SISERA'S MOTHER



JUDGES 5: 20-30

SISERAS MOTHER

NAME: : Sisera'smother

ABOUT: What we know of Sisera and his mother. Sisera is the chief military leader for King Jabin. It's thought he wasn't a Canaanite, but a mercenary brought in to lead. If this is true, then Sisera's mother was also an outsider. We only hear of her in Scripture through the song of Deborah, a song praising God for defeating Israel's enemies once again. In fact, we know nothing of the truth about Sisera's mother; she exists only in Deborah's poetry and imagination. But for us she is an interesting study. Deborah pictures her standing by the window, confident in her son's battle prowess. She imagines her waiting for his return and the scene unfolding just behind the latticed windows of her palatial home. It is thought by some that Deborah saw this as a vision - we may never know, but there is definitely an air of gloat, that she is yet to discover the truth of her son's death - long after Deborah herself knows his fate.
Deborah imagines Sisera's mother, surrounded by wise women telling her what she wants to hear, a place of delusion.

Scripture. Judges 5:26-28
she struck Sisera; she crushed his head;
she shattered and pierced his temple. *27* ***Between her feet***
he sank, he fell, he lay still; between her feet he sank, he fell;
where he sank, there he fell—dead.
28 ***"Out of the window she peered,***
the mother of Sisera wailed through the lattice:

A WINDOW ON OUR SOUL



Windows appear more often than you would think in the bible. It symbolises a boundary between the internal mind and the external world. Physically Siseras mother is trapped inside looking out to a reality she doesn't want to face. The lattice may provide enough obscurity for her to remain in the illusion.

A window is a viewpoint; we can often see further afield from. Yet she still chooses what she sees. She reframes her vulnerability into a story of triumph, victory and dominance, but it isn't the truth, we know its only the truth that sets you free.

The battle we are told came right to the borders of their land, Deborah who is writing this scene is almost gloating on the delusion and soon to be revealed misery of this mother. Deborah too is imagining a scenario that suits her narrative, different to this anxious mother but nonetheless a created scene.

Small group questions

1.What do you tell yourself when facing something difficult? The worst or best case scenario?

2.If you could see the future, would you want to? Why or why not?

3.What does this tell us about God's wisdom that we arent supposed to know?

THE SWEETNESS OF DELUSION



Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the hoofbeats of his chariots?'
29 ***Her wisest princesses answer,***
indeed, she answers herself,
30 ***'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?'
31 ***"So may all your enemies perish, O Lord!***
But your friends be like the sun as he rises in his might."

Reflection
It seems here theres an echo chamber - everyone affirming the most comforting story, to each other and for Siseras mother even to herself. Hope is good, we were created for hope, it's the source of that hope that makes a difference. We have heard how we are hard wired for empathy, to experience some of anothers pain. Sympathy is different, it feels *for* someone, empathy feels *with* someone so therefore costs us more.

Small group questions

1.How do you accompany someone who is suffering?

2.What feels uncomfortable for you to be present to? How do you deal with it?

3.What is your experience of how people have walked with you inhard times? What was helpful - what wasn't?

FOR PERSONAL REFELCTION

Scripture Ephesians 4:15

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,
2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.
3 For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbour. 5 For each will have to bear his own load.

Reflection

There will be for everyone, a story we tell ourselves to protect us from uncomfortable truths or from a fear of what we will have to face . Maybe its a victim story, maybe its hiding behind a diagnosis, maybe its a narrative we have (often unintentionally) created that serves to stop us moving forward. It can be a mindset of “it will always be like this.” or “This is beyond my power to change”sometimes its that work or home would fall apart without us, sometimes this is true but it is never beyond the power of God, if you are brave enough to ask. Remember the truth will set you free....

Questions

How do I balance the desire to comfort others with the need to speak truth? What would I rather avoid in others pain?

What delusions am I telling myself because they are more convenient than truth? Ask the Holy Spirit to gently show you.

How does it really serve me to do this, and what do I fear may happen if I let it go? What are the ‘spoils’ of this delusion?

WHERE IS JESUS?

Mary waits for a living son that everyone believes is dead - Sisera's mother waits for a son who is dead they are trying to believe is alive.
We too are awaiting the return of a son. Mary remains present in her sons agony and the reality of her own, there is no escape or space for illusion.



The maidservants imagine Sisera dividing the spoils of victory including captured women. Jesus teaches us that greatness is found not in dominating but in humble service.

In John 9, Jesus heals a blind man then challenges those who believe they can already see. Spiritual blindness links both stories.

Sisera's mother listens to the wisdom of the women around her, but Jesus says "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"

Works of Mercy -Comfort the sorrowful

"'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." Rev 21:4

Somewhere in your social circle there will be someone who would appreciate your time, just listening. How good are you at listening to others? It's so tempting to come up with answers and solutions but often those who are suffering simply need you to be present. Try to listen attentively to people this week, it won't be so easy to begin with but to love others is to give them your full attention. People who feel seen and heard will feel lifted by time with you. This is how we accompany and heal most effectively. Where are you being called to be present this week?

TAKING IT TO PRAYER

Psalm 139

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.
2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.
Help me to see what is true in all things, especially in myself.

4 Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.
5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.
Help me to sit in the uncomfortable places with the knowledge you are there.

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.
Help me know there is nowhere and no reason to hide from your love

11 If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,”even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.
Lord let your light shine in the darkest of places, those places in us and those around us. Amen

5 WAYS TO OFFER COMFORT

1. Be present rather than trying to fix things.
When someone is grieving, we can feel under pressure to find the right words. But often our presence, our silence and our willingness to listen are far more valuable.

2. Follow the example of Jesus at Lazarus's tomb.
In John 11:35, Jesus knew that Lazarus would rise again, yet He still entered fully into the sorrow of those around Him.

3. Offer hope without denying pain. Christian hope is not pretending that everything is fine. It is believing that God remains present even when everything is not fine.Sometimes we unintentionally minimise grief with phrases such as "God has a plan" Even when spoken with love, these can make someone feel that their sorrow is somehow inappropriate.

4. Allow difficult emotions, including anger at God. God does not require us to disguise our feelings before approaching Him. A grieving person may feel angry, abandoned, guilty or even relieved. We can offer them a safe space to express those feelings without judgement.

5. Listen without comparing their loss to your own. We naturally want to connect through our experiences. But saying "I know exactly how you feel" can unintentionally take attention away from the person grieving.
Instead, we can ask: "What has been the hardest part for you?"
"What do you miss most about them?"

Oh and Pray for them, but don't impose prayer.
Prayer can be a tremendous comfort, but it is worth asking permission.Sometimes the most appropriate prayer is simply: "Lord, hold this person close when they cannot find the strength to hold on themselves".

