

**JUDGES 4:6-10**  
**BE A MAN!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 4 as we continue our study through this book.

Keep in mind that the children of Israel are in the Promise Land and the major battles are over as well as many of the smaller battles within the various tribes in Israel, in which they were to drive out the enemy, but they did not and it ended up being a thorn in their side.

In Judges 4:1 through Judges 5:31 we are focusing on the northern region of Israel and how their sin affected them.

Remember that these Judges that God raised up were not over the entire nation but various tribes in Israel.

We looked at the southern region in Judges 3:5-31. And, like I have said, we are now focusing on the northern region or tribes in Israel, not all of them, but a few of them as they departed from the Lord and went into captivity!

And in our study, after the Judge Ehud died, we are told that, “**. . . the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD.**” Judges 4:1.

And because of that, God brought judgment upon them, not to destroy them but to awaken them to their sin so that they might repent and return to the Lord.

And this bondage or captivity for them was at the hands of Jabin, who was the king of Canaan and he reigned in Hazor. And for twenty years we are told “**. . . he harshly oppressed the children of Israel.**” Judges 4:3.

How sad that it took them that long, twenty years to repent and call upon God to deliver them. But that is how long it took and as they cried out to the Lord, we see the Lord raise up Deborah and Barak to deliver the children of Israel from this bondage they were in, from this captivity at the hands of Jabin!

What is interesting to me about Deborah is that we are told that she was judging Israel during this time. Not only was she judging Israel, but we are also told that “**... she would sit under the palm tree ...**” during this time of bondage and oppression.

Here was this woman of God who was at peace in the midst of this persecution, this captivity, because she was resting in the Lord and we talked about that last time.

This morning, in the text we will be looking at, we are going to focus on “***BE A MAN!***”

You see, there was not a man in Israel, or at least in this northern area of Israel, who was judging the nation at this time, but a woman stepped up for that role.

And as I read this I see that things are out of order in Israel and not just because I said so, but God has established an order and the man was to be the leader in the nation and in the home and in the church you might say!

Maybe you have heard this phrase that is being spoken of a lot lately and that is “***toxic masculinity!***”

Let me share this with you and then I will expound on this more as we will see how this plays out in our study this morning. We are told in this article from April of 2019,

In a sane world, it would not be necessary to write a serious article about such a foolish topic. But in a world where good is bad and bad is good, where right is wrong and wrong is right, where strength is ridiculed and weakness is praised – in our inverted world, I find myself compelled to write about the most absurd topics.

In Pennsylvania a group of men have formed the “Men’s Therapeutic Cuddle Group” in order to end “toxic masculinity.”

The unanalyzed assumption, of course, is that such a thing as toxic masculinity exists. In my opinion, it doesn’t. There may be personality traits of the typical male in the Western world that are problematic, just as there are personality traits of females that are problematic. The perfect human being does not exist.

But to brand modern masculinity as toxic is downright absurd. Teaching young boys to cuddle may suppress some of their aggressiveness, but it will never eliminate it. Furthermore, I don’t necessarily see aggressiveness as negative.

Just let me say at the outset that I am glad that our boys weren’t “cuddling” when they landed on Omaha Beach during the Invasion of Normandy. And Western Europe was glad as well. The courage and valor of our troops brought the end of the horrific Nazi regime.

But now I am getting ahead of myself. Who came up with this crazy idea of toxic masculinity in the first place? Why would anyone want to criticize outward strength and perseverance and attempt to replace these traditional virtues with outward vulnerability and submissiveness?

Perhaps you have already guessed the source of this lunacy. It is a product of the identity politics group. Under the sway of French deconstructionism (Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and others), the radical liberals became convinced that they could change reality by creating new words. So they coined the phrase “toxic masculinity” in an attempt to transform masculinity into “something poisonous” that has infected the males of our society.

The precursor of “toxic masculinity” was “hegemonic masculinity” (dominating masculinity) – an idea popularized by the Australian transgender professor Robert (today Raewyn) Connell. In his (her) book *Gender and Power* (1987), Connell maintains that current forms of masculinity are detrimental because they encourage domination over women and enforce the subordination of non-conforming men.

Connell was visiting professor at Harvard during the 1990s where he (she) propagated the idea of hegemonic masculinity which eventually morphed into “toxic masculinity” with predictable embellishments.

Since the time of Aristotle, the traditional virtues of Western societies were: temperance, justice, wisdom and courage, whereby courage was stressed as both a physical and mental virtue.

Apparently, Connell and others of the “identity club” feel intimidated by the idea of real courage, but this virtue has been essential to the development of Western Civilization. I am sure that the “identity club” members would be more comfortable if all of us were like them, but this is an unrealistic expectation and would be disastrous for our society. A brief survey of history will confirm that societies disintegrate under the influence of weak leaders. . . .

In sum, I see the term “toxic masculinity” as another attempt of the radical liberals to transform our culture into something that fits their ideology. Can you imagine the uproar if I were to coin the phrase “poisonous femininity” or “toxic transsexuality”? But men have the ability to suppress such childish urges, to analyze situations logically and to exercise patience with the nonsense of others. As a historian and philosopher, I still have high regard for the virtues of temperance, justice, wisdom and courage.

Let me say this, and you can send me letters or e-mails or put me down on Facebook, but there is a difference between men and women and all I can say is - ***PRAISE THE LORD*** there is!

And in this difference, we compliment each other but that is no longer a good thing. Now we must be the same, no difference, and that is not a good thing!

Now please understand I am not talking about abuse or lording over another person, that is not Scriptural. But we do have roles we play in this life and if we refuse, then we are going against the will of God for our lives.

I know that may seem a little harsh, but not at all. And as we will see in our study this morning, Barak did not assume the role God had for him and in the end, he lost out on the blessings that God had for him and those blessings were given to another.

I have broken the verses we will be looking at this morning down into four points and they are as follows.

***THE CALL BY GOD – JUDGES 4:6-7***

***LACK OF FAITH – JUDGES 4:8***

***THE LOSS OF GOD’S BLESSINGS – JUDGES 4:9***

***THE TRUST IN DEBORAH – JUDGES 4:10***

So with that as our background, let’s begin reading in Judges chapter 4, beginning in verse 6 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we look at this topic – ***BE A MAN!***

**JUDGES 4****VERSES 6-7**

These verses here in Judges deal with our first point – ***THE CALL BY GOD!***

This man named Barak was a well-known military leader in Israel and we see here that Deborah calls for Barak to come down from the north, the area of Naphtali so that she can speak to him.

Interestingly enough, the name “**Barak**” means “*lightning*” but, as we will see, he did not shine that brightly!

And as he comes before Deborah, listen again to what she tells this great military leader, **“... ‘Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, “Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and the sons of Zebulun; and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand.””** Judges 4:6-7.

I think what we see here is that Deborah is just confirming a prophecy about this battle against Sisera that the Lord had already given to Barak.

Then what is the problem?

He was not acting upon what the Lord already showed him.

Why didn’t he go into battle like the Lord showed him?

I think fear plays a big role here in the life of Barak.

Yes, he was a great military leader but for whatever reason, he is now fearful, maybe because the enemy had a stronger military force, they had chariots and the children of Israel did not, and thus, the Lord told him what to do and yet he did not act upon it. He did not walk by faith!

Again, his name may be lightening, but there is a not a big flash in the sky with Barak, maybe a spark but not lightening!

Fear can cause us to stop walking and, in the end, we lose out. Let me show you what fear can do. We are told,

Several generations ago, during one of the most turbulent of the desert wars in the Middle East, a spy was captured and sentenced to death by a general of the Persian army.

The general, a man of intelligence and compassion, had adopted a strange and unusual custom in such cases. He permitted the condemned person to make a choice. The prisoner could either face a firing squad or pass through the Black Door.

As the moment of the execution drew near, the general ordered the spy to be brought before him for a short, final interview, the primary purpose of which was to receive the answer of the doomed man to the query: "What shall it be - the firing squad or the Black Door?"

This was not an easy decision, and the prisoner hesitated, but soon made it known that he much preferred the firing squad to the unknown horrors that might await him behind the ominous and mysterious door.

Not long thereafter, a volley of shots in the courtyard announced that the grim sentence had been fulfilled.

The general, staring at his boots, turned to his aide and said, “You see how it is with men; they will always prefer the known to the unknown. It is characteristic of people to be afraid of the undefined. Yet I gave him his choice.”

“What lies beyond the Black Door?” asked the aide.

“Freedom,” replied the general, “and I’ve known only a few brave enough to take it.”

The story illustrates the situation many people face each day - a choice between the known and the unknown. Few have the courage to come alive, to stop being engulfed in a sea of mediocrity - humbled and dulled by failure to recognize their own potential. They lack the fortitude to stop living their lives in a mentally-chloroformed condition in that ignoble [shameful] mass of humanity . . . the uncommitted. The choice is yours (Phil 4:13). “By grace ye are saved through faith” (Eph 4:28). “We live by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7).

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I see that here with Barak, feared paralyzed him and thus, to get him moving God has Deborah call for him to come down and we see Deborah encourage him to go into this battle, a battle that the Lord has already given him victory in, all he needed to do was walk by faith!

In other words, the Lord already told Barak what to do, and now we see Deborah confirming the message to go and destroy the enemy!

And here is the battle plan.

Barak was to take his men and station them on Mount Tabor, which rose some 1300 feet up and is located just south of the Sea of Galilee at the junction of the tribes of Naphtali, Zebulun and Issachar.

Now why was it important for them to position themselves on Mount Tabor?

Because Sisera had 900 iron chariots and they would be useless in the mountains, obviously.

So this is more of a staging area for them as they prepare to go into battle, they will come down off of Mount Tabor to fight Sisera and his army.

And I am sure that Barak knew this area and it is interesting to see the Lord tell him that He will deliver Sisera and his army at the River Kishon.

Folk's, this is not some raging river but a tiny stream.

And yet, as we will see as we look at this battle next time, God will take something that is not too impressive and make it into something that is to assist the children of Israel in this victory.

I see God doing that with us. We may not be too strong, too impressive, but God will use us to attain His victory in the battles that are out there.

We just need to be open, to be available.

And here's the thing. Can we trust in what He is telling us? Can we trust in Him enough to walk by faith even though as we look at the situation with our physical eyes, we see no way are we going to be victorious?

That is what God wants us to do. He wants us to trust in Him and walk by faith and not by sight!

And when God calls us to do something, He not only prepares the work for us, but He also equips us for the work.

God was not going to call Barak into this battle so that he would lose. The victory was his, but as we are going to see, he lacked the faith to walk!

And that is our next point, as we have seen *THE CALL BY GOD* and now, on Barak's part, his *LACK OF FAITH!*

### VERSE 8

Barak, the commander of this army tells Deborah that he will not go into battle unless she goes with him.

You have to be kidding me?

It is like saying, *"I'm not going to war unless my mommy comes with me!"*

Sorry, but that is not good, and we will see that in the next few verses.

And I know, there are some who say that he is just being wise since God is directing her.

And as good as that sounds, it is not correct!

And this is what we see happening far too often among Christians. The husband is not the spiritual leader in the family, but the wife is.

Thus, the wife gets him involved in ministry. The wife tells the family where to go to church. The wife makes all the decisions and the husband just goes along with it, not wanting to cause any trouble because the wife is the dominant one in the family!

And now it is even getting worse as we see this idea of toxic masculinity going around.

But again, God created men and women differently, like I have said. And if you go back to the very beginning, when God created Adam and Eve, there was a beautiful relationship between them.

Let me show you what I mean, what God intended and then what happened when sin entered this world and we see this problem growing leaps and bounds because people have moved away from what God has ordained the family to be, the order of the family!

We see in Genesis chapter 2 that God formed Adam from the dust of the ground, and He breathed life into Adam.

And then God created a helpmate for Adam by putting Adam in a deep sleep and then taking a portion of Adam's rib to create Eve.

And the point that is being made here is that yes, the woman was part of man and yet different, very different.

And what I want you to see here in creation, the creation of the woman is how this relationship between a husband and a wife is ordered by God.

You see, Eve was taken from his side, not from his foot so he could step all over her.

She was not taken from his head so he could lord over her.

But she was taken from under his arm so he could protect her, close to his heart so he could love her, comfort her!

And the Lord brought her to Adam just as I believe God does today, bringing our helpmate to us.

Now for all those who are against the role of a husband and a wife in marriage, what is wrong with what God has established?

There is nothing wrong with it. In fact, it is perfect. All that God created was good, it was very good!

And then sin entered the picture and this once beautiful relationship between a husband and a wife was now going to be in trouble.

Listen to what we are told in the last part of Genesis 3:16, and keep in mind that this is part of the curse after Adam sinned, not a blessing. We are told, “**. . . Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.**”

Now I do understand that as some read this, they see this beautiful picture of a husband and a wife as she will desire her husband and he will look after the wife! It sounds great, but what is the problem with that?

This is a result of the curse and thus, this is not painting something beautiful, it is just speaking of what sin will do in this relationship between a husband and a wife!

Maybe you still are not sure about that, but again, keep in mind that this is part of the curse! Context, context, context!

Let me show you what I mean and what you will see in this verse is the start of the battle of the sexes, it all began here, not with Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs in that tennis match back in 1973! What is spoken of here in Genesis 3 is part of the curse.

You see, when it says, “**. . . Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.**” it is speaking of usurping the role of the husband.

How can I be so sure?

The reason is simple. You see, that word “**desire**” is also seen in Genesis 4:7 where we are told, “**If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.**”

The Lord was warning Cain that sin wants to rule his life, it wants to control your life, it wants to lord over you, don't let it!

And that is what is seen here in Genesis 3:16, the desire for the woman is to rule over his life, to be in charge!

And again, this is part of the curse, so it can't be good, and it is not.

And here we are in 2020, and we still see this part of the curse being carried out where women are trying to rule over the husbands, they are in charge and, like it or not, that is not the order of the family that God established, that is part of the curse.

And thus, if that is true, and it is, then in the Christian home, this should not be. The husband is to be in charge of the family.

Now don't freak out on me here. Do you really think it was a mess in the Garden of Eden between Adam and Eve before the curse? Of course not, it was a beautiful relationship where they complimented each other, they made each other complete!

Sin messed that up and God, through Jesus Christ, is trying to get things back in order again!

And there is another problem here in Genesis 3:16 that does affect the men. Listen again to what we are told, “**. . . Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.**”

Did you catch that?

Not only will the wife try to rule her husband, but the husband will now try to lord over his wife.

And you will not find that in the Scriptures and yet, some men feel like they are the king and they need to be cared for by their wife. They are to jump at their every command! If you feel that way you don't need a wife, you need a maid!

The husband is to love his wife, cherish his wife, protect his wife, help his wife grow in the Lord. The husband is to sacrifice his life as Christ laid down his life for the church!

You see, a far different picture than some men paint and let me say this, they are totally wrong if they feel that they are the lord of the family and the wife is the slave.

The picture has to go back to the Garden of Eden, before sin and the beautiful relationship that Adam and Eve had. Again, they complimented each other they did not rub each other the wrong way by trying to lord over the other person.

This is nothing more than the battle of the sexes, as I have said, where each person tries to usurp the role that God has given to him or her.

Susan T. Foh wrote, "As a result of the fall, man no longer rules easily; he must fight from his headship. Sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband. The woman's desire is to control her husband (to usurp his divinely appointed headship), and he must master her, if he can. So the rule of love founded in paradise is replaced by struggle, tyranny and domination." (Susan T. Foh, cited in Boice).

And we see that in the world today, but it should not be seen in the Christian home as Christ is the head and then the husband and then the wife.

Again, not that the wife is not smart enough, spiritual enough, but this is just the order that God has established.

And if anyone has a problem with that, then they need to look at Jesus. He is Almighty God and yet, He submitted his life to the Father. If He could do that for us, why can't we do that for Him?

Let me share this with you to kind of let you see what is going on and what we can do about it, because men need to be men in the days we are living in and they need to lead their families in the ways of God. It is not time to sit back and not do what God has called you to do, this is too important.

The Devil is doing a good job in destroying the family and we many times surrender to what he is doing. Don't give in to the Devil, submit your life to the Lord and follow Him!

This is what we are told,

If you live in mainstream media and consume the male-bashing commercials and shows, you'd believe that most women lead or "wear the pants" in their homes, and the majority of guys are more than willing to let them do it. While I agree our men need to collectively step up their leadership efforts, I also know that most men want to lead their families well, and the majority of women out there want that as well.

The topic of male leadership within the family recently garnished even more national attention when a car commercial depicted a couple driving in their car looking for a parking place. The wife was driving, and the husband, seated in the passenger side, was suggesting that the wife park the car in an open space that was apparently a distance away from their son's football game. The wife appears quite annoyed at her wimpy husband as she makes the comment that "someone has to wear the pants in this family" and proceeds to park the car on a nearby hill. All of this takes place as their son sits quietly in the back seat, albeit geared up for his football game.

When I watched the commercial, what struck me even more than the man being quite passive, was the cold and hostile attitude of the mom. Not a great depiction of a happy couple at all. And this is suppose to sell me a car?

Yet, the commercial hits on a trending reality of the declining role of male leadership within the American family. Since the beginning of time, God has called men to lead their families, i.e. to "wear the pants." Yet, what does it look like for a husband/father to lead his family?

**1. It doesn't mean that our wives are too weak or incapable of "wearing the pants."**

While God calls the man to lead his wife and children, God makes it clear that marriage is a partnership, i.e. we are co-heirs in Christ. By no means does leadership mean dictatorship (Jesus spoke against the "lording over" mentality of the ruling religious leaders in His day). My wife and I make collective decisions on a regular basis. Yet, in the same light that we have and need a hierarchy of leadership within every organization, God gave us an indisputable model of leadership within the home (Ephesians 5:22-6:4). Every business needs to have a CEO or president. However, it doesn't mean that the people that work for this leader are lesser men and women. The same applies for our families. Men, God has positioned you to lead your families. It's high-time we step up to deliver in a manner that reflects God's love and equality. Yet, before we "step up," we need to take a step down and submit ourselves before God and our wives.

***“. . . submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Eph. 5:21***

Unfortunately, too many women, whether single moms or wives dealing with husbands that refuse to lead, are forced to "wear the pants" for their families. The women and children in our communities need our help. Children of all ages need to see real men that are willing to set the example of what a godly man should look like. . . .

## **2. We must be willing to go to battle for our families.**

To contradict most of the pop-culture psychology that is being communicated through our public institutions and main-stream media today, the biological facts that substantiates the differences between men and women are real. Men and women, while co-heirs in Christ, are designed differently to serve different purposes. However, we live during times when political correctness has gone insanely out-of-control. What are we thinking when we (America) are placing our women alongside men on the battlefield? The social and military consequences should be obvious. It pains me to think what this will mean for American wives, moms and daughters in the future.

Yet, I also look at this decision as an opportunity for men to live out their leadership calling and to make a declarative statement that stands out as a stark contrast. Regardless of what our culture and “PC” government officials may choose, we can resolve to be men that “wear the pants” in our own homes. As husbands and fathers, we need to live on the front-line of the battlefield of life for our family. Without question, our wives and children must know we will go to battle for them regardless of the cost. Christ embodied the concept of meekness, power under restraint, and we are called to follow Him in this pursuit.

### **3. We lead best when we love most.**

As our supreme example, the life of Jesus Christ taught us how to lead. As men, we are also given an explicit command to love our wives as Christ loved His church. This means our leadership focus is one of love and self-sacrifice. It's our calling to put our wives and children before ourselves. Regardless of what our schools are teaching our kids, biblical chivalry is not dead! As dads, our children need to see us lovingly and relentlessly serving our family in a bold and purposeful manner. We need to be a model of leadership that embodies the qualities and missional purpose of Christ's new commandment: To love others as Christ loved us. If we succeed here as a husband and a father, we will have succeeded in life where it matters most.

### **4. Our lives are a mission.**

Every great leader pursues a higher calling and purpose that transcends his own life. Again, Jesus is the pinnacle example of a "man" living for a mission beyond Himself. Quite frankly, this is my biggest motivator as a husband and as a father. I'm not here for me. I'm divinely positioned in this time and space to serve God for a purpose that reaches far beyond my own life. I'm counting on God to use me to impact my family, my community and this world for His ultimate glory.

From a practical standpoint, as dads, we need to continually look for those teachable moments to build the love and truth of God's word into our children's hearts and minds. The book of Proverbs and other explicit verses instructs our children to listen to the teachings of their fathers/parents. Men, like Christ, we need to be disciple-makers. First and most, this needs to happen in our own homes. For me, I've resolved to make this one of my highest life priorities. I also realize that my greatest life lesson to my children will be how I love their mother. I can't say this with enough emphasis - one of the greatest heritage-makers we will give to our children is the love and devotion we show to our wives.

#### **5. Our manhood is undeniably woven into our character and our actions.**

This may be getting deep, but it's true. You can't separate a person from their gender. Unfortunately, that's exactly what's beginning to happen in America today. We're attempting to go genderless. God created us - man and woman. While sin has no doubt caused some complications that confuse the biology and psychology as to what this means at times, the extreme vast majority of people are biologically clearly a man or a woman.

It's high-time that we wake up and not deny our God-given gender but embrace it. Men need to be men, and women need to be women. Understand this: I can't be a good man and not love my wife and my children. I can't be a good man and not put my family's interests above my own. I can't be a good man and watch pornography. I can't be a good man and abuse my children. I can't be a good man and not intentionally look to build Christ into the lives of my wife and children. If able to work, I can't be a good man and not do all I can to support my family.

“Wearing the pants” means to lead within one’s home. Men, this is our God-given calling. While some women may want to “wear the pants,” I believe most desire for the men to lead their families. Our wives and sons and daughters need to see us “wearing the pants” and setting an example of what it means for a man to be the spiritual leader of his home. The next generation of America depends upon it.

For all the women out there that still desire for their husbands to lead or “wear the pants” in their homes, I want to encourage you to keep praying and looking to build your men up. God has done and can do a mighty work through the prayer of a woman when it comes to her husband and children. Don’t give up . . . most men out there truly want to be the leader for their families.

- <http://bit.ly/2PYWai>

When the world today calls that toxic masculinity, God calls that the roles of the family and He will bless it!

For Barak, he lacked the faith to go forward unless Deborah went with him in this battle. As one writer put it, “Barak preferred the inspiration of Deborah’s presence to the invisible but certain help of Almighty God . . . He is mentioned in Hebrews 11 as one of the heroes of faith; but his faith lay rather in Deborah’s influence with God than in his own. Thus, he missed the crown of that great day of victory.” (Meyer)

So we have seen ***THE CALL BY GOD*** to go into this battle. Then we looked at the ***LACK OF FAITH*** on the part of Barak to go into this battle alone. And we are going to look at next, ***THE LOSS OF GOD’S BLESSING!*** And, as you will see, this tells me that what Barak did, by not walking by faith, cost him the blessings of God!

VERSE 9

Here we see Deborah tell Barak that she will go with him into this battle, and then there is that “*but*”! Okay, not a “*but*” but a “**nevertheless**”!

Because of his lack of faith in God, because he trusted more in Deborah, the victory would not only be given to Deborah, but to another woman also, Jael.

In other words, Barak, because of his lack of faith, is going to miss out on the blessings that God had for him.

Remember, the Lord told Barak and then the Lord spoke again to him through Deborah, that, “**. . . ‘Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, “Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and the sons of Zebulun; and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand.”’**”

Judges 4:6-7.

In other words, the battle was already won, all he needed to do was walk by faith and then receive the blessings that God had for him as he did! But he missed out on those blessings because he refused to walk as God had called him to walk!

I truly believe God wants to use us but if we refuse to walk, God will raise up another and they will enjoy the spoils of the victory, those blessings!

What about you? Has God called you to do something, to take some step of faith and you have allowed fear to stop you from going forward?

Again, as I have said, God is not going to call you to do something that will fail. Now let me also say this. It may not turn out the way that we planned, but God’s plans are what is best for our lives.

Thus, we need to learn to walk by faith and not by sight. To trust that what the Lord has called us to do He is more than able to accomplish that task in our life!

And there is the blessing we find, as we walk by faith!

One of the difficult things for me was to do Vacation Bible School. There was a lot of fear to put this on. I can't sing and to not only do songs but then have to do hand motions and stuff like that with each song, are you kidding me!

But I do know what the Lord called me to do, and that was Vacation Bible School.

So, some ten years ago, when we first did our Vacation Bible School, I took that step of faith! And what a wonderful time we had with the children!

I can't tell you the blessings that God bestowed upon me. And when I say blessings, I mean that the children blessed me more than I could ever imagine! Yes, that first day was tough as they were learning what we were doing and I was learning, but once they understood, wow!

And it is so funny, some ten years later, after we are done, there is a least one child who will come up to me and say, "***When are we doing this again?***" What a blessing!

I can't tell you how wonderful it is to get a hug from a child, what a blessing!

Now, I could have refused to take that step of faith and do Vacation Bible School.

Yes, I can't sing or dance or any of that musical stuff.

Yes, I was very busy, so to take the time and do Vacation Bible School would have been tough.

And I could come up with a hundred reasons why I should not take that step of faith because when I looked at the situation through human eyes, it could not be done!

But God called me to do it and I did take those steps of faith and He did it through me and the rest of the people involved in Vacation Bible School, and with that step of faith came many, many blessings!

Again, I don't know where you are at this morning. I don't know what the Lord has put upon your heart.

But let me say this. When the Lord is speaking to you, encouraging you, obey His voice and take those steps of faith and see the blessings He will pour upon your life as you walk by faith!

As we finish up this morning, we will be looking at our last point and it is interesting in that Barak was not really trusting in the Lord, but what we will see is ***THE TRUST IN DEBORAH!***

#### VERSE 10

What I find interesting in all of this is that Barak seemed to put more trust in Deborah going with him than he did in the Lord.

Now some don't see it that way. One writer put it like this. He wrote,

Nevertheless, Barak and all who went with him showed real courage and trust in God to go out against Sisera and his army. They had essentially no weapons to fight with against a technologically advanced army (having 900 chariots of iron). In addition, God led them to fight on a plain, which gave great advantage to the forces with chariots.

- David Guzik

Barak did have some faith, but again, I think he had more faith in Deborah going with him than the Lord, like I have said.

Keep in mind that the Lord already spoke to him about this battle and what he was to do.

Keep in mind that Deborah re-confirmed what the Lord already spoke to Barak about what he was to do in this battle.

And yet, here we see him go forward with the aid of Deborah.

Another writer put it like this. He wrote,

Barak's refusal to go on this mission without Deborah raises questions. He may have been afraid to go into battle without Deborah's comforting company. Probably he wanted to have this prophetess with him so he could obtain God's guidance through her if he needed to do so. A third explanation follows.

***“. . . his mistrust of his own strength was such that he felt too weak to carry out the command of God. He wanted divine enthusiasm for the conflict, and this the presence of the prophetess was to infuse into both Barak and the army that was to be gathered around him.”***

Whatever his motivation may have been, he put a condition on obeying God. The will of God was clear. He even had God's promise of victory.

Nevertheless he refused to obey unless Deborah accompanied him. Barak would defeat the Canaanites, but a woman would get the credit for defeating the commander, Sisera.

This was Barak's punishment for putting a condition on his obedience to God (v. 9).

Barak probably assumed that the prediction in verse 9 referred to Deborah, but, as things turned out, Jael the Kenite received the glory that might have been his.

Even though Barak had faith (Heb 11:32), his faith was not as strong as it should have been.

- Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Judges 4

How does that even apply to us?

Think about this for a minute.

Do you put your trust in money, a job, a talent, this or that?

And it is easy to say "No!" right now, but what happens when we leave the four walls of this building, I won't say church because we are the church, not a building! So what happens when we leave these four walls?

Are we truly resting in the Lord or in something else?

For me, it is a lesson the Lord is constantly teaching me, and I am sure He is with you as well.

Something happens and we think, "***What are we going to do?***"

Where is our trust, in the situation or in the Lord?

And I think that is key.

May our trust be in the Lord and when He calls us, we would have the faith to step out and do what He has called us to do!

And let me say this, fear can cause us to stop dead in our tracks and not go anywhere. Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

On July 21, 1861, raw Yankee recruits marched toward the Confederate Army camping at Bull Run, 30 miles southwest of Washington.

The Union soldiers were overconfident and acted like they were headed toward a sporting event.

Congressmen, ladies, and all sorts of spectators trailed along with lunch baskets to observe the fun.

But the courage of the Confederates (who stood their ground like a stone wall - giving their leader, Thomas J. Jackson, his nickname) and the arrival of Confederate reinforcements threw the Union forces into a panic - even though the Union had superior forces!

One observer wrote, “We called to them, tried to tell them there was no danger, called them to stop, implored them to stand. We called them cowards, denounced them in the most offensive terms . . . but all in vain; a cruel, crazy, mad, hopeless panic possessed them.”

Fear and panic have a way of doing that - overwhelming us emotionally even though we have the spiritual resources to deal with the situation. We are better able to face into fearful situations - and stop a “cruel, crazy, mad, hopeless panic” from possessing us - if we prepare ourselves soberly for the challenge’s life will hand us.

- More Perfect Illustrations for Every Topic and Occasion

An amazing story to show us what fear can do in our lives.

Remember what Paul said in Philippians 4:13, “**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**”

Notice it does not say, “*I can do all things because I am a great and strong person!*”

Not at all, but in Christ, we can do all things because it is through Him we can accomplish them. Don’t let fear stop you, let the Lord guide you!

Look at what we have seen this morning.

***THE CALL BY GOD*** – as God calls us may we take those steps of faith, look to Him to be the strength of our lives! He is always calling us to do things, may we be listening.

***LACK OF FAITH*** – that will cause us to stop dead in our tracks. May we look to the Lord to be the strength in our lives.

***THE LOSS OF GOD'S BLESSING*** – is seen as we don't take those steps of faith because we are blessed so much as we serve the Lord, as we walk by faith.

***THE TRUST IN DEBORAH*** – do not trust in anyone or anything besides the Lord. He needs to be the strength of our lives, as I have said.

Men be men and be the spiritual leaders in your homes. Women be women and serve the Lord faithfully. When there is order in the home there is the blessing of God! May we not lose sight of that and may we walk by faith and see what victories, what blessings the Lord has for us as we do!