

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday May 10, 2020 "Surely it was happening all around us, it's true...and we couldn't see it. Surely the Lord will give this victory to a woman."

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to watch the live stream service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk.

Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

So, how is everyone doing? Here we are at week eight in this...whatever 'this' is. That's a long time. We are still plugging along. Taking care of things behind the scenes, working on both providing opportunities for growth and learning, taking care of the facilities at the church, and preparing for that eventual time in the future when we can gather again. If there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions you have, please pass them our way. We feel just as isolated as you, and we want to maintain that connection with each of you.

II Sunday.

Sunday was Mother's Day. A really unusual one considering what we're in the middle of. We sincerely hope that in spite of all you were dealing with, that you still were able to honor the 'mom' in your life in a way she so deserved.

We're also in our May series called; "Surely". We're defining surely as; ***"an obvious truth that should be apparent, we should know this, but we needed some help in discovering it."***

Which means we recognize our own limitations and ability to know everything all the time. This recognition is from a place of humility. We are limited creatures. God is infinite. We're okay admitting that, and we are open to new and different revelations, experiences, and understanding of our world and of God. If we build a foundation of trust and intimacy with God, growing in our knowledge of him, then we can use that relationship with God to make us open for new things to learn and experience. So, let's review and revisit that posture of being open to God.

What and where may have you had some barriers, beliefs, practices, that may have limited a growing relationship with God?

What do you know now, that you didn't when you were younger, that has helped you be more open to the movement of God?

What initiated or triggered that growth in your spiritual life?

Since it was Mother's Day, a day we celebrate ALL women, because of the influence and impact they've had in our lives, and in the lives of those around us. Sunday we looked at an interesting story in the O.T. Hebrew scriptures. Let me give you a little background before you read the specific account. This story is from the book of Judges, a time in the history of Israel when they just had entered the promised land. They were beginning to settle in for the first time, and trying to figure out

what it looked like to be a nation, and live in community. Coming up with the bi-laws, structure, and systems to run this big thing called the nation of Israel. They didn't have a king at the time, so they were led by a series of 'judges', (wise people), and prophets. Judges is really a hard, brutal book telling the story of the conquest of the land, and subjugation and really genocide of the people. It's a very difficult book to read, and we have to understand it in the context of the times.

Anyways, this specific account is about one of the judges, Deborah, and a snippet of her calling by God to do the work of taking the land. So read this one account first. **Judges 4:1-9.**

What jumped out to you about this passage?

If you are familiar with this story, did you see anything new?

If you are NOT familiar with this story, were you surprised to see a woman leader, AND prophet of God? What does this say to you about God using women?

Women have not traditionally had a favorable, honored, role in the work of God throughout history, especially in the church. But the scriptures are full of God not only telling stories through the lives of women, but actually using them in roles that we often think only men can hold. And yet, we see Deborah serving as a prophet, (a person who speaks for God), a source of justice for the people, and a military leader. Many of us see nothing unusual about this, but for many who grew up in the church, we're not used to seeing women in leading roles like this.

So, what was your church experience with women in leadership?

It's perfectly okay to admit this, but do you still have some discomfort at the thought of women having leadership positions in a church?

III Challenge.

New Community Church has always been a place that recognized the God-given authority and calling women have in the work of God. We stand somewhat by ourselves in this belief, but the leaders of NCC through its history have believed and taught that scriptures affirm and highlight the role of women to lead. So, there won't be a whole lot of questions with this one. Just some thoughts and how we as a community, family of faith, can make sure we always will be a place men feel just as qualified as women to serve alongside them. =;)

Women- just like Deborah, you have this inner voice of God, that is calling you to do this great work. And sometimes our less than encouraging culture tells you to keep that voice inside. Be brave and bold and know that this inner voice, could very well be God, and there may be this great work ahead.

Men- most of us did not do all the work to get us where we are today. We no more earned our position as women earned their lack of position. So, there are times we need to put the mic down, sit down, and stop talking, so women can take the stage. And then we need to cheer them on when they find the courage to step into the roles that were meant for them.

So, final questions, what can both women and men do to help address, overcome, the issues that hold women back, and what can we do to break that ceiling that holds them back?

What can we do to grow, and encourage there to be more Deborah's in our world?