

JUDGES 4:11-24
FROM FAITH TO VICTORY!

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

As you will see in our study this morning, we will be looking at several characters that play an important role in our story.

We will see the traitor Heber.

We will see the enemy Sisera.

We will see the guidance of Deborah in the ways of God.

We will see the step of faith of Barak.

We will see the strength of Jael.

So, as you can see, there is quite a cast of people we will be looking at this morning and they are all important as we look at the topic of – ***FROM FAITH TO VICTORY!***

Let me set the stage for our study this morning.

Here in Judges chapter 4 we see the death of Ehud, who was a Judge in Israel.

And with the death of this Judge, the children of Israel went back to their old ways, they did evil in the sight of the Lord.

Thus, because of their sin, God brought them into bondage at the hands of Jabin, the King of Canaan, and he reigned in the area of Hazor, in the northern part of the land of Israel.

Now Sisera was the commander of Jabin's army, and he will play an important role in our study this morning, since he will lead the Canaanites against Israel, in this battle for their freedom!

And here is the amazing thing. For twenty years he oppressed Israel before they came to their senses and repented before God and God raised up a deliver by the name of Deborah.

And the reason she was Judging Israel at that time was that there were no man who wanted to step up and take that role. A very sad situation.

This is what we are told of their cry to the Lord, “**And the children of Israel cried out to the Lord; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.**” Judges 4:3.

Then we see the introduction of this man, Barak, who was a leader in the army of Israel. And we are told in Judges 4:6-7, “**Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, ‘Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, ‘Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of 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’?’**”

Deborah is trying to encourage Barak to go and fight against the enemy.

And here’s the thing. God not only told Deborah about what they needed to do and the victory that He would give them, but He also spoke to Barak!

Deborah made this point when she said, “**Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded . . .**”

In other words, Deborah is reminding Barak that God has already told him what to do and that God was going to give them this victory, all he needed to do was walk by faith.

And the response by Barak is kind of sad as we are told, “**And Barak said to her, ‘If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!’**” Judges 4:8.

Now some feel that Barak just wanted another godly person to guide them in this battle, they don't see it as a lack of faith on Barak's part.

But listen to what we are told in Judges 4:9, **“So she said, ‘I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.’ Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.”**

You see, because of his lack of faith, because he was unwilling to go into battle by himself, he was going to lose out on the blessing that would come from this battle. And we will see that in our study this morning.

Now some would argue that he is mentioned in the hall of faith in Hebrews chapter 11, so how can this be saying he lacked faith? Again, we will touch on that as we read on this morning in our study.

I have broken these verses down into six main points and they are as follows:

SISERA IS WARNED – JUDGES 4:11-13

THE CALL TO BATTLE – JUDGES 4:14

THE VICTORY – JUDGES 4:15-16

SISERA NAILED – JUDGES 4:17-21

A WOMAN GETS THE BLESSING – JUDGES 4:22

GOD'S PROMISE FULFILLED – JUDGES 4:23-24

And again, what we will see here is that we are going to move ***FROM FAITH TO VICTORY!***

And make no mistake about it. Faith is what moves us, and fear is what paralyzes us from moving!

Let me show you what I mean about faith and how we need to obey even when we might not understand, or we might think it is foolish or we might think it is too dangerous. We are told,

In 1988, three friends and I climbed Mount Lyell, the highest peak in Yosemite National Park. Our base camp was less than 2,000 feet from the peak, but the climb to the top and back was to take the better part of a day, due in large part to the difficulty of the glacier we had to cross to get to the top. The morning of the climb we started out chattering and cracking jokes.

As the hours passed, the two more experienced mountaineers opened up a wide gap between me and my less-experienced companion. Being competitive by nature, I began to look for shortcuts to beat them to the top. I thought I saw one to the right of an outcropping of rock - so I went, deaf to the protests of my companion.

Perhaps it was the effect of the high altitude, but the significance of the two experienced climbers not choosing this path did not register in my consciousness. It should have, for thirty minutes later I was trapped in a cul-de-sac of rock atop the Lyell Glacier, looking down several hundred feet of a sheer slope of ice, pitched at about a forty-five degree angle. . . . I was only about ten feet from the safety of a rock, but one little slip and I wouldn't stop sliding until I landed in the valley floor some fifty miles away! It was nearly noon, and the warm sun had the glacier glistening with slippery ice. I was stuck, and I was scared.

It took an hour for my experienced climbing friends to find me. Standing on the rock I wanted to reach, one of them leaned out and used an ice ax to chip two little footsteps in the glacier. Then he gave me the following instructions: "Ben, you must step out from where you are and put your foot where the first foothold is. When your foot touches it, without a moment's hesitation swing your other foot across and land it on the next step. When you do that, reach out and I will take your hand and pull you to safety."

That sounded real good to me. It was the next thing he said that made me more frightened than ever. “But listen carefully: As you step across, do not lean into the mountain! If anything, lean out a bit. Otherwise, your feet may fly out from under you, and you will start sliding down.”

I don’t like precipices. When I am on the edge of a cliff, my instincts are to lie down and hug the mountain, to become one with it, not to lean away from it! But that was what my good friend was telling me to do.

For a moment, based solely on what I believed to be the good will and good sense of my friend, I decided to say no to what I felt, to stifle my impulse to cling to the security of the mountain, to lean out, step out, and traverse the ice to safety. It took less than two seconds to find out if my faith was well-founded.

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That is what Barak and the children of Israel will face, a battle that they should not win from a human perspective, and yet, God told them to step out in faith and see the victory that He would give to them as they did.

And thus, these are lessons for us to listen and obey what the Lord is showing us. With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in Judges chapter 4, beginning in verse 11 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this morning and we look at the topic, ***FROM FAITH TO VICTORY!***

JUDGES 4**VERSES 11-13**

Here we are introduced to Heber, he was a Kenite. And as you can see, he was a traitor to Israel.

Now before we dig deeper into that, who were these Kenites?

The Kenites were distant relatives to the children of Israel through Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses.

But the establishment of this group of people did not begin here with Jethro. It still goes back even farther for we can go all the way back to Abraham and his second wife, Keturah, (Genesis 25:1-4).

And here in Judges chapter 4 we see Heber become an informant to Sisera telling him that Barak had gathered his army at Mount Tabor.

Also, did you notice that Heber “**separated himself from the Kenites**” or he broke away from the rest of the Kenites who were living in the south.

Now the big question is, why did he do that? Why did he turn against the Jewish people?

We are not told but it is possible that he wanted to side with a winner and the winner here was King Jabin. At least at this point, but that will change, as we will see.

The problem here is that the children of Israel were in bondage and that bondage lasted some twenty years and now we see the children of Israel, under the leadership of Deborah and Barak, gathering their forces at Mount Tabor and they are preparing to come against Sisera and the Canaanites.

To ensure his safety and maybe a better position with King Jabin and even Sisera, we see that he goes and tells Sisera “**that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor.**”

It is always good to know the battle plan of the enemy that is coming against you so you can be prepared.

And as Sisera hears of this, he gathers his troops, 900 iron chariots, these war machines, and they are far outnumbering Barak and his troops, they have no chariots!

The sneak attack is no longer a sneak attack and with these troops, with these 900 iron chariots, the children of Israel were in trouble.

Well, let me clarify that. Yes, they were at a great disadvantage through the eyes of man. But in God’s eye’s, through the eyes of faith, Barak was the one with the advantage, as we will see!

But think about this situation that they are in. It does seem hopeless. What are they going to do?

I think we find ourselves in situations like that often. It seems like everyone and everything is against us. We can’t see a way out. We are not sure what we are going to do. The enemy is too strong. The enemy is too big. We are doomed!

In that, what is the problem?

It is the word “*We!*”

And what is the word that is left out?

It is the word “*God!*”

Psalm 124 puts this into perspective for us as we are told, **“If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,’ Let Israel now say – ‘If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, When men rose up against us, Then they would have swallowed us alive, When their wrath was kindled against us; Then the waters would have overwhelmed us, The stream would have gone over our soul; Then the swollen waters Would have gone over our soul.’ Blessed be the Lord, Who has not given us as prey to their teeth. Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; The snare is broken, and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.”** Psalm 124.

As you can see, the basic idea here is that the Psalmist realizes the fact that *IF* God was not with them, their lives would have been destroyed.

In this Psalm we don’t know what event David was speaking of, or if he was just speaking allegorically, realizing that without God’s help, without God’s sustaining power, they would have been swallowed up, destroyed, overwhelmed, and-so-on.

What a great thing to do, look at God’s past deliverance’s, thanking Him for them, and using them to help us through our present situations.

What I like about this Psalm is that I could have written it and so could you.

Now you may be taken back by that but think about it.

If the Lord had not been with us, we would have been overwhelmed! We would have been washed up. We would not be victorious!

Make no mistake about it, the Psalmist went through this tough time and is giving us encouragement as we go through tough times. This Psalm is for us, helping us to remember what God has done in the past to sustain us in the present situation we face.

Paul put it like this in II Corinthians 1:9-10, **“Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.”**

Notice what Paul says here. God had delivered him from past difficult situations, and He will deliver Paul from the present ones he is facing. We can apply that to our own lives. We can be confident that God will see us through all the way to the end because, as Paul said, **“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”** Philippians 1:6.

In other words, **“If it had not been the LORD who was on our side . . .”**

We also see in this Psalm that the Psalmist shares how the Lord delivered him from past troubles. The fowlers were trappers of birds, and the Psalmist is speaking of how God delivered them from these fowlers who were trying to trap them like birds!

As Christians we might say that Satan is the fowler and we are the birds. And he goes around trying to snare us, cause us to stumble, but the Lord will break his traps and set us free.

And he concludes with a correct perspective, the God who made the heavens and the earth can deliver me from the hand of the enemy.

It is as Proverbs 18:10 encourages us and comforts us when it says, **“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.”**

Make no mistake about it. If the Lord had not be on our side, we would have been completely subdued by the world, the flesh and the devil.

It is only because the Lord has given us the power, His Spirit to be free from these things if we would walk in the Spirit! Again, **“If it had not been the LORD who was on our side . . .”**

So, even though Sisera is warned of the coming attack by Israel by Heber, they forgot to factor God into the equation and look at what we see next, ***THE CALL TO BATTLE!***

VERSE 14

I like how Deborah admonishes Barak to get up and get moving. It is kind of like a pep talk given by a football coach like George Halas for the Chicago Bears or Vince Lombardi for the Green Bay Packers.

Can you imagine their pep talks! They didn't pull any punches but just gave it to their players to encourage them to go farther and do better.

Now as much as that is good for worldly things, like football, for us as Christians, all a pep talk will do is encourage you to do something but if you don't have the power to do it, you will fail.

It would like me going up against Khalil Mack from the Chicago Bears. He is 6³ and weighs 269 pounds. I stand at a staggering 5⁵ and come weighing in at 150 pounds!

Now that pep talk may be great, but if I try to block Khalil Mack, I am going to get run over! Help, I have fallen and I can't get up, in fact, I can't even move! And I don't care how good that pep talk is, I don't have the power to block this guy!

And I think that is how we look at our spiritual lives sometimes. We just can't do it. We don't have the power to do it. And thus, we don't do it.

Listen carefully again to what Deborah said to Barak, “**. . . ‘Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the Lord gone out before you?’**” Judges 4:14.

This is not really a pep talk to stir Barak up physically, but it is one to stir him up spiritually speaking.

In other words, Deborah is saying, *“Barak, get up and get moving because the Lord has already given you the victory against Sisera. And as much as things may not look good for you, the Lord will go before you and fight for you. The victory is certain, now get up and walk!”*

Please understand that our victory is never found in how strong we are, but it is found in the strength of the Lord, the power of His might. He calls us to take those steps of faith and then we must walk accordingly!

So Barak has been called to battle and now what is he going to do? Is he going to trust in the Lord and walk by faith or is he going to let fear cause him to be paralyzed and not walk?

Let’s read on and see as we look at ***THE VICTORY!***

VERSES 15-16

And again, this was going to be a slaughter for Barak, from a human perspective. One writer put it like this. He wrote,

The battle plan God had given Barak made little sense, militarily speaking. Chariots were very effective on the plains, but they were of little or no value in the mountains. God ordered Barak to muster his troops on Mount Tabor, and then to lead them down from the mountain and onto the plains. This is precisely where the chariots had the advantage and could do the most damage.

Humanly speaking, the plan didn't make sense. But in retrospect we can see how shrewd God's plan was. Because the Israelite army was on the plain, Sisera felt that his chariots were the perfect weapon. He ordered all of his chariots to engage the Israelites in battle. It looked like a slaughter, which is exactly the way God wanted it to appear.

The Canaanites depended upon their nine hundred chariots. The Israelites chose to trust in God's promise. What are you depending upon to give you spiritual victory? Throughout the Book of Judges, God uses weak and foolish people and methods. He continues to do so today. Will you offer yourself to the Lord? God intervenes when we act with courageous faith.

- <http://bit.ly/351upn4>

And look at what we see here. Barak and his army walked by faith, and look at the victory that God had given to them! And God is calling for us to walk by faith and see the victory that He will give us in the battles we face!

Now many believe this battle took place during the summer months, June to September because it was the dry season.

Why is that so important?

Think about it. It would make sense because you would not take your chariots into battle during the rainy season because they would get stuck in the mud.

Now here's the thing. We are not told of this in Judges chapter 4 but in Judges chapter 5, in the song of Deborah, where we are given more information about this battle, some details that were left out in Judges chapter 4.

We are told that God sent a flash flood upon the land and the chariots got stuck in the mud!

That is an important piece of information because it gives to us how God attained this victory for Israel!

Now we might not think much about this, but flash floods happen in Israel. It could be raining far away and yet where you are at, it is completely dry. But that water from far away can come rushing down the ground to where you are at very quickly and you can be in trouble, you can get washed away.

Let me show you what I mean.

When we were in Israel several years ago, we went to visit En Gedi, which is an oasis in the desert where David and his men hid from King Saul.

And it was a nice day, clear and sunny, as we started our hike to the waterfall. But there were storm clouds way in the distance, back around Jerusalem and it was making the tour guides nervous.

Now you may be wondering why, and the reason is simple.

You see, even though it was sunny by us, those rains in Jerusalem could send a flash flood to our area and we could get swept away.

So they hurried us out of there because there was a bus that did get swept away because of one of these flash floods that came through!

And believe me, when they told us to get out, there was no time to take pictures or look around, we had to move because it would take some time to get out of that canyon!

It is very dangerous, you could lose your life if you were caught traveling in this area, that is how fast and strong these waters could be. Thus, we then understood why our tour guides were so nervous!

And so, as God rained down upon them, this tiny stream became a raging river, the ground became like mud, these flashfloods came roaring down upon them, and the chariots were useless as they sank into this mud.

The word “**routed**” in verse 15 speaks of “confusion” as their chariots were stuck in the mud and Israel was upon them.

Thus, Sisera flees from his chariot, for it could not move in the mud, and high tails it away on foot.

What an amazing victory God had given them, and we may be surprised by this, but this is exactly what God said would happen, that “**the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand.**”

Now you may be thinking that Sisera escaped, he is not captured yet. That is true. But there is more to this story as we read on and look at *SISERA NAILED* and that is literal as you will see!

VERSES 17-21

Remember the characters of this story that we have been looking at, and there is one more, Jael.

We have seen the traitor Heber.

We have seen the enemy Sisera.

We have seen the guidance of Deborah in the ways of God.

We have seen the step of faith of Barak.

And now we see the strength of Jael.

Look at what is taking place here.

Sisera knows that the battle is over and that he and his men have lost this battle.

So, Sisera, the commander of this army, flees, and by random chance, he enters the tent of Jael and she opens her tent up to him.

First of all, that is not correct because there are no random chance happenings with God.

Then how in the world did he end up in the tent of Jael?

Keep in mind that it was her husband, Heber, who told Sisera what was going on, what Israel was doing.

That tells me that Sisera must have felt comfortable there because her husband he knew. And thus, as you are on the run from the enemy, you try to find a safe place to hid from the person or army that is coming after you!

And as you can see, Sisera is very comfortable here.

And we see that Jael opens her tent to him, tucks him in, and he asks for water to drink and she brings him warm milk.

How hospitable, how nice was Jael, up to a point, I guess.

Now, why did she give him warm milk instead of water to drink?

Maybe to help put him to sleep!

You see, as soon as he goes to sleep, she grabs a tent spike and drives it through his skull, killing him. Sisera was nailed you might say, sorry!

And keep in mind that the Bedouin women were in charge of setting-up and taking down the tents, so Jael knew how to pound in a tent spike and, again, really nailed this guy to the floor, literally!

Now how does this relate to us today as Christians? Or, does it even apply to us today as Christians?

I think it does. Long ago Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon on this passage and titled it *Sin Slain!*

And here were the players in his teaching.

He looked at Sisera as a type of sin!

Then, the master or King, Jabin was a type of Satan!

And Spurgeon insisted that we should not be content to merely defeat sin, as Barak defeated Sisera in battle; we should not rest until sin is dead.

Just as Jael asked Barak to look at the dead body of Sisera, Spurgeon said we should look at sin slain by the work of Jesus, knowing He has already won the battle.

This is what Spurgeon said, “If you are content merely to conquer your sins and not to kill them, you may depend upon it, it is the mere work of morality - a surface work - and not the work of the Holy Spirit.”

Today we have moved away with the idea of crucifying the flesh and we feel that we need to build up the flesh, take care of the flesh and in the end, it consumes our lives.

Here are some verses to show you what I mean and the consequences of not crucifying the flesh.

In Galatians 5:24 we are told, “**And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**”

When Paul says, “**... those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh . . .**” the verb tense here indicates something that happened decisively in the past. It actually occurred at the time of our conversion. (Romans 6)

What does that mean because we still have problems with sin?

This is speaking positionally of those who have received Jesus as Lord and Savior.

But it doesn't mean that all that I am positionally in Christ automatically carries over into the practical matters of daily living.

Thus, don't entertain the flesh, feed the flesh, play with the flesh, but crucify the flesh nature with its passions and desires to control your life.

Here we must take the action and place that flesh nature on the cross to be crucified, we must be willing to give it to the Lord.

And then, in Romans 8:5-8 look at the comparison here and see how you are walking. We are told, **“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”**

Now we as Christians can be carnally minded and we need to be careful what we are feeding, the flesh or the Spirit. Because whatever you are feeding will control your life!

But here Paul is speaking of those who are carnally minded as being the unsaved and it is their body appetites, the ***“lust of the flesh”*** you might say that is controlling their lives.

One author summed it up like this, “These people are completely consumed and dominated in their thinking by the things that gratify their fleshly desires. There is no desire or thought of future rewards or future glory, they live for the moment and for the pleasure they can get now. They are hedonists and materialists, who have no desire for spiritual things except to give God lip service at the appropriate times.”

On the other end of the spectrum, those that are saved, are “**spiritually minded**” and it speaks of a person who is focused on the things of God. And thus, what will flow from his life is the fruit of the Spirit!

Now, again, for us as Christians, I hope you see the battle that is going on here. This battle is being fought in the mind and the flesh tries to control the mind and the spirit tries to control the mind. What is your mind set upon, the flesh or the spirit?

As we walk in the Spirit, as we have made peace with God through Jesus Christ, then the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds.

The thing we must all remember is we all go through good times and bad times, times of calm and times of storms, both on the just and the unjust, the difference being is where we set our sails and let the wind blow us. May the sail of our mind be set upon Jesus as He leads us through those storms of life!

Now here in Romans 8:7 this is a powerful point that Paul is making here. He is saying, “**The carnal mind is enmity against God.**”

Did you see that? Not, “*The carnal mind was at enmity with God.*” You see, that would be implying that because of that condition they are in they can only please God when they really do good? That is not what Paul is saying, not at all!

Paul says that those who are not born again, those who remain in the flesh can never please God until they are born again! How can that be? That is not fair! Why is that true?

Because you are created to bring pleasure to God and thus, if you are at war with Him, you will not please Him, and you will be at war with Him until you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior!

But again, for us as Christians, what are you filling your life with, carnal things, worldly things or the things of God. Be careful where you set your sail because it will either bring you closer to God or move you farther and farther away from God. We must crucify the flesh!

Let me share this with you so you can see what it means to crucify or put to death the flesh. We are told,

We find the word mortify in the King James translation of two passages: Romans 8:13 and Colossians 3:5.

- ***“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live”*** (Romans 8:13)

- ***“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry”*** (Colossians 3:5)

More modern English translations, such as the ESV or NIV, translate “mortify” as “put to death.”

In both cases, the apostle Paul is exhorting his readers to “put to death” the “deeds of the body” or “what is earthly in you.”

So the mortification of sin / the flesh is the putting to death or subduing of the sinful nature that still resides in believers.

Let’s look at each of these passages in more depth.

“For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Romans 8:13).

Paul here is making a contrast between believers and non-believers. Non-believers are those who “live according to the flesh.”

By contrast, believers are those who “by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body.” Often in the writings of Paul, flesh and spirit are contrasted.

To live “according to the flesh” is to have your mind set on the flesh and to have a mind that is hostile to God and does not submit to His law. This, in a nutshell, is the life of an unbeliever. Romans 1:18 - 3:20 is a vivid description of what “living according to the flesh” looks like. The person who lives his life according to the flesh will die. This is not speaking of physical death because that is the fate of all people as a result of sin. Paul is speaking of eternal death in hell.

The believer, on the other hand, by the Spirit puts to death the deeds of the body. In other words, through the working of God’s Holy Spirit, who only dwells in believers, the believer engages in the process of sanctification or growing in holiness. The believer, in contrast to the non-believer, has his mind set on the Spirit and submits to God’s law.

It is important to note that the believer is not completely free from sin. Putting to death the deeds of the body is a continual process that the believer must engage in on a daily basis. The point is that one of the marks of a true believer is that he is daily putting to death the deeds of the body. This person, the one who puts to death, or mortifies, the deeds of the body and its sinful nature will live. Again, this is a reference to eternal life, or heaven.

“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Colossians 3:5).

Looking at the context of this passage and noting the word therefore, we must look at what preceded this verse. In verses 1–4, Paul exhorts the Colossians to seek the things that are above and to set their minds on heavenly things.

Why?

For we have died, not physically, but figuratively to sin and the old life, and our lives are now “hidden with Christ in God” (verse 3). If this is the case, then what are we to do? The only way the believer, whose life is hidden with Christ, can be heavenly minded is if he puts to death those things that are earthly in him.

Again, we should not understand the contrast between heavenly and earthly as to mean we should have our heads in the clouds and our feet off the ground; as the expression goes, “He is so heavenly minded that he is no earthly good.” It is similar to the spirit/flesh contrast Paul made in Romans, with flesh being understood as “sinful nature.”

What is it that Paul wants us to put to death?

Sinful desires and actions such as sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and covetousness, which is equated with idolatry. The person whose life is characterized by these things is said to have the wrath of God upon him (verse 6).

Paul notes that this was the way of life of his readers (verse 7). All believers were at one time unbelievers and were under the wrath of God. This is a similar argument to the one Paul makes in 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 when he says the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. In verse 11, he says, “And such were some of you.”

In other words, you were like that; now you're like this. You were walking according to the flesh; now you're in the Spirit. Because of this, put to death those things that were of the flesh. Grow in holiness and sanctification.

So what is mortification of sin / the flesh?

In a word, it's sanctification, the process by which the Holy Spirit works in the lives of God's adopted children to grow them and form them into the image of God's one and only Son, Jesus Christ. Sanctification is God's will for our lives (1 Thessalonians 4:3), and it is the purpose to which He has called us (Romans 8:29).

- <http://bit.ly/351oMoS>

This is important for us to understand. Not that we can crucify the flesh by our own efforts, but by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, we can overcome that flesh nature and we can live for God.

Paul put it like this in Romans 6:11-14, **“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”**

The Greek word that Paul uses here for **“reckon”** is an accounting term. And the idea here is that we have to put this into our account by faith that we are dead to sin and alive in Christ!

Why is that? Because we still have these bodies of flesh and the flesh nature does try to resurrect itself and control our lives from time-to-time.

Thus, by faith I believe the old life was put to death and we wait for the redemption of our bodies when this flesh nature will be done away with, when this corruptible body has put on incorruption and this mortal body has put on immortality. It simply means to believe that what God says in His Word is really true in your life - it's a settled fact!

Here is the key to walking in freedom, don't present the various parts of your body to the service of sin.

I think the New Living Translation puts this idea across for us very nicely as it says, "**Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to its lustful desires. Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God.**" Romans 6:13-14.

So don't present yourself as instruments of unrighteousness, don't team up with Satan. And the second key to walking in freedom and not remaining a slave to sin is to present yourself to God, let Him use your life instead of having your body be used as a weapon of evil, let God use it for good!

Jael, you might say, nailed the flesh to the floor, crucified the flesh or Sisera, and we too must crucify the flesh!

VERSE 22

In this verse we see that ***A WOMAN GETS THE BLESSING!***

Now keep in mind that Barak is hunting down Sisera and as he is searching, we see Jael come out to meet him. And she, of course, knows exactly who he is looking for.

So as Barak comes on the scene, he finds Sisera dead, and as Deborah had said,

“... there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of woman. . . .” Judges 4:9.

Because he refused to walk by faith, to be the spiritual man that God wanted him to be, God blessed not only Deborah, but also Jael and Barak was left out.

And yet, when we come to the New Testament, in that section on the great hall of faith in Hebrews chapter 11, we are told in verse 32, **“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets.”**

So is Barak a man of faith or a man who lacked faith?

That is a great question and let me ask you this question first, and then I will answer it.

When you look at men like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the ones we read about in Hebrews 11:32, when you see them mentioned in this chapter of Hebrews, what is missing?

All the times that they did not walk by faith, but by sight! All the times that they lacked faith and did what they thought was right in their own eyes, not trusting the Lord.

If that is true, and it is, then why don't we read of their failures here in Hebrews chapter 11? Or why are they even listed in this section known as the hall of faith?

Because that is how God sees them and us. He does not see our failures but our faith.

As God sees Barak, He sees him as a man of faith and has put away all his failures just as He does with us!

Now keep in mind that this was not only humiliating for Barak, that a woman destroyed the enemy, but for Sisera too.

You see, to die in battle was a great honor, but to die in retreat and then by the hands of a woman was a double humiliation.

Again, how does that relate to us today?

This is for both men and women, young and old, it is for all of us who are Christians.

When God calls us to take a step of faith, we need to go forward and do it or we will lose out on the blessing and God will use someone else to work through and they will get the blessing.

It is as simple as that!

VERSES 23-24

As we see here, the power behind King Jabin was the commander of his army, Sisera.

And now that Sisera was gone and his army decimated, his power is also gone, and Israel rose up and defeated the King who had oppressed them for 20 years!

Now who won this battle?

Notice that it is not Barak! It is not Jael! It is not even Deborah!

Then who won this battle if it was not any of them or all of them?

Listen again to what it says in Judges 4:23, **“So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel.”**

And this is our last point – ***GOD’S PROMISE FULFILLED!***

Remember what the Lord said to Deborah and Barak, “... ‘Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, “Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of 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”?’ . . . ‘Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the Lord gone out before you?’” Judges 4:6-7, 14.

God said that He would give them the victory and that is exactly what He did.

Yes, the children of Israel were involved, but the battle belongs to the Lord, never forget that!

I pray that you would see how important it is not only to listen to what God is telling you, but then to take it a step further and walk by faith and do what God is telling you to do.

And as you take those steps of faith you will see those victories that God will give you in your life.

But again, the flesh must be crucified and we can’t accomplish that by our own efforts, but by surrendering our life to the Lord, placing our lives on the altar of sacrifice and allowing Him to not only work in us but through us for His glory!

Let me leave you with this to think about. We are told,

I have read that, when the first cable of the suspension-bridge that now spans the Niagara was about to be laid, a thin thread was attached to a kite and both sent, on a favoring wind, to the other side of the river. By means of that thread, a heavier string was pulled across, and by it a heavier one still, and then a rope, and then a tow, and then the cable, and the other parts of that mighty bridge that enables the people to pass in safety, from one side to the other, over the roaring cataract [torrent] beneath.

Let but those who doubt or disbelieve fasten the tiny thread of faith that still lingers in them to the spiritual side of life, and gradually it will become stronger and stronger until it will grow into a mighty bridge that will carry them safely, over the seething and hissing abyss of doubts and perplexities, unto the yonder peaceful shore.

- Heartwarming Bible Illustrations

Maybe you feel that your faith is not strong, you are having a hard time walking.

Take one step at a time, follow the Good Shepherd and you will see how your faith will continue to grow in Him. But you must take those steps of faith!

FROM FAITH TO VICTORY!