

“God Our Warrior”
Judges 4:12-16
(Preached at Trinity, February 15, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We've been studying the account of the remarkable woman Deborah and the great deliverance God accomplished through her and Barak. After receiving the word from God Deborah tells Barak, the commander of Israel's army to rise up and go to war against the armies of Jabin.
Judges 4:6 NAU - "Now she sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali, and said to him, "Behold, the LORD, the God of Israel, has commanded, 'Go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun."
2. Jabin's army under his general, Sisera, was a mighty force. Sisera had at his disposal 900 chariots of iron. These were the great display of technology, a formative weapon on the battlefield and greatly feared by foot soldiers.
3. Barak was greatly afraid and insisted that Deborah accompany him.
Judges 4:8 NAU - "Then Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go."
4. Israel went to war and Jabin's army was defeated and Sisera was killed. It was a great defeat. Jabin's force of chariots was decimated.
5. What I want us to see tonight was the success was not due to the power of Israel's army. It was actually God who went to war.
Judges 4:15 NAU - "The LORD routed Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from *his* chariot and fled away on foot."
“Routed” - חָמַם *hamam* - *to make a noise, move noisily, confuse, throw into confusion*
It literally means he was thrown into a panic.
6. In **Chapter 5** Deborah recounts the battle:
Judges 5:4-5 NAU - "LORD, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth quaked, the heavens also dripped, Even the clouds dripped water. ⁵ "The mountains quaked at the presence of the LORD, This Sinai, at the presence of the LORD, the God of Israel."
Judges 5:20-21 NAU - "The stars fought from heaven, From their courses they fought against Sisera. ²¹ "The torrent of Kishon swept them away, The ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon. O my soul, march on with strength."
7. In all likelihood God sent a great rain turning the hard ground to mud. The heavy iron chariots bogged down and became useless. All advantage was lost and Sisera's army was defeated. Terrified, Sisera left his chariot and ran for his life only to be killed by Jael—a tent stake through the brain.

8. Is it true that God actually fights wars? The answer is a resounding yes.

David understood this:

2 Samuel 22:2-4 NAU - "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; ³ My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence. ⁴ "I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies."

Psalms 144:1-2 NAU - "Blessed be the LORD, my rock, Who trains my hands for war, *And* my fingers for battle; ² My lovingkindness and my fortress, My stronghold and my deliverer, My shield and He in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me."

- I. The Bible describes God as a "Man of War."

Isaiah 42:13 NAU - "The LORD will go forth like a warrior, He will arouse *His* zeal like a man of war. He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry. He will prevail against His enemies."

- A. To refer to God as a Warrior or a Man of War means God is at war
1. Over 200 times in the OT God is referred to as "the Lord of Hosts" "hosts" - **צְבָאוֹת** tsaba' - that which goes forth, army, war, warfare
 2. God is ruler over all – no one is able to oppose Him.
 3. Those who stand in opposition to Him have become His enemies
God has always taken vengeance against those who oppose Him
 - a. We've witnessed it in the Great Flood
 - b. We've witnessed it with Sodom and Gomorrah
 - c. We've witnessed it as Israel made conquest in Canaan destroying city after city – they were the enemies of God
 4. Moses witnessed God's wrath against the Egyptians
 - a. He personally witnessed the ten plagues crush the Egyptians and watched as God destroyed Pharaoh's armies
 - b. Moses stood in awe as he saw God's power and declared:
Exodus 15:3 KJV - "The LORD *is* a man of war: the LORD *is* his name."
 - c. Barak stood in awe as God rendered Sisera's mighty army helpless. God is a warrior!
 - d. Calvin: "God is armed in military attire, to contend with all the forces of His foes."
 5. Is it proper for God to behave in this manner. The answer is YES! He is God.
Revelation 19:1-2 NAS - "Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; ² because His judgments are true and righteous"
 6. God's anger is kindled against all who work unrighteousness
Romans 1:18 NAS - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness"
Psalms 7:11-13 NAU - "God is a righteous judge, And a God who has indignation every day. ¹² If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. ¹³ He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts."

- II. How does this line up with God's attributes? Is it consistent with God's Divine character?
- A. Many have a problem with using such language as it applies to God – that God is a God of War.
1. This seems so out of character with modern teaching
 2. God is love, compassion, gentle, kind – not a God of war
 3. All of God's attributes exist in perfect harmony – None are in conflict with God's perfect holy character
- B. Can God be a God of love and a God of War?
1. God demonstrates His love upon all men – love is of the very nature of God. His goodness is displayed throughout the earth and in the lives of men. One look at the human body displays the goodness of God. All of our senses are given so that we might experience God's goodness and then praise Him.
 2. The Bible tells us that God even loves His enemies
Matthew 5:44-45 NAS - "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you ⁴⁵ in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous."
 3. God does love His enemies, but God is also a God of perfect justice – God's love in no way cancels His wrath. God is love, but it is also true that God's vengeance is kindled against the wicked – they are His enemies. Instead of worshipping God human beings have rebelled against Him bringing His wrath upon them.
Romans 1:21-22 NAS - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools"
- C. What about God's mercy. Can God be a God of mercy and a God of War?
1. Again, God's attributes exist in perfect harmony
 2. God is angry with the wicked but He has chosen to delay the sentence God is withholding His wrath that men might repent and turn to Him in righteousness
 3. In God's gracious mercy He offers peace to all who will surrender themselves before Him
 - a. Those who make peace with God will find reconciliation.
 - b. This is the glorious invitation of the Gospel
Matthew 11:28 NAS - "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."
 The key word is "Come"
- D. God's warfare is judicial and perfectly just
1. He has justly declared war upon His enemies
 Because God is holy He hates sin. Because He is righteous He must punish sin.
 2. The wicked have declared war upon Him – He has justly condemned them
 3. God's vengeance upon His enemies is not void of compassion and mercy but it will surely be exercised with perfect justice
Nahum 1:3 NAU - "The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And the LORD will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished."

- III. What are some of the implications we should consider as we consider that God is a strong warrior?
- A. As a strong warrior God is able to defend us
1. Nothing shall be able to take us from God.
John 10:27-30 NAU - "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ "I and the Father are one."
Romans 8:37-39 NAU - "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 2. The Bible is filled with passages that remind us of the infinite power of our God to protect us
Psalms 121:5-8 NAU - "The LORD is your keeper; The LORD is your shade on your right hand. ⁶ The sun will not smite you by day, Nor the moon by night. ⁷ The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul. ⁸ The LORD will guard your going out and your coming in From this time forth and forever."
Psalms 18:2-3 NAU - "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. ³ I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies."
 3. These same thoughts of the power of God that bring the Christian comfort should cause the unbeliever to tremble
- B. As Christians we are sent forth into battle
1. If our God is a Man of War how confident should we be as His soldiers
 2. May we continue to fight the good fight of faith
1 Timothy 6:12 NAU - "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."
2 Timothy 2:4 NAU - "No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."
- C. No one will be able to stand against this all powerful warrior
1. His sword is unbreakable
Deuteronomy 32:41-42 NAU - " If I sharpen My flashing sword, And My hand takes hold on justice, I will render vengeance on My adversaries, And I will repay those who hate Me. ⁴² 'I will make My arrows drunk with blood, And My sword will devour flesh, With the blood of the slain and the captives, From the long-haired leaders of the enemy."

2. Listen to Moses' words as he describes the defeat of Pharaoh's armies. They describe how fierce God came in judgment
Exodus 15:4-7 NAU - "Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; And the choicest of his officers are drowned in the Red Sea. ⁵ "The deeps cover them; They went down into the depths like a stone. ⁶ "Your right hand, O LORD, is majestic in power, Your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy. ⁷ "And in the greatness of Your excellence You overthrow those who rise up against You; You send forth Your burning anger, *and* it consumes them as chaff."
 3. Do you see how absolutely ridiculous it was for Pharaoh to stand against God. This stands as a strong warning to all who will oppose God.
Revelation 2:16 NAU - "Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth."
 4. You must surrender to Him. You must lay down your weapons of rebellion and embrace His Son. While God is sharpening His sword He is offering you an opportunity to surrender.
- D. The perfect demonstration of God's just warfare is seen in Christ
1. Jesus is merciful, He is loving, He is gentle, He is kind – But His anger is kindled upon His enemies – this is the picture seen in **Psalm 2**
Psalms 2:12 NAU - "Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish *in* the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!"
 2. He will crush His enemies under His feet – He is a Man of War
Psalms 110:1-2 NAU - "The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." ² The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies.""
 3. Jesus will return as a conquering King
2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 NAU - " the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power"
 4. His enemies who would not have Him to rule over them He will crush with infinite power
 5. Jesus is the Lord of lords and the King of kings.
Every knee will bow before Him
Philippians 2:9-11 NAU - "God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Conclusion:

We need to remember a couple things from this passage.

1. Salvation demands throwing down your weapons of rebellion and bowing before Jesus Christ as Lord and King. He is a mighty King and worthy of all honor and praise.
2. Second, it is a blessing to fight with Him. We have the confidence that our God wins. See **Verses 14-15, 18-19**
3. It is also a curse for those who stay home.
Judges 5:15-16 NAU - "Among the divisions of Reuben *There were* great resolves of heart. ¹⁶ "Why did you sit among the sheepfolds, To hear the piping for the flocks? Among the divisions of Reuben *There were* great searchings of heart."
Judges 5:17 NAU - "Gilead remained across the Jordan; And why did Dan stay in ships? Asher sat at the seashore, And remained by its landings."
Judges 5:23 NAU - "'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of the LORD, 'Utterly curse its inhabitants; Because they did not come to the help of the LORD, To the help of the LORD against the warriors.'"
4. Matthew Henry – “They are cursed for *not coming to the help of the Lord*, when it was in effect proclaimed, *Who is on the Lord's side?* The cause between God and the mighty (the principalities and powers of the kingdom of darkness) will not admit of neutrality. God looks upon those as against him that are not with him. He that will richly reward all his good soldiers will certainly and severely punish all cowards and deserters.”
5. May we all joyously march alongside our Lord and King – Onward Christian Soldiers!!