

SERMON: A QUESTION THAT SAYS A LOT (A VETERANS DAY SERMON)

Judges 5:28

The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots.

Introduction

There are many types of questions. There are open-ended questions and there are closed-ended questions. There are leading questions and there are follow-up questions. There are probing questions and there are thought-provoking questions. There are rhetorical questions in which the answer is apparent.

The Bible is full of questions and, thank God, it is full of answers. These answers we definitely need. God asked Adam a question. "Where art thou?" Job asked a question. "If a man dies, will he live again?" Jesus asked the apostles a question. "Who do men say that I am?" Then He asked another related question. "Who do you say that I am?"

Every question is a quest for additional information. However, every question, also, has a presumptive assertion. In other words, there is a statement behind the question. For example, "Are you mad at me?" asserts the possibility that something could have transpired that made you angry with me. Unfortunately, some politicians know how to ask a question that asserts something negative and the assertion breeds suspicion against their opponent. This mother's question, in our text, says a lot about military service.

Let me give you the context of this text. (This is the short version.)

Israel was in a war of liberation against the Canaanites, who had held the Northern Kingdom in subjection and oppression for twenty years. Sisera was the commander of the Canaanite army. He was appointed to that position by King Jabin. From all military and practical analysis, the army of Israel was no match for the Canaanite army. Contrary to how it looked on the surface, the army of Israel won a stunning victory. Good won over evil. Deborah and Barak were instrumental in providing the leadership that led to the victory. After the defeat of his army, Sisera fled and hid in the home of Heber the Kenite. He was deceptively lured into the home by Heber's wife Jael. (Heber was not at home at the time.) Sisera let his guard down and went to sleep. While he was asleep, Jael drove a tent peg through his temple and killed him.

Of course this narrative is horrible – even sickening. If reading and talking about war is sickening, what about the individuals that had to experience it firsthand. This verse of our text is the graphic description of Sisera’s mother waiting for her son to return home from battle. Her wait was a long agonizing one. All kinds of thoughts must have rushed through her mind, worrying if the long delay meant defeat or even death for her son.

Finally, the truth was revealed to her. Her son would not return alive. The reality of warfare hit her “smack-dab” in the face. Sisera was a general in the army, but he was still her “baby boy.” (Some non-Biblical writings have given Sisera’s mother the name “Themech.” The Bible leaves her unnamed.) I mentioned earlier that each question expresses assertive assumptions. Let’s see what this question asserts.

Exposition

1. War, Unfortunately, Is A Part Of Our Sin-Cursed World.

- (It Is Naïve Not To Realize This Fact.)
- (Many Of The Well-Known Biblical Narratives Are About War.)
- (Paul Tells Us To Put On The Armor Of A Roman Soldier.)
- (Some Of The Classic Literature Is About War.)
- (Some Of The Great Hymns Of The Church Are About War.)

2. Military Life Is Difficult For The Enlisted.

- (Life Or Death Combat.)
- (Rigorous Physical And Mental Conditioning.)
- (Adherence To A Strict Chain Of Command.)

3. Life Is Difficult For Military Families.

- (There is Frequent, Extended Loneliness.)
- (Significant Days Are Celebrated Without Loved Ones.)
- (Periods When Communication With Family Is Prohibited.)

4. We Should Appreciate Their Dedicated Service.

- (They Protect Our Freedoms.)
- (They Protect Our Freedom To Protest Their Military Involvement.)
- (They Mimic Spiritual Warfare.)

Closing Thoughts

Our ancestors had faith in a better future, despite the oppression and cruelty. They believed that there would come a day when war would cease and there would be nothing but

worship. They believed in a future when the lion would lay down with the lamb. They believed in a day when swords would be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. Therefore, they could sing with hope and conviction these words:

“Gonna lay down my sword and shield,

Down by the river side,

Down by the river side,

Down by the river side.

Gonna lay down my sword and shield,

Down by the river side,

To study war no more.

I ain't gonna study war no more,

I ain't gonna study war no more,

I ain't gonna study war no more.”

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