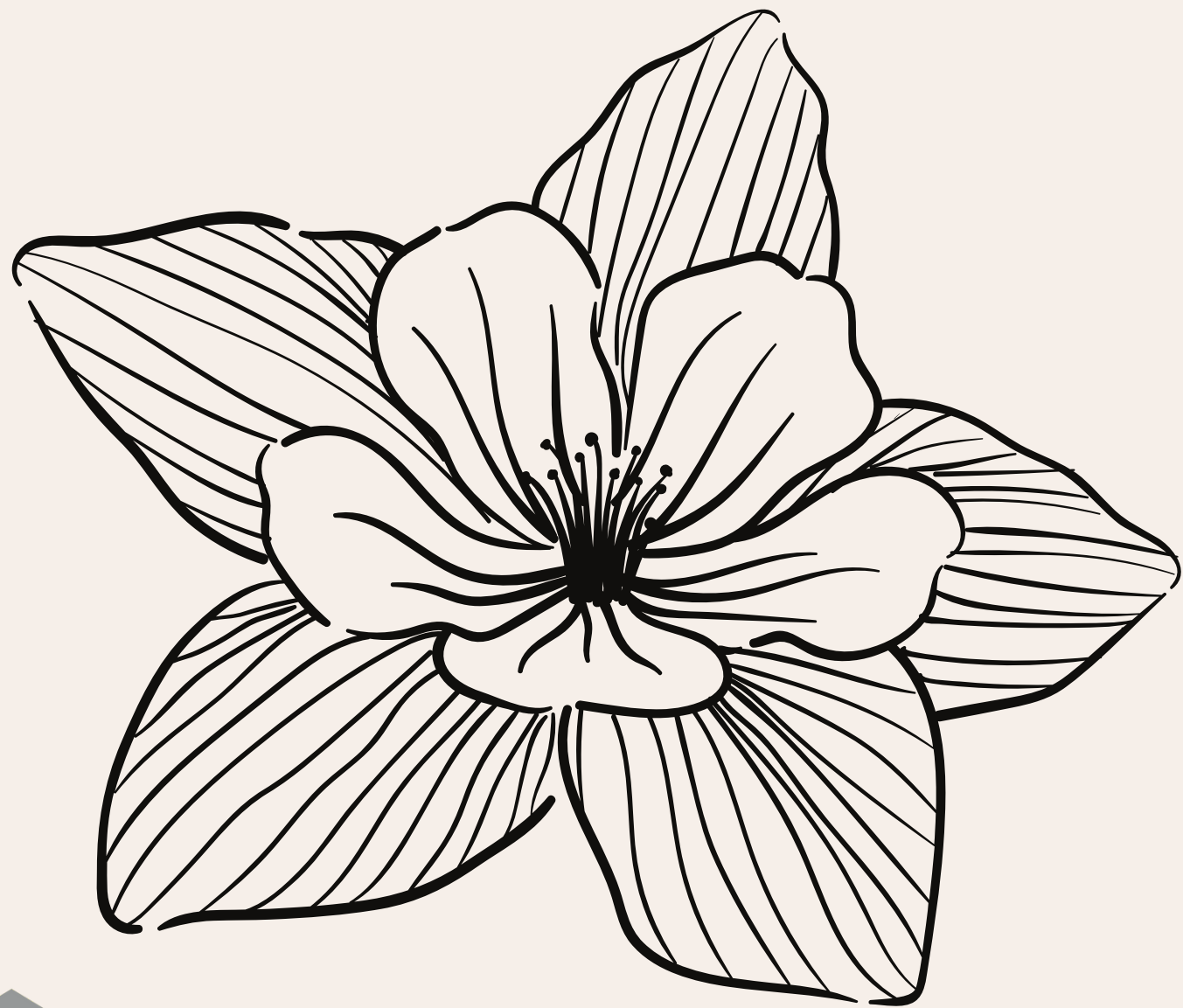


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WOMEN of the bible DEVOTIONAL



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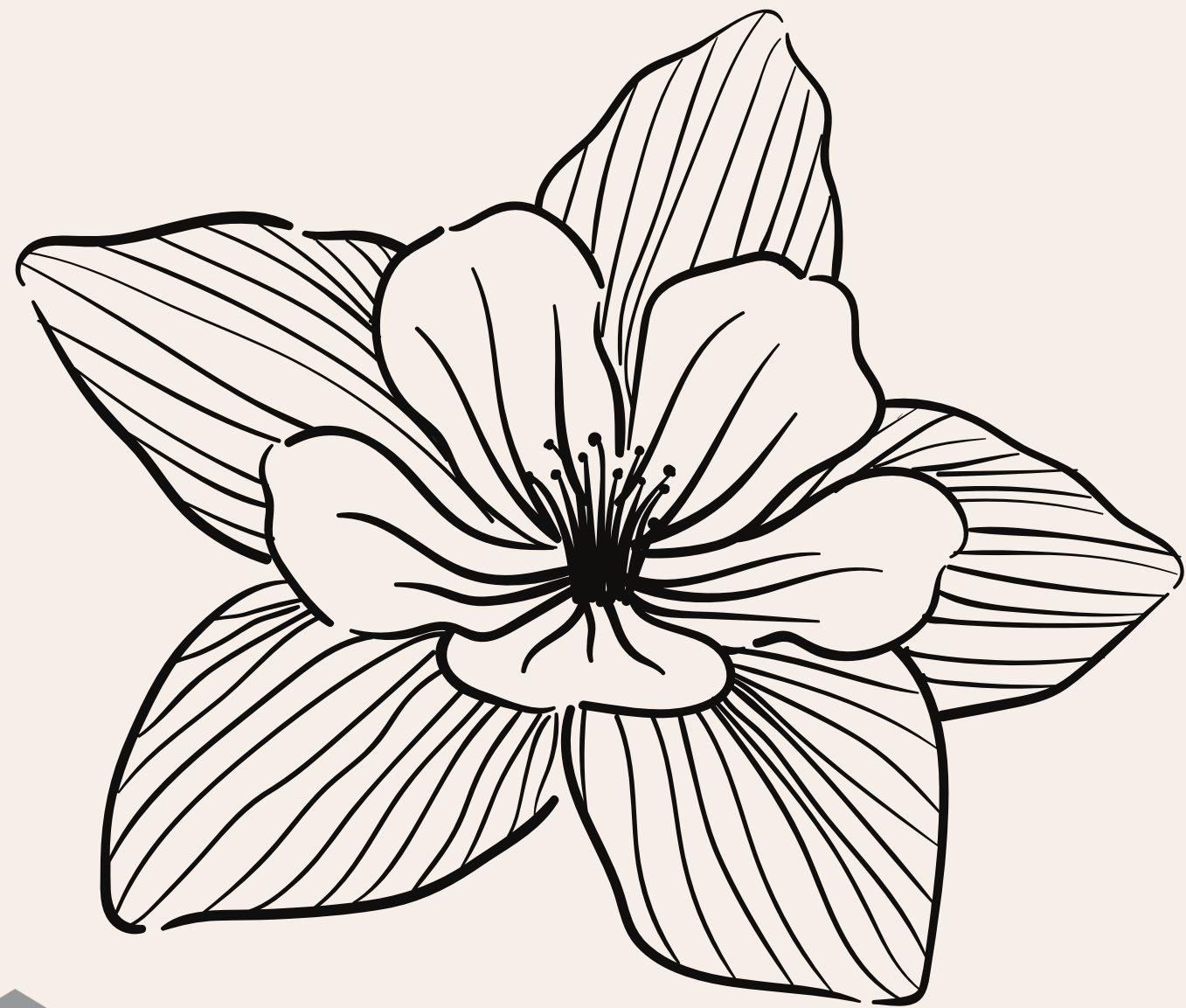
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OVERVIEW



Genesis 29 & 30. Leah

She was the first wife of Jacob, even though she was tricked. She was the mother of many of his children; she carried on the bloodline that would one day lead to King David and, finally, to the Messiah and Lord of all, Jesus!

Her story reveals God's love, care, and favour beyond men's capabilities.



DAY ONE



Genesis 29:16-30:

The story begins when Jacob meets Rachel and Leah. The Bible says Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel was beautiful in form. To me, this is comparison. The older sister was not seen like the younger sister; she was also not Jacob's choice but her Heavenly Father's.

Leah is the first wife of Jacob. We cannot control every situation in our lives, but God can!



DAY TWO



Genesis 29:31-35:

How amazing is our God? It says He saw that she was not loved and opened her womb, but her sister was barren. Even though God opened her womb, Leah took a while before recognizing that it was not about her husband's love, but about God's love for her. With her fourth son, Judah, she said, "This time I will praise the Lord."

How often do we miss the mark? We lose sight of the Giver and focus on the gift itself – we are thankful but focus our attention on the gift or what the gift represents to us. For Leah, it was her husband's love.



DAY THREE

Genesis 30:1-13:

Rachel is threatened by her sister; she can have children and not her. She throws a tantrum: "Give me children, or I shall die!" She gives her servant to Jacob and starts a competition with her sister, as we read in the scripture. Leah doesn't recognize that she has God's favour upon her, as she feels the need to compete for more children.

At times, we don't recognize the favour of God in our lives – we feel like we need to prove ourselves and out-do the other person for validation or approval. God doesn't work like that; how great is that? I pray that this frees your heart.



DAY FOUR



Genesis 30:14-24:

Today, we learn of how the sisters bargained for Jacob. Leah says to Jacob: "You must come in to me, for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." I imagine it must have been difficult for both: one had borne children and the other had the love of Jacob. I love how it later says God heard both and gave Leah more sons, and Rachel's womb was opened!

God heard them; the significant part of this text is that God heard them, and He hears us too! We don't need to bargain with God or people to get what we really need; we only need to go to God in prayer and thanksgiving!



DAY FIVE



Genesis 30:25-43:

We end off the story with a little twist: after Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob wanted to leave. Jacob was blessed by God, with two wives who gave him many children, and he also had the favour of Laban and God. Not much is mentioned about Leah and Rachel here, but they belonged with Jacob. Where he goes, they go because they are married.

We need to learn how to submit to God's authority; align yourself with where God is taking you and your family and submit to the decisions because God reveals Himself to us when we completely surrender to Him.





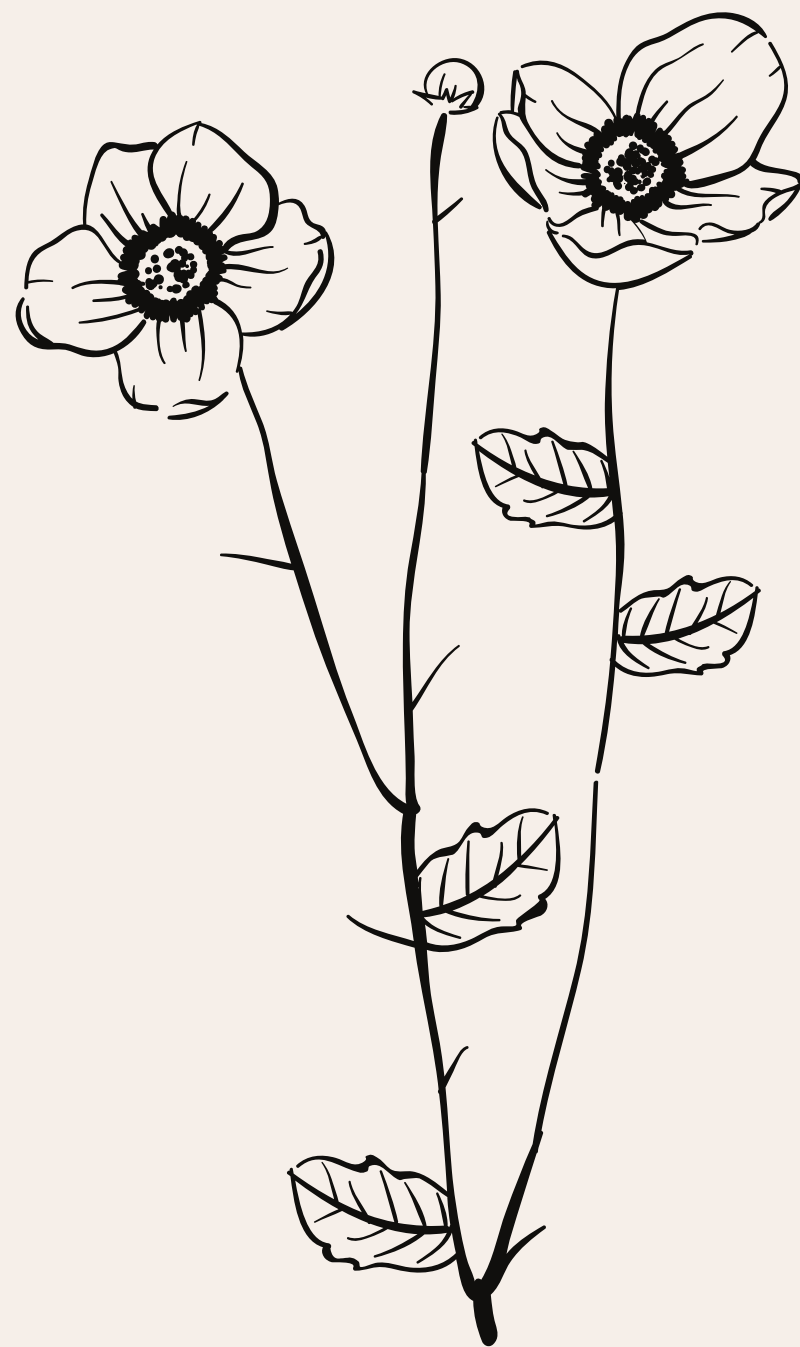
REFLECTION

As woman, at some point, we have been the second option in someone's plan. We were not the preferred choice; it is sad and heartbreaking but true.

In the story, we see God reveal His love for Leah and the outcome is incredible, to say the least. This week, allow God to be your first love again. Let us have the same posture as Leah; cry to God and know that He sees and hears you!



OVERVIEW



Luke 1 - Elizabeth

This is where we find the story of Zachariah and Elizabeth, a woman in her golden years of life, the mother of John the Baptist and a descendant of Aaron. We read that she and her husband were found righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly.



DAY ONE

Luke 1:5-7

Today, I would like us to start with how she is introduced in the story. Elizabeth is mentioned as a righteous woman who obeyed the ways of the Lord and was found to be blameless, yet she couldn't conceive a child. If this is mentioned then she must have wanted a child, right? Many times, we measure our lives by what we have achieved, yet God is the one who should be in control. In the Lord's prayer, Jesus says, "Thy Will be done" – not mine but God's will be done. It mentions that they were both very old, meaning the childbearing stage was over and, yet, they were found to be righteous and blameless in obeying the ways of God. I would like us to take a moment and pause: consider what you are busy with (a project / school / work) and ask yourself if you are being faithful in what has been entrusted to you. Zachariah and Elizabeth served the Lord!



DAY TWO



Luke 1:8-17

There is great news today! Zachariah has an encounter with an angel of the Lord, and he is never the same again. I love how the angel starts by saying to him, "Do not be afraid, your prayer has been answered." Firstly, there is fear, and it is addressed. Then comes the response about what Zachariah and Elizabeth have been praying for. God first meets us where we are, then He reveals His heart to us. Our hopes, dreams and desires belong to God alone; all we need to do is spend time in prayer. The good news took a long time to arrive, but God's timing is perfect in this story, and it is perfect in our personal stories. Elizabeth is not mentioned in today's passage, but she is a big part of what happens to both. Sometimes we need to just trust God's plan for our lives. It may seem to take long or feel like you have done everything right and yet you are still waiting. Let me encourage you... wait a little longer. God will come through for you: His timing is perfect in all things.



DAY THREE



Luke 1:18-25

We get to see different characters today: Zachariah couldn't fathom what the angel was saying, and he asked, "How can this be, as we are both old?" The consequences were that he was unable to speak until the baby was born. When we read about Elizabeth, she says, "The Lord has done this for me... In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people." It is important how we respond to what God says to us. When we look at heavenly things with our eyes, we tend to doubt and are scared away, or we find that what God is calling us into is too big or impossible, then we justify not doing it or we shy away. Today, I would like you to ask God to give you fresh vision so you can see, new courage to walk into what He has for you and capacity for what only He can provide for you. Check your heart and respond in faith, not fear or doubt. Remember that God meets us where we are and then equips us for purpose. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, Ephesians 1:18 (NIV)



DAY FOUR



Luke 1:39-45:

This is when Mary visits Elizabeth. It says that when she entered the house and greeted, the baby inside Elizabeth leaped and she was filled with the Holy Spirit! When Mary asks Elizabeth, "Why am I favored for such a task?" Her response is amazing! "Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises to her!" It is a blessing when we walk in line with what God has for us. Her response changes the conversation for me; it shifts the focus from me to Him and that is what I believe we should be doing as daughters of God. Shift the conversation from how it affects me to who our God and King is. He will fulfill His promises to you as well, daughter of God; trust His timing, always.



DAY FIVE



Luke 1:57-66:

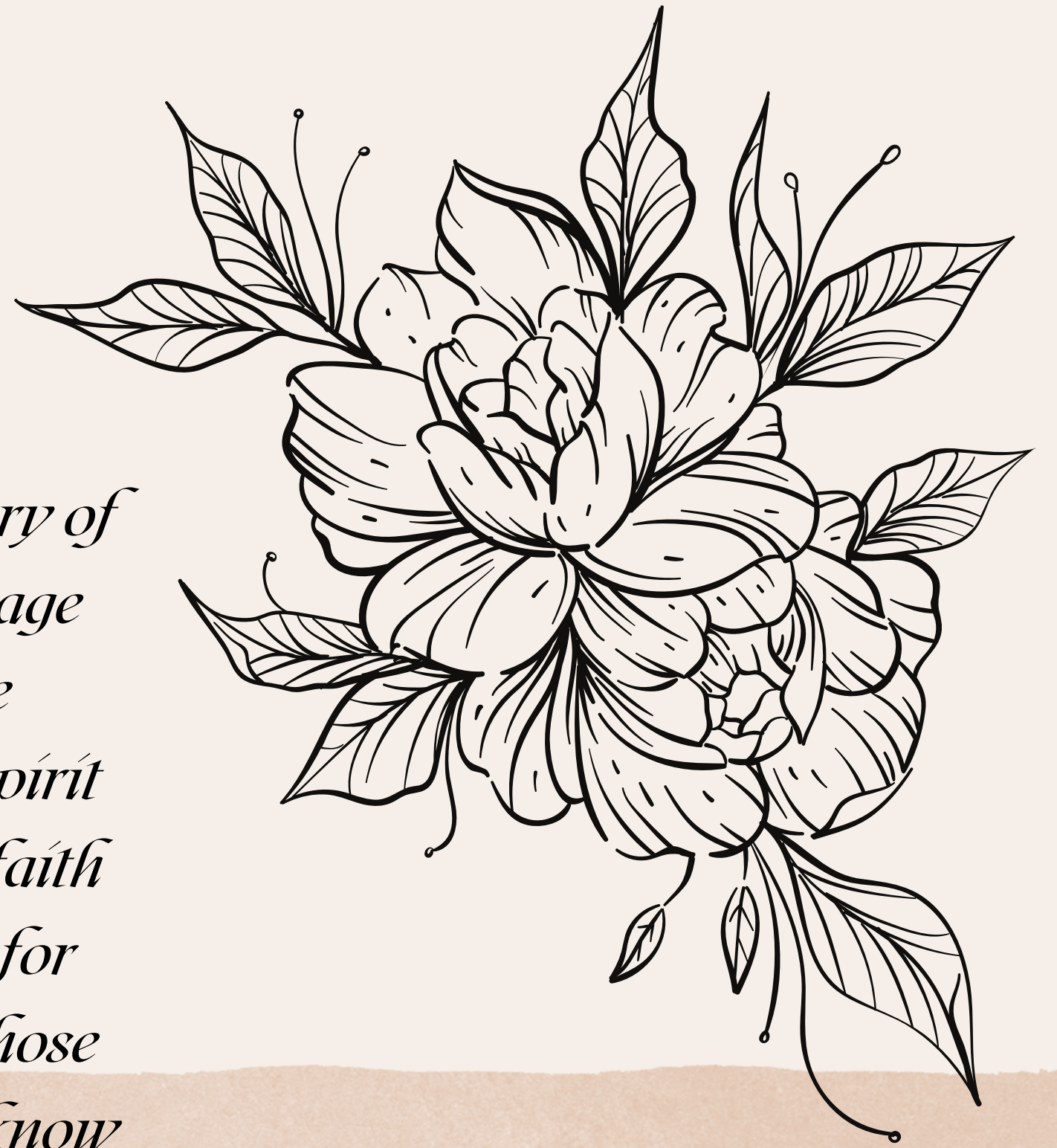
Her family and friends heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to Elizabeth, and they shared her joy! There are people in our lives that God has given us; they share in our struggles and our joy. It is good to walk with others. Be accountable – not just to have someone to talk to, but to know that someone is praying with you and shares your joy in the victories that God gives you. Today, we finish with the child being born – everyone pointed out what the tradition was (name the baby after someone in your family) but Elizabeth and Zachariah both knew what the name given by the angel was – “John” – and they stuck to that name. Most of us can relate with going against the grain with family “tradition” or “culture” but we are convinced because we know what God has said to us. It is not always the popular opinion to go against tradition / culture / routine, but it is necessary to accomplish the purpose God has for us. God revealed Himself to the people around Elizabeth and Zachariah; it says they were in awe of what God had done. Be a vessel for God to use you for His Glory; all you must do is be obedient!





REFLECTION

This week, our theme was waiting patiently on the Lord. The story of Elizabeth is a reminder that to God, nothing is impossible! Her age was not a factor in the plans of God – what mattered was the response. Our heart posture is important. I pray that the Holy Spirit will open your eyes to see, that you will be bolder and that your faith will be renewed so you can walk into the purpose that God has for you. Remember, your purpose is not inward, it is outward, for those God wants to reach and bring back to Himself. Be encouraged; know that you have a great purpose that only God can give you capacity and grace for.



OVERVIEW



Her story is found in Exodus 2. -Miriam

Miriam was the sister to her well-known brother, Moses. She was the one who watched the basket float all the way to the palace on the Nile River, and arranged her own mom to nurse Moses. She played an important role, along with her brothers Moses and Aaron, in getting the Israelites out of Egypt and into the land God promised them. Her story shows us humanity; we have great intentions but, sometimes, we lose sight of what God is doing and start to complain or become despondent. Miriam was a prophetess and she loved God.



DAY ONE



Exodus 2:1-10:

Miriam is the little girl who was so courageous; she watched her brother in the basket and followed it along the Nile River, all the way to the palace. She was bold and brave enough to stand up and offer a nurse (her own mother) for the baby. Moses' mother got to be part of her baby's life because of Miriam.



DAY TWO



Exodus 15:1-18; 20-21:

This is the song that Moses and Miriam sang after leaving Egypt. They celebrated the goodness of God. Miriam led worship! To give context, Miriam witnessed the signs that God had given to Moses and witnessed her brothers stand up to Pharaoh for the sake of the Israelites. She saw what God could do and what He was doing in her family; they were united and fighting together. When the day to leave came, and they crossed on dry ground, we see the revelation that Miriam had: she led others in worshipping God. We don't get to read her prophecies, only the song, but we know she was called a prophetess. She was called by God, along with her brothers Moses and Aaron (Micah 6:4).



DAY THREE



Numbers 12:1-9

This is taking place while the Israelites are in the desert because of their unbelief. Miriam and her brother, Aaron, start complaining (which we all have done) about Moses' wife because she is not an Israelite, but a Cushite woman. The Bible says Moses was a very humble man. It sounds like Miriam wanted more, as it states, "Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" It was a status issue or personal issue; they wanted to have the same standing as Moses (remember, they stood by Moses when he was fighting Pharaoh for their freedom and now things were not the same). We see that Miriam had lost sight of who God is and His promises to them as a people. She became like most of us: unhelpful, strong-willed, and difficult to lead. We read that God hears them and acts on the situation immediately. He reminds them who Moses is and who He is. I love that God commands that they respect Moses as a leader that He Himself has given them.



DAY FOUR



Numbers 12:10 -16

There is so much hope and grace in these verses that sometimes I just get emotional reading it. Oh, how He loves us! Miriam had leprosy; as the cloud moved away, they saw her skin and Aaron immediately repented of what he had done. Moses started crying out to God for healing for his sister. Moses, the same man who was disrespected by his siblings, was the one crying out to God for his sister to be healed. She was taken outside the camp for seven days until she was healed and then brought back. God defended Moses: when his closest ally started grumbling and complaining, God came to the rescue. We don't have to fight our own battles; let God do it for you! It is such a blessing to know that there are people crying out to God on our behalf. We may treat them harshly or disrespect them, but those who lead us are crying out to God for our breakthrough, healing and epiphany moments (new revelations).



DAY FIVE

Numbers 20:1

We don't get to hear about Miriam after she comes back from being exiled for seven days because of leprosy. The next encounter we have with her is when she is dying. Remember the promise that God made to the Israelites, that the older generation would not enter the promised land because of their lack of faith (refer to Numbers 13 & 14: "not one of those who saw my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times— not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their ancestors. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it.") Her life was full of lessons for all of us: she was a woman of courage and faith, and chosen by God. She made mistakes, but she was loved by God. None of us is above correction from God and it is not done to spite us or hurt us, but to bring us closer to Him and for us to understand His will for us.





REFLECTION

This week our theme was humanity. We are like the Israelites in so many ways. Miriam teaches us that we can be bold in our decisions, and we can encourage others around us to fulfill their purpose in God without doubting our own or comparing our own to others'. We can learn to be a joy to others we work with, live with and fellowship with. Be a joy to those around you; lead others.



OVERVIEW



*Her story is found in Joshua 2-6. Rahab
She was part of the lineage of Christ! This was
the woman introduced as a prostitute. She was so
intelligent and perceptive: she welcomed the
spies when they came and figured out a response
for the King's men when they were looking for
them. She even advised them on how to get out
and back home safely. Her intelligence was seen
when she bargained for herself and her entire
family. This is going to be a great one to learn
from....*



DAY ONE



Joshua 2:1 -5:

We are introduced to Rahab as a prostitute and a very perceptive woman. Firstly, she knew her surroundings; she could sense there was something happening and, using her intelligence, found a way to take advantage. She welcomed the spies and protected them before making an agreement with them; she thought things through. She was not an Israelite – she owned a tavern and was a prostitute. We can see that she was determined. When I reflect on this, it was none of her business, but as a businesswoman, she took advantage of the opportunity that had presented itself to her. She didn't think of her standing in society, she thought of the safety of her family when God would come and give the land over to Israel. Know the end goal; work accordingly.



DAY TWO



Joshua 2:6-11

Rahab didn't let them sleep; she had plans. She went up to them and pleaded her case but, first, she made them aware of what she knew about them and then she told them how everyone felt about them as Israelites, people of God. She declared: "the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below." This is to solidify trust and start a new relationship. This is how you start a new business venture; you do research and see if you can align yourself to that vision. Rahab understood how to do business and she knew how to draw clients based on her line of work..



DAY THREE



Joshua 2:12-15:

Deal or no deal?! Rahab used her excellent negotiation skills to save her household. She asked for kindness as she had shown kindness to them, meaning protection. They told her that they would treat her kindly and faithfully when the Lord gave them the land. This was an oath made and how it was fulfilled is amazing. Side note: Rahab proclaimed who God was and wanted to be saved; she believed and showed her faith by her actions. That is what we are all called to be, proclaiming with our mouths, living a life worthy of the call we have received. When they had finished their conversation, Rahab helped them escape.



DAY FOUR



Joshua 2:16-21:

As a businesswoman, you understand what a contract is or what it means. The oath that Rahab and the spies had was similar in the context of work or obligations. There were terms to be kept ensuring the contract was still valid. Firstly, she hung the scarlet rope, which was used to help them escape, from the window. I love how this reminds me of when God said to the Israelites to paint the doors with blood of the Lamb. It signifies protection. Secondly, she was instructed to bring those she wanted saved into her home; if they were outside, then their lives were in their own hands. Here, again, we are reminded of the Great Commission, Matt 28:20: "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you," meaning bringing them to the full knowledge of who God is, so they, too, can be saved. Lastly, she was instructed not to tell anyone what the spies were doing. Rahab had to keep the secret; this was not because if she told then God wouldn't give the Israelites the land, but it was about patience. Can you imagine what was going through the people when the Israelites were marching silently around their walls? They instilled fear, anxiety, despair, etc. It was not comfortable, and can you think how Rahab must have felt, the excitement, eagerness, and preparation for what was coming next? We need to learn to wait on the Lord; His timing is always perfect. Side note: be careful how you behave when your season is ending, or a new one starting; remain patient and keep your faith strong by remaining in the Word of God. Always be found in the Word (John 15:1-17). This applies to your business, family, personal life, and ministry. Our task /contract in this context is to be obedient to God and honor His word. Rahab honored the promise she made and was kept safe.



DAY FIVE



Joshua 2:22-24 & Joshua 6:17-18:

The spies were able to give Joshua the report because of what they had seen and what Rahab had shared with them. Now let's look at her reward for a minute; Rahab turned away from her people, lied to the King and turned away from the gods her people were worshipping to the God of the Israelites, only from hearing about Him. Her faith changed her life. She was spared and is part of the lineage of Christ (Matthew 1:5-6).

What a great story to learn from, of a woman of character and great determination. Your standing in society doesn't disqualify you to serve our King of Kings; when we hear the Good News and change our ways, He welcomes us! Be encouraged!





REFLECTION

When we look at our lives, we can easily focus on things that don't work or we don't like. When you look at your business, you can focus on the lack of income, lack of drive from your team and a small or declining customer base, but that should never be your focal point. It is good to self-assess and to assess your business as well, but never let the negative be the driving force behind your decision-making. Rahab knew she wasn't an Israelite, but her great business skills and great faith helped her to be part of a story bigger than herself. Align yourself with the King of Kings when making decisions, and in all that you do.



OVERVIEW



Her story is found in Genesis 24-27. Rebekah

She was beautiful, strong and intelligent. She was the woman chosen for Isaac and, for many years, struggled to have children. She was God's answer to Abraham's servant's prayer.



DAY ONE



Genesis 24:1-21:

Someone prayed for Rebekah! She was an answer to prayer. The servants were sent by Abraham to find a wife for Isaac. When he prayed to God, he had specifics, and also said she must be willing to serve the camels. That, I assume, was not an easy job, but he was looking for a willing heart that would be happy to serve. As he was praying, Rebekah came and did exactly as he had asked of God. The only thing we know of her at this point is that she is beautiful, a virgin and has a heart to serve (she served the servants and the camels). This is a beautiful introduction of Rebekah.



DAY TWO



Genesis 24:22-49:

These verses are about the testimony of God's goodness. Abraham prayed to God for favour as his servants went looking for a wife for his son. The servants also had a testimony of God's goodness when God directed them to Rebekah and ended up in her home. They finished by praising God for what He had done. Notice how Rebekah had not yet agreed to go with them and the family had not responded, but they were praising God right there! We don't need to wait for the outcome to praise God; we need to praise Him in the moment we are in. Don't wait for the response; don't wait for others: live out the testimony that God has given you. Rebekah also ran home to share the news, wearing the gifts that had been given to her!



DAY THREE



Genesis 24:50-67

Rebekah agreed to go with the servants to marry Isaac. She agreed to the unknown. The Bible says when she saw him approaching the camels, she covered herself with her veil; she showed respect to her future husband. It says he loved her, and when his mother died, he was comforted by her. God's timing is always perfect.



DAY FOUR



Genesis 25:19-34

It is interesting that Isaac is the one to pray for his wife to have children; it doesn't say she prayed to God for children. God answered Isaac's prayer and Rebekah was pregnant with twins! Most women know that pregnancy can be difficult, but for her it was more challenging as the babies were not settled in her womb. So, she had no rest and then enquired of the Lord. Isaac went to God for his wife; it concerned him that she was childless. She went to God when the babies were wrestling in her womb, as it concerned her. This gives us an idea of how their relationship worked. They were not a team in parenting; both had favourites and it affected the family. Jacob was the younger brother who bought his brother's birthright with food. Reading Genesis 25:23 again, we see he was Rebekah's favourite.



DAY FIVE



Genesis 27

Rebekah stole Esau's blessing for Jacob. She deceived her husband and when Esau found out about it, she protected Jacob from him. Rebekah, as a mother, created a wedge between her children. In verse 41 it says, "Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him." This was because of what Rebekah had done. Remember, Jacob had already bought his brother's birthright and then he stole his blessing, so what else was left for him? As a mother, caregiver or wife, we need to watch our motives.





REFLECTION

The story of Rebekah starts off so beautifully: she is chosen for Isaac and later has children (twins) but her character as a mother seems to be different to when she was serving the camels and Abraham's servants. She is no longer a woman ready to serve and humble herself, but becomes one who is manipulative, strategic and self-centered. She favoured one of her sons and did everything possible to give him what did not belong to him. She protected him from the consequences of those actions. It was not about her family, but about Jacob. God has called us to love one another as Christ has loved us. Always present your decisions to God and He will honour your heart for that.



OVERVIEW



*Her story is found in Genesis 17 & 21. -Sarah
Sarah was the wife to Abram, whose name God later changed to Abraham. Sarah's name was also changed, by God, from Sarai ("princess") to Sarah, "mother of the nation." She was a faithful wife and followed her husband wherever God led them to go. We also read that she was barren, but because of the faithfulness of God, she bore a son. We learn that God's promises don't have an expiry date.*



DAY ONE



Genesis 15:1-6

God made a promise to Abram that he would be a father of the nations and that his descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky, but Sarai was barren. Abram believed God and it was granted to him as righteousness. Genesis 16 talks about Sarai taking matters into her own hands: she knew what God had promised to them, so she told Abram to sleep with her slave so she could build her family from her, but it didn't work out as planned. We know Ishmael was born out of all of this from Hagar the slave, but Sarai was still barren.



DAY TWO



Genesis 17:

God made a covenant with Abram. He changed his name to Abraham and Sarai became Sarah. God said she is the mother of the nations; kings of people would come from her. Sarah was old at the time, way past child-bearing years; however, God doesn't work according to our timing but His own. We know that God kept this promise when we look at the history and genealogy of Abraham and Sarah. All that was required was to believe that God would do what He said he would do.



DAY THREE



Genesis 18: 1-15

This chapter shows us how relatable Abraham and Sarah are to us. When the three visitors told Abraham that Sarah would have a child next year around that time, she laughed. That is the same response Abraham had when God told him in Genesis 17. God told him to name the son Isaac (meaning "he laughs") but they were both in disbelief at the idea of being parents at such an old age. When Sarah was asked why she laughed, she became scared and lied, but this is God we are talking about, He knew she was lying. Is there anything too hard for the Lord?!



DAY FOUR



Genesis 21:1-7:

A promise fulfilled! Isaac is born and Sarah says, "God has brought me laughter and all those who hear will laugh with me!" She was overjoyed over what God had done for her.

Invite others to rejoice with you on your victories.



DAY FIVE



Genesis 21: 8 -13

The thorn in the flesh. Isaac was celebrated but in all the excitement, Sarah didn't want to deal with Ishmael and Hagar. She asked Abraham to send them away; keep in mind that it was her idea that Ishmael was born... it never works out as we think when we take matters into our own hands. God is so faithful that, even in that, He honoured Abraham when he was distressed about what Sarah wanted to do.





REFLECTION

Sarah was a beautiful woman. She made mistakes, doubted God's promises, and took matters into her own hands. She was a mother to Isaac at an old age and became the mother of nations as God promised. She was not perfect, but God still loved her and kept His promises to her and Abraham. We are not perfect but believe that God will fulfill the promises that He has made to you.

When you look at the timeline for when God first promised Abraham that he would be a father of nations, many years passed before it came to be, but it happened as God had said. His ways are not our ways; trust Him through the process.

