



5
FEARLESS
SISTERS

NUMBERS 27, 36 &
JOSHUA 17:4-6



DURING THOSE WANDERING WILDERNESS DAYS, inside the vast desert encampment of The People that God Goes With, nestled amongst the tents of the Manasseh Tribe, snug and secure in the Tent of Zelophehad, there lived five fearless sisters. Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah.

Girls so smart and kind that they moved with courage wherever they went.



After all, do you know that courage means to tell the story of who you are, with your whole heart?

These girls knew who they were and it made them brave.

And whenever they started to forget and feel afraid or lost, all they had to do was repeat their names, which shimmered around them like ripples in a pond.

Daughters of Zelophehad.

Family of Manasseh.

Camp of Israel, The People that God Goes With.

They were snug and secure at the center of so much belonging.

But one horrible day, Zelophehad died and the sisters found themselves afraid and confused. The rules in those days said that only boys could keep their father's things. This included his name, his tent, his animals, his money and—most importantly—his place in the Promised Land. So without a brother, the girls felt their layers of belonging start to slip away.

Daughters of...

Nobody.

In the

Tent





of...No One. From the Family of...Nobodies.

With The People that God Goes With? It just didn't add up.

"What will happen to us!?" worried Tirzah. She was the youngest and was quite used to being taken care of.

"Will we have to leave our tent? Live with another family? Give up our special place in the Promised Land?" Milcah and Hoggah were filled with questions too. They had often daydreamed together about their place of belonging, planning a fort in the yard, a place to grow cucumbers, maybe even room for a pet!





I HAVE A
PLAN.



“This isn’t right,” said Noah. She was the boldest of the sisters and always filled with good ideas. She huddled her sisters together in a tight circle and they made a plan.

The next morning they walked arm in arm to the Tent of Meeting—the place where the priests gathered and God met with Moses. The sisters had talked late into the night. They knew who they were—Malah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. They were the daughters of Zelophehad, from the tribe of Manasseh in the people of Israel.

But most of all, they knew that they were loved and valued by a God who invites us to wrestle. They knew that even without boys in their family, God was still with them.





And when you know who you are and whose you are, you know how to ask for what is right, even when it's scary.

The sisters marched into the Tent of Meeting, waited in line and finally it was their time to speak. Mahlah cleared her throat, took a deep breath, lifted up her chin and explained what they had talked all night about.

She explained that their father had died but he had no sons. That Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah Milcah and Tirzah loved God with their whole hearts and dreamed of their special place of Belonging amongst the people of Israel. That they understood the law stated their inheritance was lost to them now.

This, said the five fearless sisters, this is not right.

They stood in front of Moses, Eleazar and all of the other Important Men with Important Jobs and said "Give us our land. We belong just as much as any sons would. We know who we are, we know whose we are and we know it is right for us to belong."

The Important Men with Important Jobs looked at each other.

Girls as important as boys? This is a new idea.

Let's see what God has to say about that.

So Moses went to meet with God and what do you think God said?

Of course!

God said to Moses, "These five sisters are right. Give them their inheritance, just as they asked. And while you're at it, let's make sure this doesn't happen again. From now on, girls shall be treated with the same regard as boys. Write it down and make it part of the law: Daughters have as much right to land as sons."

Moses came back with the news and the words were whispered from one tent to the other: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah had done it! Those five fearless sisters believed who God said they were more than they believed anyone else. And they changed the future for many girls to come.



WONDER MOMENT

WHAT IS A SPIRIT?

It's that invisible suchness that makes you, you. It's what lives in your body, separate from your muscles and hair and bones.

God is a Spirit, but the Bible says God and Moses talked together like friends do. What did Moses see when he met with God?

What did God's voice sound like?

We don't know! But we can imagine. Close your eyes and picture Moses, meeting with God to talk about The Five Sisters. What do you see? What do you hear?

Do you ever talk with God?