

Sooo I won't lie to you. I was excited when I saw the scripture was on Deborah.

I asked, no begged Dan to let me preach on this text.

See, Deborah is one of my favorite people in the bible for many reasons, but one in particular is her name.

The name Deborah in Hebrew means fiery woman.

Not only does her name mean fiery woman, but she is a judge over Israel.

For those who do not know what that means, before Israel had a King or Queen, Israel had judges.

These judges were believed to have been appointed by God to lead Israel.

There are many famous judges, like Samson, Gideon, and so on.

The main thing all judges have in common is their ability to lead military pursuits.

All of the judges were highly trusted, in fact in the story of Deborah, the men would not even go into battle without her accompanying them.

Obviously, you can tell I have a "girl crush" on Deborah.

I just find her story to be fascinating.

She goes on to tell them that she will accompany the men to battle, but that their enemy will be delivered into the hands of a woman, to which they believe that she means herself.

Deborah was actually prophesying about Jael, another woman we meet in Judges chapter 4, killing the enemy king.

It is as though Israel is trying to fix a car engine and Deborah is holding the flashlight for them to see.

She was representing the holy light, the holy fire,

Holy Fire. *pause*

Fire is hot and dangerous, yet such a vital part of our lives.

We need the heat to cook food, to survive snow days, to take a nice shower, and so on.

Fire is needed in our lives everyday, whether it's a direct fire or electric stoves, electricity, some version of fire is being used by each of us daily.

pause

The more I reflected on why fire was sticking out to me, what was it about fire, besides how humans use fire, was so important that my mind would not dare to part from it.

The answer become very clear when I was asked by a friend what is the point of fire...

My answer was pentecost. When you sign on to be a Christian and to walk this path, the territory comes with Sophia.

Sophia is the greek term used for Holy Spirit- it means wisdom and it is a feminine word.

It is the holy wisdom of the spirit that ignites the fire within our souls and within our hearts.

It is through this that we are able to love each other and be champions of Jesus' path of liberation.

Another word used for the spirit is found in the old testament, Ruah, meaning breath of God or spirit of God.

It is through ruah, sophia that Deborah was able to shine the light on what lays before Israel.

It is the holy wisdom,

the fire of God that lights our path just as God sent the fire pillar to guide the israelites in Exodus,

Beloved Jesus tells us in Matthew that we are to be the light and salt of the earth,

We are suppose to be the fiery leaders,

We are the deborahs,

We are the ones who are supposed to listen Sophia,

We are supposed to hold the flashlight on the car engine that is the world...

pause

We are being watched to see if they will continue to pursue the path of
God's love, peace, and liberation,
or will we fall blind to the false idols of this world.

We are all being asked to go above and beyond for our neighbor.

In a day and age when everything seems to be so polarizing-

When there seems to be no way to win.

When we are filled with hope and defeat at the same time,

We are called to be the salt and the light

pause

Every generation has seen their own set of troubles, but man 2020 seems
to really be kicking our butts, doesn't it?

Beloved, it is not a mistake that we are here.

It is not a mistake that right now we are being called to be the salt and the
light.

When I was 22 years old, I knew I was called to ministry.

I begged to not be, I won't lie to you. I was not qualified for this,

I didn't want to give up my weekends,

why was anyone going to listen to what a 5 foot white woman from georgia
had to say about God,

Even that statement you can hear my 22 year old ego in,

And keep in mind that I did not see a woman preach until age 23,
But, one day I was flipping through my bible and I found comfort in the wise
words of Uncle Moridecci in Esther,
“Perhaps you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this.”

pause

And that was when I said okay, God, we are on this walk together.

Use me, tell me where to point the flashlight...

None of us will walk this path perfectly,

And God is not asking you to be perfect.

What God is asking is that you be still and know.

That you will love your neighbor as yourself.

That you will follow the pillar of fire and shine the flashlight for others where
it is needed.

That you will be a beacon of God’s peace, love, and liberation for all to see.

I want you to just take a moment and close your eyes.

I want to invite you to dream with God,

Dream of what the world would be like if we really leaned into the fire,

If we really allowed ourselves to be the salt and light.

who knows, perhaps YOU have come to the kingdom for such a time as
this...

Amen.