

Wow- what beautifully bold powerful women we just heard in today's scripture readings. We just heard about Sarah, a wife and mother. Sarah's story was one filled with faith and fortitude. While she did not always say or do the right thing, she always seemed to find her way back to the promise God had for her life. God's promise to Abraham and Sarah was about making them the father and mother of nations. Sarah found her purpose through faith and patience. Sarah is a great example of how we can't rush God's will and purpose for our lives. Sometimes, the call on your life is to wait patiently and have faith through the ups and downs

Next, we heard about Naomi and Ruth. Ruth was a woman of God who lost everything she loved and valued. She had to overcome her husband's death. While life was unfair to her, she faced many tough decisions. She still looked to Naomi for guidance, wisdom, and friendship. Ruth found her purpose through loyalty and commitment to her family. If she had not gone with Naomi and remained committed to a relationship that had no guarantee of anything, especially a future, she

would not have found her Boaz. Ruth's beautiful story of redemption can only be orchestrated by God in His great mercy.

Then there was Esther who was a leader and advocate for the Jewish people. Esther found her purpose through faith, courage, and a willingness to risk her life to save an entire race. She was strategic in her thinking and aware of her role in the lives of so many people. She did not back down from challenges or allow her misfortunes to take her away from the open doors right before her. Queen Esther was a powerful woman because she was humble and obedient. She was also courageous and able to stand up for what was right while maintaining honor and respect for her role as The Queen.

Then we heard about the sisters, Mary and Martha. They open their home to Jesus as he traveled with his disciples. As Martha hurried to ensure the preparations, Mary simply sits at the feet of Jesus and listens to the wisdom of Christ. Mary and Martha are two sisters with incredibly different focuses. While Mary soaks in the moments with Jesus, Martha can't think past the cooking and cleaning. Martha quickly becomes

frustrated with all the work she is doing alone and complains to Jesus! Martha says to Jesus, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" Jesus replies, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." We can gain much insight into what it means to lean on God for our strength and power. Mary's humility and submission to The Lord can be seen as powerful.

Lastly we heard about Lydia a businesswoman. Biblical scholars believe she may have been the first Gentile convert in Europe and the first believer to open her home for worship for the early European Christians. Her generosity and hospitality benefited not just Paul and the early church but even future generations of believers. Lydia exemplifies determination, foresight, and true generosity that can encourage us today.

Powerful women are all around us, but they might not look like you'd expect. In the Bible, the most powerful women were often quiet and

humble and never claimed to have all the answers. Power can look different for some people. I can have moments when my words and my temper get the best of me. I have even been known to have an adult temper tantrum. While some people might think they know what bold powerful women look like, the Bible shows us that we need restraint to be powerful. A loud voice doesn't mean you have power, and even being smart or successful doesn't make you powerful. You might feel like you aren't strong enough. You might feel like you are too emotional to be powerful. But having emotions gives you a great superpower, including strength, empathy, and resilience. In those moments, you might feel weak, but remember, where you are weak, God is strong.

Having the capacity to be powerful in the many different situations you face is a good thing. Hard times are inevitable in life. But leaning into your relationship with God will give you the power to overcome.

The woman's strength is found in her faith, hope, and love for those around her. The powerful woman understands the need for reflection and self-awareness to achieve spiritual growth.

The most important women in the world are those in the trenches, working to make a difference and change the culture around them.

Powerful Christian women read and study the Bible, allowing God's Word to mold them into the women God created them to be.

This is true across all generations. Young women may struggle with thinking they are not strong enough to withstand life's trials. Older women have a beautiful purpose: to help young women learn to be strong and find their purpose in life. When women help each other become powerful and endure life's trials and triumphs, they grow in their convictions and walk with God. The godly woman in our lives can help us find and fulfill our purpose and help us become stronger.

Strong women can be found everywhere in this life. Stop and look around this sanctuary. This place is abundant with bold powerful women. And yes- there is also an abundance of strong powerful men here in this place.

Remember that just like the women we heard about today we find our power through Christ Jesus. Amen