



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC	Uncommon, Unlikely & Unrecognized Heroes (Judges 4-5)	SPEAKER	Ps Lawrence Chua
THEME	Gearing Up For The Harvest	DATE	25 & 26 Nov 2017

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

What comes to mind when we talk about heroes? We visualise heroes as good, disciplined, strong and courageous people who fight against bad people and put themselves at risk to rescue the weak and save those in distress without care for financial gain. We think of the heroes in our lives (e.g. our teachers, authors, parents etc) and we are reminded of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. But what about ourselves? We too can be such heroes even if it may seem uncommon and unlikely to ourselves and others.

This week, Ps Lawrence Chua shared about 3 Uncommon, Unlikely and Unrecognized Heroes found in Judges 4-5 of the Bible and how we can emulate the qualities of these heroes and learn from them to become heroes as well.

QUALITIES OF HEROES

1. What is a Hero of Faith?

Heroes of faith are witnesses of God who give testimony about God acting in their lives to inspire us, teach us and become heroes of faith to others. Hebrews 11 list these heroes of faith. However, Ps Lawrence cautioned that we must be careful not to idolise these heroes but instead be inspired by them to look unto Jesus.

2. UNCOMMON HERO: DEBORAH the prophetess who became a Judge of Israel (Leadership)

In today's era, Jesus came to introduce a new dispensation of grace; in Christ we have a new status as sons of God that transcends gender (Gal 3:26-29). Back then, the Old Testament culture was patriarchal so the heroes were usually men and seldom women. But culture and gender are no obstacles to God! He raised Deborah as an uncommon hero. Take heart - if becoming a leader is unlikely or we face obstacles, we can start by believing in God and then to develop leadership qualities.

What can we learn about leadership from Deborah:

- ✓ **Be aware and care for the needs of others** – To lead, we must be observant and learn to be aware of the adversities faced by the people around us. We need to develop social concern and care for the needs of others. *[Deborah was aware of the oppression and did not turn a blind eye to the problems of the Israelites - she was observant and concerned for their welfare (Judges 4:3-5)]*
- ✓ **Be willing to step out of your comfort zone** – God is calling us to go beyond our current

appointment and to go beyond the difficult to the demanding. *[Deborah stepped out of a security of a Judge to be a General of War – she was challenged by Barak the General to go with him and she did not hesitate (Judges 4:6-9)]*

- ✓ **Be prepared to lead leaders** – Peer leadership is the most intimidating as it is not easy to gain the respect of peers but we can achieve this when we ground our leadership in the Lord and lead by the leading of the Lord.
- ✓ **Grow in wisdom and judgement** – To lead, we should be a good judge of character and exercise wisdom and judgment in selecting the right team whose hearts are aligned with the people and purposes of God. They care for God and are passionate for God.

3. UNLIKELY HERO: Jael the woman in tent who became a silent killer (Courage)

Jael was a woman in the tent (today's equivalent of a housebound wife); the most unlikely person God would use to assassinate Sisera, an army commander and enemy of the Israelites (Judges 4:17-22). We write ourselves off because we think that we are not good enough or lack the necessary skills be of any use to God. Even worse, we think the same of others and write them off too.

Unlikely as we may be, God can raise us to be heroes like Jael as long as we have:

- ✓ **Good sense of loyalty, courage and wisdom** – As with Jael, we need to be courageous, willing and available. God may present the opportunity to us to be used for his purposes but the decision or choice to act is left totally to us. We are also reminded to be wary and wise as serpents but innocent as doves in witnessing to others (Matt 10:16).
- ✓ **Resourceful and willing to use simple tools in hand to accomplish big things for God** – Jael carried no sword or spear to carry out God's purpose – she used a hammer and tent peg. David used 5 stones to defeat Goliath (1 Sam 17) and Jesus fed a hungry crowd of 5,000 people with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fishes (Matt 14). In God's world, he uses the fool to confound the worldly wise and the weak to confound the worldly strong (1 Cor 1:27). God can use us to accomplish big things too!

4. UNRECOGNIZED HERO: BARAK the reluctant General who became a man of faith (Strength)

Do not judge others based purely on past failure – We should not totally ignore present accomplishments and judge others based on past failures. It is our ultimate obedience to God that matters most. *[Barak initially doubted God and hesitated to lead the troops up to Mount Tabor as instructed by God (Judges 4:6-8). Although he may have harboured doubt at the start, he led the team to victory and ended the war strongly and well with faith.]*

We must not hesitate to change our mind when we realize that we are wrong – It is never too late to turn around as God will still honour us. Others may not see us as heroes but God sees those who follow his way because he honours ultimate obedience as how he honoured Barak in time memorial (1 Sam 12:6-11 and Heb 11:32-34) despite depriving him of the honour of killing Sisera (Judges 4:6-8) because of Barak's initial disobedience. The parable in Matt 21:28-34 also tells of how God honours those with a change of heart – it is never too late to answer God's call.

Conclusion

Heroes of faith are not just those found in Hebrews 11. They are found in the most unlikely, uncommon and unrecognized of people. No matter how we feel we are not good enough for God's purposes, God can raise us to be heroes – to be witnesses of faith, to inspire others to look unto Jesus. Thus, let us heed God's voice now, it is never too late and God will honour our obedience at the end of the race (Hebrews 12:1-2)

QUESTIONS

1. Name a spiritual hero in your life. What are some qualities he or she has that inspires you to be a spiritual hero for others?

2. God often uses the most unlikely people and resources, as long as they are willing to be used, to serve His purposes. What are some (unlikely) resources you have or that you see in your cell members, and how can they be used for God's purposes?

3. While Barak was initially disobedient, he ultimately chose to obey God and was remembered for that. What is an area in your life that God has been challenging you to obedience? What do you need to do to answer God's call?