

Praise God this morning, Happy Mother's Day to all mothers, those who stand in with mothers. And I think Shanta already said the dogma Patmos.

Just. Just so you know, I have not preached a Mother's Day message for a number of years, and let me tell you why. When I was in my 20s, I looked around the church Sunday, and the pastor was preaching, and I saw the women that wanted children, who was principal at school. They were never able to. There were people who stopped coming.

With the mom. And so from that standpoint, they lost a mom. And it was so hard because that's all they talked about. When I grew up, Mother's Day, we wore a white flower or a red flower. It was a carnation.

Red carnation meant your mother was living. A white one meant your mother. But then over the years, it evolved to be, who has the most children, who's the oldest mother in the room. Look around the room and see all the women with broken hearts and the men with broken hearts. I thought, I won't ever do that.

I will say, happy Mother's Day. And I do know that Proverbs said that blessed is a woman that honors the Lord is to be prayed. But then I always got ticked off about Proverbs 31, because that was the other one. They preached all the time, and they were talking about, she got up early, she went and she went out and she bought fabric and she made all the coverings for her house. But you know what?

When I got older, I realized they didn't tell her she had maids. And I'm like, of course she was able to do that. She provided for her maid servant. And here your husband and all the men are looking at their wives. You don't do this.

Don't do this. And then when I saw that, I'm like, preach the whole story. It'll tell it all. So give us maids and we'll get it done. But anyway, make a long story short, I am very thankful.

I'm thankful and blessed to see all of you here today. And the Lord has a message for all of us. And I don't know about you, but we live in a society, especially as women, and it's highly competitive. And I read something that 12% of women actually spend. 12% of our day is spent comparing ourselves with somebody else.

Whether it's status, whether it's looks, whether it's our occupation, whether it's our size. 12% of our day is spent on comparing. And then there's a group of women that just feel like they're left out totally. It's like, I'm not good enough. I don't belong to this group.

I don't belong to that group. So you know what? Count me out. And even if I'm in church, I'm probably not recognized because I don't fit the bill. But you know what?

God has a powerful message for everyone and that this applies to men. God has a message for all of us. So if you would turn with me to Judges chapter four and Judges Chapter five. I think I'm a little bit loud. Judges chapter four and five, then we'll see something that's totally amazing.

And we've probably heard it before. And most of the time this passage has been used to justify women, women's ability to speak or women's ability to be a prophet or to work for God. But at Women's conference many years ago, I think it was 20, 20, 22, maybe one of our speakers talked about Deborah and talked about Jael and so I gleaned some of that. And then the Lord put that on my heart and I went and dug out my notebook. So I'm going to share what else the Lord put on put on my heart.

So if you don't mind, I want to read Judges 4 from the Message version. It's much clearer and says the people of Israel kept right on doing evil in God's sight. With Ehud dead, God sold them off to Jabin, king of Canaan, who ruled from Hazar. Sisera, who lived in Harasaph, was the commander of his army. The

people of Israel cried out to God because he had cruelly oppressed them with his 900 iron chariots.

With for 20 years. Deborah was a prophet. The wife of Laphadot. She was judge over Israel. At that time.

She held court under Deborah's palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in the hills of Ephraim. The people of Israel went to her in matters of justice. She sent for Barak, son of Abinoam from Kadesh in Naphtali, and said to him, it has become clear that the guy, the God of Israel commands you. Go to Mount Tabor and prepare for battle. Take 10 companies of soldiers from Naphtali and Zebulun.

I'll take care of getting Sisera, the leader of Jabin's army, to the Kishon river with all his chariots and troops, and I'll make sure you win the battle. Barak said, if you go with me, I'll go. But if you don't go with me, I won't go. She said, of course I'll go with you. But understand that with an attitude like that, there'll be no glory in it for you.

God will use a woman's hand to take care of Sisera. Deborah got ready and went with Barak to Kadesh. Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together at Kadesh. 10 companies of men followed him, and Deborah was with him. It happened that Heber the Kenite had parted company with the other Kenites, the descendant of Hobab of Hobab, Moses in law.

In law. He was now living at Zaminen Oak near Kadesh. They told Sisera that Barak, son of Abinoam, had gone up to Mount Tabor. Sisera immediately called up all his chariots to the Kishon River. 900 iron chariots, along with all his troops who were with him at Haroseth Hagaim.

Deborah said to Barak, charge. This very day, God has given you victory over Sisera. Isn't God marching before you? Barak charged down the slopes of Mount Tabor, his ten companies following him. God routed Sisera.

All those chariots, all those troops before Barak. Sisera jumped out of his chariot and ran. Barak chased the chariots and troops all the way to Harosheth Hagali. Sisera's entire force was killed. Not one man left.

Meanwhile, Sisera, running for his life, headed for the 10 10th of JL, wife of Heber the Kenite. Jabin, king of Hazar, and Heber the Kenite were on good terms with one another. Jael stepped out to meet Sisera and said, come in, sir. Stay here with me. Don't be afraid.

So she went with her. So he went with her into the tent. She covered him with the blanket. He said to her, please, a little water. I'm thirsty.

She opened a bottle of milk, gave him a drink, and then covered him up again. He then said, stand at the tent flat. If anyone comes by and asks you, is there anyone here, tell him, no, not a soul. And while he was fast asleep from exhaustion, Jael, wife of Heber, took a tent peg and a hammer, tiptoed toward him and drove the tent peg through his temple and all the way into the ground. He convulsed and died.

Barak arrived in pursuit of Sisera. Jael went out to greet him. She said, I'll show you the man you're looking for. He went with her. And there was Sisera, stretched out dead with the tent packed.

His temple. On that day, God subdued Jabin, king of Canaan, before the people of Israel. The people of Israel pressed harder and harder on Jabin, King of Canaan, until there was nothing left of him. And that's a pretty lengthy story. But if you look at chapter five, it tells for those 20 years of oppression.

The people were afraid to go outside. And actually, King Jabin in his group, he was actually very cruel to women, actually vicious. People just felt like they were shut in. And so in this, we see two different women that the Lord uses. And

one of them is Deborah.

The other one is Jael. But in between, we see a man named Barak. And so all of us in this room at some point or the other have been in a classroom or in a group where they put you in groups of three or four people. And the group you were in is like, oh, I got stuck with that one. And I can do anything.

And it's like, I'm going to have to do all the work. But then you come to find out who. I'm so glad they were in my group. Because you found out. Oh, they weren't.

I don't know a good word. They were more than our thoughts. And so from that standpoint, sometimes we judge people based on looks. We judge them based on where they come from. But God doesn't judge any of us on our looks, on our abilities, on our socioeconomic status, where we live, where we come from.

And this is what we see in this story. God had a job that needed to be done. And every one of us sitting in this room are created in the image of God. Every person we encounter on the street, every person we look at is the imago dei. They're created in the image of God.

None of us in this room ever have a right to look at somebody and say, you are not worth living. We never have a right to say, you are an illegal alien. Because they're created in the image of God. And every human being on this earth is created in the image of God. So when we look at people, we're looking at a creation from God.

And whoever he chooses to use, he does. And there was Deborah. Deborah was the fourth king. Sorry, the fourth judge. And she was the only female in the history of the Israelites.

And they had. They had. They were in this cycle, reading all through judges, just like God would deliver them. Then they would rebel. They'd start worship, worship, worshipping other gods.

And then they get in trouble. And then they would cry out to God, and God would send another judge. Well, this time it was a woman. And Deborah's name means a wild honeybee. And what they say about bees is that we can't live without bees because they say they pollinate.

And so there's some things they destroy and some things they create. And so she was a wild honeybee, which meant she was a dangerous force to deal with. God knew Deborah would rise up and do whatever he called her to do. But the reason being was because she knew God. She was fulfilled by the spirit of God.

And she said she was confident in God. She was willing to stand against the forces. Are we willing, women or men, to stand in confidence in God? If God tells you to go speak on the corner and say, thus saith the Lord, do we have the confidence? Are we confident enough in him?

Are we empowered by his spirit enough that. Okay, I'm there. We were talking about acts this morning, I think, in the little Bible study group, how Paul was beaten up, but yet, you know what encouraged the people. He didn't discourage him. He got up and moved on.

She was confident. She was a mediator. She was an advisor. She was a counselor. She was able to give orders.

She was able to direct. She was able to delegate. It didn't bother her. She wasn't humiliated. Some people, when they got a little power or a little position, they show it all over their chest.

They show it all over their face, or it's like, look, I'm all that in a bag of chips. And Deborah, like, no, no, no. She wasn't that kind of person. She was so

confident in God that she could have confidence in other people. She didn't have a select group of people that she used.

She used whoever God said you need. Sometimes when we get the idea I can only work with you. And I can only work with you because you think like me. And let me tell you a funny story. This was years ago, but one day I was standing at the kitchen sink, and I was mad at him, and I said, God, why didn't you give me somebody just like me?

And he has a sense of humor because I saw him smile. I'm like, okay, that probably was a bit much. So sometimes we want people that are like us, but in God's plan, he expects us to use whomever he's gifted to help get his task done. She was a prophetess, so she heard from God, and she spoke for God and she didn't mind, but God gave her an order. He said, I want you to tell Barack, hey, hey, hasn't God told you that you need to go down and take care of King Jabebe?

And he said, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, well, but I ain't going if you don't go. And I, I. People give him a hard time for that, but I don't give him a hard time for that. If you think of the woman that was standing beside him, she was a prophetess. She heard from God all the time.

Don't you think if I got in trouble, I'd want to have the woman or the person beside me that heard directly from God that says, back it up. Don't go there. So I don't count him as a coward. As a matter of fact, in Hebrews 11, I believe it's 32. He's counted in the wall of faith.

And so he was a man of faith. And Barak's name meant lightning. He was strong, he was spirit empowered. He. He's the commander of the Israelite army.

And I think, look at this. Look at God. He took this mighty woman and this mighty soldier. And, you know, it's typically, it's usually the man given orders, but the Lord gave the orders from the woman. And he had no issue with her saying, has God not told you to go?

He was not so egotistical, he was not so pompous that he couldn't take the order. He also loved God. He had confidence in God. He knew, hey, we, with two of us together, we can get this job done. He didn't say, well, look, I don't need you.

And yes, he told me, and I'll do it on my time. We have people that are like that. They don't want any suggestions. They don't want your opinion. They don't want your ideas.

They'd rather walk out in front of a truck and let the truck hit him, as opposed to somebody saying, hey, I think you better watch it. But anyway, he was full of wisdom. And to me, when he said, only if you go with me, it shows his humility. Humility is critical. Humility means I don't think so.

I don't think so much of myself that I can't honor you. There are so many people in positions, and I get so sick of it that they're so mighty and they're so powerful and they're all this. And because I do this and because I do that, I'm this, this, and this. And don't ever question me. You know what?

Don't ever do that. Don't ever challenge me, because if you do, you've got a problem and they want to squash you like a bug. I don't know if you've ever been in that situation, but I have on many occasions. But you know what? That's where your confidence in God.

I don't care where you came from. I don't care how old you are. I don't care what color you are. I don't care what size you are. I don't care what nationality you are.

When God told you to do it and he said, do it, you need to stand flat, feed it, and you say, God said do it, and I'm going to do it. I. I can take your insults,

I can take your criticism. I don't have to attack you because I know who I am in Christ, because he created me. He called me for a purpose. And you're not going to deprive me of the purpose and the plan that God has for my life.

How many of us back up in a corner when we face opposition? How many of us make excuses? It's the other person. Well, I'm here to serve. Nerdist.

If you back up, it's because of you. It ain't because of God. Because. Because God's put everything in us that we need to accomplish what we need to accomplish. But we need to ask the Holy Spirit of God.

Rise up in me, God. Rise up in me, Holy Spirit, and help me step out here and do what you called me to do. And you can do it shaking in your boots like I am right now. You can do it shaking, you can do it crying. But he'll give you the ability to do it.

I'm saying God has given every one of us a voice and. And a voice to speak for him. Everything he calls us to do is to bring glory to Him. There are people that are out there wandering. They're lost, they're dying.

They don't know what to do. Life is hard. Our voices, those of us that have received Jesus as savior, he calls us disciples. The world calls it influencers. Everybody's trying to be an influencer.

They want to be so noticed on Facebook, whatever That thing is, YouTube, you name it, so that I can make more money. Well, we have a whole book of influence, and it's called the Bible and his name is Jesus. And he's already told you you are an influencer. When you signed up for me, I told you I called you for a purpose and I got a job for you. And your job is not like her job, it's not like his job, but I gave it to you.

So get up and do it.

But anyway, Sisera, I'm sorry. Barak pursued Sisera. Okay, so Deborah gave the order, and Barak got up and moved what was the last order God gave you?

I know I've got an order that he gave me, and I'm still kind of sitting on it because I'm a little bit afraid because I'm a little bit afraid sometimes of what people will. I'm a little bit afraid because, oh, well, people will say she was that little girl from such and such. Oh, yeah, I remember when she did this or when she did that. But, you know, but the Lord was speaking to me, and he's speaking to us. Whatever's holding you back, God said, put it in my hands, rely on my spirit, and get up and do it.

And then we have Hebrew. Jael's husband. He was a Kenite, and he was part of the Midianites. Remember Moses in laws. And you know what?

They were friendly with each other, and they had a good relationship. But for some reason, Heber decided to. To come in alliance with Jabin, King Jabin. And so. But he had this nice little wife.

She was a foreigner, and her name was Jael. And she remembered from years ago, way back as far as Moses. We have always been in alliance. We've always been in relationship with the Kenites, with the Midianites. And she said.

And in her heart, she never said a word. She never said a word. But she did not. Not compromise with Heber. And that was the amazing.

Sometimes I can't keep my mouth shut. I'm just telling you. Sometimes I can't keep my mouth shut. I would have been. Heber says, you know, what's wrong with you?

You know, we're supposed to be. But she kept her mouth shut. I'm telling the truth. And so from that standpoint, she kept her mouth shut. She was a

foreigner.

She was. She was not even recognized as having a voice. But look at what God did. Her name meant wild goats. Her name meant that she was watchful, she was loyal, and that she was able to just.

She had strength, she had stability, she had agility. And even though she knew what was going on, she never said a word. She demonstrated her faithfulness in alliance. And so when Jabin. When Sisera came to her house, she was so hospitable.

She was so kind. And number one, he wasn't supposed to go into a woman's tent, but she said, come on in. Come on in. And I bet she think, I got something for you. Come on in here.

So she said, he asked for water, and she gave him milk. And to give milk was a sign of hospitality. And so he was as a guest, he wasn't even supposed to ask, but can't you imagine that the Lord's voice in her heart. Yeah, this is yours, baby. You got the last part.

Deborah had the first part. Barack had the second part, and now it's yours. So he goes in and she gets him comfortable, and then she covers him up. And he said, stand by the door. Stand by the door.

So if anybody comes, don't tell him I'm here. And I know she's just moving around nice and slow. And, oh, yeah, I got it. Yeah, okay. Don't worry about it.

And when she fell asleep, when he fell asleep, she got the tent and she got the hammer. But the most amazing thing about this story is for the women, their job was to put up tent tents. So she was used to using a tent peg. Do you understand? She was used to.

To using a tent peg and a hammer. She knew exactly how much force she needed to apply. Do you hear me? She knew how much. Those were her everyday household tools.

For some of us, it's pots and pans, but for her, it was a tent peg and a hammer. God put that man, put the enemy of Israel, into the hands of somebody that could take him out immediately. Do you see what he does? It took three of them to accomplish God's mission that day. It took three of them to deliver them from oppression.

I'm sure it takes probably a group of us. And he's waiting for us to stand up and to be the Deborahs. He's waiting for us to stand up and be the Baracks. He's waiting for us to stand up and be the JL's. Everything that whatever's in your hand, he wants us to use.

What are your gifts? What are your talents? What are your abilities? And what I love about this story is God's graciousness. Twenty years they were in oppression, and as soon as they get out, they're gonna go back.

But you know what? Every time they cried out with a repentant heart, he would send somebody else. So every time I've messed up, God has said, get up, girl. Okay? You've repented.

Get up and got going. I got something for you to do. I got people for you to meet. I don't care how many times you got down. If your heart is really repented, get up and keep moving.

We see his faithfulness. We see his mercy. He wasn't ready to throw his people away. I don't know where you are. I don't know what position you're in, but I can tell you God is Not ready to throw any of us away in his desire that none perish, but that all come to eternal life.

And he says what? Ephesians 2:10. He said, I created you on purpose. I'm paraphrasing on purpose for my purpose. Our lives are to bring him glory.

And if we stop and think that, I wouldn't have breath in my lungs if he didn't breathe it. I wouldn't have a voice to speak if he didn't give it, I wouldn't have eyes to see if he didn't open them, I wouldn't have legs to walk. How in the world can we say no, God, I'm not going to do what you asked. Everything we've been in in life has prepared us for such a time as this. With everything that's going on in our.

In our world, we are here at this time for a reason. Some of us are Deborahs, some of us are Baracks, some of us are JL's. And you know what? He's just waiting for you to sign up and say, okay, I'm ready to go. And so one of the things she, Jael used what God placed in her hand to fulfill Deborah's prophecy, and Barack is such an awesome man.

When she and Deborah said, now look, you're not going to get credit for this. A woman's going to. You're not going to get full honor. A woman is. He's like, no problem.

And you know what? We can say that when we're doing it for God. Do you know people that if you don't call their name, I'm like, I did this and I did that. And if you don't call their name, oh, my goodness, the world ends. But when we're doing something for the glory of God, we don't care who gets the credit.

God gets the credit. He gets the glory, not us. So in this message today, Galatians 6 and 4 says to pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done. And you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else, for we are each responsible for our own conduct. So he's given you work to do.

And I pray that we will find ourselves in the pages of the Word. I pray that we will find ourselves as a Deborah. And one of the things that I know that I know you may not be a Deborah all the time, but. But there's a time in your life you're going to be a Deborah. There's a time in your life you're going to be a jl and there's a time there's going to be a Barack.

And so from that standpoint, okay, God, who do you want me to be today? Who do you want me to be today? What do you want me to do? Okay, Joyce, I just want you to sit over there and be quiet. And God knows that's the hardest thing in the world for me.

I got to be quiet. Yes. I don't want you. I don't want you to say nothing. I just want you to march around the wall seven times.

I'm like, can't you give me something else?

I like to talk. So from that standpoint, we have to find our position. And if you look on your handout, I believe I gave you a handout. It says, sometimes it takes three. And one of the things I wanted.

Well, it takes three. And one of the things that the Lord popped in my head with this is God wants to do the impossible through us. That's why we're here. He wants to give us his power. He has a desire that he wants us to fulfill.

He wants us to help deliver those people that are lost and dying and bound up in sin. He wants us to show his love to the world. He wants his love inside of us to flow onto everyone around us. Did you hear me? Everyone.

Not a select group. He said everyone. As a matter of fact, I think it's John. I think it's 13, maybe 34. And even in first John, the word says, they will know you are my disciples by your love.

He didn't say, they'll know you by how much you can talk Christianese. He didn't

say, they'll know you how much you can do this. He said, they'll know you by your love. Jesus said, you'll know them by their fruit. There are some people, I'm like, okay, never mind God.

I don't know about that fruit. But let me keep going and let me keep my mouth shut, because some days mine don't look good either. And so from that standpoint, he said, our love is to be shed upon anyone, everyone. So as I come to a close to the message today, I want you to know that the hero in every one of these, every one of the stories in the Bible is God. Because, see, sometimes we decide.

We walk out after we hear a sermon. We walk out and say, I'm going to be a Deborah, gonna be a Barack, and I'm gonna be a JL. No, no, no. Wrong answer. I'm gonna yield myself to God to be Used as a Deborah, to be used as a Barack, to be used as a Jael.

However you want to use me, Lord, it's your story and it's your win. You get the glory. I'm just the instrument that you flow through. And when we get that right, then we don't have to struggle and compare ourselves with anybody else because God's gonna give us exactly what we need. One of the last thing is that with the attitude, look at the attitude of all three people, of Deborah, of Barack and Jael.

It reminded me of Jesus. Jesus gave up everything. He didn't come here to establish a relate of reputation for himself. He humbled himself to the point of death. Father, whatever you want me to do.

He stripped himself of every, every privilege that he had. I can't imagine how hard it was to be God locked up in a body to know that you have all this royalty, to know that you have all this power. But I'm going to let myself be trapped in this body that's hindered and I'm not even going to use it. Can you imagine what that feels like? But Jesus, he didn't come here to establish a reputation.

He came to serve. He said, I do what my father called me to do. And that's my challenge every day. God, I want to do what you want me to do, Lord, I need it. But then another thing that hit me like a ton of bricks, it took three for us.

It took the father, sin and his son. It took his son to die on the cross and it took the holy Spirit to give us the power to live. And so from that standpoint, it takes three. If you're trying to live your life without one or the other, it won't work. And it's one thing to say, yes, I believe you, God, and yes, I received you, Jesus.

But if you're not asking the Holy Spirit, fill me with your presence, fill me with your power, fill me with your ability. Then guess what? You live a frustrated Christian life because you're trying to do it in your own strength. It takes three. Jesus paid the price so that we don't have to be oppressed, we don't have to live in bondage.

But we have to rely on him. So today I ask you, today I beg you. I covet your prayers. When you pray for me, pray, lord, let her walk in the spirit today. Let her be the Deborah, the Barack or the JL you want her to be.

I'll pray that for the body of Christ. I pray for the body of Christ every day. That we will be the people of God. He's called us to be because we're here on purpose for a person. We're not here to be loyal to anybody but King Jesus.

We're here to bring praise and glory to his name. And that's my prayer. And that's my prayer for every man, woman sitting under the sound of my voice. That we come to know the Holy Spirit so well that when he says, go on that corner, I don't care how scary that corner is, you take yourself out. God, my confidence is not in me.

My confidence is in you. You told me to go and I'mma go do it. Open my mouth and let me praise your name. Open my mouth and let me speak. I don't care what they smell like.

I don't care what they look like. I don't care because you said, go do it. So in the name of Jesus, my prayer today. Men and women of God, let us be so full of the spirit. Let us rely on Jesus for our confidence.

Let us rely on him for who we are. And find our assignment. And don't let any devil in hell take it from you. Amen. In Jesus name.

And on your next steps, you have eyes to see, ears to hear and heart to obey. Billy tells us all the time, eyes to see, ears to hear, and I always include in my prayer, lord, give me a heart to obey. Because sometimes it's scary. And then will you do it? Whether it's a big task, whether it's a small task, will you do it if you don't get any notoriety?

Or will you do it only for the glory of God? And then the next one is, what did he put in your hands? What has he equipped you to do? And let me tell you, growing up, I thought I was being picked on. There were five kids in our family.

And when my grandmother was sick, I was the one that my mother would make us spend the night. And I would say, why is she picking on me? And she would say to me, you're the only one that can stay with her and tell me exactly what's wrong with her. And I helped my grandmother babysit. And if there was a kid that couldn't, they couldn't read right, read well, or they couldn't do math.

She would say, joyce Ann, go over there and help that baby. And I'm like, it's four others. I can't do it. And I wanted to run away from home at one time, but do you see? The Lord used that to groom me for what he had prepared for me.

I was supposed to be a nurse. I was supposed to be a teacher. And if you take those bad situations in your life and recognize God has put tools in your hands, if you let go of the negative, if you let him see the positive, say God, show me you've equipped me with something through this difficulty. And you know what? The sky is the limit.

So today ask him, Lord, reveal to me the plans and the purposes you have for me, even to those difficult times you equipped such a time. If there's anyone under the sound of my voice that hasn't confessed Jesus, meaning that you believe. And when I say believe, that means that you adhere to that you trust and you rely on him. I'm not talking about in your head. Believe that he's the Son of God, that he died on the cross and he rose again.

I pray today is that day for the confession. And then for some of you, you may have been like me for many, many years, trying to live the Christian life and frustrated because I couldn't figure out what the problem was. I heard about the Holy Spirit, but I didn't know the Holy Spirit. I'd been taught I had some misconceptions about the Holy Spirit. And once I came to know who he was, I started asking him to help.

So if you haven't come to the point where you give up and say, God, I can't do this on my own. Holy Spirit, I need more of you. Then I want you to also pray. Every head bow, every eye closed. Father, I praise.

Father, I thank you so much. For you, for your son, for the Holy Spirit, I thank you that you called every one of us. You've given us gifts, abilities and talents to help others to live an abundant life. To bring you glory. I pray whatever's missing and whatever's lacking in this body today, and by the power of your spirit provided, I give you glory and thanks in Jesus name, Amen.

If anybody needs prayer for prayer and otherwise, those of the rest of you, if you need to go, you are dismissed. Have an enjoyable rest of your day, Mother's Day or not, Amen.