

The Leaders Took the Lead the People Offered Themselves Willingly

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon highlights the necessity of leadership and willing participation in the revival of the Body of Christ.

Scripture: Judges 4:1, Judges 4:12, Acts 2:37, Acts 2:42-43

Topics: "Spiritual Revival", "Servant Leadership"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the concept that revival in the Body of Christ always begins with God's initiative, not our own efforts. He emphasizes the importance of leaders taking the lead as servants and people willingly offering themselves to God when revival comes. Using the story of Deborah, Barak, and Jael in Judges, he illustrates how revival starts with individuals inspired by the Spirit of God taking initiative and others responding with open hearts. The sermon highlights the need for spiritual awakening to manifest in leaders emerging as servants and people offering themselves willingly for God's Kingdom.

Transcript

It's true to say that revival in the Body of Christ never begins with us...it always begins with God.

- We don't engineer revival. - We can't program it.
- God has to send us his Spirit.
- God has to speak a word that wakes us up...raises us from the dead.

But it's also true to say that whenever God sends revival, it only really begins when certain people, inspired by the Spirit of God take initiative. And the revival only picks up momentum when other people respond with open eyes, penitent hearts to what God is doing.

And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, after Ehud died. And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth-ha-goiim. Then the people of Israel cried to the Lord for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.

Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the people of Israel

came up to her for judgment. She sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. And 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.'" Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go." And 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. And Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and ten thousand men went up at his heels; and Deborah went up with him.

Judges 4:1-10

Israel turned from God and stumbled into 20 years of cruel oppression from Jabin king of Canaan. The people were so low they had no hope that things would ever change... they lived their lives in fear.

But there was a woman of God, a prophetess Deborah, who judged Israel...ruled Israel...during this difficult time.

- There were men who were jealous of her.

- There were men who resented her....

but there wasn't a man in the land with half her courage.

Under the anointing of the Spirit Deborah declared,

"The time has come for us to break out of this bondage." She sent north to the tribe of Naphtali and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam..."The Lord God of Israel commands you, 'Go gather your men at Mount Tabor, and 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 unto your hand."

This was the beginning of revival in Israel. It began, when under the direction of the Spirit, Deborah took initiative... she took the lead. Barak the Jewish captain wasn't quite as confident. "I'll go if you come along...if not, I won't." "I'll go with you," says Deborah, "but the glory in this victory won't go to you it will go to a woman."

When Sisera was told that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, Sisera called out all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the men who were with him, from Harosheth-ha-goiim to the river Kishon. And Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the Lord go out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barak at the edge of the sword; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. And Barak pursued the chariots and the army of Harosheth-ha-goiim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

But Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael came out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; have no fear." So he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. And he said to her, "Pray, give me a little water to drink; for I am thirsty." So she

opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. And he said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and asks you, 'Is any one here?' say, No." But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, till it went down into the ground, as he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died, And behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael went out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking." So he went in to her tent; and there lay Sisera dead, with the tent peg in his temple.

Judges 14:12-22

"What a gruesome story," you say. It wouldn't seem so gruesome if you'd felt the kick of Sisera's boot for twenty years and had some of your children dragged off by his troops as slaves.

Sisera is a symbol of Satan himself. We need to understand that Satan is an enemy...you either conquer him or he conquers you....this is a war.

And the weakness,

the impotence,

the paralysis in the Body of Christ doesn't end until this enemy is pushed back and his strongholds are pulled down and the people of God rise up and take the territory which is rightfully theirs. This won't happen until the leaders take the lead and the people offer themselves willingly.

So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel. And the hand of the people of Israel bore harder and harder on Jabin the king of Canaan, until they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day: "That the leaders took the lead in Israel, that the people offered themselves willingly, bless the Lord!"

Judges 4:23-5:2

....that the leaders took the lead in Israel,

....that the people offered themselves willingly.

Whenever the Spirit of God brings revival to the Body of Christ, two things are always present on the human side...always: the leaders take the lead, the people offer themselves willingly.

What does it mean for the leaders to take the lead? Who are these leaders? In the world, leaders are those who assert power over others. In the kingdom, leaders are those who take the lead in serving. "He who is greatest among you let him be the servant of all."

As the Spirit moves in the Body, certain people will emerge as leaders because they take the lead as servants. We're not talking about electing somebody to the church council or appointing somebody to a committee. We're talking about any man or woman or young person responding to the guidance of the Spirit and acting.

For instance, all over the earth the Body of Christ is forming itself not only into congregations, but also into small groups...small groups where people can meet together, share with each other,

encourage each other, and pray. Such groups are forming where you are too, Dear Reader.. How will they form? Very simple. There will be as many small groups as we have people to lead them...to pull them together. Every one of those groups has to have somebody to take the lead. So a man or woman feels responsible ... takes the lead...invites people to come to their house on a certain day.

encourages,

visits,

prepares,

shepherd....

is consistent and responsible...prays for them. And the people offer themselves willingly.

Perhaps there are those who feel they have a gift to teach.

"Ah, but no one ever gives me the opportunity. No one ever asks me to teach."

You have something to teach...you have a gift...don't wait for someone to give you a Bible study on a silver platter. Take the lead! Gather some folks together at the house of your best friend and teach. Pretty soon it will be clear that you do indeed have a gift to teach and the people will respond willingly...or that in fact teaching is not your gift, that perhaps your gift is in another area.

Maybe you decide that there are people in your church who would be greatly encouraged by a personal visit from someone who cares. Take the lead...start visiting and sharing and praying. Take someone with you and the people you visit will respond. They will offer themselves willingly to the Lord.

Perhaps you have a conviction that there is an area of outreach that is being missed...take the lead...move on it...gather one or two others together and share and pray.

Some time ago there were some women the congregation I belong to who were deeply concerned about a certain aspect of our corporate life. They arranged to meet for prayer at one of their homes on a Friday night...they prayed all that night. The following Sunday morning the matter these women prayed about began to resolve itself. Light began to shine among us...peace began to spread...the leaders took the lead, the people offered themselves willingly.

Let's pray that the spiritual awakening which is happening worldwide will manifest itself very clearly in leaders emerging in the fellowship where the Lord has placed us....leaders who simply take the lead as servants of God.

Whether it's Deborah speaking a word from God or Barak gathering his army, or Jael driving the tent peg into Satan's head...people who in the past were shy,

hesitant,

self-pitying or critical, will take the lead as servants of God. And as this happens the second glorious sign of revival will occur....the people will offer themselves willingly.

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the

name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are Far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him." And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. Acts 2:37-41

What were they doing when they were being baptized? They were offering themselves willingly...giving themselves body, soul and spirit to God...joyfully dying to themselves!

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42

They were offering themselves to become disciples so they could serve the purpose of the Kingdom of God.

And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:43-47

They were offering themselves to each other, so they could be one. And together they were offering themselves to the world in Jesus' name so others could be harvested into the Kingdom.

- Nobody had to beg them to come together.
- Nobody had to push them to send them out.
- Nobody had to manipulate them into proclaiming Jesus to the world.
- Nobody had to force them to let their light shine.

....they offered themselves willingly.

May this be happening in all our fellowships in the coming days.

As the leaders take the lead, the people will offer themselves willingly.

And your neighborhood,

and your city,

and all the people you work with, will feel

the impact of the Kingdom of God through you.

And the Lord will add to our number daily those who are being saved.....

....and the revival will go on and on.....

Source:

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