



A Few Good Men and Women

Judges 2-7

RECAP

The nation of Israel had a place to call home at last. Settling into the Promised Land enabled them to leave behind their wandering ways and fulfill one of the key promises to Abraham: a land for God's people to occupy. But, failing to evict the Canaanites from the land, these pagan neighbors became a toxic influence on a nation called to be different.

This Week's Focus: God used judges to deliver His people from the consequence of sin. He would send Jesus to deliver us from the cause of sin.

After the death of Joshua, God's people felt this pull of worldly culture and a destructive pattern emerged: Israel turned again and again to the worship of pagan gods. God brought divine judgment and the people were oppressed. Israel cried out for God's help. God raised up a judge to save them. This cycle of sin became the pattern of life in Israel for the next 300 years.

Early on, Israel was conquered by Eglon king of Moab and subject to his oppressive leadership for eighteen years. But Israel cried out to the Lord and God sent an unusual left-handed judge named Ehud. Ehud overcame his limitations and became famous for losing his sword in the belly of Eglon and delivering Israel from the Moabites.

Again, the Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord and so God gave them over to the Canaanite king, Jabin. In their distress, God appointed an unexpected prophet, judge, and leader named Deborah, to deliver her people. She and her military leader, Barak, defeated the powerful Canaanite army led by Sisera. He escaped and took refuge in the tent of a woman named Jael, who took matters in her own hands by giving Sisera a whale of a headache with a tent stake.

Israel had been delivered for now, but the cycle would continue. Israel was later oppressed by the Midianites. God called Gideon who seemed to be the ultimate underdog. He was unqualified, unconvinced, and timid. But, God used him to deliver His people. Gideon asked twice for a miraculous sign. God confirmed His intentions, and Gideon gathered 32,000 troops to take on the vast Midianite army. God, however, trimmed their forces to just 300 men. He used them to rout the Midianites, and the people enjoyed freedom...for a while.

Eventually God would call one last judge named Samson to deliver them from the consequences of their sin. He was known for his superhuman strength and less than super character. His wife, Delilah, betrayed him by cutting off his hair forfeiting him of his advantage and God's favor. Samson embodied the insidious cycle of sin that had enslaved Israel. As a result, God's people would long for someone to deliver them from not only the consequence of sin but the cause of their sin.



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SHARE (5-10 min)

Icebreaker Question: Describe a time when you worked on a project, puzzle, or problem that seemed impossible to solve. How did you react while working on it? Did you ever solve it?

STUDY (about 30 min) Read Luke 15

1. Reflect on last week's reading and the sermon. Is there any truth that stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful, or difficult to grasp?
2. According to Deuteronomy 20:18, why were they commanded to drive out the Canaanites entirely? Why does God want complete devotion from His people?
3. According to Judges 1:19-21, Israel had fallen short of complete obedience and devotion. What were the consequences?
4. Review the cycle of sin repeated in Judges: Sin, Oppression, Repentance, Restoration. What was the role of the judge in this cycle?
5. God's judges (11 men, 1 woman) were all flawed and unique. What were the unique qualities of Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, and Samson? What were their flaws? Given these qualities and flaws, what kind of person does God use?
6. Your availability is more important than your ability. Do you agree or disagree? Why? How are you making yourself available to God? Where are you holding back?
7. Deborah and Jael were both women used by God to accomplish His will. What does this say about God's view of women in leadership? What does it tell us about God's sovereign will?
8. Gideon had a confidence problem that stemmed from fear and a sense of inadequacy, but this didn't stop God from using him. What areas in your life (fear, insecurity, self-reliance) keep you from allowing God to use you?
9. Jesus came to be the ultimate deliverer. What has he delivered you from? What are you asking him to deliver you from? What do you need to repent from to walk in obedience and experience freedom?

SUPPORT (15 min)

Share & Pray: Break up into smaller groups of 3-4 to share and pray. Consider the cycle of sin/restoration: Sin-Oppression-Repentance-Restoration. Where would you say you are in this cycle? What are you asking God for during this season of your life? What is He revealing to you that needs to change?