Judges: Straight Lines – **wk 12 – The Enemy With-in**

**From Egypt they disperse to diff areas in the region now Israel. They had no king. God was to be their King. But they…**

**There is one verse in judges that sums it up - Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**

**Did whatever they want- lived w/out a compass or an anchor.**

**Today a judge’s flashback to one of the more horrendous stories.**

**\* For the sake of time and size, we will not read every verse.**

**Theologian FB Meyer – recommended skipping it. “this terrible chapter, which shows the depths of the depravity to which may sink apart from the grace of God.” (This is a very sensitive topic)**

**Judges 19:1 In those days, when there was no king in Israel, (sets the stage for lawlessness) a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.**

**Levite from Judah took a concubine. Not married, no love, legal sex slave- purpose was to provide children and pleasure.**

**God’s design for marriage - One man, one woman, one flesh. God never condones concubines or polygamy. (Gen 1:27, 2:24, Mat 19:5, Mar 10:7, 1 Co 6:16, Ep 5:31, Lev 18:22, 1 Tim 3:2, Ro 1:26-27)**

**2 And his concubine was unfaithful to him, (older manu. say “she became angry with him”) and she went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah and was there some four months. (She ran home to dad in Bethlehem)**

**3 Then her husband (lit. the man - ishah) arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her and bring her back. (Sweet talker her) He had with him his servant and a couple of donkeys. And she brought him into her father's house. And when the girl's father saw him, he came with joy to meet him. (Treated nice - does not mean he was happy to see him) 4 And his father-in-law, the girl's father, made him stay, and he remained with him three days. So they ate and drank and spent the night there.**

**V5-7 on the 4th day - Dad talked him into staying again. Relax stay here**

**V8-9 on the 5th day – Dad tried to talk him into staying again…**

**The Dad is trying to keep his daughter safe and home.**

**V10-11 But the Levite took the man’s daughter (his concubine) and left. It was late as they traveled so they looked for a place to stay.**

**14 So they passed on and went their way. And the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin, 15 and they turned aside there, to go in and spend the night at Gibeah. And he went in and sat down in the open square of the city, for no one took them into his house to spend the night.**

**V16-17 – An old man from out of town, coming home from work sees them out in the town square. Where are you from?**

**18 And he said to him, “We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, from which I come. I went to Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to the house of the LORD, (Lie) but no one has taken me into his house.**

**V19-21 Come stay with me. So, they went to his home.**

**22 As they were making their hearts merry, (getting drunk) behold, the men of the city, worthless fellows, surrounded the house, beating on the door. And they said to the old man, the master of the house, “Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know him.” (Sexually assault - watching and waiting – more like men from Sodom than from Israel) 23 And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my brothers, do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not do this vile thing.**

**(Sacred – they offer the women to save themselves) 24 Behold, here are my virgin daughter and his concubine. Let me bring them out now. Violate them and do with them what seems good to you, but against this man do not do this outrageous thing.” (Here is my daughter and his woman – how is that not wicked and vile?? How is that not outrageous??)**

**25 But the men would not listen to him. So the man (the Levite) seized his concubine and made her go out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go. (They raped her over and over all night) 26 And as morning appeared, the woman came and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, until it was light. (She crawled to the door, needing help, she drops on the steps)**

**She experienced the worst abuse imaginable - while he slept in comfort. Maybe you know the pain of those you trusted who ignored your abuse & pain. Where’s the Justice!**

**27 And her master rose up in the morning, and when he opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way, behold, there was his concubine lying at the door of the house, with her hands on the threshold. 28 He said to her, “Get up, let us be going.” (Heartless – who is worse?) But there was no answer. Then he put her on the donkey, and the man rose up and went away to his home.**

**Sickening – assuming she was dead – he threw her body on his mule and left. No tears. What happens next is horrific…**

**29 And when he entered his house, he took a knife, and taking hold of his concubine he divided her, limb by limb, into twelve pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel. (Shock factor) 30 And all who saw it said, “Such a thing has never happened or been seen from the day that the people of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt until this day; consider it, take counsel, and speak.”**

**Look at this – something must be done about our cousins, the Benjaminite’s. Look what they did – Really – what they did???**

**Incredible heartless behavior – claiming to be a victim for the loss of his sex slave. He wants justice – this is Narcos stuff.**

**Judges 20:1 Then all the people of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, including the land of Gilead, and the congregation assembled as one man to the Lord at Mizpah. 2 And the chiefs of all the people, of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, 400,000 men on foot that drew the sword. (Asking questions and ready to fight) 3 (Now the people of Benjamin heard that the people of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.) (Meanwhile – Ben heard they were meeting and getting ready)**

**3b And the people of Israel said, “Tell us, how did this evil happen?” 4 And the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, “I came to Gibeah that belongs to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to spend the night. 5 And the leaders of Gibeah rose against me and surrounded the house against me by night. They meant to kill me, and they violated my concubine, and she is dead.**

**He conveniently leaves out how he threw her out to them as a sacrifice, to be assaulted to save his own hide. Lie, Lie, Lie.**

**6 So I took hold of my concubine and cut her in pieces and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel, for they have committed abomination and outrage in Israel. (What about you?!) 7 Behold, you people of Israel, all of you, give your advice and counsel here.”**

**V8-11 We will not go home until there is justice. They rallied an army from all the tribes to confront Benjamin.**

**V12-17 Bounty hunters sent out to find the men - instead of handing them over - Ben raises up an army of skilled assassin’s and soldiers. Ben is often considered the toughest tribe in the OT.**

**18 The people of Israel arose and went up to Bethel and inquired of God, “Who shall go up first for us to fight against the people of Benjamin?” And the LORD said, “Judah shall go up first.”**

**Who do we send to fight first? God said - Send Judah.**

**BTW – That’s where the Levite came from.**

**V19-23 They go out to fight - Judah loses big time. 22,000 men killed.**

**Crying out to God, “what do we do” - God said, “go fight them again.”**

**V24-28 So they go out again with more - and lose again. 18,000 killed.**

**Crying out to God praying & fasting at the ARK - what do we do?**

**God said, “go fight them again.”**

**\* God used defeats to humble and discipline them.**

**V29-47 – After a very hard-fought long strategic battle – Israel wins. But it is excessive - 25,000 Benjamin men died. Killing all the women and children. 600 men run and hid in the mt.’s – hiding for 4 months.**

**Judges 21:1** **Now the men of Israel had sworn at Mizpah, “No one of us shall give his daughter in marriage to Benjamin.” (We vow to never let them marry one of our daughters) 2 And the people came to Bethel and sat there till evening before God, and they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly. 3 And they said, “O LORD, the God of Israel, why has this happened in Israel, that today there should be one tribe lacking in Israel?” (What do we do? They are going to die out! You did this you dummy’s) 4 And the next day the people rose early and built there an altar and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.**

**V4-5 – After they go to church – they then vow to kill all the family members who did not come to help them. (They are erratic)**

**V6 – they start feeling sorry for the Benjamin men without wives.**

**7 What shall we do for wives for those who are left, since we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them any of our daughters for wives?”**

**V8 - They (not God) come up with a plan. Whoever did not come to help, go kill every man, women, & child (their cousins) but take all the virgin daughters. So, they killed them and bring back 400 young girls.**

**12 And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead 400 young virgins who had not known a man by lying with him, and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.**

**The Massacre at Jabesh-Gilead. Evil upon evil. This is direct lawlessness and neglect of God and His Word.**

**13 Then the whole congregation sent word to the people of Benjamin who were at the rock of Rimmon and proclaimed peace to them. (Come get a wife) 14 And Benjamin returned at that time. And they gave them the women whom they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead, but they were not enough for them.**

**V15-18 Not enough, 600 men but only 400 women. What do we do? We can’t give them our daughters. So, they plot another evil plan.**

**19 So they said, “Behold, there is the yearly feast of the LORD at Shiloh… (local tradition) 20 And they commanded the people of Benjamin, saying, “Go and lie in ambush in the vineyards 21 and watch. If the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come out of the vineyards and snatch each man his wife from the daughters of Shiloh and go to the land of Benjamin.**

**V22 – when their fathers come out to stop you – just tell them we told you to do it. It’s our doing, they are not accountable to God for it.**

**So, what do they do? They kidnap a bunch of innocent women and take them home – assault and human trafficking.**

**23 And the people of Benjamin did so and took their wives, according to their number, from the dancers whom they carried off. Then they went and returned to their inheritance and rebuilt the towns and lived in them. 24 And the people of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family, and they went out from there every man to his inheritance.**

**Judges ends with an obvious and sad statement to close the book - 25 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**

**Ever watch a movie without a happy ending? It leaves you thinking about it for days. This is the intention of the writer.**

**Samuel is raised as the last judge, eventually the people demand a king - they get Saul, who btw is from the tribe of Benjamin. Which gives you an idea how his rule will be.**

**\*\* What redemptive things can we possibly find in this story?**

**We have - Mixed up worship, Mixed up relationships, Mixed-up Morality, Mixed-up Passions, Mixed-up Politics, Mixed-up Purposes.**

**5 horrific chapters where the heroes are the wicked.**

* **Where is the Levites rebuke and justice for his actions?**
* **Where is the concern for the safety and treasure of women?**
* **Where is the concern for the innocent families & lives killed?**

**Some might read this and think the Bible is a horrible book.**

**Remember: God does not condone the actions in this tragic story.**

**Judges is an example of Total Depravity on full display.**

**Apart from God, apart from His word, without a king (the LORD), Without Jesus – we spiral into selfishness.**

**In this story we see depravity - adultery, homosexuality, neglect, rape, abuse, kidnapping, sex slaves, human trafficking, dismemberment, & genocide. Selfish Cowards - Moral Confusion - Corrupt Chaos**

**Gen 6:7 - every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was altogether evil all the time. // Gen 8:21 - every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. // Proverbs 14:12 - There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. // Rom 3:10 As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one…**

**We all have a sin problem - we all need a savior – a king!**

**Psalm 14:1 - The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt; their acts are vile. There is no one who does good.**

**Judges lurks in our own hearts. The #1 movie genre is horror (beating out drama, comedy, action, romance). We want blood.**

**The Bible tells the truth – it reveals our need for a savior.**

**Where there is no King - When Jesus is ignored**

**When the compass of LORD God is removed these are inevitable.**

**1. We don’t know what is right or wrong**

**Every main character in this story = blind to their own sin - oblivious to their own behavior. They talk like they know God – but they were far from him.**

**“Everyone did what was right in his own eyes”**

**Truth is relative to each person - This is moral relativism. Relativism leads to a lack of moral absolutes = to nihilism.**

**For example: Gen 1:27 - Every man and woman is created in the image of God.**

**Without this - value and respect of people is gone. Resulting in devaluing of life (born and unborn), racism, misogynistic behavior, abuse, and hate. When God is removed: Hitler’s genocide – 12 million killed. / Russia’s communist revolution - 120 million. / Mao’s cultural revolution – up to 80 million or more = this is what relativism looks like.**

**If there is no God, we don’t need to be worried about anyone’s pain but our own. But if there is a God, then we recognize that each person created in his image is worthy of dignity & value.**

**Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. - Are we that far off? I think many are there.**

**2. We will call evil good – there is a distorted view of what is right.**

**The Levite’s selfishness, lies and entitlement started a war and nearly killed an entire tribe. He was convinced (they all were) that they were doing right.**

**Exodus 21 – Condemns kidnapping, human trafficking, and murder.**

**They would have known better – but they saw it as good.**

**When we condone, accept, and support what the Bible clearly says is sinful – we are like them. Ex. sexual sin – called good.**

**A word about \*\*toxic masculinity - Tough guys are not necessarily good guys – being a manly man is not about fighting and be rough with women – that is sinful behavior. You can tell a lot about one’s relationship to God by how they treat women. (Malachi 3)**

**3. We ignore and become callous of the oppressed**

**Assault women, no remorse. Families slaughtered, no regret. Who spoke out?**

**When there is no King, we turn a blind eye to the suffering and hurt of others. Our own world becomes the only world.**

**When we turn away, do not care, or become callous, the weak are abused – and the strong exploit the weak.**

**Are we callous? \*\* 50 mil in slave labor – 6 mil forced into the sex slave industry - 4.8 are human trafficked. \*\* We ignore the millions of children abused in our own communities and single moms abandoned barely surviving.**

**We ignore the 400,000 foster kids looking for hope – the ½ mil homeless – the unborn (the most helpless of all). Clinics that traffic aborted baby parts for profit. Where there is no God, that baby is just a clump of meat & tissue.**

**\* What about the 6 billion people w/out Jesus? Do they matter?**

**4. We try to fix our sin with more sin**

**The old man was repulsed by their request, but his solution was just as vile. The Levite covered his sin with more lies. Responding to Ben’s sin, Israel was just as wicked committing even worse atrocities and bloodshed.**

**A cycle of sin - again and again. Total moral confusion**

**Just cover it with more sex, more drugs, more alcohol, more lies, more pleasures – the end does not justify the means.**

**Notice how far they had to go in order to undo a careless vow? Killing to remedy killing – abduction to remedy rape.**

**How far do we sometimes go in order to undo statements made in anger, or actions made in haste?**

**God’s justice and discipline - he sent them to their own slaughter - judgment upon them was harsh. Sin to fix sin will lead to the next**

**5. We end up in despair and more depravity.**

**The end result was more corruption and wickedness. This continued until they were overtaken by Assyria and Babylon.**

**Hosea a prophet during another time of Israel’s decline refers to these events of as an example - Hosea 9:9 They have sunk deep into corruption, as in the days of Gibeah. God will remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins. 10 When I please, I will punish them; nations will be gathered against them to put them in bonds for their double sin.**

**Trying to fix and fill the void with more sin will end in despair and brokenness.**

**6. We see the LORD God is a God of Hope**

**The ending is abrupt and sad (a reminder of the enemy with-in) - but it was not the end.**

**\*\*\* The 2 tribes highlighted are Judah and Benjamin. They later become the only 2 out of 12 that ever sought the LORD – the only 2 that survive today.**

**\*\* The hometown that poor sacrificed woman was born (Bethlehem) became the town our sacrificed savior was born - Jesus Christ**

**\*\* Years later another angry Benjamite attempted to wipe out God’s people until he met Jesus face to face – Paul (Rom 11:1, Phil 3:5)**

**We see God’s justice and mercy in Benjamen and Judah - God’s protection and provision for those whom he has called - in the midst of our sin – God’s mercy is given.**

**As dark and grisly as these chapter are – it is not most gruesome story in the Bible. The darkest and most violent event in the entire Bible is the crucifixion of Jesus.**

**That God and creator of all, the giver and sustainer of life, became a man and subjected himself to be reduced to fileted hamburger meat. Walk through the cross… unrecognizable.**

**Isiah 52:14-15a - As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind - so shall he sprinkle many nations. (Sprinkle – splatter and pour out)**

**Why would he do this? Because of what we just read - because of sin. To rescue us from our sin and the effects of sin. To give us a new life and a new nature in him.**

**That horrific bloody cross was to satisfy the justice of every horrific sin committed. He bared the weight of the world’s sins.**

**Instead of cutting his bride up (us) as a display of wickedness, he gave himself to be cut up as a display for our wickedness.**

**Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 10 …while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son…**

**What is your sin – God’s grace is greater!**

**Judges is an example of God’s grace calling us back to himself – to restore us and to rule and reign over our lives. Our King Forever!**

**Jesus is our judge, our king, and our only hope – he is the remedy for the enemy with-in.**