

Home Group study: week beginning 18th October 2020

Flawed Heroes — Desperate times call for desperate measures

Can you recall an occasion (not a Biblical one) when someone very ordinary, or who may not be considered very 'worthy', achieves something really significant or heroic?

Read: Judges 3: 12-30

Discovery

We read in v12 that the Israelites 'once again' did evil in the eyes of the Lord. We're only into Chapter 3 of Judges, and this is at least the fourth time this has happened. Have you any suggestions as to why the Israelites kept doing evil? What is always the result of them doing evil? Does this suggest that when we do things that God considers evil, we are actually opening up opportunities to Satan to come in and do much worse things?

When the people have reached the point when they can't put up with the evil any longer, what usually happens? What does this tell us about the nature of God?

In verse 15, how does God react to the people? Do you think they deserve God's intervention?

What do we learn about Ehud in this verse? The Bible tells us little about him, yet it does tell us that Ehud is left-handed. Why is that significant? Throughout history left-handedness has been considered, at best, a disadvantage. In Latin the word for 'left' is 'sinister', which has, well, sinister connotations, and, conversely, even in English we use the word 'right' to mean 'correct' as well as being the opposite of 'left'. Some of us may be old enough to remember left-handed children at school being forced to write with their right hand. How does God turn Ehud's left-handedness into a definite advantage?

Understanding

Throughout the Old Testament the evil that has come into the Israelites' situation leads to oppression that can only be dealt with by violence. Read **2 Corinthians 10: 3-6**. How does God intend us in our generation to fight against evil? Carnie said on Sunday that we need to be 'spiritual Ehuds' fighting against 'spiritual King Eglons'. What does he mean by that? Can you suggest some 'spiritual King Eglons' that we need to fight against? What do you think verse 6 means?

Back to Judges 3. As nice Christian people we wouldn't admit it, but on the quiet many of us probably revel in the graphic description of Eglon's death in verses 21-22! (You might like to get someone to read it out again, especially if they can read it in a suitably dramatic way!) But what do these verse tell us about Ehud's determination to see the job done properly? And what does it make us think of Eglon? It's not just a matter of plunging a sword into his belly; what other qualities has Ehud used to ensure he completes the job God has given him to do effectively? Just to recap and remember the context (always important with scripture), this passage is much more than just a gory murder: what, referring back to verse 15, is Ehud's real mission?

Application

Israel was under serious oppression from King Eglon. We too are under serious oppression, and it is becoming more and more apparent that people around us are suffering from its effects. What is the oppression that we face?

We see that Ehud uses subtlety and subterfuge in his strategy to deal with the threat posed by King Eglon. How might that apply to us in our spiritual warfare? Then when Ehud delivers the 'killer blow' he makes sure the job is done thoroughly: again, how might *that* apply to us as we battle against evil?

Left-handedness is a characteristic found in only about 10% of the population.

Most of us have some unusual features; we may have a particularly bizarre sense of humour, we may have a passionate interest in something unusual, we may be unusually talented at something. There may even be things we're spectacularly bad at! How can God use these things to advantage in progressing the Kingdom? Are we prepared to let him use these things?

Look at **2 Corinthians 12: 7-10**. We may think there are things about our lives that prevent God from using us in extending his kingdom. What are those things? What does this passage tell us about them? Why do you think God prefers to use those who are weak or apparently ill-equipped for the job he wants us to do?

Carnie reminded us that result of Ehud doing what God called him to do was 80 years' peace in Israel (Judges 4: 30): a massive achievement for one man and testimony to what God can achieve through one person who is in tune with His purposes. What might be the consequences of us deciding we can't do the things God is calling us to?