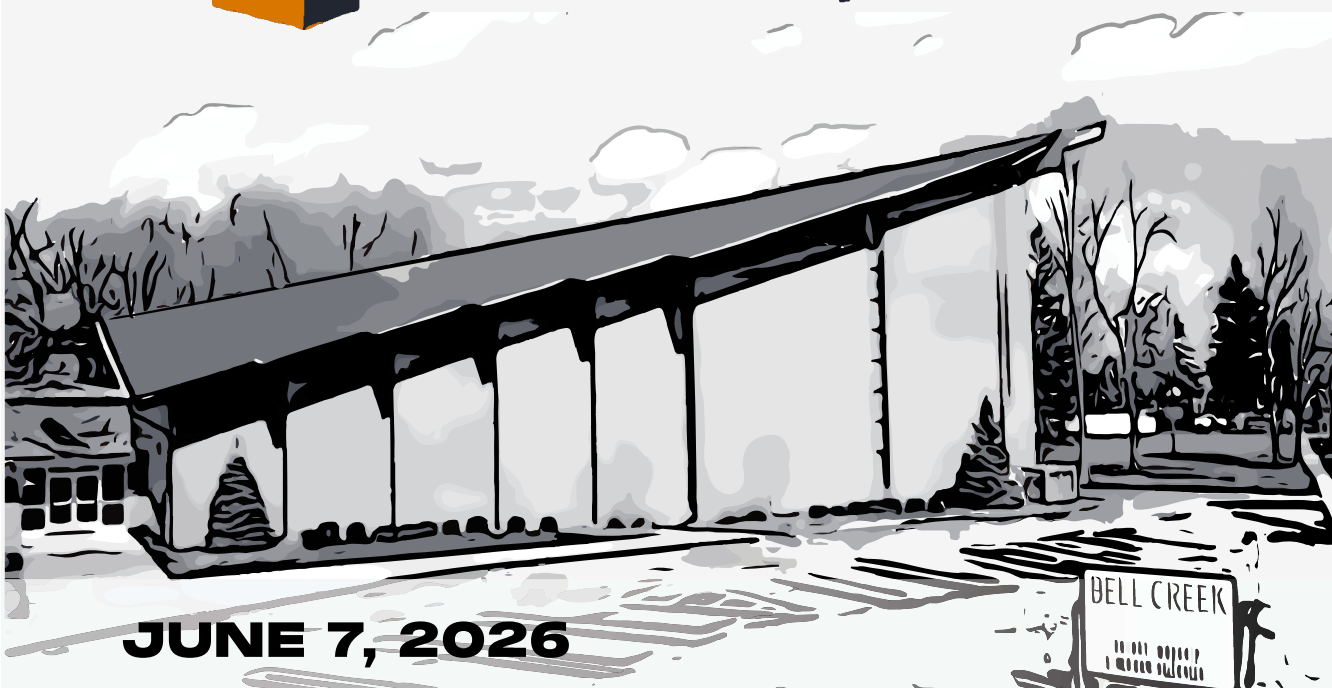


WELCOME TO



BELL CREEK

Community Church



JUNE 7, 2026

DOES NOT THE LORD GO BEFORE YOU?
JUDGES CHAPTERS 4-5

SERMON BY: PASTOR FRED WRIGHT

CURRENT SERMON SERIES:
JUDGES—THE GOD WHO DELIVERS

DOES NOT THE LORD GO BEFORE YOU?

JUDGES CHAPTERS 4–5

The Cruelty of an Oppressor

The Certainty of God's Promises

The Details of God's Providence

FOR NEXT WEEK

Read Judges Chapter 6 in preparation for next week's sermon.

DAILY CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE READING

JUNE 7: PROVERBS 13-15

JUNE 8: PROVERBS 16-18

JUNE 9: PROVERBS 19-21

JUNE 10: PROVERBS 22-24

JUNE 11: 1 KINGS 5-6; 2 CHRONICLES 2-3

JUNE 12: 1 KINGS 7; 2 CHRONICLES 4

JUNE 13: 1 KINGS 8; 2 CHRONICLES 5

UPCOMING AT THE CREEK

APOLOGETICS CLASS

Pastor Dylan's Apologetics Class meets today in the Prayer Room at 11:00 AM.

HOMESCHOOL MEET-UP

If you homeschool, are interested in homeschooling, or once homeschooled, you are invited to our monthly Homeschool Meet-Up on Wednesday, June 10 from 10:00-11:30 AM in Bell Creek's gym. Come for support, curriculum help/swap/sale, or to encourage other homeschoolers that attend Bell Creek. Children are welcome, but please do not bring food. For more information, please contact Rachel Nash (rachel@bellcreek.org).

CHURCH MEMBERS' MEETING

All Bell Creek members are invited to a meeting in the Sanctuary on Sunday, June 14 from 12:30-1:30 PM to discuss Bell Creek's Constitution with the elders. If you are unsure if you are a member, please contact Pastor Dylan (dylan@bellcreek.org).

DINOSAURS & DRAGONS CLASS

Join Bill Durkee on Sunday, June 14 to learn about the connection between dinosaurs and dragons. The class will meet in the Prayer Room during both services.

WESTSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL SERVICE PROJECT OPPORTUNITY

Westside Christian Academy is partnering with us to find an opportunity for our students and their parents to serve the community! We are going to help the school "love their neighbor" by clearing out the fenceline around their property. We will be serving on June 16 and 17 from 9:00 AM-3:00 PM. Please contact Pastor Adam (adam@bellcreek.org) for more information.

GAME NIGHT

All are invited to a Game Night at Bell Creek on Saturday, June 20. If you would like to attend, please see the table in the back of the gym after both services to sign up!

BAPTISM

If you are interested in being baptized, our next celebration will be on Sunday, June 28. If you are interested in baptism, please reach out to Pastor Adam (adam@bellcreek.org).

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

PRAYER MEETINGS

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:30 PM

FRIDAYS 12 NOON

PRE-TEEN & MIDDLE SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SUNDAYS AFTER WORSHIP

2ND SERVICE

AWANA

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SEPTEMBER-MAY

HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

SUNDAYS 11:00 AM

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES
AND EVENTS AT BELLCREEK.ORG

OUR MISSION

MATTHEW 22:37-40

He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and prophets depend on these two commandments."

MATTHEW 28:19-20

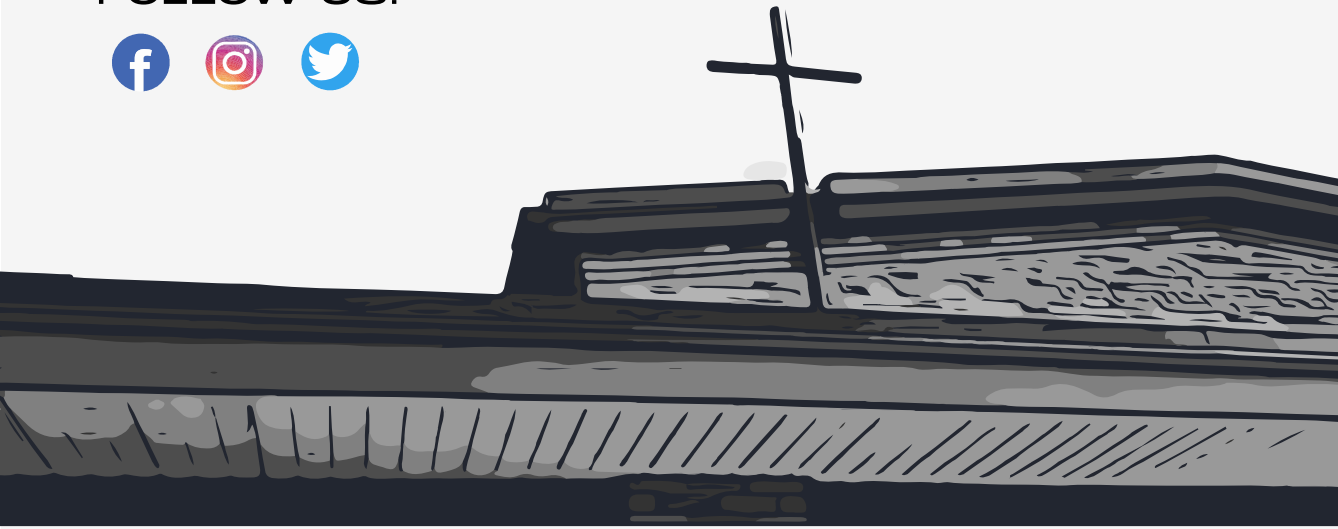
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember that I am with you always to the end of the age.

STAY CONNECTED

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU HERE!

WWW.BELLCREEK.ORG/CONTACT-US

FOLLOW US!



BELL CREEK
Community Church

30000 FIVE MILE RD.
LIVONIA, MI 48154

Sermon Series | Judges – The God Who Delivers

Sunday, June 7, 2026 | Does Not the Lord Go Before You?

Sermon Text | Judges Chapters 4-5

The Cruelty of an Oppressor

1And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD after Ehud died.

Remember, this is what they were doing...idolatry:

“And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals. 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. They abandoned the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth.” (Judges 2:11–13, ESV)

As we go through Judges 4, we are going to be referencing Judges 5 which is a SONG about the events in Judges 4! God’s people write poetry and write songs when significant things happen. Songs and poems, but God’s design, allow us to process the facts of major events not only in our minds, but in our hearts as well.

Here’s why God’s people were facing trouble: They had chosen new gods:

“When new gods were chosen, then war was in the gates. Was shield or spear to be seen among forty thousand in Israel?” (Judges 5:8, ESV)

2And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim.

3Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help, for he had 900 chariots of iron and he oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.

““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.” (Judges 5:6–7, ESV)

These are really bad times...and remember, Chariots were the high-tech war machines of those days. Iron chariots are even worse.

Question: Where do you need to remember that the Lord sees who or what is oppressing you? He will hear your cries, and He is able to bring you deliverance even when evil seems powerful and secure.

The Certainty of God’s Promises

4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. 5 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.

This is odd. To have a woman sit as Judge over Israel would have seemed very odd then, and this was not lost on the author or the original intended audience of the book of Judges. Imagine, long ago, a group of Jewish children sitting around the campfire and hearing this story for the first time, saying, "Dad, did you read that right? A woman was judging Israel?" Why is this odd? First of all, a Judge in Israel at this time not only presided over governmental affairs but was expected to be an out-front military leader like Joshua. It was supposed to be a man's role to step into harm's way. Next, who was tasked with leading Israel after the death of Joshua? The tribe of Judah. It doesn't say specifically, but it looks like she's a member of the tribe of Ephraim. What we see here with Deborah judging Israel has little to do with gender dynamics and more to do with the spiritual state of Israel. Where are the men from the Tribe of Judah? It seems that the men of Judah, and most of the men in Israel, were cowed by these cruel oppressors. Where were the male prophets? Where were the men who would walk with God? Most of them were worshipping Baal. But God's plans weren't going to be thwarted, and He called a faithful woman. Here's the irony we're not supposed to miss: Deborah, the woman, is the kind of judge that a man from the tribe of Judah was supposed to be. Jabin, King of Canaan, and his thugs probably thought it was a huge joke that a woman was the "judge" of Israel. But they underestimated Deborah, and they reckoned without her God to their peril.

6 She 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. 7 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?'"

It seems likely that Barak had heard this command from God before, but had not followed through. So, Deborah is calling him to listen to God's promise and take action.

8 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."

Barak is acting like a wimp (but let's not be too hard on him, keep reading).

9 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.

10 And Barak called out Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh. And 10,000 men went up at his heels, and Deborah went up with him.

Note that Barak follows through, and the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali follow him. Where's the rest of the tribes? Where's the tribe of Judah?

11 Now Heber the Kenite had separated from the Kenites, the descendants of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Zaananim, which is near Kedesh.

Keep this small but significant detail about Heber the Kenite in your pocket!

12 When Sisera was told that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, 13 Sisera called out all his chariots, 900 chariots of iron, and all the men who were with him, from Harosheth-hagoyim to the river Kishon.

14 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 10,000 men following him.

Joshua 8:1 is grammatically very similar:

“And the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear and do not be dismayed. Take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city, and his land.” (Joshua 8:1, ESV)

15 And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barak by the edge of the sword. And Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot.

““LORD, when you went out from Seir; when you marched from the region of Edom, the earth trembled and the heavens dropped, yes, the clouds dropped water. The mountains quaked before the LORD, even Sinai before the LORD, the God of Israel.” (Judges 5:4–5, ESV)

“From heaven the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera. The torrent Kishon swept them away, the ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon. March on, my soul, with might!” (Judges 5:20–21, ESV) [This was spiritual warfare!]

16 And Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth-hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

The Details of God’s Providence

Remember that verse about Heber the Kenite up above?

17 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. 18 And Jael came out to meet Sisera and said to him, “Turn aside, my lord; turn aside to me; do not be afraid.” So he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. 19 And he said to her, “Please 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. 20 And he said to her, “Stand at the opening of the tent, and if any man comes and asks you, ‘Is anyone here?’ say, ‘No.’ ” 21 But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand. Then she went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple until it went down into the ground while he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died. 22 And behold, as Barak was pursuing 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.

“Have they not found and divided the spoil?— A womb or two for every man; spoil of dyed materials for Sisera, spoil of dyed materials embroidered, two pieces of dyed work embroidered for the neck as spoil?” (Judges 5:30, ESV)

Heber the Kenite most likely had lousy motives when he moved up north to live near Hazor. He DEFINITELY should not have been making peace with Jabin. But God had a plan. “Providence” is the old-fashioned word for God’s plans and how He carries them out. It’s often very, very, difficult for us to look around and understand what the LORD is doing in the events that are shaping our world, our nation, and especially in the events of our individual lives. But we need to look at both the sweet providences and the bitter providences through eyes that trust the Lord. “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28, ESV)

23 So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel. 24 And the hand of the people of Israel pressed harder and harder against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

The Song commands us to tell of what God has done!

““Tell of it, you who ride on white donkeys, you who sit on rich carpets and you who walk by the way. To the sound of musicians at the watering places, there they repeat the righteous triumphs of the LORD, the righteous triumphs of his villagers in Israel. “Then down to the gates marched the people of the LORD.” (Judges 5:10–11, ESV)

Praise God that about 1200 years after these events, another man from the Tribe of Judah was born. No one had to tell Him to trust God and go out to battle, because that’s why He came. He redeemed his tribe’s honor and much, much more. His name is Jesus, and He’s not only descended from the Tribe of Judah but is also the Son of God, fully God and fully man. He came to die for our sins, to defeat the grave by rising again, to crush the head of the Enemy, and to free us from death and hell. Do you know Him?

God is love, and He is also just. The Scriptures say that every one of us has sinned against Him. Every one of us. Let me ask us, if even these feared oppressors under Sisera could not escape God's judgment, what makes us think we can safely ignore the Lord who rules over everyone and everything? We can’t ignore Him, and He hasn’t ignored us in our need! He knows we have sinned, and that’s why He sent His Son, Jesus, to save us. If you don’t know Him, come to Him! Come to Jesus now, and ask Him for forgiveness and for the new life and the presence of the Holy Spirit that He has promised. He will hear your cry, and He will never break His promise to you!



Does Not the Lord Go Before You?

1. What did you think of the sermon "Does Not the Lord Go Before You?"

2. Judges repeatedly tells us that Israel "again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD." Why do God's people always drift back into sin and idolatry after experiencing His deliverance? What similar patterns do you see in your own life?

3. Even after Israel's repeated rebellion, God heard their cries and raised up a deliverer. What does this teach you about God's character, and how you should respond when you have failed Him?

4. Deborah and Barak's story shows once again that God remains faithful to His promises even when we have not been faithful to Him. How does God's faithfulness give hope to believers who are struggling with sin, or feel discouraged?

5. This sermon points us to Jesus, the ultimate Deliverer. Jesus defeated sin. He defeated death by rising again. He crushed the head of the enemy. He freed us from hell. We can't ignore Him! What does it look like to trust in His promise of salvation?

