Judges: Straight Lines – **wk 8 Midway**

**Hot Dog Christianity - Have you ever looked at the contents of a hotdog: “mechanically separated turkey,” which the USDA defines as “a paste or batter-like poultry product manufactured by forcing turkey bones with attached edible tissue through a sieve under high pressure,’ a process called ‘advanced meat recovery.’” Mmm – sounds good. Other ingredients include corn syrup, beef, salt, sodium phosphate, sodium erythorbate, sodium nitrate, and maltodextrin.**

**Many build their faith like a cheap hot dog. They take a little bit of something from this and mix it with a little bit of something from that, and the result is a concoction that you can hardly call Christian… which is more than simply bad for you; it is spiritually toxic. That is what is happening in judges.**

**About 3000 yrs ago, the land of Israel was ruled by a succession of judges, rather than kings. There were 15 people who served as judges.**

**Today is a bit different: no weird story – no spikes thru the head or a fat guy getting killed in the bathroom – a farmer turned terminator - or a crazy leader who kills all 70 of his bros**

**The real “Believe it or not” is not what the people did, but how God responded.**

**Judges 10:1 After Abimelech (lead for 3 terrible years) there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, and he lived at Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. 2 And he judged Israel twenty-three years. (long time) Then he died and was buried at Shamir.**

**3 After him arose Jair the Gileadite, who judged Israel twenty-two years. (long time) 4 He had thirty sons, (implies he was polygamous) who rode thirty donkeys. (had 30 cars) They controlled thirty towns in Gilead, (wealthy and powerful) which to this day are called Havvoth Jair. 5 When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.**

**God is not mentioned by either as one who raised them up. Still working in their own ability and power – leads to what happens next. What do leaders like this bring?**

**6 The people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. (says 7X)**

**In the eyes of the LORD – not only was it evil, but it was in the face of God. They did not even care if He saw it.**

**and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines. (An idol buffet – seven diff national groups and idols) And they forsook the LORD and did not serve him. (The lowest that have fallen so far)**

**Baal - the weather god, was associated with financial success.**

**Ashtoreth - goddess of fertility, associated w/ love, sex, family. They began to conform to the popular culture around them. They worshiped what the world worshiped.**

**Judges 10:7 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, (lit. the anger of the LORD was hot!) and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the Ammonites, 8 and they crushed and oppressed the people of Israel that year. (Let them be overtaken) For eighteen years they oppressed all the people of Israel who were beyond the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. 9 And the Ammonites crossed the Jordan to fight also against Judah and against Benjamin and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was severely distressed. (They drove deep into the land of Israel)**

**Doing things on your own may bring peace… for a while.**

* **Our Idols: Anything we seek for power, joy, and significance apart from the LORD God.**

**Maybe the reason you are unhappy in love is not because you have not found Mr. Right but because you are looking for this person to make you whole and happy. Looking to a job, career, for your spouse to fill the worship void – that only the LORD God can fill.**

**Jeremiah 2:13 for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water. (They rejected him and they replaced him – but they don’t work!)**

**Judges 10:10 And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, “We have sinned against you, because we have forsaken our God and have served the Baals.” 11 The LORD replied, (strange response) “Did I not save you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites, from the Ammonites and from the Philistines? 12 The Sidonians also, and the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you, and you cried out to me, and I saved you out of their hand. 13 Yet you have forsaken me and served other gods; therefore I will save you no more. (Plot twist – God says no. They are serial idolaters.)**

**Does this really mean what it says? Lit. I will not add deliverance. First time God refused to deliver them. This was a test for them.**

**Technique used to help people stop smoking - put them in a small, unventilated room and make them smoke for hours on end, until they can’t bear it. It makes them sick of smoking and want to stop. In the same way, sometimes God will allow the natural consequences of our sin to crash upon us, so we can become sick of our sin.**

**They were not worshiping God - they were using God.**

**(Their words seemed legit – but God saw something was lacking.)14 Go and cry out to the gods whom you have chosen; (this is your doing) let them save you in the time of your distress.” 15 And the people of Israel said to the LORD, “We have sinned; do to us whatever seems good to you. Only please deliver us this day.” (Complete remorse… but God does nothing) 16 So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD, and he became impatient over the misery of Israel. (Anthropomorphism)**

**Note: God’s response (anger) – God’s resistance (to help) – God’s silence (they take responsibility) – God’s compassion.**

**2 Things happened before God responded:**

**They got rid of the false gods and served the Lord**

**Then God gives them another crazy judge (Jephthah) - next wk**

**Understanding this passage through the lens of God’s attributes:**

**\* Omniscience – God’s wisdom is perfect - all knowing past & future.**

**\* Omnipresence - God’s is ever present simultaneously all at once.**

**\* Omnipotence - God’s is able to do whatever he wills to do – always.**

**\* Omni-benevolence - God’s is always good, holy, and perfect.**

**\* Immutability - God’s is self-existent & does not change his mind.**

**Numbers 23:19 “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”**

**This passage is an example of God’s unchanging anger for our sin and his unchanging pleasure with our repentance.**

FIVE THINGS FEW PEOPLE UNDERSTAND:

**Five things happening in this passage**

**Judges 10:6 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord… and no longer served him, 7 he became angry with them.**

**1. The Fear of the Lord**

**Many think we can’t be afraid of God… so some change it to mean reverence or awe –The problem is… the word means Fear!**

**Matthew 10:** **28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.**

**Jesus in my homeboy is not the God of scripture…**

**Proverbs 9:10 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.**

**We don’t fear him because he is mean and might tick him off… but because he is Holy, righteous, just - we are not.**

* **Only a fool messes with God**

**God is good, but His goodness does not make him a Santa Clause**

* **God is a God of love AND anger**

**His love is what he offers to us – but it is not to be trampled on**

**\*\* The simplicity of God – not a pie**

**Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."**

**Hebrews 10:26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God**

**Basically - “Come to me… but don’t mess with me…”**

**Like electricity… we fear it and embrace it**

**2. Spiritual Discipline**

**Judges 10:7 …He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, 8 who that year shattered and crushed them. For eighteen years… and Israel was in great distress. (Another principle often mis-understood…)**

* **We aren't exempt - we're first in line**

**We often think the closer we get to God, the more rope we get… I’ve done this and this and this…**

**1 Peter 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?**

**Christians are ready for God to judge those around us, but if we look at scripture it always starts with his own kids.**

* **It's usually not a slap on the wrist**

**Hebrews 12:7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? 8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! 10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.**

**A lot of Christians just want a slap on the wrist and go thru life like this - but God’s discipline is often strong.**

**#3 - Judges 10:10 - Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord, "We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals."**

**3. Confession**

**A great confession verse - 1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

**We often take this verse to mean that all we need to do is own up to it and we’re good to go… The Israelites owned up to it… but what did God do? Nothing…**

**Context of 1 John 1:9 - 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. (you think you’re good – you’re not) 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (Good news – God forgives) 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.**

**This is about an acknowledgement of our inability to stand before God on our own… John then tells us how we know we have confessed.**

**1 John 2:3 We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. 4 The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.**

* **God responds when we come clean and take responsibility for our actions**

**Proverbs 28:13 - He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.**

**We don’t serve a stupid God – all I have to do is confess it later and I’m good…**

**We see another one in - Judges 10:16 - Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the Lord.**

**4. Repentance**

**What is repent? We often think it’s being sorrowful and broken – that’s not repentance, but good intentions**

* **It's more than tears & good intentions**

**John the Baptist talking - Matt 3:7-8 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! (That is one incredible welcome packet) Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.**

**(Paul talking to King Agrippa) Acts 26:20 - First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.**

**Repentance is always followed by action**

* **It's a change in direction**

**Lit - change of mind that results in a change in actions**

**(Last one) Judges 10:16 – Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the Lord. And he could bear Israel's misery no longer. (We see…)**

**5. Restoration - with God**

* + **On a spiritual level it is instant**

**God’s forgiveness is instant… paid in full**

* + **On an earthly level it takes time**

**God sends a judge to help… but not without discipline, struggle, hard choices, and a change of plans and time**

**God is quick through Jesus to forgive you, but the challenge of dealing with those days out of his will – will often take time to heal**

**Bottom line - Do what he says to do – stop what he says to stop – and you will avoid a lot of the heart ache we find in the book of judges.**

**Judges 10 reminds us – that we all have a sin problem and have to face a righteous, just, and holy God – that is a fearful thing.**

1. **Confession**
2. **Repentance**
3. **Restoration**

**1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**