Be A Dream Team Player

Judges 4:1-23

The **1992 United States men's Olympic basketball team**, nicknamed the "Dream Team", was the first American Olympic team to feature active professional players from the National Basketball Association (NBA). The team has been described by journalists around the world as the greatest sports team ever assembled.[2][3][4]

At the 1992 Summer Olympics held in Barcelona, the team defeated its opponents by an average of 44 points en route to the gold medal against Croatia. (wikipedia.org)

It was the first time that professional athletes were allowed to play for the United States Olympic Team. Because they got to pick the top NBA players, the team was collectively called, "The Dream Team." It consisted of three of the greatest players ever to play the game: Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, and Larry Bird, along with Charles Barkley, centers David Robinson and Patrick Ewing, and forward Karl Malone. It had the best of the best: best shooters, rebounders, and ball handlers; everyone playing their position. It was a team a coach and country dreamed of having.

In the book of Judges chapter 4 of we read of another Dream Team, that consisted of three individuals and the coach, each player gifted in different areas, playing their individual positions, bringing a victory that was more crucial and needful than that of a gold medal at the Olympics. The victory that was won brought about the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage and oppression that they had endured for twenty years.

The three players that made up this “Dream Team” were Deborah, Barak, and Jael. The coach of course was and is God.
Before I get into the heart of this message, I need to tell you that God has built another dream team. It is "the church of the Lord Jesus Christ." And this team is invincible, unbeatable, and indestructible. I didn’t say that Jesus Did

Jesus said in, **Matthew 16:18 (ESV)** (18) And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And guess what? If you’re a follower of Christ, you are a player on this team, and you have been given a role to play. You are not to be a "bench warmer."

In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, the apostle Paul portrays the church as a "body," with each part needed for the body to function properly.

**1 Corinthians 12:7 (NKJV)** (7) But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

When we read and study the 12 chapter of 1 Corinthians, we discover that every member is important and necessary for the success of the whole body.

In this message we are going to see how each player on this team operates according to their ability.

After Ehud died, if you saw last week’s message, you’ll remember that he was the one who turned his disability into possibility. We see once again that the people of God did evil in the sight of God and were disciplined for their rebellion. There is a phrase seen over and over throughout the book: That phrase is, “And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.”

**Judges 4:2-3 (ESV)** (2) And 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. (3) Then 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.

Jabin is a successor in a line of rulers that Joshua had killed. In Joshua 10:10-11 we see that Israel under the leadership of Joshua destroyed Hazor.

Hazor had been rebuilt and raised from its ruins. Here we see a resurrection of an old enemy that had been destroyed. It is important to understand that this decline and captivity under Jabin is the third one. The number three in the Word of God means revival and resurrection. The former enemy enslaves Israel once again. Many times, this been the case in the history of the church, and it is still true today. Satan knows how to revive old sins and evil habits and use them to bring God's people into captivity.

They cried out to God for relief, this was not a cry of repentance. They wanted comfort, not cleansing.

In verse 4 we meet the first person and the captain of this “Dream Team” Her name is Deborah.

Judges 4:4-7 (ESV) (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. (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’?”

Deborah was the only female judge Israel had. She was also a prophetess. A prophetess or prophet was one who spoke for God to the people.
God (the Coach) raised her up for this time of deliverance and spoke to her and gave her specific instructions about what to do. It was a plan.

Every winning team has to have a good plan.

**Proverbs 21:5 (NLT)** *(5)* Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.

This refers to a person who diligently and carefully plans his work and works his plans. This is compared with a careless person who makes hasty decisions and actions without thinking them through. The one results in success (plenty) and the other in failure (poverty).

Since God is the coach, He knows the outcome if we follow His Game plan. In the life of the Christian, it is God that designs the plan of life and communicates that plan through His word and through the leaders that He has placed withing the body of Christ.

God has a plan for every Christian, no one is left out. We all are responsible for our part in the life that we are called to live for God.

Let’s look at how this plan came to completion and what part each of these three played as the Dream Team.

**I. A Good Plan Has to be Communicated.**

**Judges 4:6-7 (NKJV)** *(6)* Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; *and* against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand'?”

Deborah communicated God’s plan to Barak. Deborah was a prophetess. What do prophets and prophetesses do: they speak the word of God to His People. Even today, in the church, God has given the gift of prophecy to some. What is prayer. Prayer is talking to God. What good is praying if God doesn’t speak back to us when we pray. Prayer is not just a one-sided conversation where we speak our hearts and minds, and God has nothing to say. Prayer is a two-way conversation.

**1 Corinthians 14:3 (NLT)** (3) But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them. A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church.

The Apostle Paul is teaching us the value of prophesying verse speaking in tongues in a church service. In a church service we are here to build up one another, to strengthen one another, to encourage one another and comfort one another.

Every gift has a place and should be utilized under the direction of the Holy Spirit to build and edify the body of Christ.

The church still has prophets today who get a timely word for edification and admonition. However here is a requirement: it can NEVER violate God's written revealed Word; it can never be contrary to what God has already spoken and given us in His written word.

God has appointed those in the church that would speak on His behalf.

**1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 (NKJV)** (19) Do not quench the Spirit. (20) Do not despise prophecies. (21) Test all things; hold fast what is good. (22) Abstain from every form of evil.
Paul teaches us that we are not to hate the preaching of God’s word or quench the Spirit of God. He teaches us to take what is being preached and analyze it against the word of God. Reject what is false and hang on to what is true.

God still speaks today through human instruments to communicate a His word to someone or the body of Christ. I still believe that God gives pastors of local churches a specific vision for that church as they yield to Him. As the pastor spends time with God, He begins to give him an understanding of what He's called that pastor to do. The pastor then shares the vision with the people accompanied with a strategy that manifests itself into a plan whereby to fulfill that vision.

The pastor is not to attempt to carry out the plan by himself. He is simply the vessel through whom God speaks to deliver the plan.

**1 Peter 4:10 (NLT)** (10) God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

Every Christian has received one or more spiritual gifts from God. A spiritual gift is a talent or ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and able to be used in the ministry of the church. Spiritual "gifts" help us as God's people to serve and love one another and continue the work of spreading the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When use use our gifts to serve others, we are faithfully sharing God's grace in its various forms to others.
Israel followed the crowd, like many Christians today that have only a lukewarm faith. Israel needed a voice to speak God's Word and call them to follow God. With Ehud gone God calls a woman, a mother in Israel by the name of Deborah!

Deborah communicated God’s message to Barak, "Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; (7) and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand'?"

By communicating God’s plan to Barak she did two things.

A. She Confirmed What God Had Already Spoken to Barak. She said, “Has not the Lord God Israel commanded. God had already spoken to this man; he just needed a confirmation.

Confirmation is the act or process of confirming or assuring. Deborah wasn’t telling Barak anything new. I believe God had already spoken to him and told him what to do. He was just needing and waiting on the confirmation.

Sometimes when we since that God is giving us directions, we often wait for someone to come along and confirm what we synced God speaking to us.

With that being said, we do not need a confirmation on the clear and precise commandments already given to us in the word of God.

- Witnessing
- Reading and studying God’s word
- Church attendance
• Praying
• Loving one another and others.

There are some clear guidelines in God’s word where we do not need any confirmation.

B. She Affirmed God’s Promise. I will deliver him into your hand’?"
Sometimes we need to be reminded that God is faithful and will keep His promises to us. When we have been beat down, misused, abused, and lied to it’s hard to believe anyone. Thank God He is trustworthy and faithful to fulfill His promises to us. Sometimes after we have weathered the storms of life our faith can be week an in need of strengthening. It’s then that God places people in our lives to remind us of God’s word and promise to us.

**Hebrews 10:24-25 (NKJV)** (24) And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, (25) not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

I share these scriptures because it tells us the responsibility that we have toward each other. It says we are to look for ways to stir up one another to love and good works. We are to exhort, encourage and build up one another especially as we see the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ drawing near.

Folks this is not just about church attendance. We can show up at church and still fail at carrying out God’s plane for the body of Christ. It is also about what we do when we go to church.

Deborah communicated God’s plan to Barak and now it is up to him to do his part.
II. The Plan Has to Be Believed and Acted Upon.

Judges 4:8-9 (NKJV) (8) And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!" (9) So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.

A. Believe It:

Let me ask you a question. What good is a plan if we don’t believe it and act upon it? Truthfully, we won’t be successful unless we do.

Many have said that Barak was reluctant to go because of a lack of faith. That may be partially true. But according to God’s word Barak was a man of faith.

Hebrews 11:32-33 (NKJV) (32) And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: (33) who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.

I noticed that Barak is listed among those who were heroes of faith.

Why then was he reluctant?

I don’t believe that Barak was scared. It may have been that he wanted her presence during the battle as a spiritual advisor. If you will remember back when George Bush senior was president that on the eve of invading Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm he had Billy Graham in the White House. Why? Was it because he needed some spiritual comfort and godly counsel during a time of crisis like that? Could Barak not have been saying, in essence, "I'm a fighter, not a preacher?"
Years of oppression has a way of wearing us down and causing us to doubt our own ability to carry out our part or fulfilling our responsibility. All of us at some point and time have gone through tremendous storms or battles that left us feeling worn out, useless and oppressed.

What is oppression? Oppression is an act or instance of oppressing or subjecting to cruel or unjust impositions or restraints. Downtrodden, needy, and hurt. To dominate or be under the power of another.

**Acts 10:34-38 (NKJV)** (34) Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. (35) But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. (36) The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ--He is Lord of all-- (37) that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: (38) how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and *healing all who were oppressed by the devil*, for God was with Him.

Peter is explaining to Cornelius and all those who were present the plan of God concerning the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah, While Peter was explaining God’s plan of redemption to them they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit moved on them.

Jesus broke the chains of oppression and bondage for the lives of these people in a moments time because they believed the plan.

He will do the same for all of those who believe and trust Him and His plan for their lives.
Luke 4:18 (NKJV) 18 "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;"

B. Act On It:

Not only did he believe it, but he acted on it. We know this because in verse 14 you see "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."

I believe Barak had great faith to believe that God would accomplish His purposes through him and acted upon it. It's one thing to say you have faith to believe God can do something. It's another to act on it.

Faith that does not act is dead. A living and vibrant in God will act on the promises of God. Action is faith in progress, motion, moving and doing.

Deborah knew the timing of the attack. Was that may have been another reason that Barak wanted her with him? It's one thing to have a plan; it's altogether another thing to operate it in God's timing.

While we are all supposed to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus daily. However, there are times when we need to be sensitive to the leading of God’s Spirit to fulfill a certain or specific purpose.

When we move in the timing of God’s plan and purpose we will see great results.

Judges 4:15-16 (NKJV) 15 And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. 16 But Barak pursued the chariots and
the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

The time of this battle was during the "dry" season when the Valley of Jezreel was solid enough and dry enough for 900 chariots to do battle. During the rainy season, Sisera knew that his chariots would bog down and get stuck in the mud. This was his opportunity to quash the Israelites. He did not know that God had planned to use the River Kishon as a part of His plan.

The victory song from chapter five alerts the reveals the fact that God caused a heavy rain, and the river overflowed its banks. The chariots bogged down in the mud; there was confusion, and the troops fled, and consequently failed.

God’s word says, "the LORD routed Sisera." Barak and his men had to use their swords, but it was the LORD who confused and routed the enemy. I believe this is the evidence of faith. We step out in faith, using the weapons at our disposal, but when it comes down to it, the LORD is the One who does the routing and gives the victory. God controls every element of His plan for His glory and can change circumstances in a moments time to accomplish what He's calling you to do. Even though the odds were against Barak and his army, having to face 900 iron chariots, he had faith to believe God would empower Him. He literally "exercised" his faith!

III. We Must Follow the Plan to Completion.

Judges 4:17-24 (NKJV) (17) However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. (18) And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear." And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket. (19) Then he said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink,
for I am thirsty." So, she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him. (20) And he said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, 'Is there any man here?' you shall say, 'No.' " (21) Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. (22) And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, I will show you the man whom you seek." And when he went into her tent, there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple. (23) So, on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel. (24) And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

Jael helped to complete the plan.

She knew that this was the commander of the armies of her oppressor. She understood that she had to take advantage of the opportunity.

She probably woke up that morning not having a clue what the day held. She was probably minding her own business, going through her daily routines as normal and along comes Sisera (an opportunity). She invites him in, covers him in a blanket and gives him some milk. Then she takes what comes naturally to her and uses it for a supernatural purpose. She delivered!

The Christian life is a journey. Every day we yield ourselves to God allowing ourselves to be used and making the most of every opportunity. What is in your hand that you think could never be used to advance God’s purpose for His glory of God?

Jael was a housewife; In those days’ wives were responsible for setting up the tent. So, she knew how to use a hammer and a tent peg. Do you think she
ever imagined using that to deliver her people from out under the oppression of the enemy?

**Ephesians 5:15-16 (NKJV)** (15) See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, (16) redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

**Colossians 4:5 (NKJV)** (5) Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.

**Romans 12:6 (NKJV)** (6) Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith.

We are to make the most of every opportunity that God gives us in life. We are not to waste our time worrying or wondering if God can use us on “His Dream Team”. I said, “His Dream Team”. I am just one of the players on the team trying to use what God has given me for His purpose and glory. Everyone of us has something that we can use to serve God and His purpose.

It’s time to stop complaining about what we don't have and use what God has given us!

Don't be guilty of thinking that one man, the pastor or church leader, should deliver the plan, believe the plan, and execute the plan. Otherwise, you will never know the joy of being a hero. Do you know your spiritual gift? You ought to be able to say it like your phone number, because it's a part of who you are. We want to help you. A part of our plan will be to help you discover it; because when you are operating within your giftedness, you are energized, passionate, and productive. **Realize that you are a part of the greatest team ever: the body of Christ.**

**2 Corinthians 6:1-2 (NKJV)** (1) We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. (2) For He says: "In an
acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

The Lord Jesus to this earth to die for our sins. Therefore, this is the day of salvation. If you are not saved, there is no time like the present to receive God’s forgiveness.

If you are not using your gifts, talents, and abilities to serve God’s purpose and glory, now is the time to begin.

Judges 4:24 (24) And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

Israel finished the job. They completed their mission. Will we do the same. The Church of God has a vision, “Finish the Commitment”. It’s a vision to reach and impact the world with the message of the gospel. As your pastor I want us to do our part to make that happen. Will you join me on this mission. If so reply, “Yes, I am Committed to the Great Commission of Christ!”

God bless:

Prayer: