

JUDGES 3:12-30
ONE LEFT-HANDED MAN!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 3 as we continue our in-depth study through the book of Judges.

As we have seen in our study of this book, Israel is in a cyclical pattern of sin, servitude, supplication and salvation.

And yet, in all of this rebellion against God, we see His grace and mercy come through. Yes, they went into captivity for their sin, but when they cried out to God, He sent them a deliverer, a Judge to free them from the bondage that they were in.

We see that in Judges 2:18, where we are told, **“And when the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them.”**

And you would think that they would learn the lesson, but not exactly. This sin cycle repeats itself over and over again.

Listen to what we are told in Judges 2:19 as the Judge dies and what Israel does. We are told, **“And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.”**

Now, as we read that, we may be thinking, *“How in the world could they turn so quickly from the Lord after He delivered them from the bondage that they were in? How could they turn from the Lord after all He has done for them?”*

That is a great question, but I don't think it is only for the children of Israel. I think the Holy Spirit wants us to think about what we are doing! You see, these lessons are in here for our learning, that we may grow, that we may mature in the faith. And sometimes the Lord needs to do some heart surgery and remove those things that are hindering our relationship with Him.

Last time we looked at the first Judge in Israel, Othniel. The children of Israel were in bondage for eight years. And, remember, it was not the whole nation at one time, but in Judges 3:5-31, the focus is the southern tribes of Israel.

After eight years of being in bondage to Cushan- Rishathaim, the King of Mesopotamia, the children of Israel cried out to the Lord and the Lord raised up Othniel to deliver them.

And for forty years the land had rest, they were not in bondage and Othniel died, and they went back to their old ways and the cycle of sin, servitude, supplication and salvation would begin all over again!

This morning we will be looking at the second Judge, Ehud. Now, as some read this story, they are disturbed by what he does. They see his actions as evil, even though he delivered the children of Israel from bondage.

One writer put it like this,

To put it mildly, Ehud comes as a bit of a shock after Othniel. Othniel was an ideal figure – well connected, heroic, upright, the kind of man we can understand God choosing to lead Israel.

Now, straight after him, we have a devious assassin, also chosen by God to save Israel (vv. 15, 21).

That's disturbing. It's not the only disturbing thing in Judges, of course. The whole book is disturbing. It's a very violent book, about Israel doing "what was evil in the sight of the LORD" again and again and suffering the consequences. It's about a dark period in Israel's history that makes pretty uncomfortable reading.

Of course, it's no bad thing in itself to be disturbed. The fact that people do evil *should* disturb us, especially when they are God's people.

So far, though, it's been the rank and file who do evil. The leaders, Caleb and Othniel, have been exemplary.

Now we have a *leader* who is devious and whom God apparently approves of. That's even more disturbing. God's own integrity seems to be at stake here.

This is not unique to the Ehud story. From here On in Judges, most of the people God uses to rescue Israel use methods that are morally questionable.

Consider Jael, for example, or Jephthah or Samson. But the Ehud episode is not simply one of a kind. There is something *uniquely* disturbing about it that we will become increasingly aware of as the story unfolds.

We will find ourselves laughing, but feeling uncomfortable in doing so. What is especially disturbing about this story is its humor.

- Barry G. Webb, Judges and Ruth – God in Chaos, p. 75

I don't agree with what he is saying, that God's own integrity seems to be at stake because of the actions of this man, Ehud.

First of all, God raised this man up to deliver Israel. And to deliver Israel you really have to take out the King, the enemy that has them in bondage.

Now I don't know how you can do this in a nice way. You are going to kill the King, so how are you going to do it in a way that won't offend someone? You can't and you don't!

And let me say this. All this evil that we see, even here with Ehud, is a result of sin in this world and the only way to deal with it is to put it to death!

I don't think Ehud did anything wrong here, but I will leave that up to you to decide for yourself, you know how I feel. And, as we go through this story you will then have to make that decision for yourself!

I have called this study – ***ONE LEFT-HANDED MAN!*** And, as you will see as we go through this, the reason for that title.

I have broken these verses down into several points and they are as follows:

THE SIN OF ISRAEL – JUDGES 3:12a

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN – JUDGES 3:12b-14

ISRAEL REPENTS – JUDGES 3:15a

GOD RAISES UP A JUDGE – JUDGES 3:15b-16

THE PLAN TO DELIVER ISRAEL – JUDGES 3:17-23

OOPS! – JUDGES 3:24-25

THE BATTLE – JUDGES 3:26-29

THE VICTORY AND REST – JUDGES 3:30

So with that said, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 3, starting in verse 12 as we look at this first point, ***THE SIN OF ISRAEL!***

JUDGES 3**VERSE 12a**

This is pretty straight forward, ***THE SIN OF ISRAEL!***

Now think about what is going on here. Look at where they were at and where they drifted to.

After God brought deliverance through the work of Othniel, after they had rest for forty years from their enemies, Israel eventually drifted away from their dependence and obedience towards God.

What is my point? My point is this. Their victory did not automatically last forever; it had to be maintained, and it wasn't.

And I want you to think about this for a minute. First of all, sin is boring!

I know, that is a shocker to some of you, but think about it. We see Israel fall into sin over and over and over and over again! There is nothing really new or exciting about it. In fact, in the end it will bring you into bondage as we will see.

Also, and this we must also be careful about. We often sin after we have obtained some great victory, something great that God has done or brought into our lives. And, instead of being thankful, instead of having a heart of gratitude, we show God our ingratitude for what He has done and is doing in our lives.

Again, that may rub us the wrong way, and I guess that is good if you feel that way. But look at all God has done in your life and instead of being thankful and obeying Him, you are showing your ingratitude towards Him by your rebellion against Him.

That is exactly what Paul said in Romans 1:21, **“because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”**

That is what the children of Israel were doing. They had forty years of peace and instead of being thankful, they **“did evil in the sight of the LORD.”**

And sin can become an addiction. Look at the children of Israel and how it seemed like they had broken free of this rebellion against God, the evil that they were doing, and then, all of a sudden, they are right back into it.

It truly is like drug addiction. We never start out by saying, “I am going to be a drug addict!”

No, we think we are in control of the drugs we are taking and before long, the more we do it, the more it has control over our lives!

That is with any sin. The more you do it the more you are allowing it to control your life!

But the wonderful thing is that we can be set free as we draw close to the Lord, as we put Him first in our lives.

Listen carefully to what we are told in John 8:31-36, **“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’ They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free’?”’ Jesus answered them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.’”**

These are refreshing words if you are willing to obey them. Jesus says we must abide in His Word, make it part of our life, because His Word is living, and it is powerful, and it sets us free from the Law of sin and death. It is a commitment of the heart! It is a love relationship with the Lord, not a Law relationship!

How many people claim to be Christian but negate the Words of God? That is tragic and only the Lord knows if they are saved or not. But here's the thing, if you are not obeying God's Word then you will be in bondage to sin!

You see, "There is nothing like the freedom we can have in Jesus. No money can buy it, no status can obtain it, no works can earn it, and nothing can match it. It is tragic that not every Christian experiences this freedom, which can never be found except by abiding in God's word and being Jesus' disciple." (David Guzik)

Now as you read these verses here in John, it would seem that these Jews were living in a fantasy world. They said that they were never in bondage and thus, they are not in bondage now.

Now they may have felt that way, it may have been their reality, but it was not true. And I believe that it is the Jewish religious leaders who were saying this to Jesus.

Keep in mind that they were in bondage in Egypt for 400 years, in bondage to the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and now the Romans, so to say they were never in bondage is ridiculous!

But don't people do the same today as they are in bondage to sin and they don't even see it, they refuse to see it? Of course we see people do that today and we have probably done it ourselves!

You see, the only true freedom we have is found in Jesus, but they refused to see the bondage they were in, not only to the Romans but to sin, they saw themselves as keepers of the Law! “The power of self-deception in the unconverted man is infinite.” (Ryle) And I will add to that, even in our own lives self-deception is serious and dangerous!

And please understand that whatever controls your life outside of Christ you are in bondage to, it is only in Jesus that we are free; we are bond slaves to Christ, freely surrendering our lives to Him!

Paul said in Galatians 4:7, “**Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.**”

And notice that Jesus says, “**Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**”

It is as one writer wrote, “So the slave of sin cannot by himself change his status. He cannot convert himself, nor can he be converted by any fellow-sinner. . . . The liberator from our bondage must come from outside the ranks of enslaved humanity.” (Tasker)

And the One who sets us free from the bondage of sin we are in is Jesus!

But we see that the children of Israel had turned from God – ***THE SIN OF ISRAEL!***

VERSES 12b-14

I don’t care what anyone tells you, and really, it doesn’t even matter how you feel about this. There is always ***THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN*** and that is what we see here with Israel!

We talked about bondage and, as you can see, that is exactly what transpired here!

Remember, “**. . . the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD.**”

And, because of their rebellion, because of their sin, God raised up the people of Moab and the people of Ammon to teach the children of Israel lessons they needed to learn.

But here is the difference. Now the enemies were relatives.

Remember the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by God? We saw Lot and his daughters escape from the city. And Lot's daughters thought they were the only ones left on the earth. So they each got their father drunk and laid with him.

The oldest daughter conceived and bore a son; his name was Moab, the father of the Moabites.

The younger daughter also conceived and bore a son; his name was Ben-Ammi, who was the father of the people of Ammon. (Genesis 19:30-38).

God was now going to use the illegitimate sons of Lot and his daughters, relatives of the children of Israel, to bring judgment upon them.

We also see the Amalekites assist in this oppression. They were more of a nomadic people and traveled in the area south of Beersheba and were bitter enemies of Israel.

And I hope you are seeing that this is the nature of sin – ***BONDAGE!***

And the problem for the children of Israel and for us is that it is difficult to admit our sin and come back to God.

For the children of Israel, it was eighteen years of bondage before they will repent of their sin and get right with God!

And agree or not, sin will always place you in bondage and it will try to destroy you!

You see, what we thought was a way of freedom, our sin, becomes a place of bondage as this story shows us.

“A news story told of a grease processing plant that opened up a 55-gallon drum of grease that came from a prison. Inside, they found a little bit of grease, but a dead prison inmate. He tried to escape by hiding in the barrel, but his quest for freedom became a means of bondage and death for him. He was deceived like we are deceived by sin, thinking that it can be a path to freedom. Instead, it only brings bondage and death.” (David Guzek).

Let me share a few verses that deal with the consequences of sin in our life.

First of all, in Galatians 6:7-8 we are told, **“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”**

What are you sowing to, the flesh or the Spirit, because there are consequences to your actions!

Also, we are told in Isaiah 59:1-2, **“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”**

Sin separates us from God and yes, even as Christians, we can’t lose our salvation but our fellowship with God can be broken by sin in our lives. You see, there are consequences to your actions!

In Proverbs 14:12 we are told, **“There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”**

Man, who tries to do his own thing, who refuses to listen to God, his way is that of death. For the person who is not saved, eternal damnation. For the person who is saved, death to that Spirit-filled life as you quench the work that the Holy Spirit is trying to do in you and through you. The only solution is to repent and return to the Lord because there are consequences to your actions!

And lastly, and there are many more, but in Proverbs 5:22 we are told, “**His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, And he is caught in the cords of his sin.**”

Again, man apart from God thinks he is free, but in the end, he is not free but is in bondage! You see, there are consequences to your actions!

Make no mistake about it, sin always brings bondage, though it comes to us deceptively.

Think about this for a minute. Do you think that the fish, when he is looking at the bait that is dangling in front of him ever contemplates the bondage that the hook will bring to his life? Of course not and he goes after the bait and he is hooked!

Satan snares us by making the bait attractive and hiding the hook, and it looks so wonderful, so attractive, so tantalizing that we just can't ignore it and we take a bite and we are hooked!

And so, we see that the consequences of sin for the children of Israel is that they were in bondage to Eglon, the King Moab for eighteen years!

Make no mistake about it, sin will weaken us, and it will weaken nations and make us vulnerable, sooner or later, to a great fall or conquest!

The warning is simple, there are ***THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN!***

VERSE 15a

I am not sure why some people, when they read the Scriptures, they see God, in the Old Testament, as some angry, vengeful God. I don't think they are really reading the Scriptures, because you can't come to that conclusion as you read the Bible!

You see, over and over again we see Israel drift away from God. And because of their actions, God had every right to destroy them, cast them off, but He didn't!

One writer put it like this,

Isn't it astonishing that God keeps saving his people even though they keep sinning against him? And shouldn't every new instance of it cause the most profound gratitude to well up with us? Without this we would all be lost, because the fact is that this side of Heaven we will go on sinning, even though it is not our intention to do so, and if God should ever abandon us to the full consequences of our sin all hope would be gone.

There are two amazing things in Judges: Israel's persistence in sin and God's persistence in saving them, and the second is the most astonishing by far.

- Barry G. Webb, Judges and Ruth – God in Chaos, pp. 77-78

Look at what we read here, “**And when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.**”

That is it, and we see God respond to them with open arms! What Israel did, is *ISRAEL REPENTS!*

In other words, they were moving away from God, God was not moving away from them.

And when they came to their senses, when they saw what they were doing was wrong and the bondage it had brought them into, we see them do a 180 degree turn back to God. That is the idea of this word, “*repent.*”

But there is much more to this word. We are told,

Many understand the term *repentance* to mean “a turning from sin.” Regretting sin and turning from it is related to repentance, but it is not the precise meaning of the word.

In the Bible, the word *repent* means “to change one’s mind.” The Bible also tells us that true repentance will result in a change of actions (Luke 3:8-14; Acts 3:19).

In summarizing his ministry, Paul declares, “I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds” (Acts 26:20). The full biblical definition of repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of action. . . .

Repentance involves recognizing that you have thought wrongly in the past and determining to think aright in the future. The repentant person has “second thoughts” about the mindset he formally embraced. There is a change of disposition and a new way of thinking about God, about sin, about holiness, and about doing God’s will. True repentance is prompted by “godly sorrow,” and it “leads to salvation” (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Repentance and [faith](#) can be understood as two sides of the same coin. It is impossible to place your faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior without first changing your mind about your sin and about who Jesus is and what He has done. Whether it is repentance from willful rejection or repentance from ignorance or disinterest, it is a change of mind. Biblical repentance, in relation to salvation, is changing your mind from rejection of Christ to faith in Christ. . . .

To see what repentance looks like in real life, all we need to do is turn to the story of Zacchaeus. Here was a man who cheated and stole and lived lavishly on his ill-gotten gains - until he met Jesus.

At that point he had a radical change of mind: “Look, Lord!” said Zacchaeus. “Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount” (Luke 19:8). Jesus happily proclaimed that salvation had come to Zacchaeus’s house, and that even the tax collector was now “a son of Abraham” (verse 9) - a reference to Zacchaeus’s faith. The cheat became a philanthropist; the thief made restitution. That’s repentance, coupled with faith in Christ.

Repentance, properly defined, is necessary for salvation. Biblical repentance is changing your mind about your sin - no longer is sin something to toy with; it is something to be forsaken as we “flee from the coming wrath” (Matthew 3:7).

It is also changing your mind about Jesus Christ - no longer is He to be mocked, discounted, or ignored; He is the Savior to be clung to; He is the Lord to be worshiped and adored.

- <http://bit.ly/33bb6XG>

Again, what we see here is the grace and mercy of God. When Israel repeatedly drifted from God, He had every right to cast them off completely. Yet He still responded when they finally did call on Him for deliverance. ***ISRAEL REPENTS!***

VERSES 15b-16

Out of the cry of deliverance by the children of Israel, we see that ***GOD RAISES UP A JUDGE*** and his name is Ehud.

So we see here Ehud, Israel's second Judge.

Now it is interesting because we are told that he is "**a left-handed man.**"

As some read this, they think that Ehud was obviously not right-handed, but a left-handed man, that is what the Scriptures are saying, right?

Not exactly. You see, I don't believe that is speaking of him being left-handed as opposed to being right-handed because in the Hebrew it literally means, "***one bound in the right hand***" or "***a man handicapped in the right hand.***"

Because of this handicap, he may have been thought of as less of a threat to the King and he used this for his advantage in meeting with the King of Moab, as we shall see.

And think about our own lives. We have many faults and really, as the world looks at Christians, they see us, in a sense, as handicapped. We don't have what the world might call the tools to do the work.

But here is something that we do have that the world does not have, we do have the Lord!

When I was a young Christian, one of the Scriptures that always encouraged me and it still does is what the religious leaders said in Acts 4:13, "**Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.**"

You see, folk's, it is not by our might or power or strength, but by His! It is spending time with Jesus! May we not forget that even if we feel and should feel inadequate for the work because He is more than able to work in us and through us for His glory!

And some of you this morning may feel useless to God. You feel that you wasted your life and what can God do with it now?

First of all, listen to that statement – ***WHAT CAN GOD DO WITH IT NOW!*** And instead of a question, put an exclamation mark there.

He is God and He is in the business of taking broken and battered lives and restoring them!

Maybe you heard the song by Wayne Watson called “*The Touch of the Master’s Hand.*”

I think this song sums this up for us because we are all battered and scared and yet, God makes us precious and useful for His use. He makes us sound like beautiful music as He plays us you might say. This is how the song goes,

Well it was battered and scared
 And the auctioneer felt it was hardly worth his while
 To waste much time on the old violin but he held it up with a smile
 Well it sure ain’t much but it’s all we got left I guess we ought to sell it to
 Oh, now who’ll start the bid on this old violin?
 Just one more and we’ll be through

And then he cried one give me one dollar
 Who’ll make it two only two dollars who’ll make it three
 Three dollars twice now that’s a good price
 Now who’s gonna bid for me?
 Raise up your hand now don’t wait any longer the auctions about to end
 Who’s got four Just one dollar more to bid on this old violin?

Well the air was hot and the people stood around as the sun was setting low
 From the back of the crowd a gray haired man
 Came forward and picked up the bow
 He wiped the dust from the old violin then he tightened up the strings
 Then he played out a melody pure and sweet, sweeter than the Angels sing
 And then the music stopped and the auctioneer
 With a voice that was quiet and low he said now what am I bid
 For this old violin and he held it up with a bow

And then he cried out one give me one thousand
 Who’ll make it two only two thousand who’ll make it three
 Three thousand twice you know that’s a good price
 Common who’s gonna to bid for me?
 And the people cried out what made the change we don’t understand
 Then the auctioneer stopped and he said with a smile
 It was the touch of the Master’s hand

You know there's many a man with his life out of tune
 Battered and scared with sin and he's auctioned cheap
 To a thankless world much like that old violin
 Oh, but then the Master comes
 And that old foolish crowd they never understand
 The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought
 Just by one touch of the Masters hand

And then he cried out one give me one thousand
 Who'll make it two only two thousand who'll make it three
 Three thousand twice you know that's a good price
 Common who's gonna bid for me?
 And the people cried out what made the change we don't understand
 Then the auctioneer stopped and he said with a smile
 It was the touch, that's all it was; it was the touch of the Master's hand
 It was the touch of the Master's hand; oh, it was the touch of the Master's hand

- <http://bit.ly/2XGzCP7>

That is our God and I love how Paul puts it in Philippians 4:13, “**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**”

The Amplified Bible puts it even stronger as we read, “**I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency].**”

May we not forget that! It is not our strength or might, but God's working in us and through us for His glory.

If you feel you are not equipped to serve God, perfect. He will equip you; He will give you the tools you will need for the work that He not only called you to, but He prepared the work for you!

That is what Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:10, “**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**”

God raised up this Judge, Ehud, to deliver Israel and yes, maybe he was not the strongest, the healthiest but it was God who would enable him to accomplish this task of destroying this King of Moab, Eglon, who had the children of Israel in bondage!

Let me just fill in a few details before we move on.

Ehud brought tribute to the King, that is the taxes that the King placed upon Israel. And Ehud makes a dagger approximately 18 inches long and fastens it to his right thigh.

Now because he was handicapped on the right side, no one would think of him concealing a weapon on that side. He again used his handicap for an advantage.

So we have seen ***GOD RAISE UP A JUDGE – EHUD!***

VERSES 17-23

In these verses we see ***THE PLAN TO DELIVER ISRAEL.***

Let me give you a picture of what is going on here and to develop the picture, we need to understand what the King's name means.

The name "**Eglon**" means "a little calf."

Now we may not think much about that until we read this story and we see what happened to him.

He is called the little calf and I am not sure little is correct because we are told, "**Now Eglon was a very fat man.**"

So when you look at his name and his size, and then what was going to happen to him, he was really a fatted calf being prepared for the slaughter!

But why?

Before I get into that, let's go through this story.

Ehud brings tribute to the King, it was probably money, grain, food, it could have even been wool. It was a pretty large sum of stuff because we are told that after Ehud presented these to the King, **“he sent away the people who had carried the tribute.”**

So as these men go away, after paying their tribute to the King, Ehud sends these men out and he tells King Eglon that he has a secret for him and thus, Eglon clears the room of everyone so that now it is just Ehud and this King.

Now, did Ehud lie, trick the King?

I don't believe he did. You see, the message is this, ***“If you are going to oppress God's people, if you are going to touch the apple of His eye, then you will be judged for it!”***

And that is exactly what happened here. Ehud had a message from God for this King, and it was not a good one to say the least.

I think this also applies to us and the Eglon's that are in us and need to be put to death.

Also, and I think this is so important, the preacher should present the Word of God with the sense that what the preacher is giving to the people is a message from God.

Spurgeon, from years gone by, was concerned by what he saw as he wrote, “I am afraid, there are some ministers who hardly think that the gospel is intended to come personally home to the people. They talk, as I read of one the other day, who said that when he preached to sinners he did not like to look the congregation in the face, for fear they should think he meant to be personal; so he looked up at the ventilator, because there was no fear then of any individual catching his eye. Oh! That fear of man has been the ruin of many ministers. They never dared to preach right at the people.”

That is funny to me because some ten years ago someone was mad at me, they even left the church because they felt I was always looking at him!

I don't think that was the problem. I think that the problem was God's Word and that God was convicting him and he did not like it. Now, it doesn't make sense to fight against God, so you fight against those who are teaching the Word of God and the excuse, "You are always looking at me when you teach!" Crazy.

But make no mistake about it, and how true what Spurgeon said, that some are afraid to share the message of God because they feel people will be upset with the message!

Remember what Paul wrote in Hebrews 4:12-13, "**For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**"

First of all, Paul tells us that "**. . . the word of God is living . . .**"

Some today feel that the Word of God is boring, it is dead, it is lifeless! That is foolish and it may be that they are dead or lifeless, but God's Word is not dead, it is not lifeless!

Why do I believe that God's Word is living? Because it gives life, spiritual life to those who are spiritually dead!

Paul tells us in Romans 10:17, "**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**"

You see, if this was just another book it could not transform lives, it could not give life to the dead, spiritual life that is. And yet that is exactly what we see!

You have heard of this example before, but it just shows how God's Word is life-giving.

We are told,

One of the most dramatic examples of the Bible's divine ability to transform men and women involved the famous mutiny on the "Bounty." Following their rebellion against the notorious Captain Bligh, nine mutineers, along with the Tahitian men and women who accompanied them, found their way to Pitcairn Island, a tiny dot in the South Pacific only two miles long and a mile wide.

Ten years later, drink and fighting had left only one man alive - John Adams. Eleven women and 23 children made up the rest of the Island's population. So far this is the familiar story made famous in the book and motion picture. But the rest of the story is even more remarkable.

About this time, Adams came across the "Bounty's" Bible in the bottom of an old chest. He began to read it, and the divine power of God's Word reached into the heart of that hardened murderer on a tiny volcanic speck in the vast Pacific Ocean - and changed his life forever. The peace and love that Adams found in the Bible entirely replaced the old life of quarreling, brawling, and liquor. He began to teach the children from the Bible until every person on the island had experienced the same amazing change that he had found. Today, with a population of slightly less than 100, nearly every person on Pitcairn Island is a Christian.

- From Signs of the Times, August 1988, p. 5

God's Word is living, and it can change people's lives as we have seen, and we do see in our own lives. And it is not just living, but "**... the word of God is ... powerful ...**"

Books don't have the power to change people's lives as God's Word does. Yes, books can affect our lives but God's Word changes us from the inside out!

It is as Paul said in I Thessalonians 1:5, **“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“For our [preaching of the] glad tidings (the Gospel) came to you not only in word, but also in [its own inherent] power and in the Holy Spirit and with great conviction and absolute certainty [on our part]. You know what kind of men we proved [ourselves] to be among you for your good.”**

There is no doubt about it, we have seen evidence to prove this, that when the Word of God goes forth it goes forth in power. You see, it is the Word of God empowered by the Spirit of God and we can have that full assurance that God’s Word will do what it says!

As one writer put it, “The word of God actively works in believers to teach them doctrine, diagnose sin, discipline them, and provide direction for them when they hear and heed it.” (David M. Levy, Hebrews A Commentary, p. 45)

So God’s Word is not just living, it is not just powerful, but **“... the word of God is ... sharper than any two-edged sword ...”** This third point says that the Word of God is like a surgical instrument cutting right to the heart of the matter!

And what does that two-edge sword cut into? We don’t have to guess because the fourth point is that **“... the word of God is ... piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow ...”**

I believe it is God's Word opened up to us by the Spirit of God that brings us to saving faith. Paul said in Romans 1:16, "**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**" That is because God's Word is living, and it is powerful, and it can bring us to saving faith!

But God's Word is even more than that because once we are saved God's Word is like a surgical instrument cutting away the garbage in our lives. This is called the sanctification process and like I have said, this is God purging the garbage from our lives to make us more like Him.

It is as Paul said in I Thessalonians 5:23, "**Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

As believers, Jesus not only has cleansed us from all of our sins in the positional sense, but He is cleansing us every day in the practical sense as He makes us into the men and women of God that He wants us to be. We don't clean up our lives to come to Christ, we come to Him because we are unclean and we give Him our lives and He will cleanse us from our sins and He will set us apart for His use, He will make us like Him!

How does He do that? Very simply, listen to what Jesus Himself said in John 17:17-19. We are told, "**Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.**"

You see, the Word of God opened up to our hearts by the Spirit of God exposes our hearts, what is inside us, for only God knows our hearts and thus, He then can show us what we need to give to Him.

David put it this way in Psalm 119:9-11, **“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.”**

So as God uses His Word in our lives like a surgeon’s scalpel He is cutting away those things in our lives that need to be removed.

It pierces our **“soul and spirit”** or the PSUCHE, (psoo-kahy’) and the PNEUMA, (pnyoo’-mah) in the Greek and it speaks of our consciousness, (soul) and that part of us that is in communion with God, (spirit).

Why does God pierce those areas? I think He does so to draw them together so that our conscious and our spirit are one, focused on God!

Also, it pierces between the **“joints and the marrow.”** Joints are the point of contact between the bones and what surrounds those areas. In other words, it speaks of how we move. It speaks of the things we are doing, how we are walking. The Word of God shows us how to walk, it tells us what is right, what is wrong, how to get right when we have gone astray and how to stay right.

That is what Paul said in II Timothy 3:16-17, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

Also, Paul speaks of the “**marrow**” or the place where red blood cells are produced. The Bible tells us that the life is in the blood and the blood permeates our body, it goes throughout our body and I think the point is this. That what is on the inside of our lives, what is flowing through our blood will overflow in what we do, how we live, the nature of Jesus will come forth from us!

We need to hear the message that God has for us so those Eglon’s in our life, in a sense, can be destroyed, put to death, cut out! And that is what we see here, it is what Ehud does.

And I guess you can say that this was a pretty brutal period of time and definitely not for the weak.

We see here that Ehud is able to get close to the King, grab his dagger and thrust it into the King. In fact, this King was so fat that the whole blade went in and he fell down dead.

This was the plan, that came to pass, ***THE PLAN TO DELIVER ISRAEL!***

VERSES 24-25

I have called these verses – ***OOPS!*** And as you can see, it is kind of funny and on the part of these servants, it is an ***OOPS!***

The servants of the King come to see how he is doing, and the doors are closed.

And they came to the conclusion that he was “**covering his feet**” which is a euphemism for body elimination, he was going to the bathroom they thought.

Obviously you don’t want to bother anyone when they are involved in this activity and especially this King!

So they waited patiently for the King to finish his business, and they waited and waited until they reached the point that they were embarrassed he took so long.

After all that time they finally unlocked the door to see what had happened, maybe peering in not to disturb him and they found the King dead on the floor!

This delay allowed Ehud to escape out of the window and flea to safety, as we will see as we read on.

Also, this delay, we will see, is giving time for Ehud to gather the troops for battle. And with their leader dead, there would be confusion and the city would be easy to take.

As you can see, there really is not much more to say about this incident, other than, ***OOPS!***

VERSES 26-29

Now we come to ***THE BATTLE!***

Not a lot of information here about this battle. It is almost matter-a-factly given to us.

And keep in mind that the soldiers and the people of Moab are in distress, there is much confusion as their King is dead and who is going to lead them. And from the looks of things, there was no one and they were fleeing as Israel was coming after them.

And here is what happened. As Ehud arrives in the mountains of Ephraim, he then blows the trumpet for battle and the children of Israel rise up to assist in the work and they defeated Moab, killing 10,000 men.

Can one man make a difference?

You bet, it takes one man or one woman to stand up for God and God will use that person mightily as he did with Ehud.

And I like the fact that Ehud said, **“Follow me, for the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand.”** Judges 3:28.

In other words, Ehud was following the Lord and he knew that the Lord had given them this victory already, all they needed to do was walk by faith!

I think that is important for us to understand. Don't follow people who are not following the Lord, they are not going to lead you in the right direction.

It sounds so simple and yet, we do fall prey to these things.

Here we see Ehud and the children of Israel in **THE BATTLE!**

VERSE 30

Here we see ***THE VICTORY AND REST*** for the children of Israel!

Ehud Judged Israel for eighty years, which was the longest period of rest in the book of Judges.

They obtained the victory and they enjoyed the rest for eighty years! And it does not say that they fell back into sin, in this chapter, but they had rest for eighty years and I think after that they went back into captivity because of sin. Otherwise they would have continued to enjoy that rest.

But, as we move into Judges chapter 4, we are told, "**When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD.**" Judges 4:1.

Once again we see this cycle begin all over again, tragically.

Now, as you read this story you can clearly see that Ehud is a dramatic example of how in the ***LORD***, one man can make a difference, and how God will call others to work with that one man.

And remember what the Scriptures told us of this man, that he was "**a left-handed man.**"

And, as I have said, in the Hebrew it is not speaking of him just being left-handed, there is more to it than that. In the Hebrew it literally means, ***“one bound in the right hand”*** or ***“a man handicapped in the right hand.”***

I don't know where you are at this morning. Maybe you are feeling handicapped in your walk with the Lord or you have some physical or health issues that you feel has disqualified you or taken you out of serving the Lord!

Ehud did not let his handicap get in his way of serving the Lord. In fact, he used it to his advantage.

And I want you to think about this. When God called Moses to go before Pharaoh and to speak for Him, Moses had all kinds of excuses why he couldn't. He had what we might say handicaps, he did not speak well, maybe a speech impediment, and there were all kinds of excuses why he couldn't do it.

And what did the Lord say to Moses, ***“I forgot about that Moses. I am sorry, of course you can't serve Me. Thanks for reminding Me!”***

No, the Lord did not say that. And think about it. If the Lord is going to call you to do something, don't you think He will equip you to do the work. He is not calling you so you will fail, but that you will have victory like Ehud had here.

Listen to what the Lord said to Moses in Exodus 4:11-12, **“So the Lord said to him, ‘Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.’”**

Again, don't let your weakness cause you to not take those steps of faith. It is not going to be our victory but the victory that the Lord will obtain through us. And yes, He does not need us to get these victories, but He uses us so that He will get the glory!

My prayer as you leave here and get ready to begin a new week in the Lord is that you would not only hear what the Lord is telling you, but then you would walk accordingly and see the salvation that He will bring to the battles you face in life!

Yes, God can do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think! We just need to walk by faith! Remember - *“The Touch of the Master’s Hand.”*