

Day 11

We are Never Victims of Our Circumstances

START WITH HEART

*Lord, as You speak please help me listen with my whole heart and Holy Spirit
please meet me today and make me more like Jesus.*

Habakkuk 3:17-19

(A Hymn of Faith)

*“Fig trees may not grow figs,
And there may be no grapes on the vines.
There may be no olives growing
And no food growing in the fields.
There may be no sheep in the pens
And no cattle in the barns.
But, I will still be glad in the Lord;
I will rejoice in God my saviour.
The Lord God is my strength.
He makes me like a deer that does not stumble
So I can walk on the steep mountains.”*

In life there comes a time when we realize that we do not have control over certain aspects of our lives and some of us look back on our lives and see disappointment, failed plans and unrealized dreams.

It is far too easy for us to believe that the world is out of control when we think we are no longer controlling it, but actually, it was never in our control. God has always been in control and He is the Sovereign God who is still in control, right now, today,

yesterday and tomorrow. He holds it all in His hands and He allows trials for that exact and very important reason because He wants us to come to realise that He is the one who is in control.

That unique plan that God has for our lives does not change because of unexpected circumstances. God does not give us a plan B for our lives when plan A seemingly derails. He always has that one, original plan and His destiny for us.

When times get tough we have to look to Him for direction - we have to learn to walk by faith and not by sight and we have to remember that, while disappointments are inevitable, discouragement is a choice that we make. We should NEVER allow circumstances to steal our enthusiasm and our confidence in Him.

Life is not simple and we face many bumps along the way. The battle is real and continuous and we suffer painful experiences. However, our circumstances should not define who we are or how we react. Our sovereign Lord knows all the difficulties that we have to face, He holds the map and He is so aware of every bump, every turn, detour, hill and valley that we will have to endure.

Endurance is tough but when the going gets tough we cannot run away, we cannot quit. We have to faithfully trust in our sovereign God and in doing that, our faith will grow stronger.

I don't know if you are familiar with the Old Testament book of Judges? But, even if you aren't, I'm sure that you have heard the name of the great prophetess, Deborah. This amazing, godly woman has been an encouragement to women throughout the centuries. Whenever women have felt like they are entering unknown territory, whenever they have felt overlooked, ignored or powerless they have found inspiration by remembering Deborah and by looking at her life.

She was the only female to hold the position of Judge in Israel. She was a child of God and as children of God, we are never victims of our circumstances.

Deborah's confidence was found in her relationship with God and her vision of the world was not shaped by the political situation of her day. Her greatest sorrow was that her people had sunk into despair. Israel was spiritually malnourished, idolatry was spreading and oppressing circumstances began to strangle the people's faith. Conditions that we are familiar with. They had forgotten God's promises and the faith of their ancestors. By this time Moses and Joshua were the palest of memories and once again the nation of Israel were the underdogs, oppressed by Canaanite rulers.

The chief Canaanite warrior, Sisera, terrified the Israelites with his mighty armies and no one dared to challenge him. The fact that Israel was also ruled by a woman possibly made him feel smugly, but falsely secured.

Deborah's strength and calm leadership are characteristics of her confidence. But, not a confidence that she had in herself, the confidence that she had in her God. The most important aspect of Deborah's faith-walk was her relationship with God and the ability that she had to hear His voice. She also knew His word and she believed in His promises.

She firmly believed what God tells us in Jeremiah 29 v.11, that He does not have plans for us that will harm us but plans to give us hope and a future. And Deborah claimed that promise for her people as she heard the voice of God.

She had the courage to rouse them and encourage them to go to war against Sisera and his mighty army. She herself accompanied the Israelite army into war and God, who once again heard the cries of His people, sent a flood that caused the chariots of the enemy to become stranded in the mud and that in turn made them easy targets for the Israelite army, who destroyed them and claimed the victory.

Deborah's ability to hear the voice of God, to still the voices of doubt, together with her obedience, enabled the nation of Israel to throw off their foreign oppression. In return, God bestowed power to the weak Israelites and blessed them with peace in their land.

Scripture tells us that Deborah was a prophetess and that her people named her “The mother of Israel”. She was possibly a wife and mother as well, just like many of us. But above all she was a woman whose strong faith gave birth to a new hope and a new freedom and a new peace for her people. She stirred her “children” to greatness out of their despair. Perhaps you are not in an influential position or in a position of authority but you can still be this kind of a mother to your children, to the children in your family and your neighborhood. Perhaps you have little power in your job or position but you can still be a mother to those around you and inspire them to righteousness. Perhaps your life allows little time or opportunity for significant positions of leadership but you can still be a mother in your own sphere, regardless of how big or small it is.

You can be like Deborah today, used by God to be a mother in your Israel and to once again stir your children to greatness out of despair. Everything that Deborah offered to Israel she offers to us as an example of a woman who was willing to be used by God.

Circumstances do not control us, Jesus does; and God does have blessings for us, more than we can ever imagine.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS:

1. What can I do to learn how to discern God’s voice from my own?
2. Which of Deborah’s characteristics would I most like to have and what would I do if I had that characteristic?
3. Who are the people in my life that I can be a “mother” to and how can I help to stir them to greatness?

Lord, I want to hear Your voice. Give me discernment Lord and help me to recognize and resist all the false voices that masquerade as yours. Help me to distinguish Your voice from all the others. Make me a woman who both listens and speaks Your Word. Holy Spirit please remind me of your faithfulness and power

WORSHIP SONG:

Trust in You, by Lauren Daigle

https://youtu.be/n_aVFVveJNs

by Sonja Long