Judges: Straight Lines – **wk 11 – Selfish People**

**Words that describe: Violent, weird, odd, strange, scandalous, tragic.**

**Coming out of Egypt they are dispersed to different areas in the region now known as Israel. They had no king. God was to be their King. But they were terrible subjects.**

**There is one verse in judges to sum up all the book – it’s…**

**Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (NIV, “everyone did as they saw fit”)**

**Simply - they did whatever they wanted to do – they lived without a compass.**

**We are in a part of judges that is a flash back. 3 stories - 5 chapters. The first 2, believed to be during the first 40 yrs and first judge Othniel.**

**This section for the sake of time and size, we will not read every verse… but I encourage you to do so.**

**Previously on - JUDGES – Map**

**Last wk – a crook of a son fessed up to stealing his mom’s life savings. He then used it to start his own Yahweh house church cult.**

**A corrupt Levite from Judah is hired to be a father and priest for him.**

**\*\*\* Meanwhile – back at the Tribe of Dan**

**Judges 18:1 In those days there was no king in Israel.**

* **Ch 17 – “did what was right on their own eyes” (personal sin)**
* **Ch 18 – “they had no king” (community sin)**

**No accountability – you can’t tell me what to do!**

**And in those days the tribe of the people of Dan was seeking for itself an inheritance to dwell in, for until then no inheritance among the tribes of Israel had fallen to them.**

**Dan went to the area given to him by God (use map) But they did not and could not drive out the people there, it was too hard - so they decided to look for a new place. (Joshua 19:47)**

**2 So the people of Dan sent five able men from the whole number of their tribe, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land and to explore it. And they said to them, “Go and explore the land.” And they came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there. (The house church cult guy)**

**3 When they were by the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite. (his accent) And they turned aside and said to him, “Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What is your business here?” 4 And he said to them, “This is how Micah dealt with me: he has hired me, and I have become his priest.” (It’s a good paying gig – what can I say?)**

**5 And they said to him, “Inquire of God, please, that we may know whether the journey on which we are setting out will succeed.” 6 And the priest said to them, “Go in peace. The journey on which you go is under the eye of the LORD.”**

**Will it all go well for us? Priest says, sure. This minister does not know God or serve God – he serves himself. Using the name of God to serve himself. Takes the name of God in vain.**

**7 Then the five men departed and came to Laish (aka. Leshem) and saw the people who were there, how they lived in security, after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and unsuspecting, lacking nothing that is in the earth and possessing wealth, and how they were far from the Sidonians and had no dealings with anyone.**

**MAP - They came to an area that looked great - had a quiet harmless group of people. Living life – minding their business.**

**(They went back) 8 And when they came to their brothers at Zorah and Eshtaol, their brothers said to them, “What do you report?” 9 They said, “Arise, and let us go up against them, for we have seen the land, and behold, it is very good. And will you do nothing? Do not be slow to go, to enter in and possess the land. 10 As soon as you go, you will come to an unsuspecting people. The land is spacious, for God has given it into your hands, a place where there is no lack of anything that is in the earth.” 11 So 600 men of the tribe of Dan, armed with weapons of war, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol…**

**We found the place! It is beautiful and God wants us to have it. Let’s go take it! Some weaklings live there – they won’t even see us coming! 600 men arm themselves and head out.**

**\*\* On the way there – they went by Micah’s house again.**

**While the 600 camped outside the gate distracting the priest, the five who spied out the area went into the house to steal the silver and shrine from the Micah’s house cult.**

**17 And the five men who had gone to scout out the land went up and entered and took the carved image, the ephod, the household gods, and the metal image, while the priest stood by the entrance of the gate with the 600 men armed with weapons of war. (distracting him while the others heisted) 18 And when they went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household gods, and the metal image, the priest said to them, “What are you doing?” 19 And they said to him, “Keep quiet; put your hand on your mouth and come with us and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and clan in Israel?” (You want to be rich – you want to be truly powerful? Join us!) 20 And the priest's heart was glad. He took the ephod and the household gods and the carved image and went along with the people. (He ditched his boss and spiritual son – heartless)**

**(Miach finds out – and chases them down) 23 And they shouted to the people of Dan, who turned around and said to Micah, “What is the matter with you, that you come with such a company?” 24 And he said, “You take my gods that I made and the priest, and go away, and what have I left? How then do you ask me, ‘What is the matter with you?’”**

**If someone can pick up your god and take him, what kind of god is that? You took my stuff! I have nothing. (Stuff he stole from his mom). We see absolute Spiritual blindness of Micah.**

**25 And the people of Dan said to him, “Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows fall upon you, and you lose your life with the lives of your household.” (Don’t say another word - get lost - or we will kill you and your family!) 26 Then the people of Dan went their way. And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his home. (The Church of Micah has been closed. You reap what you sow)**

**Yet another reason (last wk) God does not want us to have idols – they can be taken. But God is ever-present. Whatever can be taken from you – is a signature of human efforts. But Jesus, cannot be taken or will he ever leave you or forsake you**

**27 But the people of Dan took what Micah had made, and the priest who belonged to him, and they came to Laish, to a people quiet and unsuspecting, and struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire.**

**Slaughtered and burned their city to the ground –a massacre.**

**28 And there was no deliverer because it was far from Sidon, and they had no dealings with anyone. It was in the valley that belongs to Beth-rehob.**

**They were alone - and no one came to help them.**

**Tragic – imagine what that might have been like.**

**\* Realize God promised Israel their land not because of Israel’s goodness, but because the inhabitants of the land were evil.**

**Deuteronomy 9:5 Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.**

**The original inheritance of Israel was given by God and meant to be justice upon some very wicked groups of people. This was not that people. This was cruel, brutal, and unsanctioned.**

**Jud 18:28b Then they rebuilt the city and lived in it. 29 And they named the city Dan, after the name of Dan their ancestor, who was born to Israel; but the name of the city was Laish at the first. (It became the most northern city in Israel)**

**30 And the people of Dan set up the carved image for themselves, and Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses, and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land. 31 So they set up Micah's carved image that he made, as long as the house of God was at Shiloh.**

**Shiloh is mentioned as a comparison. It’s the place where the ark of covenant and the tabernacle resides. This was a conflicting rival center of worship to Yahweh’s true worship. A tale of two cites.**

**Dan’s Dirty Deeds – that was a tribe of Israel.**

* **They did not worship the God who saved them**

**They redefined Yahweh – ignoring God’s words and commands**

* **They did not want what God gave them – ungrateful**

**The inheritance God gave them was not making them happy**

* **They did not respect the people around them**

**They were brutal and murderous – they were evil.**

**Treacherous Hearts**

**What can we learn from them? So many things came to mind**

**1. Sometimes it’s hard work to walk out God’s plan**

**Jud 18:1…until then no inheritance among the tribes of Israel had fallen to them.**

**Serving God is no cakewalk. It includes self-discipline, new habits, and intentional changes. To walk out God’s plan takes work.**

**Philippians 2:12** **…work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**

**It might mean getting up early, extra time with your kids, trusting God financially, keeping your word. It might mean rejection, lost wages, loss of comfort, maybe lost relationships – but it is worth it.**

**2. Some take the easy way rather than God’s way**

**Rather than enjoy the inheritance of God and do the work it takes to live in it, Dan decided to attack and take it from the weak. A soft target.**

**Dan chose the easy path. So do people still. I would rather do what I want and go where I want. (Proverbs 14:12 – there is a way)**

**Matthew 7:13-14 Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.**

**I don’t want to believe there is only way to the Father, Jesus – I want the universal Jesus. The everyone goes to heaven Jesus.**

**Our promised land is the Kingdom of Heaven.**

**Serving God is hard – trusting God can be hard – and few.**

**3. Some have counterfeit convenience rather than real obedience**

**Rather than go to Shilo and inquire the LORD they asked the pagan Levite as they were just passing by. They were wanting God to bless their actions.**

**We do the same - passively asking God to bless your daily endeavors without actually seeking his will.**

**You already started it – God bless it.**

**Or - bless my actions – even though it contradicts God’s word.**

**Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God (the will of God) and his righteousness, (the ways of God) and all these things will be added to you.**

**Not as second, not if you hit a wall, not if you exhausted your efforts. We are to view everything thru God’s will and ways.**

**What they ended up with was a counterfeit – and they loved it. You know why? It gave them what they wanted.**

**Worshiping at the altar of convenience will often give you what you want – but you won’t have the LORD.**

**4. Some have the appearance of godliness but do not truly have God**

**They talked about God and used God for their own selfish carnal objectives.**

**2 Timothy 2:5 – (there are those who) having the appearance of godliness but denying its power. Avoid such people.**

**We see this today everywhere. In cults, false religions and even among Christians.**

**\*\* Selfish ambition is more dangerous than you think (Dan just took it!)**

**What is selfish ambition? Seeking your interests at the cost of others.**

**James 3:14-16 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.**

**To follow Jesus is to deny self – (Mark 8:34)**

**Unfortunately, many people practice a brand of**

**“Christin atheism” a=no / Theism= God**

**\*\* Using God to promote yourself is more dangerous than you realize**

**God became a symbol of allowance for their own pursuits.**

**Slap a verse on something and call it Christian. Put a fish on the truck and call it Christan. Speak at a Christian rally. Maybe they are – or maybe their using God to sell themselves.**

* + **Well, God told me – what does the bible say?**
  + **I feel like God want this – what does the Bible say?**
  + **God is with me on this – what does the Bible say?**

**If you continue using God - Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.**

**What happened to Micah? He was robbed and left destitute.**

**What happened to Dan? Were eventually overtaken & destroyed.**

**Interestingly - John’s vision in Revelation lists the tribes sealed by God. If you look closely the tribe of Dan is not listed. Revelation 7:4-8.**

**5. Some are deceptively convinced they can control God**

**They hired the priest and stole the idols to control God’s power.**

**Attempts to control God will only lead to total despair.**

**Micah was devastated when he lost his idols. Idols are terrible security.**

**\*\* False religion seeks control of God; true faith surrenders to God.**

**Tim Keller: “Religion seeks access to God to get him to do what you want. True faith gives God access to your heart so that he can tell you what he wants”**

**When you shrink God into your image- you live in fear of losing him.**

**Control = Fear of losing salvation, trying to get saved over and over.**

**But when you have the true Jesus - you have peace because you know he will never lose you.**

**When you try to control God- you live in fear and anxiety of him leaving**

**Control = Fear of losing the experience, moment, the feeling of God.**

**When you surrender to his splendor – you live in peace because you know He will never leave you.**

**6. Sin will only grow larger if it goes unaddressed**

**It all began with a mom enabling her thieving son, Micah. Then Micah and Jonathan - to the five Spies - to the leaders of Dan - to 600 men - to their families – then to an entire tribe and region.**

**At Micah’s it was a small cult, but it became an established official idolatry by one of the tribes of Israel – a national abomination.**

**Micah and his mom’s personal sin – infected an entire tribe.**

**Every one of them is guilty – because they all gave in to it.**

**It began with compromise and turned into full carnality.**

**Sin is infectious and spreads like a cigarette butt tossed out a window on a Texas summer hwy. (In our life, home, church, community)**

**1 Corinthians 5:6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven works through the whole batch of dough. (Your attitude is poison)**

**We see in this passage – a poor foundation, self-promotion, moral relativism, selfish ambitions, and materialistic greed.**

**What do we do with this? We must ask ourselves:**

**\* What kernel of sin is growing in my life? What are your Dirty Deeds?**

**\* What am I pursuing in my life and why?**

**\* Are you selfish?**

**\* Have I traded “easy believeism” Christianity for true faith in Christ?**

**\* Have I subscribed to Christianity without real submission to Christ?**

**The answer: Turn to Jesus – the good and faithful king.**