sudden build a theology that says hey, I'll just be in charge of everything. I'm glad somebody finally preached that so now I can be released to do whatever I want and not be under any kind of covering anymore.

That's not what the word of the Lord is saying. There's a proper order and there's a proper timing but men, realize more than you've ever realized before if you brought your wife here today, God is speaking to her. Listen to her.

She has amazing things to say and she'll say them in wonderful ways. Now I preached this sermon about two months ago at Times Square Church and about a month after preaching it, there was an opportunity. I travel full time with my father.

I'm no longer pastoring in Denver, Colorado. I moved with my family to New Jersey and I travel full time. We're going to Spain and Portugal and a couple other countries next month and we're on the road quite a bit but when I'm home, I have sometimes a two or three or four week time period between conferences where I'm at home without necessarily, you know, and I was used to pastoring so I had this pastoral role.

I had the pastoral love. I miss the church so I began to wonder if maybe while I'm home I could be highly involved in either as an associate pastor or a co-pastor or maybe even a senior pastor of a church that would excuse me to go on these conferences and as I was praying about that and believing for that and thinking maybe that was the right way to go, I got a phone call the very next day and it was a pastor saying, we're starting a church, a branch church in your area and we want you to help give oversight to this. You can travel still.

You can go to conferences but we'll, and I'm just thinking, this is God. This is so exciting. Wow, I was just praying about this yesterday.

God, you are so precious and I really kind of was inclined towards it and then I got home and I said, honey, you're not going to believe this. Kelly, God has just done a miracle. Not only do I get to do these conferences but now I get to be a pastor again as well.

Both of my, the most exciting dreams of my life coming true and she goes, hmm, that's not the response I was looking for. I was looking for cartwheels and a big kiss and a hug and say, thank God our prayers are answered but I got a, hmm. And as soon as she said that, I didn't, you know what it's like.

I didn't have to say anything. I knew what she was thinking but I said, well, let's at least pray about this and I began to pray and I was, I didn't get a piece about it. I knew I wanted to in my flesh.

I really wanted to do this but I didn't get a piece about doing it so I knew it wasn't right and I knew I wasn't going to have to but I was still, I was kind of angry at my wife for saying, hmm, instead of being supportive so I kept sort of saying, I really think this is God. You know, and she would just go, I'm supportive. You know, I've been with you for, I've been married to you for 25 years and you know, I love you and I'll go wherever.

I've been all over the world with you and I'll go. You just, you speak and I'll listen. I'll, you know, she's just being so sweet about it and I said, but why do you go like, hmm? And she goes, well, I just don't know that you have a piece about it and I go, oh no, I've got a real, and I was lying to her, I've got a real piece in my heart.

I, I feel this is God but I'm concerned that you're not walking in authority here and, and, so we were out in the backyard one day and she said, and I said, I just don't feel like you're, you're feeling a piece about this and she says, no, the, the Lord spoke to me and I said, where and when? And she said, I was out in a field. And I knew exactly what she was talking about. I, I wanted to say, I'm going to make you stop coming to church.

You can't hear me preach anymore because you use my sermons against me. She said, I'm out in a field, I'm out in a field and, and God spoke to me and I knew, yeah. And, and I told her that and then I finally broke down and told her the truth.

Yeah, I feel exactly the same way. I just don't have a piece about it. I'd love to do it.

It's a wonderful presentation to us and I'm thankful that, that other people would even consider us for this but we just were in agreement. We knew it. But God spoke to my wife and, and we came into an agreement together.

And there's some women here that you're going to be out in a field one day. God's going to speak to you and it's going to be, it's going to be creative and it's going to, when he speaks to you, it's not just sort of a couple of good insights about who he is. That's a wonderful thing.

But when he speaks to you, he speaks to you things that are creative, that are powerful, that are dynamic. He speaks a voice to you, a word to you that says, women, you are called to bring forth from the innermost being of who you are, you are called to bring forth deliverance. Hallelujah.

You women are called to be a deliverer. You are called. There are things that God has spoken to you or will speak to you and it may not be a physical birth but it'll be a spiritual birth, a creative birth, a ministry birth, a blessing, a birth of, a blessing of many, many people through your heart, through your mind, through your soul.

God is going to speak to you and he's going to speak a word, woman, you are a deliverer. You're a woman of God and I have my hand upon you and I have called you and my authority is in your life and you are

called to go forth and be a great blessing to many people. But women, let me tell you, you've got to believe that.

Without faith, it's impossible to walk in this kind of pleasure of God to see great things happen in your life. So you have to put aside. Because the tragedy is that so many women are so hurting in so many ways and many women suffer with problems of low self-esteem and they begin to think, no, not me.

God could never speak to me. God could never use me. God could never bring through my heart and soul and mind a great deliverance to the church or a great deliverance to the nation.

And you need to rebuke that spirit now in the name of Jesus. And say, God has called me and I have a special gift and I'm unique in Jesus Christ and I'm not a second class citizen and I'm not someone to be put on the side of the road and left alone. There is authority in my life.

I've been out in a field and I have heard from God. And you do it with humility and you do it with meekness and you do it with love and it's clothed with the humility of Christ. And it's not a boisterous and a proud thing but it's a clarity.

God has said deliverance is coming and he's going to use me, part of the picture, to bring it forth. Amen. Stand with me if you would and I'm going to pray for you women.

I want Kelly and Greg and the worship team to come back and we're going to sing God is here. And we're going to make this altar here at the front of this auditorium today, the field. And you're going to come to this field and say, God, and I want to pray particularly for women whether you're married or single, whatever your status is, I want to pray for those of you who feel like, I don't have that kind of confidence.

There's so much hurt in my life. I really lack the faith. I lack the ability.

I lack the...

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