

**Judges  
Deborah and Jael  
Judges 4:1-24  
Sermon Outline**

**Introduction:** Two things jump off the page in Judges 4: the prominent role of women and the calculating brutality of Jael. What are we to make of these features?

**I) The triumph of women  
A) Deborah—the prime mover**

**B) Jael—dispatching the strong man**

**C) The men: losers**

1) Barak

- v. 22: *Behold! Barak pursuing Sisera...*

2) Sisera

- v. 22: *Behold! Sisera, fallen, dead, with a tent peg in his temple*

**D) What does all this mean?**

God wins

*2 Corinthians 4.6-7: For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness!' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to*

**Take away:** Leverage your weakness

**II) Jael's treachery**

**A) Breaks a treaty in the most shocking way imaginable**

- Needy fugitive
- Red carpet
- Spike through the brain

**B) What do we make of this?**

There has to be a better way to dispose of our enemies

There is

*4.18: Turn aside...turn aside to me. Do not be afraid*

*Mt 11:28: Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*

God takes the spikes rather than hammering them

**Take away**

### Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Compare the women in the story (Deborah and Jael) to the men (Barak and Sisera). What is significant about the differences?
- 2) V. 23 interprets the events of Judges 4. What is significant about the use of the preposition “before” in the verse? How would the meaning of the verse (and the story) change if “before” were replaced by “by”? Notice how “before” is similarly used in v. 15. How do vv 15 and 23 help us understand the point behind the triumph of Deborah and Jael?
- 3) Read 2 Corinthians 4:6-7 and 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. What do these texts teach about the divine agenda behind human weakness? How do these verses help us understand the theological thrust of Judges 4?
- 4) Reflect on the following: “Judges 4 teaches us to leverage our weaknesses. Rather than bemoaning them we should receive them (whether weaknesses of body or of mind or of emotions or of wisdom) as opportunities for God to shine. We should seize them as the very places where Jesus Christ can be seen. We should pray that he will.”
- 5) Itemize all that is questionable or outright wrong about Jael’s behavior.
- 6) How can we see her as an agent of God’s will when what she does is so terrible (Acts 2:23 should help)?
- 7) Jael and Jesus picture for us two radically different ways of bringing enmity to an end. One way is to destroy one’s enemies. The other way is somehow to bring peace by allowing one’s enemy to destroy oneself. How does Jesus accomplish the latter?
- 8) Compare Jael’s invitation in Judges 4:18 to Jesus’ invitation in Matthew 11:28. Spend some time thanking Jesus that, unlike Jael, he meant what he said.