



Near and Now

*When my calling “fits” both me and the needs of others-Deborah
By Deacon Amanda Randall*

Warm-up Question

*When have you helped someone just by doing what you normally do?
Give examples*



Photo by Om Prakash Sethia on [Unsplash](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

The Israelites came up to her for judgment

Read [Judges 4-5](#)

Bible Story Reflection

The Israelites are chosen to be in a covenant with God, but their humanity has shown again. They have done evil things in God's sight. They are under the rule of a Canaanite king and lived in oppression for 20 years at the hands of the commander of his army. Their lives are marked by the consequences of their humanity. Though they have done wrong, they are never separated from God's love and grace.

The Israelites came under the Palm of Deborah for judgement. Deborah is known for her own faith and action, rather than her relationships with a man. She is a prophet, a judge, a trusted voice in the Israelite community. Her calling is out of the norm. She shows fairness and favor and is called to help the Israelites from their oppression. The story articulates a powerful countercultural connection of the importance and value of women; "...the road on which you are going will not lead to your glow, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Jael invites Sisera into her tent and then Sisera asks her to guard the tent. Once Sisera had fallen asleep from the weariness of the day, Jael killed him. Deborah's judgment and calling had led them out from their oppression.

This story invites us to reflect on our own calling, to see ourselves in Deborah. Our own sacred callings can often be unexpected. The Spirit moves in mysterious ways, calling us into untrodden paths. Deborah's calling as a judge and a prophet was sacred and life-giving to her. Her calling also helped to address the needs of the Israelites in an oppressive time. God's calling and work in our lives is not without difficulty or doubt, but God uses us as vessels of God's abundant love and grace. Whether you have found your calling or are still in discernment, be comforted in the fact that God has created you in God's image with a sacred calling. Just as the Israelites, we look to the voices of those who care and invest in us. Our calling impacts others in ways we don't realize at the moment.

Discussion Questions

1. Where do you see Deborah in your own story?
2. Talk about a time that someone helped you by simply doing what they are called to do.
3. What do you see your calling to be? Why?
4. How do you think Deborah would tell her own story?
5. What does it look like to accompany others in their triumphs and turmoil?
6. When have you felt your calling made a difference for someone else?
7. How does God show up in untrodden places through people?
8. How are you called to be the hands and feet of God through your calling? Be specific.

Activity Suggestions

Trace your hand and fill it with words or pictures of how you are called to serve others in this world.

Think of someone in your life whose calling has been a blessing to you in times of joy and/or struggle. Write them a letter.

Take some time to map out the different callings in your life. Think about how they are intertwined together to form you and how they beckon you further in service.

Prayer Concerns

Those struggling with an unfulfilled calling, whose callings have changed, and for those who serve your people with grace amidst struggle.

Closing Prayer

Take who I am and what I have, O God. Use me to serve your people for your glory. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

