

# GOD CAN USE YOU

God can use you

*Appreciate mother's first for their role*

- Motherhood is a spirit. Why do I say that?
- There are mothers out there who neglect and abandon their children
- We also read it in scripture, that mothers are loving but there might be instances they might not do so

Isaiah 49:15

"Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.

- You can have the spirit to mother your own children and mother other children as well. You can cry out to the Lord for a spirit of motherhood so you can mother well
- Say you receive message and you hear that a child that is not yours is on drugs do you feel burdened to pray for them or encourage that child or are you not interested at all in their wellbeing
- We live in a society were most people are selfish and look out for our own interests but God wants us to move beyond that
- IN AS MUCH AS TODAY WE CELEBRATE AND APPRECIATE MOTHERS I WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOURAGE MOTHERS TO GO TO OUR NEXT LEVEL IN OUR MOTHERHOOD JOURNEY
- THE MESSAGE IS TO ENCOURAGE AND CHALLENGE US IN OUR MOTHERHOOD JOURNEY TO GO BEYOND SO THAT WE RAISE GODLY CHILDREN WHO ARE WELL ROUNDED.
- God wants mothers to move from a place of complacency where we raise children haphazardly. He wants us to be intentional as mothers and put in place certain measures in our parenting so that we go to the NEXT LEVEL IN MOTHERHOOD

## **GOD CAN USE YOU**

As we celebrate mother's day I thought I would share a message on Deborah who was a woman, judge, prophetess and wife and a mother in Israel to inspire and encourage mothers and all of us today that God can use you as He used Deborah.

- I watched a video clip this week of a Pastor sharing that behind a Ma Moruti wearing nice clothes, etc there is suffering to get taking place, behind a successful Pastor there is also great suffering to prepare for church, preparing sermons and teachings and leading the church
- In the same way we know that mothers go to great lengths to sacrifice for their children, be it in looking after them when they are young.
- Mothers sacrifice their sleep to raise their young children (In the past few months we were having a discussion with mums at the gym and one mum has been sacrificing her sleep for four years already because her children do not like sleeping in their own beds (she has two both below the age of 4)
- I remember when my kids turn 1 I would go for days sleep training so they could adapt sleeping in their own beds. That was tough as I and my husband would go for days doing sleepless nights and not sleeping well
- Where school fees is required they go all out to sacrifice school fees for their children (Mum in the salon) **SHARE THEIR STORY**
- Cooking and fetching them at school
- Going to work for them and working in uncomfortable conditions so they have a roof over their head
- Washing their clothes, supervising homework. The list is endless of what mothers do

### Background to Judges

- We are going to focus on a story found in the book of Judges which includes Jael, Deborah and Shamgar as some of the people who are part of the story
- The Title of the book of Judges was given based on 12 leaders whose temporary leadership was military and civil
- Judges took over the military and civil affairs of Israel
- The reason why judges were in place was that there was a leadership vacuum once Joshua had died, and Israel slid from a place of obeying God; they had already started disobeying God, but this became worse when Joshua died, sin became more pronounced, and Israel followed other gods like those of the Canaanites.
- There was no king so people did what they wanted.

Judges 21:25 (NLT)

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In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

Judges 2:11-23

<sup>11</sup>And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals. <sup>12</sup>And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the LORD to anger. <sup>13</sup>They abandoned the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. <sup>14</sup>So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. <sup>15</sup>Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them for harm, as the LORD had warned, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress. <sup>16</sup>Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. <sup>17</sup>Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the LORD, and they did not do so. <sup>18</sup>Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. <sup>19</sup>But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways. <sup>20</sup>So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he said, "Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, <sup>21</sup>I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, <sup>22</sup>in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the LORD as their fathers did, or not." <sup>23</sup>So the LORD left those nations, not driving them out quickly, and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua.

- The cycle of sin continued in Israel, which led to the nation suffering.
- This is because whenever a judge died the Israelites would go into a pattern of sin and their spiritual lives were compromised, and they adopted the ways of the people of the land.
- Once the people sinned against the Lord would allow the nation to be conquered and oppressed by neighbouring nations
- The people would then cry out to God, and God would send a judge to deliver them.
- The Judges were therefore used time and time again by God to save the Israelites.
- The judges ruled for a varying number of years for example Ehud was a judge for 80; Deborah 40; Gideon 40; Samson 20.

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## 2. Judges 5:6-7

“In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were abandoned, and travelers kept to the byways. The villagers ceased in Israel; they ceased to be until I arose; I, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel.

Who was Shamgar son of Anath?

- He was the third judge and most likely the son of the Canaanite warrior goddess Anath so he was not an Israelite but most likely a

Judges 3:31

<sup>31</sup> After Ehud, Shamgar son of Anath rescued Israel. He once killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad.

- Shamgar became a judge after Ehud, who was the second judge.
- God used a non-Israelite to kill 600 warriors.
- It was a challenge to kill using an ox-goad, as it was a long stick with a small flat piece of iron on one side and a sharp point on the other
- The sharp point was used to drive the oxen during ploughing times, and the flat side was used to clean the mud off the plough.
- The Israelites were in a time of turmoil. They had no king, and everything was haphazard, and Shamgar rescued them using an ox goad
- God can use unexpected people and circumstances to change your situation (e.g, wayward children, the academics of your children, your marriage)
- God can use you. A non-Israelite warrior was used.
- By the standards of people, you don't qualify, but God can use you.

# GOD CAN USE YOU

## OX GOAD

(Biblical Period)

c. 2000–500 BC

The ox goad was a common tool used to guide and urge oxen while plowing or transporting loads. It typically consisted of a long wooden staff with a pointed tip, sometimes reinforced with bronze or bone.



## GOD CAN USE YOU



Lets go back and read

Judges 5:6-7

“In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were abandoned, and travelers kept to the byways. The villagers ceased in Israel; they ceased to be until I arose; I, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel.

Who was Jael?

Judges 4:17 (NLT)

Meanwhile, Sisera ran to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because Heber’s family was on friendly terms with King Jabin of Hazor.

- Her husband was a Kenite.
- Kenites were descendants of Jethro, who was Moses’ father-in-law (Kenites were at peace with Israel)
- Kenites were nomads and lived in tents. They had a humble lifestyle
- In Judges 4:17, we just read that Sisera (Commander of the Canaanite army) had escaped after his army was defeated and ran to the tent of Jael

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- Sisera had oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, and he had 900 chariots. This shows he was a powerful commander after having to suppress the Israelites for such a long time
- I am sure the Israelites had given up hope of being free from the canaanites whose king was Jabin and the commander of the army was Sisera.
- Jabin of Hazor was the king of the Canaanites, and he was at peace with the Kenites, so Sisera ran, thinking that he would be safe
- It was during this time that Deborah was a judge
- 10 000 warriors were sent out by Barak and Deborah, and these defeated the Canaanites. Sisera was running away, trying to escape, when he came to Jael

Judges 4:15-24

15When Barak attacked, the Lord threw Sisera and all his chariots and warriors into a panic. Sisera leaped down from his chariot and escaped on foot. 16Then Barak chased the chariots and the enemy army all the way to Harosheth-haggoyim, killing all of Sisera's warriors. Not a single one was left alive.

17Meanwhile, Sisera ran to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because Heber's family was on friendly terms with King Jabin of Hazor. 18Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come into my tent, sir. Come in. Don't be afraid." So he went into her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.

19"Please give me some water," he said. "I'm thirsty." So she gave him some milk from a leather bag and covered him again.

20"Stand at the door of the tent," he told her. "If anybody comes and asks you if there is anyone here, say no."

21But when Sisera fell asleep from exhaustion, Jael quietly crept up to him with a hammer and tent peg in her hand. Then she drove the tent peg through his temple and into the ground, and so he died.

22When Barak came looking for Sisera, Jael went out to meet him. She said, "Come, and I will show you the man you are looking for." So he followed her into the tent and found Sisera lying there dead, with the tent peg through his temple.

23So on that day Israel saw God defeat Jabin, the Canaanite king. 24And from that time on Israel became stronger and stronger against King Jabin until they finally destroyed him.

- Jael was a wife, most probably a mother and she kill Sisera and the Canaanites were gradually defeated
- Jael was most likely a housewife looking after her husband, and children if they had any, but God used her powerfully to defeat the enemy
- If God used Jael, God can use you as well

Judges 5:24 (NLT)

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“Most blessed among women is Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. May she be blessed above all women who live in tents.

Deborah’s song included Jael and in v. 24 we see Jael being praised in a similar way that Mary was praised and blessed.

Her actions

She was a woman who lived in tents which was a humble background but God used her

- Your circumstances should not define who you are and what you can do for the Lord
- The victory came through Jael and this was prophesied by Deborah in Judges 4:9

Judges 4:9 (NLT)

“Very well,” she replied, “I will go with you. But you will receive no honor in this venture, for the LORD’s victory over Sisera will be at the hands of a woman.” So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh.

Deborah

- Deborah was the fourth judge and the only woman judge.
- This was a unique situation
- When Deborah was the judge of Israel, it was a time after Ehud the third judge had died, and the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and this caused the Lord to sell them into the hand of the king of Canaan, who was known as Jabin.
- With this background, let's read Judges 5:6-7 again

Judges 5:6-7 (ESV)

“In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were abandoned, and travelers kept to the byways. The villagers ceased in Israel; they ceased to be until I arose; I, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel.

When Deborah arose, the highways were abandoned. Travellers kept to the byways

- It was a time of turmoil in the land as the Israelites faced oppression from different groups such as the Canaanites and the Moabites

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- The likelihood was that there was danger, and people feared getting caught up with bandits and people after them, and so they chose to stay clear of the main roads
- The people tried to avoid danger; they had a fear of being oppressed
- 

Villagers ceased in Israel

- People's normal way of life was disrupted in the villages
- It was difficult time to take leadership, as things were not easy
- No leader prefers to take up leadership during hard times. I think most of us would prefer to be leaders when times are good.
- This is the time Deborah arose as a mother in Israel
- God might be calling you in a difficult season of parenting as a mother to take up a leadership position as you raise your children

What is the significance of Deborah rising as a mother in Israel? What can we learn from her

- We are not told in the story whether Deborah had children of her own, but it is mentioned that she was a mother in Israel which shows that she had a position of honour and respect in Israel

a) Rose as a leader in spiritual matters

- It is such a point in time that Deborah arose as a mother in Israel
- Deborah emerged as a leader in a time of turmoil
- As mothers, our leadership may emerge during a time of turmoil in our families; when a child is sick, a child is wayward, we are going through difficulties
- Chapter 5 is a song that celebrated Israel's victory. Songs were written during this time to celebrate national victories
- It was a song of worship which was led by Deborah and Barak its most likely it was written by Deborah
- It was a song written to the Lord

Judges 5:3

"Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers! I, even I, will sing to the LORD; I will praise the LORD, the God of Israel, in song.

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- Deborah even sang a song to the Lord; she rose up spiritually and took a lead in worshipping God with Barak in Judges 5  
Are we willing to emerge as a leader in spiritual matters e.g rising up as prayer warriors in our families and defeating the enemy with our prayers and worship?
- In Judges 4:9 we see that Deborah spoke prophetically (She was also a prophetess) that Sisera would be sold into the hands of a woman and that woman was Jael.
- Deborah was able to foretell the future
- God can use you to see in the spirit, to prophesy into your family, to declare God's word and seeing the prophetic being fulfilled in our families
- Lois(Grandmother) and Eunice (mother) passed on their faith to Timothy 2 Timothy 1:5; can we say we are leading in bringing spiritual maturity to our families?
- EMERGE AS PRAYER WARRIORS FOR OUR CHILDREN AND EXTEND BEING A PRAYER WARRIOR NOT ONLY TO YOUR FAMILY BUT ALSO TO PRAY FOR YOUR COMMUNITY, e.g., neighbourhood, schools, church
- ARE WE WILLING TO RISE UP AS A VOICE OF REASON AND SHARING WISDOM AND TRUTH WITH OUR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

b) Rose as a judge-leader in civilian matters

Judges 4:5 (NLT)

She would sit under the Palm of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites would go to her for judgment.

- Deborah was a judge, and her leadership was in civilian matters, judging the people
- Since she feared God, she brought spiritual wisdom into her judgments

c) Rose up with a nurturing Spirit

- MOTHER MIGHT ALSO SIGNIFY THAT THE DELIVERANCE SHE BROUGHT TO ISRAEL WAS DUE TO A NURTURING SPIRIT THAT SHE DISPLAYED
- Deborah was most likely called a mother in Israel because of the love and concern she showed to Israel
- ARE WE WILLING TO EMERGE AS NURTURERS IN OUR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES; NOT ONLY THINKING ABOUT THE WARMTH AND SECURITY OF FAMILIES BUT EXTENDING OUR WARMTH TO THE COMMUNITIES WE ARE IN

## GOD CAN USE YOU

- MANY PEOPLE ARE ORPHANS IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND THEY NEED THE LOVE AND CARE OF MOTHERS

- Are we willing to discipline our children so that they become all that God wants them to be? This is a leadership position you will be taking

d)Rose up and birthed new things

Judges 4:6-10

6She sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali and said to him, “Has not the Lord, the God of Israel, commanded you, ‘Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking 10,000 from the people of Naphtali and the people of Zebulun. 7And I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin’s army, to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops, and I will give him into your hand’?” 8Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go.” 9And she said, “I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.” Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. 10And Barak called out Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh. And 10,000 men went up at his heels, and Deborah went up with him.

- Deborah instructed Barak to go fight Sisera, Jabin’s commander
- For some reason, Barak wanted to go with Deborah; He did not want to go alone.
- The likelihood is that Barak was fearful of defeat
- Deborah showed courage and was willing to go with Barak
- The defeat of the Canaanites was the start of Israel obtaining peace
- Deborah’s actions brought peace in the land most likely had she not accompanied Barak the land might have remained under oppression
- Are we willing to take a risk to birth something new that God wants us to do in our children’s lives
- Are we willing to take a leap of faith and do something out of the norm where our children may be fearful to take new opportunities, starting a new phase of their lives? Are we willing to hold their hand and help them go through the situation?
- Most of the times mothers are known to be fearful when children go into new seasons, but let us have FAITH OVER FEAR as we raise up our children so that great things may be birthed in the lives of our children.
  
- When we are not able to provide all we want for our children are we courageous enough to keep on trusting the Lord that He will provide. We will not live in fear of Lack
  
- May God help us as mothers not to doubt our capabilities and be courageous to birth things in the people that God has entrusted to us to lead and to nurture.

# **GOD CAN USE YOU**

In conclusion God wants to use you

1. Rise up as a leader in spiritual matters
2. Rise up in your place of calling be it in the market place, at home dealing with your kids and your community
3. Rise up to be a nurturer of your own children and other children around you
4. Rise up and birth new things