Judges: Straight Lines – **wk 2 Ehud – No Guts No Glory**

**Ripley’s – strange but true – loved this book as a kid - examples**

**- Sanju Bhagat / India went in for bloated stomach / found out he was carrying a twin inside his stomach for 36 years.**

**- Jim Purol "The World's Biggest Mouth." Here with 200 straws in mouth**

**-** [**Gregg Valentino**](http://showstalker.net/category/gregg-valentino/) **/ bodybuilder / world’s biggest biceps at 27 inches**

**- Thomas Wedders / largest nose / 18th century Yorkshireman**

**- Siamese Cow with Two Heads and Multiple Limbs**

**- Liu Ch'ung, Chinese Minister of State 995 A.D. born w / double pupils each eye**

**Judges at times reads like a Ripley’s book. Weird, strange, violent, but true. PG13 (at time R) – but yet apply to us today.**

**Background of judges: Moses 40 yrs - Joshua 25 yrs - Judges 400 yrs to Samuel. The author is considered Samuel – the last judge.**

**After Joshua died – they were instructed, “here is your land got get it.” God used Israel as an instrument of judgement.**

**Commanded to drive the inhabitant out – but they didn’t…**

**\*\* A cycle that repeats itself in the book of Judges: The Cycle of Sin**

**Israel serves God - Israel falls into sin and idolatry - Israel is enslaved - Israel cries out to God - God sends a Judge (savior) - Israel is set free**

**SOUND FAMILIAR? I think many can relate to this.**

**God raised up judges each time they cried out (some great / some not) Each judge teaches us a slightly different lesson in overcoming sin**

**It some ways Judges is a museum of a spiritual struggles.**

**The first 2 chap of Judges explain their spiritual struggle – now 3.**

**The first couple judges are great.**

**Judge 1 - *Othniel***

**Judges 3:1 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): 3 the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo Hamath. (That is a pretty interesting thing – God gave Israel strife to toughen them up – they were too soft they needed to learn endurance and faith) 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. (Because they did not drive them out as instructed) 6 They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons and served their gods. (Insert eyeroll)**

**7 The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord; (this is a common phrase throughout judges) they forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs.**

**We see the progression of the fall: They…**

**1. Undisciplined – avoided and did not know hardship – lazy, apathetic**

**2. Ignored God’s Word – neglected Word of the LORD (sin of omission)**

**3. Compromise - of their core community – married / gave in marriage**

**= Sin - They did evil in the eye of the LORD (according to God)**

**5. Escalated sin - not just practice but worship and devotion**

**Baal – god of the weather – trusting Baal for provision (90X)**

**Asherah – goddess of fertility (Baal mother) gave birth to 70 deity’s – trusted Ash for family (40X) Her husband was El.**

**This was an ongoing issue for more than 500 years.**

 **(Pics) Eventually become symbols of idol worship.**

**8 The anger of the Lord burned against Israel so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim, to whom the Israelites were subject for eight years.**

**It is important to know the God will allow hardship and trials in our life to get our eyes on Him. How? By lifting restraint.**

**9 But when they cried out to the Lord, (8 yrs to repent) he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, who saved them.**

**Mentioned chap 1:13 was his son in law of the famous Caleb. His father-in-law / uncle – was one of the original 2 spies.**

**In their need - The Lord raised up a savior**

**10 The Spirit of the Lord came on him, so that he became Israel’s judge and went to war. (God moved on him to do something, and he did) The Lord gave Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram into the hands of Othniel, who overpowered him. 11 So the land had peace for forty years, (that’s a long time, a generation) until Othniel son of Kenaz died.**

**Othniel means the ‘power of God’ – reminds us that - Only through the power of God is there a way to overcome sin.**

**Today I want to focus on - Judge 2 - *Ehud -* strange but true story**

**Judges 3:12 And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of the Lord. 13 He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Amalekites, and went and defeated Israel. And they took possession of the city of palms. (Jericho reinhabited) 14 And the people of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.**

**Their SIN – lead to SUFFERING – now SUPLICATION**

**15 Then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, (took them 18 yrs to repent) and the Lord raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man.**

**Lit. “man restricted in his right hand”/ withered / deformed - Left-handedness in ancient times was considered peculiar and unnatural/ Any lefty’s? Guitars, scissors, golf clubs - bats…**

**15b The people of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab.**

**Money to keep him from attacking. Gangster payoff. They sent the lefty – a nonthreat – nonwarrior to do it. BUT - Ehud had had enough – God moved on him and was ready to respond.**

**16 And Ehud made for himself a sword with two edges, a cubit in length, and he bound it on his right thigh under his clothes. 17 And he presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man. (like Jabba the hut, ROTJ)**

**Eglon’s name means “bullock” – The Big Bull – The fat cow.**

**18 And when Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who carried the tribute. 19 But he himself turned back at the idols near Gilgal and said, “I have a secret message for you, O king.” (Oooh a secret) And he commanded, “Silence.” And all his attendants went out from his presence.**

**20 And Ehud came to him as he was sitting alone in his cool roof chamber. And Ehud said, “I have a message from God for you.” And he arose from his seat. 21 And Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. (“Say hello to my little friend…”)**

**22 And the hilt also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not pull the sword out of his belly; and the dung came out. (KJV - and his entrails came out. Unknown word)**

**Ehud brought a “Tribute” - an offering a sacrifice - but the king unknowingly was the real offering; he was the “fatted calf”!**

**23 Then Ehud went out into the porch and closed the doors of the roof chamber behind him and locked them. 24 When he had gone, the servants came, and when they saw that the doors of the roof chamber were locked, they thought, “Surely he is relieving himself in the closet of the cool chamber.” (the smell?)**

**25 And they waited till they were embarrassed. (While they were waiting Ehud escaped) But when he still did not open the doors of the roof chamber, they took the key and opened them, and there lay their lord dead on the floor.**

**26 Ehud escaped while they delayed, and he passed beyond the idols and escaped to Seirah. 27 When he arrived, he sounded the trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim. Then the people of Israel went down with him from the hill country, and he was their leader. (The lefty leads the way)**

**28 And he said to them, “Follow after me, for the Lord has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand.” So, they went down after him and seized the fords of the Jordan against the Moabites and did not allow anyone to pass over. 29 And they killed at that time about 10,000 of the Moabites, all strong, able-bodied men; not a man escaped. 30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years. (even longer - 2 generation’s)**

Lessons from Ehud: **For our life today**

**#1 – Sin is unchecked will grow to an obese state**

**This story has tremendous shock value - Eglon king of Moab is picture of our sin growing to an obese state.**

**The personification of their escalates sin.**

**And it is not easy to kill: It doesn’t go away by ignoring it. It must be faced head-on, even if it is gory and disgusting – it’s got to come out.**

**#2 – We can’t be afraid to confront our sin**

**Ehud empowered by God. confronted the enemy**

**We can try to justify sin, we can paint it pretty colors, call it love, deny its relevance, but when we look at it for what it is, it’s sick and ugly**

**Notice – like us – in this story – the people were content to stay enslaved for a long period of time.**

**Took Israel eighteen years of bondage before they cried out to the Lord**

**Why did they wait so long? Why do we wait so long? Perhaps afraid to face the reality or the ugliness of the patterns and addictions. They didn’t want to lose something…**

**But we have a Redeemer, a Savior, Jesus, whether it’s been 8 yrs or 18 yrs, we can cry out to the Lord today. If we can turn from sin and he will free us from our enslavement / addiction.**

**#3 – Your value is not based on your limitations**

**Ehud handicapped, yet a man God chose to use to his glory.**

**Ehud could have doubted his value to God, or passed on the opportunity – but he knew in God he was warrior.**

**Ehud’s name means – “I will give you praise” (even though he was physically limited he did not let this limit him in his praise)**

**We sometimes let ourselves be defeated by our limitations…**

**Don’t have the credentials, background, not good enough, ordinary, physically limited. This room is filled with Ehuds!**

**God loves to choose the unexpected to accomplish his purpose.**

**Isaiah speaking of the Messiah, Jesus - Isaiah 53:2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. (nowhere important) He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. (He did not look special) 3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.**

**No red carpet, no fanfare - Yet He accomplished the single most important act in history: He died for our sins - the greatest hero of all.**

**1 Corinthians 1:27 - 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.**

**Insignificant nomad family – Abraham**

**Insignificant homeless nation – Israel**

**Jesus picked working class smelly fisherman**

**Chinese Missionary Hudson Taylor stated: “God chose me because I was weak enough.”**

**#4 - It takes only one to motivate many to action**

**Ehud risked it all- and by himself and started a movement that changed a nation.**

**I picture a young Ehud hearing about the Lord from Caleb, motivated by God to make a stand – but yet daily reminded of his weakness and the opinion of others – he had to make a choice…**

**We live in similar times to the book of Judges - Everyone "does what is right in his own eyes."**

**I believe there are Ehuds here - People willing to use whatever God has given them to use. If just one person here would take a stand for Jesus on this generation.**

**#5 – Victory is not found in our strength**

**Ehud understood it was not his own strength, but his faith in God**

**"I have a message from God for you" (v. 20).**

**Ehud’s words to the Israelites when calling them to battle**

**Judges 3:28 28 "Follow me," he ordered, "for the LORD has given Moab, your enemy, into your hands." He did not take any credit for anything**

**What brings Gods victory - and to be used by God, is not our own strength & credentials, but our faith in God thru Christ.**

**2 Corinthians 3:5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.**

**We don’t need more knowledge, programs or degrees. What we need is simple faith and trust in God – like Ehud!**

**The Bible gives all the gory details… Ehud brutally stabs a king in a bathroom and his entrails pour out… leaves his weapon still inside…**

**I am not trying to be gruesome… but we need to understand Ehud’s actions saved Israel from cruel enemy oppression.**

**In similar fashion, a bloody, gruesome, cruel event won our eternal salvation… the cross!**

**Why did our Lord’s death have to be so cruel? Because sin pollutes our life – the habits that ensnare us had to be defeated.**

**Israel trusted a left-handed savior, and we can trust a Savior whose hands are scarred by nails.**

**Walk away with these thoughts:**

* **Are you willing to confront areas of sin in your life, even if they are ugly? When we do this, we can enter into God’s rest.**
* **Do you see how God can use you? No matter how weak or limited we think we are, in Christ you are capable of great things for God.**
* **Unreserved faith in the strength of God enables us - We may be weak, but He is strong!**