

HEROES OF THE FAITH, THEN AND NOW

Three Unlikely Candidates

TEXT: Heb. 11:32

Introduction: Three men, Barak, Jephthah, and Samson, so different yet with 2 things in common.

1. God called each of them to deliver Israel.
2. Each made a unique response to the call of God.

I. BARAK, THE MAN WHO SAID YES WHEN OTHERS SAID NO.

Judges 4 and 5

A. Why is he listed? So little about him. (Jud. 4, 5 and Heb. 11 is it.)

1. I read story of Jud. 4 repeatedly and said, "What is it from Barak I should see as my example?" Nothing came.
2. The Lord directed my attention to chapter 5:15b-17.
 - a. Where we learn that not all the tribes arose to fight against Jabin, King of Canaan and Sisera, his general.
3. When many said no to the call, Barak said yes.
4. Why say no?
 - a. Perhaps not sufficiently threatened.
 - b. Perhaps fearful of the 900 chariots.
 - c. Perhaps apathetic, got used to the oppression.
 - d. Perhaps they had no faith that victory was possible.
5. Same things today. **The important thing about Barak is not his ability, but his availability.**

That is what God is concerned about for each of us.

God can handle our abilities, or lack thereof.

But He will not force our availability. Oft times we fill our lives with so many things that we are too busy to do the things He has purposed for us.

II. JEPHTHAH, THE MAN WHO SAID YES IN SPITE OF HIS BACKGROUND.

His story is told in Judges 11.

A. Jephthah's background

- 1. Son of a harlot**
- 2. Hated by brothers**
- 3. Driven from homeland**
- 4. Lived among worthless fellows**
- 5. Grounded in sin**

B. Why did God call Jephthah to the task?

Was it because there were no valiant men living righteously in the land? – I doubt it.

1. I don't know why.
 - a. Why did He call a baseball player like Billy Sunday?
 - b. Why did He call a little dirty face Chicago boy DL Moody?
 - c. Why did He call a country hick kid Billy Graham?
 - d. Why did He call a rough, pool playing young adult like Johnny Hunt?
2. I don't know, He just did, like He's still calling today.

C. Our background does not inhibit God's call.

D. Sometimes we let our background inhibit our response.

1. Not me
2. Couldn't be
3. Can't do it
4. Too much sin
5. Too many obstacles
6. We are given Jephthah to say yes in spite of it all.

III. SAMSON, THE MAN WHO FINALLY SAID YES TO GOD.

A. The hand of the Lord was on Samson before birth.

B. God made Samson a Nazarite from birth.

- 1. No shaving or cutting the hair.**
- 2. No intoxicating drink.**
- 3. No touching of the dead.**

C. The Spirit of Lord came mightily on Samson to give him great power and strength.

D. But Samson lived for lust of the flesh – to satisfy bodily desires and lived a life of uselessness to God though he judged Israel for 20 years.

E. During that time Samson

1. **Took a Philistine wife.** (group he was supposed to conquer)
2. **Broke every vow of the Nazarite.**
3. **Became a murderer for sport.**
4. **His bitterness led to the destruction of his own wife.**
5. **Became a seeker of harlots.**
6. **All of which led to his downfall ...**

Judges 16:20-21 ²⁰ And she said, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!” So he awoke from his sleep, and said, “I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!” But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.
²¹ Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison.

F. So where is the example? No where yet.

1. **God called Samson to live for God and serve Him as judge of Israel.**
2. **God equipped Samson mightily for the task.**
3. **But Samson lived for Samson and his desires until ...**

a. Judges 16:21-31

Finally Samson said yes.

Finally he loved not his life – even unto death.

Finally he gave up his sensual desires to say yes to God.

How long has God been waiting on you? What will it take for you to say yes to God?

CONCLUSION: As we look at these

1. One who said yes when others said no.
2. One who said yes in spite of his background.
3. One who only finally said yes.

I see one other picture.

How much our Great God can do with so little when we say “Yes” to Him.

Adapted from "Touch of the Master's Hand" by *Myra Brooks Welch*

It was battered and scarred, And the auctioneer
thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
but he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bid, good folks", he cried,
"Who'll start the bidding for me?"
"One dollar, one dollar, Do I hear two?"
"Two dollars, who makes it three?"

"Three dollars once, three dollars twice, going for three," But, No,
From the room far back a fine young man
Came forward and picked up the bow,
Then wiping the dust from the old violin And tightening up all the strings,
He played a melody, pure and sweet, As sweet as the angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said "What now am I bid for this old violin?"
As he held it up with its' bow.

"One thousand, one thousand, Do I hear two?"
"Two thousand, Who'll make it three?"
"Three thousand once, three thousand twice,
Going and gone", said he.

The audience cheered, But some of them cried,
"We just don't understand." "What changed its' worth?"
the man replied.
"The Touch of the Masters Hand."

And many a soul with life out of tune
All battered and scarred by sin
Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd
Much like that old violin

A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,
A game and he travels on.
He is going once, he is going twice,
He is going and almost gone.

But the Master comes,
And the foolish crowd never can quite understand,
The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought
By the Touch of the Masters' Hand.