

Judges 3:12-22 Dealing with the Oppressor

If you have been around here for a while
Sin is not bad because it is forbidden, it is forbidden because it is Bad!

Sin is forbidden because a Loving God knows it will hurt you!

I come home and walk into the kitchen and see a plate of warm gooey – Brownies fresh out of the oven.

A)The aroma fills the kitchen and my senses are stirred – Yes – I reach and my wife – SAYS –
FORBIDDEN.

B)Don't touch those until after dinner – I am making your favorite and I don't want you to spoil your appetite.

C)Because she loves me – she doesn't want me to live on Brownies

1)**Forbidden – because it is bad** - (IT WILL SPOIL MY APPETITE)

D)So what happens – she leaves the kitchen – I sneak in and eat one

1)But I can't just eat one – I eat three – they melt in my mouth.

E)I have to cover up my sin – by – moving the brownies around on the plate so she can't tell that I ate them

Dinner comes – one of my Favorites – Chicken enchiladas with white sauce – but I am too full on brownies to eat them – I eat one barely.

A)Denise looks at me – What's wrong not good - no great – **YOU ATE THE BROWNIES DIDN'T YOU** – BUSTED!

B) Sin is not bad because it is forbidden – **it is forbidden because it is bad !**

C)It ruins you – it affects you in adverse ways – it has long standing ramifications and it is addicting –

1)Can't just eat one –

And so a loving God – who has our best interest in mind says - Avoid this because it is going to cause you pain.

A)The Bible says that **sin is pleasurable** for a season – but the end of it is death.

B)God who loves us so much – says – I don't want you to experience the pain the grief the ramification, the death that comes from Sin.

1)**So stay away** – It is forbidden because it is Bad – it is going to harm you, hurt you, ultimately destroy ...

C) **Mathematics of sin is always the same: Sin will....**

- Add to your sorrow
- Subtract your joy
- Multiply your problems
- Divide your heart!

Sometimes we just don't believe that do we! {Really not that Bad!}

A)When we moved to Oregon to plant the Church – we were moving into this house we were going to rent.

B)We were unpacking and had not put the plastic guards on the light sockets and **our precious 18 month old daughter Amy** – with the beautiful curly hair

1) Was fascinated with the light sockets – I find her crawling over trying to stick her fingers in the light socket

C) I rush over – pull her aside – I said – no – owey – Your hair is curly enough.

D) No – Bad! **Now a light socket is not bad** – but it is bad to put your fingers in it.

E) So I pull Amy aside – I put her on the other side of the room – **I give her stuff to play with to distract** her and guess what- she crawls back over

1) Not once – Not twice – but 4 times – finally – I had to spank her little hand.

Thing about Amy even as a little girl – she rarely cried

A) You should have seen the look – she gave me ! – You are such a kill Joy

B) Well guess what Amy is now 23 yrs old – and now She gets it!

1) **She is at the house** – there are no plastic guards on the light sockets because she gets it – IT IS FORBIDDEN (to put fingers in the Light socket)
BECAUSE IT IS BAD!

B) My dad – kept me from that **21 yrs ago because he loved me**

1) He spanked my hand – because he loved me.

C) Nice family stories Pastor Rob – but what does that have to do with our story in the book of Judges?

There is this phrase that is repeated seven times in the book of Judges, we see it in our text in v. 12 – “The children of Israel AGAIN did evil in the sight of the LORD.”

A) The people of Israel settled in the Land of Canaan – THINGS GO WELL FOR A WHILE.

B) UNTIL - **THEY STOP LOOKING UP TO GOD** –
THEY START LOOKING AROUND– WORLD

1) They start following the other nations – REBEL

C) Judges 21:25 **No King** {Refused to let God be their King } **everyone own eyes** –

Well the Bible tells us in Hebrews 12:6 “that the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”

A) That is a principle of the Lord – He disciplines his kids, because He loves them and wants the best for His kids.

B) If you are a child of God – you are living in rebellion – compromise- you can rest assured – Chastening – Discipline is coming.

1) It is a sign – **You belong to God** – and because He loves you he will discipline you. { get your attention – wake you up – bring you back. }

C) If you have been living in compromise and rebellion and you are not experiencing any discipline from the Lord

1) Don't think – ok – He must not care what I am doing – No if you are not being disciplined it could be an indication – **you are not his Child.**

D) God disciplines HIS KIDS – Same way I disciplined my kids when they were little – spanking

1) But I never spanked anyone else's kids –

2) Believe me I wanted to a few times but I didn't – **NOT MY KIDS** – I discipline – my kids

E) God who is the perfect father – Disciplines His Kids – His kids are those who have given their hearts to Christ.

1) God is the Creator of all – ONLY A FATHER TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS!

So Because God loves His Children, because He doesn't want their lives to be destroyed by sin –

Because Sin is forbidden because it is Bad

A) God would Discipline His people by raising up an oppressor to Chasten them – to allow them to experience the ramifications of their sin.

B) And God would allow His people to be oppressed until they cried out to Him and then – He would raise up a Deliverer to RESCUE THEM.

C) Debra, Gideon, Samson - SO we read in our Text!

And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. ¹³ Then he (**EGLON**) gathered to himself the people of Ammon and Amalek, went and defeated Israel, and took possession of the City of Palms. (JERICHO) ¹⁴ **So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years.**

¹⁵ But when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a **deliverer for them**: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab. ¹⁶ Now Ehud made himself a dagger (it was double-edged and a cubit in length- **18 inches**) and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh.

¹⁷ So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (**Now Eglon was a very fat man.**) {REMEMBER THIS IS INSPIRED- Eglon is the only guy in the Bible called A VERY FAT MAN}

¹⁸ And when he had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute. ¹⁹ But he himself turned back from the stone images that *were* at Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king."

He said, "Keep silence!" And all who attended him went out from him.

²⁰ So Ehud came to him (now he was sitting upstairs in his cool private chamber). Then Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." So he arose from *his* seat. ²¹ Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. ²² Even the hilt (HANDLE) went in after the blade, **and the fat closed over the blade**, for he did not draw the dagger out of his belly; (THAT IS WHY HE IS CALLED A VERY FAT MAN) **and his entrails came out.** (KJV – THE DIRT CAME OUT!)

I ADMIT THIS IS A GROSS PICTURE!

**The Book of Judges is really a good case study in the Dangers of Relativism -
The Dangers of the Fluctuating standards of man**

A) The danger of moving away from the Standards found in God's word concerning what He calls Good & Evil –

B) To a system of No absolutes – no standards – redefining of right & wrong / OUR NATION

C) That is essentially what was happening in Israel – they would start off looking up

1) Then they would start looking around – taking their cues from other nations

D)They would start doing what they felt was right in their own eyes –

E)Result: Sin is always Progressive – we read – **The Children of Israel – AGAIN Sigh of the Lord.**

1)They would turn away from the Lord – God would send an oppressor.

E)**Chasten, get attention- bring them back**

1)The Children of Israel would

This time it was the Moabites - God raises up an Oppressor named Eglon – A VERY FAT MAN!

A)They estimate that he had a 300 inch waistline – I am encouraged already because I struggle with a 36

B)Eglon - Great name for this guy- Eg – think **HUMPTY DUMPTY**

1)A better picture would probably be **Joppa the Hut – Star wars –**

C)Eglon is Gigantic – were not talking diameters – we are talking longitude and latitude.

D)This is beyond Obese — this is Planet – He has his own Zip code. – **THIS IS BIG**

Our text tells us that the people of Israel served Eglon for 18yrs!

A)After 18 yrs they finally cry out to the Lord – {Question comes to our minds – **WHY DID THEY WAIT SO LONG?**

B)Jonah in the belly of the big fish – After 3 days – He cried out to the Lord

1)I would like to think if it were me – **AFTER 3 SECONDS**

C)Why do we wait so long? Some of us – Stubborn – I am going to find a way out of this. – **Wait until we are exhausted.**

1)Others – At first we think – this isn't so bad. – Sin is pleasurable for a Season – **NOT SO BAD –**

D)Others – we wrongly believe the lie of the enemy – God is through with you – why bother – He is done!

1)**REMEMBER GOD RESIST THE PROUD – GIVES GRACE TO THE SINNER!**

E)His mercies are NEW EVERY MORNING!

I am not sure why the Children of Israel waited 18 yrs to cry out to the Lord but – I do know that as soon as they did – GOD RESPONDS IN GRACE!

A)He sends a **DELIVERER** – Ehud – 2nd Deliverer.

B)Let's note a few things about Ehud: - ¹⁵ But when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a **deliverer for them**: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man.

C)Ehud is from the tribe of Benjamin – **He is a Benjamite**: The name Benjamin= **Son of my right hand.**

1)But we are told here that Ehud is left handed. – You might say: So what?

D)How many of you are left handed? – More common today even then it was 70 yrs ago.

1)My dad is left handed and when he was in school – they tried to change him

E)I was left handed and they did change me! More common today

In Bible times it was not common at all!

A) Some in Bible days even considered being left handed to be a curse ! ~ **A HANDICAP @ BEST**

B) So uncommon in Bible days that many Scholars suggest that the reason Ehud was left handed is that he was handicapped in his right hand.

Bb) He was crippled or paralyzed in his right hand. – SOMETHING WRONG

C) Whether he was handicapped in his right hand or one of those rare people who was never converted from left to right.

1) **EHUD IS A LEFT HANDED MAN GROWING UP IN AND LIVING IN A RIGHT HANDED WORLD!**

Perhaps that is how you feel – something about you that you think – why did God make me this way? I feel so different -

A) Why did he allow that to happen in my life?

B) Walk with God long enough and you discover – there are no accidents with God!

1) **LAUREL LEE – CANCER** – Movie – Walked through the Fire

C) God always has a plan and Ehud is about to discover God's plan

1) His being left handed is going to come in very handy in this story in his dealings with Eglon. Israel's oppressor

D) But understand this story is not just a story of how God causes all things to work together for good. –

1) It is also a wonderful illustration on how to deal with the flesh, how to deal with those things in our lives that we can struggle with.

E) Those areas of our lives that get the best of us – Worry, Pride, lust, Anger

1) Those sins that just seem to linger and oppress us and hold us under their power.

How do we deal with the Oppressor?

A) First - What not to do! Don't feed it! We read here that the Children of Israel sent a tribute to Eglon.

B) This is something that the Children of Israel did a lot in that 18 year period – anytime – Eglon started to get harsh.

1) Let's send him a Present – a tribute.

C) What do **you send A VERY FAT MAN** – 300 inch waistline – I suggest **FOOD!**

1) Fruits, veggies, Cakes –

Eglon is excited when they come!

A) But listen that is never the way to deal with Sin! – Never want to try and appease it.

B) But it is easy to fall into that trap where we think- 1) If I just feed this thing a little bit – maybe the Craving will go away.

2) One more hit, **one more drink, one more look – THEN I AM DONE!**

C) Never works that way: **YOU FEED IT AND IT only GETS STRONGER!** It grows –

D) You try and play with sin – and it gets a foothold.

1) Take lust – it is like fire – the more you feed it the more it demands.

Most of you know – I LOVE ICE CREAM!

A) You know when I struggle the most with Ice Cream? When it is in the Frig.

Aa)When I know it is right there. – At night I Crave it.

B)When it is not in the house – I don't really think about it!

C) So here is what happens – I announce I am going on a diet – and the next day –

1)My wife comes home with not one, not two, but 3 half gallons of ice cream

D)Two are my favorite flavors – Honey what are you doing ? Don't eat it –be strong - Bought it for the kids – (they don't live here any more)

D)I think – just a bite- **Just a cup – small cup** – just one bowl – what the heck I will just eat the whole half gallon and get it out of here so I can start my diet
AGAIN TOMORROW

E)**Feed it and it grows** – I truly can say like Adam – Lord it was the WOMAN THAT YOU GAVE ME!

You can't feed sin – You can't feed the flesh – Whatever it is that you are being oppressed by – whatever it is that has a foothold

A)How do we deal with it – look back at our story.

B) ¹⁶ Now Ehud made himself a dagger (it was double-edged and a cubit in length- **18 inches**) and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh.

C)Ehud made a sword – double edged – he hid it under his garment and fastened it to his right side.

Ehud comes with the Tribute and after they present the tribute to Eglon –

A)Eglon is sitting in his cooling Parlor - You weigh 300 lbs living in that dry hot climate – you need a cooling parlor – you need a walk in frig.

B)They bring **Chocolate Éclairs and Chocolate covered Strawberries**

1)Ehud – sends the Presenters out – and Announces to the Eglon I have a secret for you from God –

E)Eglon gets all excited – v.20 tells us Eglon rose to his feet – not sure how you could tell – Here is where – it all comes together

Here we see the importance of EHUD being left handed /

A)Ehud was definitely a man of cunning and courage; he is the "**James Bond**" of the judges

Aa)See Only a left handed man would fasten his sword to his right thigh

B) A right handed man would put the sword on this left thigh

1) When you went into the presence of the king they had security measures much like today- **FRISK PEOPLE**

C) **GUARDS GOT LAZY** - frisking only took place on the LEFT side because most men being RIGHT handed would draw across their LEFT side for their weapon

1) So Ehud being **LEFT handed hid his sword** on his RIGHT side

D)I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER IF IN THAT MOMENT – Ehud thought to himself – this is why God made me LEFT HANDED!

E) All those years he may have wondered or was confused why he was left handed - But at that moment it was clear

1) The apparent **CURSE of left-handedness was a BLESSING**

So often we look at our own lives and we place great limitations upon ourselves because we think we are different

A) Not smart / not gifted / too old / etc – Don't fit in – Can't be used in ministering to this person or that person

B) NOTE: God NEVER makes mistakes- You are the way that you are

- 1) With your personality... or lack of it
- 2) With your intelligence.... or lack of it
- 3) With your looks.... or lack of them

Psalms 139:14-16 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.

C) Maybe you have wondered: "Lord, why am I the way that I am?"
Maybe you've asked God: "Lord, can't you change me?"

D) You are the way that you are for a reason – God wants to use your perceived limitations to illustrate His Strength

Listen we can look at so many things that we think are limitations in our lives & we fail to realize that they are there by design

A) There is a uniqueness upon your life that is Necessary – A uniqueness that is going to play out in God's Plan

B) Ehud is a great picture of that!

C) 18 years of living under this heavy oppressor – the People finally Cry out to God and God sends a man with a sword!

There in lies an awesome picture of How God wants us to deal with the Oppressors that linger in our lives

A) those sins, attitudes, those passions that we can struggle with that want to put us back in bondage.

B) Ehud takes this **double edged Dagger** - he hides it under his clothes

C) And at the right moment – thrust it in – Result is the Dirt comes out

1) The Sword goes in and the Dirt comes out!

Ephesians 6:17 “The Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.”

A) The sword of the spirit going into my heart – going into the core of my being and when it does it is always at the expense of some dirt in my life

B) God uses his word to deal with our Flesh

How do we deal with the Oppressor?

#1 What not to do: Don't feed it!

#2 WITH THE WORD!

A)The Bible says Psalms 119:9 “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.”

B)Psalms 119:11 “Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

C)IN the same way that – Ehud hid God’s word under his clothes – we hide God’s word in our hearts.

1)The word of God cleanses – the word of God transforms

Jesus said in John 15:3 – “Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”

A)Clean is Katharos– we get our word Catheterize from it. - Cleansing Process -

B) It is brutal but necessary sometimes when you can’t drain toxins from your system.

Jesus said: You are clean – Katharos through the Word that I have spoken to you.

A)The word has a way of Cleansing – Transforming our lives

B) God’s word Washes us - Ephesians 5:22 – “Husbands Wash your wife by the Word.”

C)God’s word Sanctifies - John 17:17 – Father – Sanctify them – set them apart – consecrate them by your truth – Your word is truth.

D) God’s word Renews and transforms –

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind

A)My mind is renewed and my life is Changed by the word of God

1)God’s word – Cleanses – Katharos – removes the toxins

2)Washes us

3)Sets us apart

4)Renews our minds – {Changes our whole thinking process

B)God’s word is Living and Powerful

C) Hebrews 4:12 “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.”

D)God word is Powerful – God’s word is Living – Active – Bookshelf

1)Only one that is alive.

Divides between the soul and the Spirit – Divides between that which is soulish – of the flesh and that which is spiritual

A)When we come to God’s word and let it do its surgery.

B) the word goes into us – and the DIRT COMES OUT OF US

1) The Father thru the Holy Spirit uses the word like a scalpel – to do surgery on us

C)Listen – How do you deal with Darkness – Come into a Dark room

1)Not going to Rebuke the Darkness in the name of SDGE – or the name of Jesus for that matter –

D)Not going to Karate Chop the Darkness –

1)Not going to Yell at the Darkness – get out of here

E)Deal with the Darkness by turning on the light!

F) **Your word is a lamp..... light ... path**

God's word is powerful – Power to cleanse Power to transform – power to wash, power to renew – power to change you!

A)Get into the word – Consistent basis -

B)Come out to Wed study – Get involved in a Home group – Reason why not sermon based –

1)We want you to be digging in

C)Men's group – Women's group -

D)The Key to overcoming the Oppressor is the Word – the Word goes in and the Dirt comes out!

People come to me sometimes and say:

I am struggling with Anger – I am struggling with lust – Struggling with Worry – Pray for me – Sure.

A)But let me ask you a question first – how is your time in the Word.

B)Tell me about your Devotional life – where are you reading in your Devotions

C))How are you reading - Consistent –

Some of you are still struggling with the oppressor and part of the Problem is you are still feeding it.

A)You need to get the ice cream out of the house

B)Others – **YOU NEED TO GET INTO THE WORD**

C)The **word goes in and the dirt comes out!**

READ IT – CONSISTENT

EXPECTANT

OBEDIENT

TRANSFORMATION HAPPENS