

Judges: R-rated Redemption

“Left-handed Salvation”

Judges 3: 12-30

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“The love of Christ is rich and free;
 Fixed on His own eternally;
 Nor earth, nor hell, can it remove;
 Long as He lives, His own He'll love.
 His loving heart engaged to be
 Their everlasting Surety;
 Twas love that took their cause in hand,
 And love maintains it to the end.
 Love cannot from its post withdraw;
 Nor death, nor hell, nor sin, nor law,
 Can turn the Surety's heart away;
 He'll love His own to endless day.”

- William Gadsby

“How strange it is that a widow with only a handful of meal should be commanded to offer hospitality! It is once again the impossible that is set before us. It would have been a dull commonplace to have fed the prophet from the overflowing larder of the rich man's palace. But to work from an almost empty cupboard – that is the surprising way of the LORD! He delights to hang great weights on apparently slender wires, to have great events turn on seeming trifles, and to make poverty the minister of the unsearchable riches of Christ.” - J.H. Jowett

“Humans beings can bear an incredible amount of meaningful deprivation but only a very little meaningless affluence.”- Erazim Kohak

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered or rabbit trails to be followed for you?
- This passage, once again, places us in confrontation with the discipline and deliverance of God.
 - Compare and contrast God's deliverance through Othniel and Ehud.
 - What's expected and predictable? What unexpected and unpredictable?
 - Why would God go to such lengths to deliver His people?
 - Why (cf. Jowett quotation above) does he “delight to hang great weights on apparently slender wires”?
- How does Ehud as an “unlikely who” foreshadow the person and work of Jesus Christ?
 - What do we learn of Jesus from Isaiah 53 and his profile as a “leader”?
 - How does Paul's reflection that God uses the weak things of the world to overcome the strong (1 Corinthians 1: 26-29) factor in?
 - Why is our culture often cynical about typecast heroes and the usual suspects for leadership?
- Henri Nouwen's phrase, “wounded-healer”, helps us frame what life and ministry this side of heaven looks like.
 - How did God use Ehud's liability and weakness to bring about deliverance?
 - What deficit, liability, or weakness do you struggle with?
 - How could God be using that to minister to Hope Church, this community, and our city?
- The “unbelievable why” of God's deliverance is his profound, steadfast love for His people.
 - What stands in the way of you experiencing that beyond a conceptual level?
 - How do you want to connect God's delivering grace more fully to the ordinariness of your life and work? How can God's love transform “meaningless affluence” into Kingdom purpose?