

Deliver Us From the Evil Within

Judges 3:12-30

Week of October 25

As you enter into prayer now, take a moment to settle your mind. Put aside your concerns and what needs to get done today, or what didn't get done today. Take a slow, deep breath. Center yourself in His Peace. He is the Alpha and Omega. The Beginning and End. You are found in Him.

Be Still.

Lord, open my heart and mind to hear and understand Your Word. I invite your Spirit to speak to me as I meditate on your Word.

If you were with us last week, you heard about how the Israelites had not eliminated the Canaanite tribes when they moved into the Promised Land. This became a major problem with 7 of those tribes because of the depth of moral corruption (including child sacrifice) that was happening in these groups. The book of Judges then goes on to tell the cyclical story of the Israelites sinning against God, being oppressed by a tribe, crying out to God, and then being delivered—only to repeat the cycle again. This cycle will occur 10 times in the book of Judges. Today's story is the story of Ehud, one of the first Judges that God used to deliver the Israelites after they cried out to Him. We begin in Judges chapter 3, verses 12-22.

¹² Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and because they did this evil the LORD gave Eglon king of Moab power over Israel. ¹³ Getting the Ammonites and Amalekites to join him, Eglon came and attacked Israel, and they took possession of the City of Palms.^[a] ¹⁴ The Israelites were subject to Eglon king of Moab for eighteen years.

¹⁵ Again the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he gave them a deliverer—Ehud, a left-handed man, the son of Gera the Benjamite. The Israelites sent him with tribute to Eglon king of Moab. ¹⁶ Now Ehud had made a double-edged sword about a cubit^[a] long, which he strapped to his right thigh under his clothing. ¹⁷ He presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab, who was a very fat man. ¹⁸ After Ehud had presented the tribute, he sent on their way those who had carried it. ¹⁹ But on reaching the stone images near Gilgal he himself went back to Eglon and said, "Your Majesty, I have a secret message for you."

The king said to his attendants, "Leave us!" And they all left.

²⁰ Ehud then approached him while he was sitting alone in the upper room of his palace²⁰ and said, "I have a message from God for you." As the king rose from his seat, ²¹ Ehud reached with his left hand, drew the sword from his right thigh and plunged it into the king's belly.

Pause and Pray.

Jesus, I am here because I want to experience You. As I meditate on this passage, draw to mind those things that You would have me become more aware of. Center my heart and mind on Yourself. Use your Word to draw my heart to You. Amen.

REFLECT.

The Israelites had chosen their own way and found themselves under the thumb of the Moabites for 18 years. They cried out to God, and God sent a judge. Left-handed Ehud gets checked by security but they don't find his sword—no one was left-handed back in those days—it was like a disability! So when he was searched, no one searched that side. He was let in. And King Eglon falls right into his clever play to 'share a secret from God' and empties the room of guards and witnesses. In a few short minutes, Ehud manages to defeat a kingdom.

As you consider this story of deliverance, where are you in the story? PAUSE.

Are you struggling to choose God's way in something, instead of your own? Like the Israelites, do you have other gods that you find distract you from the one true God? PAUSE.

Are you giving your time, talents, and treasures to an idol? PAUSE.

God used Ehud in a powerful way even though Ehud would never have been considered a warrior by the world. Where is God calling you to be a warrior, despite your lack of training or knowledge? PAUSE.

Despite their struggle with sin, God delivers the Israelites through Ehud. He is faithful to redeem, and we will see this repeatedly throughout the book of Judges. Where do you currently need God's redemption? Or where has He recently redeemed something or someone in your life? PAUSE.

PAUSE, PRAY AND ASK.

God, as I consider the ways that I still choose my own path instead of yours, I confess these to You. Forgive me for the ways I have been distracted from You and Your path, and instead, turn me back towards You. Make me obedient God—that I only need a gentle nudge to get moving in the right direction again. PAUSE.

If there are areas of my life that You are calling me to service like Ehud, Lord I pray that You would reveal it to me. That You would equip me for it. And that You would direct my paths in obedience, so that I too can be a part of bringing deliverance to others. PAUSE.

God, as I reflect on your redemption in my life, I pray now for an area of my life or someone else's where redemption is necessary. PAUSE.

I also take this moment to thank you for redemption You have already brought to pass. PAUSE.

YIELD.

I return now to the text:

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CLOSE IN PRAYER.

Like the Israelites, Lord, I am in constant need of your mercy. To that end, I close today with the kyrie elieson, a simple, ancient prayer that has been used for generations by Christians. This week, if you find yourself struggling in any way, be reminded that we serve a God who is

gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in love. Then repeat these words to yourself.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.