

Topic	Deborah, The Woman Leader
Reference	Judges 4-5
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OVERVIEW: Israel was supposed to be a place where all the people of God lived under the Torah. All the nations were supposed to see, what it is like to be living under the rule of God. So that was the vision, but they actually didn't capture a lot of it due to the lack of faith and intermingling with the locals caused some problems. So, Judges shows you the total failure of Israel. The first two chapters tells us about Israel's failure of conquest and there is moral corruption of the Canaanites. Chapter 3-16 corruption seeps into even the leaders of Israel. The worsening trajectory of the quality of the judges from 3-16 and 17-21 corruption creeps down to the very people of God. This is the cycle that is used to interpret the Book of Judges.

Today we are going to do two chapters. Chapter 4 is the narrative and chapter 5 is the description. The whole chapter is not about Deborah, it is about God.

- A. The Lord always acts on behalf of His people
- B. The Lord moves in partnership with His people
- C. The Lord uses the weak to confound the strong
- D. The Lord uses women mightily in ministry

A. THE LORD ALWAYS ACTS ON BEHALF OF HIS PEOPLE

We look at the cycle and we find in chapter 3

Judges 3:30 (ESV) So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

The trouble is that when that happens

Judges 4:1 (ESV) And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord after Ehud died. 2 And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim.

God delivers, God causes disaster. God is behind it, he is the bad and the good guy as it were, but there is a particular purpose.

Judges 4:3 (ESV) Then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord for help, for he had 900 chariots of iron and he oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.

During that time, they cried out a lot but God take some time to answer the prayer. But he does act in the end because he raises up a judge

Judges 4:4 (ESV) Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

And God delivers

15. And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barak by the edge of the sword

This is a cycle that shows you very clearly that Lord brings disaster, Lord delivers and the Lord is constant. He is the main actor involved. If you look at the song in chapter 5, the song starts off with

Judges 5:3 (ESV) Hear, O kings; give ear, O princes; to the Lord I will sing; I will make melody to the Lord, the God of Israel. 4 Lord, when **you went out** from Seir, when **you marched** from the region of Edom,

These are areas outside Canaan. The whole idea in those days was the gods were actually local. Here Deborah and Barak sings of a great God who comes outside of Israel who rules the heaven and earth

the earth trembled and the heavens dropped, yes, the clouds dropped water. 5 The mountains quaked **before the Lord**, even Sinai before the **Lord, the God of Israel**.

Here the entire battle, the glory goes to God.

Judges 5:31 So may all **your enemies perish, O Lord!** But your friends be like the sun as he rises in his might."

So here very clearly in this cycle we see happening time and time again is the sovereignty of God. He controls. There is both justice, when you sin he punishes and yet he doesn't destroy because there is mercy. So if you got justice and you

got mercy and his justice is redemptive. It is always designed so that the people of God are led to the inevitable conclusion that they have to seek God again. Then when he seeks God, he doesn't cast them aside. They should be cast aside, they should be abandoned, but he is longsuffering.

The reason why we have this interplay between justice and mercy is because you got a covenant. This is how God deals with his people. He will not let you go if you sin and yet when you repent, he will bring you back and the covenant is for ever. He will be their God but they will be his people. They have to be like him and God doesn't compromise on that. So, if you look into the Book of Judges, you have got the whole Book of Judges. At the end of Judges, there is this continual refrain

In those days there was no king and everyone did what was right in their own eyes

Cowboy town, because there is no king. The reason why, the next few books will come, the Davidic King, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Chronicles. It was bad, there were judges and the solution to the sin is what, the king. You bring in David who will establish God's rule but David failed. Solomon went down and failed and that looks forward to the ultimate Davidic King which is basically Messiah, bringing in the new covenant where God will put his law in the hearts and Ezekiel talks about it

Ezekiel 36:26-27 (ESV) And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

By obeying his rules and walking in his statutes you are proving to be his people. That cycle can only be broken by the power of the Holy Spirit coming into their hearts. In fact, if you look at Martin Luther when he nailed the 95 Thesis on the doors of Wittenberg. One of the thesis reads

"our Lord and Master Jesus Christ . . . willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.

So this cycle doesn't stop. When you sin, you repent, God brings you back, but through power of the Holy Spirit.

1 John 1:5-9 (ESV) This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have

fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 **If we confess our sins, he is faithful** and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So, the life of believer here is one of walking in the light and when there is unrighteousness, we confess it, we don't stand and say we have got no sin. I know we don't like to confess, because we feel that we are always good enough and we don't like to go to God. We all feel we are very great. We cannot admit it when we are wrong. Imagine your whole life coming to God and admitting you are wrong. We are living by works and that's why confession is difficult. Our self-esteem is based on what we have done, on our reputation, but there is actually great blessing in confession.

Psalms 32:1-2 (ESV) Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Which means if you admit that you are a sinner, if you admit you have messed up there is no deceit. One of the worse things is not confessing, is believing that we are okay all the time, you are living a lie. So therefore, one of the blessings that we have is that our whole life is based on confession and then that's the road to blessedness.

Why do we actually mess up?

We mess up because we always forget to remember. This is Deuteronomy when Moses brings the people towards the promised land. He says,

Deuteronomy 8:11-14 (ESV) Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, 12 lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, 13 and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery

We sin when we buy a new bungalow. We sin when you have got a new job. You never sin when you lose your job. You are crying to God. It is typical. If we look at the cycle in Judges, peace in Israel as they serve God. Every time after peace

there is always evil. The cycle goes this way. It doesn't go evil and then there is peace. This is a cycle of human behaviour. Why, because we forget. That's why when you come to the Psalms, we have whole bunch of 150 psalms and all of those psalms basically help us internalize what we know from the Lord in terms of the theology.

Psalms 103:1-5 (ESV) Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and **forget not all his benefits**, 3 who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, 5 who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

So, Book of Psalms wants us to sing and meditate and push that theology from here right down to our hearts. You cannot do it based on Sunday. You take a psalm and you chew on it. The psalms help us remember. Remembering is not just mental recall. It is a controlling consciousness. Having something so central to your consciousness that it controls how you act. It is not remembering to switch off the tap, it is actually acting on the memory that is central to your core being. So, songs do that. If we look at Moses, he got three songs. Every time you got a song, Exodus 15 is after the salvation through the Red Sea, Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 90.

Deuteronomy 32:44-47 (ESV) Moses came and recited all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he and Joshua the son of Nun. 45 And when Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, 46 he said to them, "**Take to heart** all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. 47 **For it is no empty word for you, but your very life**, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess."

Imagine Moses is bringing this song and asking you to sing this song so much so that these words become your very life. That is the secret to your long life. That's the secret to your successful life, lived in flourishing in the centre of God's will. You have to take these words and make them your very life. How often do we do that? Do we know how to take a psalm? Do we know how to meditate on that, to share on that, to actually express your emotions through that and have that psalm ministered to your heart. We need to learn to do that. The Christian church very seldom goes through the Book of Psalms and because you do that, the church becomes too emotional on one side or too theoretical on the other side because you don't do the psalms. You don't remember.

Jonathan Aitken was the British member of parliament for about 18 years of his life and one day he did something which by our local standards is nothing, because he went and stayed in a hotel and a rich Arabian businessman paid the bill. When they asked him, who paid the bill, he said my wife paid the bill. When he was caught with that, he went to court and for that little lie he got 18 months in jail. In jail he writes this

I was there for 211 days – I counted them all. Every day I did far more praying, and thinking and Bible reading than ever before, because of the luxury of all the extra time.

He left politics and then went to Bible College. Time in prison is good you know why, it gave him an opportunity to reflect. You can't run for office, you can't politic anymore, you sit down there and the words of the Lord percolate through his heart. They become the controlling thoughts. So many of us are so busy that this doesn't change you. Why doesn't it change you? Because we don't have the time to have it transform you. You even don't know how to meditate on it. So, this is a challenge to us.

B. THE LORD MOVES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE

Judges 4:10 (ESV) And Barak called out Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh. And 10,000 men went up at his heels, and Deborah went up with him.

So it is call. It looked as if only the tribe of Naphtali and Zebulun joined him with 10,000 men but if you actually look at the song behind it then

Judges 5:13-15 (ESV) Then down marched the remnant of the noble; the people of the Lord marched down for me against the mighty. 14 From **Ephraim** their root they marched down into the valley, following you, **Benjamin**, with your kinsmen; from **Machir** marched down the commanders, and from **Zebulun** those who bear the lieutenant's staff; 15 the princes of **Issachar** came with Deborah, and Issachar faithful to Barak; to the valley they rushed at his heels.

Here are all the tribes. The call went out and they joined in the battle. Here

Judges 5:18 (ESV) Zebulun is a people who risked their lives to the death; Naphtali, too, on the heights of the field.

Before that you have got

Judges 5:15-16 (ESV) Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. 16 Why did **you sit still** among the sheepfolds to hear the whistling for the flocks? Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.

Everybody went out and risk their lives, the clans of Reuben were sitting down there and wondering, should I go or not.

Judges 5:17 (ESV) Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan; and Dan, why did he stay with the ships? Asher sat still at the coast of the sea, staying by his landings.

What happened, you have got all these tribes who couldn't be bothered to come. In contrast to that we have Jael

Judges 5:24 (ESV) Most blessed of **women be Jael**, the wife of **Heber the Kenite**, of tent-dwelling women most blessed.

This woman is not an Israelite, she is the wife of Heber the Kenite. She is a foreigner. In Syria God brings revival there through the most unimaginable sources. They are seeing Jesus in their dreams. They are receiving gospel through the most unlikely of sources because God will always march on forward. If you look at the people, they reason they give

Judges 5:15-17 (ESV) Among the clans of Reuben where were **great searchings of heart**. 16 Why did you sit still among the **sheepfolds**, to hear the **whistling for the flocks**? Among the clans of Reuben here were **great searchings of heart**. 17 Gilead stayed **beyond the Jordan**; and Dan, why did he **stay with the ships**? **Asher sat still at the coast of the sea**, staying by his landings.

You compare it with

18 Zebulun is a people who risked their lives to the death;

The psalm tells you big contrast of two kinds of God's people. The medal of honour in 2009 was given to Clint Romesha, who was in an outpost in Afghanistan and this outpost is described by the commanders are indefensible. There were 53 soldiers there and they were attacked. They were in the valley, not on the top by 400 Taliban for 14 hours. He fought very bravely. 8 men died, 27 were injured. By the next morning, 150 Taliban were dead and this chap was still alive. He risked his life many times to retrieve bodies of fallen soldiers, so much so that he actually got the Medal of Honour but these are the words he actually said recently because this story is going into a Netflix film by the end of November and he said these words

Everything we did that day, we didn't do it because we hated the enemy. Combat is not a great thing to be in, and it's not a motivation to hate, by no means. It's a motivation to love your brothers."

He went out on the fight, he went out in the hail of bullets to retrieve the body of his fallen combats, why, because he loved them and when you don't go out and fight it shows you don't love your brothers. If you look here the issue is love

Meroz is an unknown town and the passage here occurs when Sisera has already lost the war. He is running away. His men are dispersed and they ask the people of Meroz why don't you go and help us, they did nothing

Judges 5:23 (ESV) Curse Meroz, says the angel of the Lord, curse its inhabitants thoroughly, because they did not come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty

When you get involved in the kingdom of God, it is a not a function of who you are but your love for God. When you sit by the coast and toast marshmallows compared to getting into the fray and battle, is a function of whether you love the lost. In fact Esther, very famously was challenged to save the Jews and she could have said no because there was a risk. If she approaches the husband in a wrong way, she might have to lose her life and her uncle said to her

Esther 4:14 (ESV) For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

So, she could have said 'no', if you said 'no' God will use somebody else because God is God, but you have a privilege to work in partnership with God. George Scott is a missionary who was very unusual because he actually approached China Inland Mission and talked to Hudson Taylor. He wanted to be a missionary all his life and Hudson Taylor was very sceptical, you know why, because George Scott has only one leg. How can you go to China, march up the hills up and down on one leg? In those days, they don't have nice prosthesis. George Scott said,

I do not see those with two legs going.

That's the kind of attitude. The lord works in partnership with people. It is always people and whoever you are it is love like Clint Romesha said, we didn't fight because we hate the enemy, we fought because we love our brothers. There are a lot of people working in the church in a lot of ministries and the rest of them are

rushing off after the service. Don't you love your brothers, don't you want to be blessed by being in partnership with God. This is your opportunity.

C. GOD USES THE WEAK TO CONFOUND THE STRONG

Judges 4:2-3 (ESV) The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim. 3 Then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord for help, for **he had 900 chariots of iron and he oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.**

It was a terrible time and it mentions 900 chariots of iron, that phrase is repeated a few times because chariots of iron are terrible. At the side of the chariot there will be knives that is used to cut down human being. It was basically a killing machine. It cuts everybody down.

Judges 5:6-7 (ESV) In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael, **the highways were abandoned, and travelers kept to the byways. 7 The villagers ceased in Israel;** they ceased to be until I arose; I, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel.

The highways were abandoned you will see a chariot

Judges 4:4-5 (ESV) Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. 5 She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment.

She is just a prophet, she hangs out under the palm tree in the village and people are coming to her for judgment. This is the unlikeliest of heroes because she is a woman. She is not in the palace.

Judges 5:7-8 (ESV) I, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel. 8 **When new gods were chosen, then war was in the gates. Was shield or spear to be seen among forty thousand in Israel?**

There was no standing army. The enemies have chariots of iron and you have got whole bunch of tribes who aren't going to join you. Then you have got the other unlikely hero, Barak.

Judges 4:6-8 (ESV) She sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh- Naphtali and said to him, "Has not the Lord, the God of Israel, commanded you, 'Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking 10,000 from the

people of Naphtali and the people of Zebulun. 7 And I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops, and I will give him into your hand?" 8 Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go."

How would you like a general like that to lead your army? I think some commentators like Keller will say, he is an okay guy. He just wanted to make sure that God was with him, but you don't often see woman dragged into the middle of the battle field. Even though this is the woman of God. So I take the view of more traditional commentators that this fellow not altogether put together. He is not that strong. He is a weak leader as it were. Then you have the battle. So, all the Israelites are hanging out at the mountain and then at the right time they were asked to come down from the mountain

Judges 5:19-21 (ESV) The kings came, they fought; then fought the kings of Canaan, at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; they got no spoils of silver. 20 From heaven the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera. 21 **The torrent Kishon swept them away**, the ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon. March on, my soul, with might!

The Bible in a poetic language depicts a fighting scene, a battle scene. Here we have all the Israelites hanging out on mount Tibor, no shield, no spear and then they go down to meet Barak to fight against Sisera and thereby the river. The entire army was destroyed because God used natural forces. Then you have got this woman Jael

Judges 4:11 (ESV) Now Heber the Kenite had separated from the Kenites, the descendants of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Zaananim, which is near Kedesh.

Jael is not an Israelite. She is the wife of Heber the Kenite, who is the descendant of Moses's father-in-law.

Judges 4:17 (ESV) But Sisera fled away on foot 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.

Jael's husband had a peace treaty with the enemy called Jabin. So, when Sisera goes to Kenite's tent, he is going back to his own people. So Kenite's are in relationship with the enemy. So therefore, Jael should be helping Sisera, instead you have got Deborah song. It is like a sandwich

Judges 5:23 (ESV) Curse Meroz, says the angel of the Lord, curse its inhabitants thoroughly, because they did not come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

Judges 5:24 (ESV) Most blessed of women be Jael, the **wife of Heber the Kenite**, of **tent-dwelling women** most blessed.

Then you have got Sisera's mother

Judges 5:28 (ESV) Out of the window she peered, the mother of Sisera wailed through the lattice: 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the hoofbeats of his chariots?'

Judges 5:29-30 (ESV) Her wisest princesses answer, indeed, she answers herself, 30 'Have they not found and divided the spoil?— A womb or two for every man; spoil of dyed materials for Sisera, spoil of dyed materials embroidered, two pieces of dyed work embroidered for the neck as spoil?'

All she is thinking about is that my son must be bringing a lot of stuff. So, when you write this song as beautiful, you sandwich the people of Meroz, who couldn't give a damn about God, you have Sisera's mother and then you contrast her with the nice girl called Jael in the middle.

Judges 5:26-27 (ESV) She sent her hand to the tent peg and her right hand to the workmen's mallet; she struck Sisera; she crushed his head; she shattered and pierced his temple. 27 Between her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still; between her feet he sank, he fell; where he sank, there he fell—dead.

Judges 5 is a dramatization of what happened in chapter 4. You don't write a drama the same way as you write a narrative. So therefore, they are not contradictory but they give you more information and it suppose to evoke emotion when you actually read a song. So here we have Sisera being killed. Here we have another non-Israel

Judges 3:31 (ESV) After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed 600 of the Philistines with **an oxgoad**, and he also saved Israel.

This shows you, you use what you have got. He uses oxgoad, she used a tent peg because uses it everyday. She used that for God's purposes.

Hebrews 11:32-34 (ESV) And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—

33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, **were made strong out of weakness**, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

They were not strong intrinsically. Barak wasn't a brave guy. God made him strong. In the end, Barak went down and charged against 900 tanks. It was an act of courage inspired by the spirit of God. This is Paul who sums it up very nicely

1 Corinthians 1:25-29 (ESV) For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. **26** For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **27** But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; **28** God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, **29** so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

That's how God works. God always chooses the weak. How did God achieve the greatest victory in the history of the world? By sending his son and the greatest emblem of weakness is the cross. Dying on the cross, save all of us. God always chooses the weak and uses the weak.

Psalms 2:1-3 (ESV) Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."

This is the world who is rebelling against God and yet God says

Psalms 2:4-6 (ESV) He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. 5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 6 "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."

God is the one in-charge. He delivers. He is the one who uses the weak. The irony is, here is Sisera, a huge general who has taken girls as slaves. He was beaten by two women. Their ultimate indignity if you live in that time is a general who was beaten by two women. One who sits around under the palm tree and the other one with a tent peg. Huge irony, because God uses this woman.

D. THE LORD USES WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Judges 4:4 (ESV) Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

You have got Old Testament woman in ministry, plenty of them. There is Miriam, Moses sister as prophetess. Huldah prophetess, Deborah judge and prophetess. Esther, Ruth and Naomi, important in development and spiritual formation of Israel

In the New testament, Samaritan Woman was the first one described going out sharing the gospel. Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene, Mother of James and John and Salome witnesses of the first resurrection. Pricilla who taught Apollos, corrected him. Phoebe deaconess mentioned in Romans. Women prophets in Corinthians 11. Daughters of Agabus were prophets.

The New Testament and Old Testament is filled with people in ministry, women in ministry but the contentious issue in the church today is that on the one side you have got the Western church pushing that all woman should be equal to man. The eastern churches, patriarchy, the man are in charge. They are the authority and there are some churches that don't even allow to have woman leading worship and we fought those battles in this church 10-15 years ago.

So you have got these two clashes and then the Egalitarian will say, look at Deborah. Deborah is an example of equality, but the trouble here you actually have is that egalitarian think that the woman are the same as the man. So therefore when you have got a hero like Thor, so the equivalent hero must be Wonder Woman. It must be the same.

Galatians 3:28 (ESV) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Why can't women be pastors, after all the gender differences are after the fall. But if you look in the life of Deborah

Judges 5:6-7 (ESV) In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were abandoned, and travelers kept to the byways. 7 The villagers ceased in Israel; they ceased to be until I arose; I, Deborah, arose as a **mother in Israel**.

She never say I arose as a judge, or I arose as a king. I arose as a mother. Her leadership was uniquely feminine. It's a mother. She didn't lead them into battle.

She asked Barak to lead them into battle. She didn't think her leadership was in the same vain or same style as men. Why does Paul write this

Galatians 3:28 (ESV) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

It is because whenever a Jew gets up in the morning he prays I thank God I am not born a slave, a gentile or a woman. So when Paul actually preaches this he reverses the prayer that the pharisees will pray. You are all one in Christ. He is not talking that you have got different values that have same values. If you look at the context of the above passage

Galatians 3:26-29 (ESV) for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

This means the women are called sons. They are called sons because they are the privileged one. They inherit. They get the power. They get the land. But Paul is calling all the woman sons, because they are equal in inheritance. Because if you look here

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

The whole passage is couched in the fact that you inherit eternal life. It is not that you are equal to men in terms of occupation. He is talking you are equal to man in terms of inheritance which is eternal life. So, egalitarians have turned it around the wrong way, because the idea of equality must be the same.

Here we see the Pauline balance. Paul has to talk about women who are preaching in public or praying in public and he has to say you wear a veil. Because on one hand

1 Corinthians 11:3-5 (ESV) But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, 5 but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven.

There is an order. The man is the head and the woman has to wear the veil as a sign of authority but at the same time you look at verse 11

1 Corinthians 11:11-12 (ESV) Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; 12 for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.

So on one hand he says there is a sequence, there is a differentiation between man and woman. On the other hand, they are the same. So, you could be a judge in high court of Malaysia. You could be the Prime Minister or Deputy Prime Minister but you can only cast one vote. No matter who you are, because in this country we are all equal. The same thing applies, we are all equal in the sight of God but we have different roles to play. So therefore, the contentious issue isn't contentious because we are not egalitarian or we are focused on patriarchy we are actually complementarian. God made us different and the differences actually glorify him.

Rosa Parks, many years ago refused to leave the bus because she stood up for her rights and she said

"I felt the Lord would give me the strength to endure whatever I had to face. God did away with all my fear...It was time for someone to stand up--or, in my case, sit down. I refused to move"

She sparked off the civil rights movement in the United States. Fanny Crosby wrote 8000 hymn. She was blind after 6 weeks of life. She writes,

*Oh, what a happy soul I am,
although I cannot see!
I am resolved that in this world
Contented I will be.
How many blessings I enjoy
That other people don't,
To weep and sigh because I'm blind
I cannot, and I won't!*

She was an inspiration to the world. Audrey Wetherll Johnson has impacted so many people in her life. She started BSF in 1959. Susanna Wesley mother of John Wesley writes

I am not a man nor a minister, yet as a mother and a mistress I felt I ought to do more than I had yet done. I resolved to begin with my own children; in which I observe the following method: I take such a proportion of time as I can spare every night to discourse with each child apart."

She had about 17 children and she spend time with each one to make sure that they do quiet time and she produced John and Charles Wesley who produced the Methodist movement which actually has changed the course of this world.

CHALLENGE:

The curse of Meroz. The Israelites have already won the victory. Sisera and his troops were fleeing the field. When they were fleeing the field, the battle was already won, the citizens of Meroz even then when the battle was won, don't want to join. I can understand if you don't want to join before the battle. Here the battle is won and they are running away and the angel says, curse Meroz

Judges 5:23 (ESV) Curse Meroz, says the angel of the Lord, curse its inhabitants thoroughly, because they did not come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

In life there are only three kinds of people, those who stand around and wonder why, what has happened. Then there are those who stand around and watch things happen. Then there are those who actually go and work. The first two are actually cursed by God. If we look at Matthew chapter 25,

Matthew 25:41-43 (ESV) Then he will say to those on his left, depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry, and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me

There is no place in the kingdom of God for spiritual apathy. The sign of spiritual life is actually a harvest. If you look at the parable of sowers, the harvest of the seed is 30-fold, 50-fold and 60-fold. You don't sit in spiritual apathy. Deborah used her prophetic gifts. Jael used the tent peg. Shamgar used a goat stick. Moses used his stick. Everybody uses what he has.

I was reading and looking at the DNA content of the human being. If we look at it has got 3.2 billion base pairs. The onion has 5 times more than us. Salamander has 65.5 billion base pairs. The flower has got 149 billion base pairs. Scientists are wondering that only 2% of your DNA is used to transcript and to produce proteins that would produce enzymes. The other 98% scientist actually say are junk. They are saying that evolution make so many mistakes, there is a lot of junk DNA left to the side. God makes mistakes. But recently through the work of Harvard Cheng and Jonathan Rinn at Harvard, they actually took junk DNA away from mouse and they write

"You take away a piece of junk DNA, and the mouse dies," Rinn said. "If you can come up with a criticism of that, go ahead. But I'm pretty satisfied. I've found a new piece of the genome that's required for life."

DNA is not junk, it is designed, finetuned. If we look into nature across us, there is balance and beauty. Because this is God's design and when you look at that you reflect on Genesis 1

Genesis 1:27 (ESV) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:31 (ESV) And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, **it was very good**. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

When you live within the design of Lord that is human flourishing, but yet we live in a society where man want to become woman and woman want to become man. It is absolute stupidity because there is glory in what God has meant us to be. So therefore, the bottom-line is that, in the kingdom of God there is no useless DNA, all of us man and woman, God has a purpose for every single one of you.

I want to challenge the woman in our midst, we are all designed to work together because we love him, and we love each other. Join in the fight for his kingdom, not because of we hate our brothers but we love them.