<u>WEDNESDAY</u> Women Prophets = Called/Courageous/Covered by Grace

- Thru/out Scripture = God called both men /women
    - to communicate His truth
- A prophet was **not** simply someone = who predicted future events
- But person chosen by God to **receive / faithfully deliver** His message
- OT Hebrew = nevi'[ee] ah = woman prophet [**Ex 15:20** = Miriam]
- NT Greek = *prophētis* prof'-fay-tace [**Luke 2:36** = Anna / identified as]
- Bible / abundant evidence = God entrusted women w/ prophetic gift
- Miriam / Deborah / Huldah /Anna / four daughters of Philip
    - are among women recognized for prophetic ministry
- Their stories teach us three outstanding truths.
    1. **God calls whom He chooses**
    2. **God uses faithful voices in times of crisis**
    3. **God's messengers must continually depend upon His grace**

God Calls Whom He Chooses

- **Exodus 15:20-21** identifies Miriam as "the prophetess."
- Sang song of victory = helped Israel recognize = Red Sea deliverance had come from supernatural intervention of Lord

Micah 6:4 God declares: "For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage; And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam."

- Remarkable statement = God Himself said He had sent Miriam
    - along w/ = Moses / Aaron = to help lead His people

Judges 4:4 "Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lap'idoth, was judging Israel at that time."

- Deborah = both prophetess / judge
- Children of Israel came to her for judgment / spiritual guidance
- When nation / oppressed by king of Canaan
    - God gave Deborah = message for Barak

Judges 4:6 "Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor'?"

- Not personal opinion = she delivered / command from God

- When time for battle arrived = Deborah declared:

Judges 4:14 "Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the Lord gone out before you?"

- Her confidence = not in Israel's army = in God who had spoken to her
- NT also records women receiving = prophetic gift.
- **Luke 2:36-38** describes Anna as "a prophetess"
    - she served God continually in / temple
    - spoke about Messiah to those waiting for redemption
- **Acts 21:8–9** tells us that Philip / evangelist "had four virgin daughters who prophesied."
- These passages establish = important biblical truth
    - God is sovereign in choosing His messengers

1 Corinthians 12:4 "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

1 Corinthians 12:11 Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts "to each one individually as He wills"

- God is not restricted by human expectations
    - He sees / heart = appoints His servants
    - Equips them for = work He has called them to do

<u>Point #2 God Uses Faithful Voices in Times of Crisis</u>

- Many women prophets served during critical moments
    - in history of God's people
- Deborah ministered during time of…
    - national oppression / spiritual decline
- **Judges 4:3** says king of Canaan had "harshly oppressed the children of Israel for twenty years."
- Israel needed more than / military plan = needed word from Lord
- Thru Deborah = God awakened courage in Barak
    - called Israel to action
- After victory = Deborah's song recorded in **Judges 5** Reminded Israel
    - victory came when leaders accepted their responsibility / people willingly responded / God intervened on their behalf
- **Huldah** = woman prophet = served during national spiritual crisis

- During repairs to / temple =high priest discovered = Book of the Law
- When it was read to King Josiah = tore his clothes / realized how seriously Judah had violated God's covenant
- Josiah commanded his leading officials:

2 Kings 22:13 "Go, inquire of the Lord for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found."

- These men included = high priest / royal secretary / members of king's council = Yet, when they needed reliable word from God
    - **2 Kings 22:14** says they went to Huldah the prophetess
- Huldah faithfully delivered / difficult message
    - confirmed judgment would come upon Judah because people had forsaken God / turned to idolatry
- But, also delivered God's message of mercy to King Josiah

2 Kings 22:19 "Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I spoke against this place… I also have heard you."

- Huldah's message helped inspire one of
    - greatest reformations in Judah's history
- Josiah renewed covenant = removed idols = restored true worship
    - and called nation back to obedience (**2 Kings 23:1–25**).
- One faithful voice = speaking God's truth / at right time
    - can influence an entire nation
- God still needs faithful voices today = all believers called to witness
- **Acts 1:8** Jesus said: "You shall be witnesses to Me."

<u>Point #3 = God's Messengers Still Need His Grace</u>

- God does not call people because they are already perfect
- He calls people who = willing to listen / repent / surrender / grow / depend upon His grace
- **Numbers 12** records Miriam's serious failure, along w/ Aaron
- Miriam / Aaron spoke against Moses because of
    - Ethiopian woman he had married

- Beneath their criticism = jealousy concerning Moses' unique leadership role

Numbers 12:2 "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?"

- God heard their words = defended Moses
- Miriam struck w/ leprosy = temporarily removed from the camp
- **Numbers 12:13** Moses prayed, "Please heal her, O God, I pray!"
- Miriam's story reminds us = being called / gifted by God does not make a person sinless
- Same true of male prophets. Moses acted rashly (**Numbers 20:10–12**). Elijah became deeply discouraged (**1 Kings 19:4**). Jonah ran from God's assignment (**Jonah 1:1–3**). Peter denied Jesus three times (**Luke 22:54–62**).
- God's messengers must never become objects of worship
- Our faith must rest in Jesus Christ / His Word
    - not in supposed perfection / of a human being
- At same time =should not conclude failure makes person forever unusable
- When = genuine repentance = God forgives / restores / continues His work of transformation (**1 John 1:9, 2 Corinthians 12:9)**

- **God calls whom He chooses**
- **God uses faithful voices in times of crisis**
- **God's messengers must continually depend upon His grace**
- Qualification for service = not prominence / position / perfection
    - It is = surrendered heart /willing to say: "Here am I! Send me." —**Isaiah 6:8**