

Most Unlikely Saviors

Judges 3:12-30

Wrap up the book of Joshua!

Joshua 24:14-15 ¶“Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¶But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

Moving on to the book of **Judges**!

- 12 Judges
- Each Judge was from another tribe
- Each Judge faced a different enemy in the Promised Land, (Moabites, Canaanites, Hittites, and Philistines)

The question that this story sets us for us is,

- **Why did God leave pockets of Canaanites in the Promised Land?**
- **If God promised victory, way does it still contain so much war and enemy?**

And this is one of the lessons that God wants to teach us today.

1. Because the past generation of Israelites did not have faith in God to drive them out.
2. So that the new generation of Israelites might learned to trust in God.

God allows certain enemies and temptations to test them, to see if they would stay faithful, to see if they would trust in him to fight for them.

That’s why before any Judges rose to power, the book of Judges opens in chapter 3 in (parenthesis), as if for us, the reader, to read this book with this understanding in the back of our minds.

Judges 3:1-4 These are the nations the Lord left to **test** all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan 2 (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience):...4 They were left to **test** the Israelites to see whether they would **obey** the Lord’s commands, which he had given their ancestors through Moses. 5 The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 6 They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons and served their gods.

Let me ask you: Do you ever wonder why God doesn’t just cure us of sin?

Why not go ahead and give us heaven now (pain-free, sin-free)?

- He wants us to learn to struggle against these things in his strength. To teach us to rely on **his grace**, not on our flesh.
- The Apostle Paul said God leaves **trials** and **weaknesses** in our lives to keep us **humble**. Sometimes God will allow you to struggle with a lesser sin, to keep you from a bigger one, **pride**. If you were immediately cured from sin, you’d get **proud**.
- **John Newton** the author of “Amazing Grace” wrote a letter to a friend, “*Now in my mid 80 I thought by now in my life I would have been much farther past these simple temptations that I dealt with in my 20s, but I look at my life now in my 80s and many of them has gotten worst, not better. If spiritual progress is measured by being free from temptation, then I’m in a spiritual regress and not progress. But I realized now is that spiritual growth is having a greater sense of wonder at the grace from which I was saved, and I know that God has allowed these temptations to continue in my life so that I believe I was saved by amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a reached like me.*”
 - Do you understand that about your life? And your struggles? Jesus says, “*My **grace** is sufficient for you.*”
 - As a Christian, I wonder if I will ever be free from certain addictions, temptations, desires, and weaknesses, but because I know that **God is with me**, I don’t **go away in discouragement**, but **I grow in dependency** on him.

So today we will discover in the book of judges that God uses unlikely leaders, to save his people.

- **Ehud** the cripple, **Deborah** a woman, **Gideon** the coward, **Abimelech** the prideful, **Jephthah** the foolish, **Samson** the strong man made weak. The book of Judges shows us that God is able to use these unlikely saviors. “*Not by power, not by might, but by my Spirit, say the Lord almighty.*”

The first Judge that we will be looking at today is **Ehud**. He is in fact, a left-handed judge. So right away, as a left handed person, I have **sympathy** towards Ehud because we live in a “right hand world”. And I’m sure he struggled with being left handed in his time.

To all my brothers and sisters who are **left-handed** I think this story is going to hit home and get personal.

To all my brothers and sisters who are **right-handed** let me educate you so that you understand our struggle;

- When you learn to write, you did not have to worry about smearing ink or led across the page.
- When you learn to cut paper, you never felt the awkwardness of holding scissors, or paper.
- When you play sports, you probably didn’t think about the glove, the football, the hockey stick, and the golf club that we had to endure through PE.
- When you pee, you don’t struggle with the pants zippers because zippers have a flap that make it impossible to unzip.
- And we stay far away from, binders, classroom wooden desk, can-openers, potato peelers and the evil spiral notebooks.

Throughout history lefties have been considered as **weak**.

- The Latin word for left is **sinister**, which also means “**evil**.”
- The French word for left is **gauche** (*goash*), which means “**awkward**.”
- The English word *left* comes from an Old English word that means “**weak**.”
- Even in Vietnamese the word left also means “**wrong**”
 - If you’re a lefty growing up in Vietnam, its punishable by a spank with a wooden spoon. (They thought they could smack the leftness out of me, but they were wrong.)

In our story today we will meet **Ehud**, one of the first judges of Israel who was a lefty. He was chosen by God to fight against Eglon, the king of Moab.

- This name might ring a bell for you if you were in Ruth the musical.

I believe through this story we will see **the types of people that God uses**.

¹² Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and because they did this evil the Lord gave Eglon king of Moab power over Israel. Even His name sounds evil, EGG-LON. For 18 year he destroyed, and raped, and killed the Israelites

¹⁵ Again the Israelites cried out to the Lord, and he gave them a deliverer—Ehud, a left-handed man, the son of Gera the Benjamite. The Israelites sent him with tribute to Eglon king of Moab.

In the Hebrew it literally says that his right hand was “restricted” or “bound”. Which means he was probably **disabled**. His right-hand had been **crushed** or born **withered**. And I can imagine that this society was more cruel to disabled people than ours. He was probably the kid that was picked on during scripture class. And while all the boys talked about how much they can bench; he was off to the side picking flowers. (I told you it will get personal) so to have a guy that had a useless right-hand, meant that he was **thought of as useless**. But we will see how God made use of Ehud’s left-hand.

¹⁶ Now Ehud had made a double-edged sword about a cubit long, (18in) which he strapped to his right thigh under his clothing. ¹⁷ He presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab, who was a very fat man. Now I know these details seemed very irrelevant, but just you wait.

¹⁸ After Ehud had presented the tribute, he... said, “Your Majesty, I have a secret message for you.” Ohh Eglon like... So he told all his servants to leave the room, I can’t help but picture **Jabba the Hutt** and Luke Skywalkers in this passage.

²⁰ Ehud then approached him while he was sitting alone in the upper room of his palace and said, “I have a message from God for you.”

As the king rose from his seat, ²¹ Ehud reached with his left hand, drew the sword from his right thigh and plunged it into the king’s belly. ²² Even the handle sank in after the blade, and his bowels discharged. Ehud did not pull the sword out, and the fat closed in over it.

- Now Eglon, and all the servants, and guards did not see this coming, because Ehud hid his dagger on the opposite side then normal right-handed people. And plus, he did not seem as a threat because he was disabled.
- Now let’s talk about how fat Eglon was... that’s ridiculous, I could imagine it’s like the loud sound when we suck on bone marrow, and then the blade just disappeared. In my bible it says “his bowels discharged” in Hebrew it literally says, “his poop came out.”

²³ Then Ehud went out to the porch; he shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.

²⁴ After he had gone, the servants came and found the doors of the upper room locked. They said, “He must be relieving himself in the inner room of the palace.” ²⁵ They waited to the point of embarrassment, but when he did not open the doors of the room, they took a key and unlocked them. There they saw their lord fallen to the floor, dead.

When Ehud escaped, he told Israel and they rise up against Moab

³⁰ That day Moab was made subject to Israel, and the land had peace for eighty years.

So from this story let me pull out **3 types of people that God uses**.

[...] e_oliver 24 points 1 month ago

G Got knocked up first semester of college. Dropped out of school, n married her baby daddy and then divorced her baby daddy 2 y years later. She posts on facebook all the time with pictures of h her kid and a lot of quotes about single moms rule and what not. I I think she lives with her parents now.

[...] abstreperousRex 404 points 1 month ago

He was our Valedictorian. Super smart guy. Nice as hell. He turned down scholarships to The Naval Academy, The Air Force Academy and Rutgers. He went on to work at the local video store before knocking his gf up, getting hooked on coke and essentially dropping out of society. The last I heard he was working for a construction company somewhere in Tennessee.

Types of People That God Uses.

1. He doesn't call the most likely but the unlikely.

I read an article yesterday called ““Most Likely To Succeed” highschool superlatives, Where are they now?”

We have a very different idea on who should succeed, but the bible says **man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart**. Israel wanted a king, so they chose Saul, he was the most likely to become king in his class. God chose a 17 year old shepherd from Bethlehem. **God has a reputation of using unlikely saviors.**

Ehud was a very unexpected savior, why do you think that God chooses the weak and unlikely things for his purpose?

Have you thought about that? I think;

1. So that we would depend on him and not ourselves
2. He may receive the glory and not us

In a way, Israel was God's Ehud, God said to them, **“The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.”** Israel don't you get it, you where the weakest, you where the smallest, and I chose you so that I may display my **glorious power**, when I took you out of Egypt.

I look around sometimes and I wonder why God chose some of you? and then I look in the mirror and wonder why he chose me? That's why it's by his **“Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a reach like me.”**

1 Corinthians 1:26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standard (smart); not many were influential (popular); not many were of noble birth (rich). ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

That's why in Christ Jesus we don't have to work for righteousness, we don't have to make ourselves Holy, and we don't have to seek out our own redemption, no, God gives us **righteousness** and **holiness** and **redemption** as a **gift** through Jesus, for anyone that is willing to **receive** it.

And this brings me to the next point about the kind of people that my God uses.

2. He doesn't work through self-righteousness but through weaknesses

God was able to use the judges not because of their great leadership skills or credentials, or position, he worked through their **weaknesses**. In the story of samson it was when he was at his lowest point that God displayed great power through him and killed all the philistines.

He doesn't work through self-righteousness but through our weaknesses.

That's why in our faith, there is such thing as **repentance**. It's us admitting our weaknesses before God, confessing our sins and where we have fallen short and surrendering before Jesus.

I think at this point in my walk, I realized that without **repentance**, **confession**, and **surrendering**, there is no true salvation because you are still living in **your own self-righteousness**.

Everyone, all of us seeks some kind of salvation, wither it's through **Religion, the World, or Jesus Christ**.

- **Religious people**, try to earn salvation from God by being **good enough**—
 - If I'm **good enough**; morally **strong enough**; keep the **rules** well enough; **God will accept me**
- **Worldly people**, try to find salvation outside of God, but through the same approach—they try to be **good enough**, or **strong enough** to obtain meaning and purpose and fulfillment for themselves:
 - If I'm **rich enough**, I'll be **safe and happy**
 - If I'm a good BF, or a good son, I'll know **I'm worth something**.

People think if I found the right person to love, then my life will have meaning, and purpose and this void will be filled;

- Interview with **Drake** a few years ago, after being nominated for 2 Grammys. *“There was a point where I felt like I needed to keep the company of a different woman every night. I was trying to fill a void.” But in the 15 or so seconds after sex, I'd know it wasn't working. That 15 or 20 seconds is the realest moment a man will ever have in his life... the next day I'd convince myself to do it again. But during that time, I knew it wasn't working.*

These are all ways we search for salvation, freedom from the bondage of dissatisfaction and meaningless and pain.

That's why Gods salvation doesn't come through self-religious strength, or earthly achievements. But it is a free gift. His salvation is through grace alone and not by your efforts. So have you repented of your sins and weaknesses before the Lord so that his strength may be with you.

2 Corinthians 12:9, “But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.”

He doesn't work through self-righteousness but through our weaknesses.

3. He doesn't seek for ability but availability

Ehud was a very unlikely candidate for a hero. He didn't even have a strong right hand. But he was willing to yield himself to be used by the Spirit of God.

The advancement of God's kingdom will not come through **ability** but **availability**.

- **Ex:** The miracles of feeding the 5 thousand, is the only miracle recorded in all 4 gospels because Jesus wanted to teach his disciples that it's not about what you have, wither its talents, or ability, or 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread. **It's not so much about what you have, it's about what are you willing to give?**
- Jesus was preparing them for ministry, because he knows one day, they will not face 5 thousand hungry people, but a million lost people starving for the gospel. He wants them to know it's not about their power or works, but what he can do through them.

So ask yourself, how can you make yourself **available** to his service and his call? It's surprising to me how so many of you question if God is working in your life, at the same time, not willing to serve in ministry, or attending church functions. It is your lost, and you have no one but yourself to blame.

- Again, It's **not about the right hand of your ability**, but the left-hand of weakness yielded to God in **availability**.

These are the kind of people that God uses.

The Book of Judges points us to another unlikely Savior, the most unexpected "left-handed" person of all. **Jesus Christ**. Who didn't come as a **worrier** as people expected, but as an inane **baby**.

- Isaiah says there was "**nothing in his appearance that would attract us to him. He was despised and rejected by men**" (Isaiah 53:2-3).
- You would never have looked at Jesus and thought, "*There's the Savior of the world.*" Probably not tall, good-looking and commanding... hate to BURST YOUR BUBBLE, but he was not **white**.
- **Jesus was the most unlikely savior!**
- like Ehud, Jesus crushed his enemy and achieved his victory all alone.
- Just as Ehud's victory was a surprised to Eglon, so Jesus' victory came as a surprised to the forces of evil.
- NO ONE SAW IT COMING! The Roman leaders and the Jewish religious leaders thought they had killed him... he was not a threat. But when they closed the entrance on him in the grave, he pulled out the dagger of resurrection and stabbed the powers of death in the gut.

Judges tells you that God is going to send salvation in a way no one was expecting, and a lot of people would miss.

And I don't want you to miss out on salvation, because you had a wrong perception of who my savior is. So listen carefully and I will tell you the secret.

"For our sake, God made Him who knew no sin, to be sin in our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Cor 5:21

This shows us that God saves through weakness and substitution, not our strength and conquest

⁹If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.¹⁰For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your

faith and are saved. Romans 10:9-10

We are saved by faith alone.