

WELCOME TO



BELL CREEK
Community Church



MAY 24, 2026

THE LORD RAISED UP A DELIVERER
JUDGES 3:1-11

SERMON BY: PASTOR FRED WRIGHT

CURRENT SERMON SERIES:
JUDGES—THE GOD WHO DELIVERS

THE LORD RAISED UP A DELIVERER

JUDGES 3:1-11

This Is War: God's People Must Learn to Fight

The God of History is not Tame

A Deliverer Who Saved Them

FOR NEXT WEEK

Read Judges 3:12-30 to prepare for the sermon.

DAILY CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE READING

MAY 24: PSALM 108-110

MAY 25: 1 CHRONICLES 23-25

MAY 26: PSALM 131, 138-139, 143-145

MAY 27: 1 CHRONICLES 26-29,
PSALM 127

MAY 28: PSALM 111-118

MAY 29: 1 KINGS 1-2; PSALM 37, 71, 94

MAY 30: PSALM 119:1-88

UPCOMING AT THE CREEK

APOLOGETICS CLASS

Pastor Dylan's Apologetics Class will not meet today, but will resume next Sunday at 11:00 AM in the Prayer Room.

DAD-CO AT BELL CREEK

All dads are invited for our next Dad-Co meeting on Monday, June 1 at 6:30 PM in the Prayer Room. This is an opportunity for dads of all ages to get together to build friendships, share advice about parenting and life, and find encouragement through monthly meet ups. Please reach out to Alex Quint or email info@bellcreek.org to learn more.

VERTICAL MARRIAGE WORKSHOP

Mike & Mary King and Alex & Elyse Quint are hosting a 2-day Marriage Workshop on Friday, June 5 from 6:30-9:00 PM and Saturday, June 6 from 9:00 AM-12:30 PM at Bell Creek. "Vertical Marriage" by Dave and Ann Wilson provides a series of videos, small group discussions, and a couples' workbook. Registration is required, so if you would like to participate, please visit www.bellcreek.org. If you have questions, please reach out to Pastor Dylan (dylan@bellcreek.org) or Elyse Quint (elyse@bellcreek.org). No food is provided, but we will have coffee, tea, and water. Childcare is available upon request.

KIDS' CREEK SUMMER KICK OFF

Our annual Kids' Creek Summer Kick Off is Monday, June 15 from 10:00 AM-12:00 PM. Join us for water activities, foam, games, and complimentary snow cones in the back parking lot. No registration is required, but parents are to stay with their kids. Contact elyse@bellcreek.org for questions.

STUDENT MINISTRY SUMMER KICK OFF PARTY

All 5th-12th Grade Students are invited for a Summer Kick Off party on June 15 from 1:00-3:00 PM. We will have a bonfire, hot dogs, smores, squirt guns and water balloons. Feel free to bring a friend! Contact Keila Malane (timandkeila@aol.com) for questions.

WESTSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL SERVICE PROJECT OPPORTUNITY

Westside Christian Academy is partnering with us to find an opportunity for our students and their parents to serve the community! We are going to help the school "love their neighbor" by clearing out the fenceline around their property. We will

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

PRAYER MEETINGS

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:30 PM

FRIDAYS 12 NOON

PRE-TEEN & MIDDLE SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SUNDAYS AFTER WORSHIP

2ND SERVICE

AWANA

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SEPTEMBER-MAY

HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

SUNDAYS 11:00 AM

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES
AND EVENTS AT BELLCREEK.ORG

OUR MISSION

MATTHEW 22:37-40

He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and prophets depend on these two commandments."

MATTHEW 28:19-20

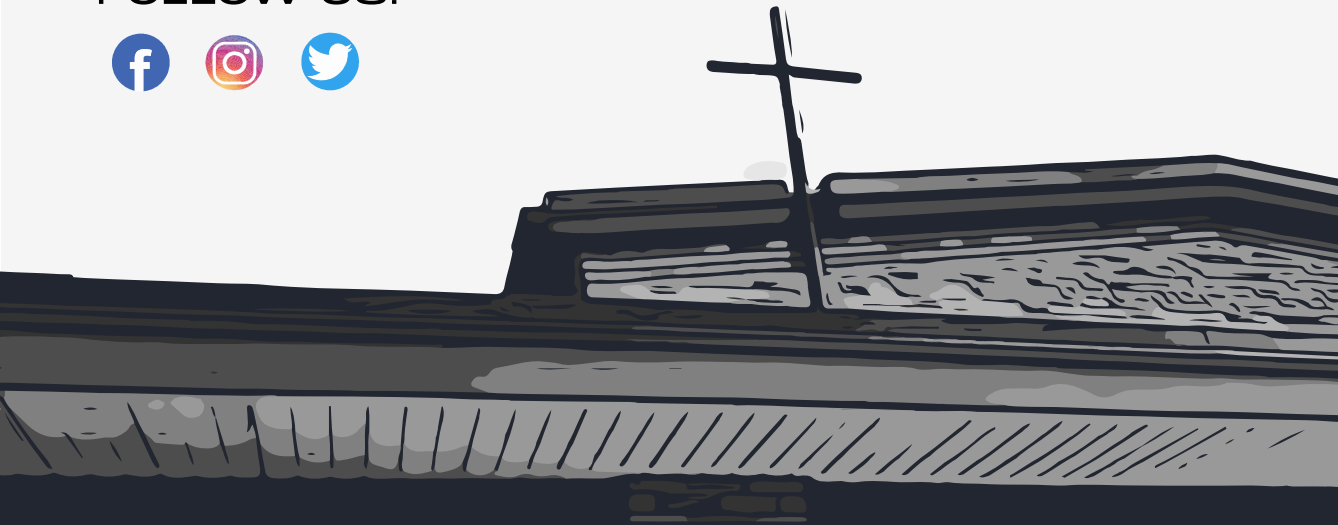
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember that I am with you always to the end of the age.

STAY CONNECTED

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU HERE!

WWW.BELLCREEK.ORG/CONTACT-US

FOLLOW US!



BELL CREEK
Community Church

30000 FIVE MILE RD.
LIVONIA, MI 48154

Sermon Series | Judges – The God Who Delivers

Sunday, May 24, 2026 | The Lord Raised Up a Deliverer

Judges 3:1-11

This Is War: God's People Must Learn to Fight

“Now these are the nations that the LORD left, to test Israel by them, that is, all in Israel who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan. It was only in order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, to teach war to those who had not known it before.” (Judges 3:1–2, ESV)

“These are the nations: the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath.

They were for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.” (Judges 3:3–4, ESV)

“So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And their daughters they took to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they served their gods.” (Judges 3:5–6, ESV)

Three times, the author of Judges says the Lord left these troublesome nations in the land to “test” Israel. Here, “test” means to provoke or probe to see what is in the hearts of the Israelites. Doesn't God already know what is in their hearts? Of course He does! But He is probing them to reveal what is in their hearts through their actions (or inaction).

Also, note that God left their enemies in the land so they might learn war. It seems that very few of the Israelites in this generation knew how to fight. They had to learn to fight, and, most importantly, they had to learn that the success or failure of their battles depended entirely on whether they trusted the LORD.

Israel was supposed to push these pagan nations and their awful gods out of the land, but they didn't – in fact, they often made deals with them. We also see that the LORD allowed this to happen to test them and to teach them war. So two things are going on here. First, the conflict that Israel is experiencing is a consequence of their sin in not pushing these enemies out of the land. Second, the LORD is allowing this to reveal what is in their hearts, and hopefully, in that revelation of disobedience there will be a desire to change. Also, He is teaching them to fight against their enemies.

Let's pause for a moment and consider the analogy to our spiritual lives in what we see here in Judges. We too have been rescued from slavery, haven't we? We, too, have been brought, in a sense, into the promised land, right? How? Because of Jesus, we are saved, spiritually alive, forgiven, beloved, children of God in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, and so God is with us now, and we will be with Him forever. And yet, we still have enemies that remain, don't we? We have enemies within, and enemies without. So, we too need to learn how to fight. We must depend on the Holy Spirit to “put to death the deeds of the body” (Romans 8:13) – the remaining sins in our lives. For only the Holy Spirit is able to: search us deeply (Romans 8:27, 1 Corinthians 2:20), show

us where we are wrong (John 16:8), teach us God's word and help us remember it (John 14:26), give us power to overcome sin (Galatians 5:16-17), comfort us (Acts 9:31), constantly be with us and in us (John 14:16-17), pour God's love into our hearts (Romans 5:5), assure us that we belong to God (Romans 8:15), and bring us safely through all trials and temptations to salvation (Ephesians 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit does the impossible for us – He transforms every aspect of our nature.

So what's our responsibility? If the Holy Spirit does all these things, can't we just sit and wait for Him to remake us? He certainly can change us in the blink of an eye if He desires, and sometimes He does, though that seems rare. More common is for the Spirit to work this change in us over time, perhaps over a lifetime.

The Holy Spirit employs three key means to transform us: God's word, prayer, and God's people.

Have you ever wondered why He does it this way? First, each of these means (the Word, prayer, and God's people) teach us to depend on Him and not ourselves. When we feel the power of His voice in the Scriptures, cry out to Him through prayer, and lean on His people, we get the help we need, but God receives the glory. Next, as we use these means, He gives us a greater appreciation and experience of Himself. If He just "zapped" us with sanctification, we would not have the opportunity to see His lovingkindness over the course of time. As we grow, He reveals who we really are - where we need to change, and the evidence of the changes He is making. Finally, God's beautiful process of sanctification makes us into people that can encourage others. When we trust Him, and change, we have valuable insight and hope to share.

The God of History is not Tame

"And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth." (Judges 3:7, ESV)

"Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. And the people of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years." (Judges 3:8, ESV)

Who is Cushan-rishathaim? His name means "Double wickedness from the Double Rivers." If we place Cushan-rishathaim in northern Mesopotamia or around the upper Euphrates, he would have emerged from a world shaped by a blend of cultures. After the decline of the Mitanni kingdom, the region saw a mix of Hurrian, early Aramean, and Assyrian influences. These cultures were known for city-states, warrior traditions, and complex polytheistic religious practices. The rulers of that era often sought legitimacy through conquest and alliances, so a figure like this would reflect a militaristic, polytheistic culture of shifting power.

Before the Bronze Age collapse, the region's major powers were powerful, sophisticated kingdoms. To the north, the Hittite Empire, centered in Anatolia, often vied for influence over Syria and northern Mesopotamia. To the southeast, the Kassite dynasty ruled Babylonia, while to the northeast, the Assyrian kingdom was steadily growing in power. The Mitanni kingdom—centered in northern Mesopotamia—was also a major force, particularly influential in the 15th and early

14th centuries BCE. These powers controlled trade routes, amassed wealth, and engaged in diplomacy and warfare with one another—until the upheavals of the collapse reshaped the entire landscape.

Note what it says here, “Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia.” We have grown accustomed to domesticating history into a simple chain of events. Cause and effect. We have forgotten that God moves history however He desires. When His people chased after idols, He brought a fearsome ruler to oppress them. This wasn’t just failed diplomacy, politics, or the decisions of nations and their leaders. This was the Sovereign Hand of God moving Cushan-rishathaim to oppress Israel for eight years as a consequence of their sins. The God of history is not tame – He moves Kings and nations where and when He will. As it was said of Aslan the Lion, He’s not tame, but He’s good.

A Deliverer Who Saved Them

“But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother.” (Judges 3:9, ESV)

When it says, “the people of Israel cried out to the LORD,” the phrase “cried out” indicates they were in deep distress. Notice this: it does not say they repented! It simply states they “cried out.” See how loving and merciful our God is! He listened to them in their suffering. What was His response? He raised a deliverer. Who was the one who sold them into the hands of Cushan-rishathaim? God did. And it was God who raised up a deliverer for them. The name Othniel means “God is my strength.”

“The Spirit of the LORD was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.” (Judges 3:10, ESV)

“So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.” (Judges 3:11, ESV)

The Spirit of the LORD was upon Othniel. The Spirit of God filled him, granting him the wisdom and ability to lead Israel and prevail over the powerful king known as “Double Wickedness.” The land enjoyed forty years of peace, and then... Othniel, the son of Kenaz, died. He was an answer to prayer, a mighty leader, and a deliverer filled with the Spirit of God, yet he died.

Let’s consider our own lives. If God is sovereign over the rise and fall of nations, over kings and armies and generations, then is it hard to trust that He has also been sovereign over our personal histories? Is it hard to believe that He has been with you all the days of your life, through your successes and failures, through your happiness and grief, and through the consequences, disappointments, fears, and longings? Could you trust that the distresses He has allowed in your life are not meant to destroy you but to make you cry out to Him? He wants to help you and to bring you to the true and better Deliverer, the One who loves us, has died for our sins, and has defeated our enemies. The One who lives forever, never to die again, the One named Jesus.

Come to Jesus today. Entrust your whole history, your sin, your suffering, your future, your whole self to the Deliverer who died and rose again for you.



The Lord Raised Up a Deliverer

1. What did you think of the sermon "The Lord Raised Up a Deliverer"?

2. God allows testing to reveal what is in your heart. Why do you think God works this way instead of instantly changing you? What can seasons of testing teach you about yourself and about Him?

3. Israel's failure to drive out the nations led them into compromise and idolatry. How do Christians compromise today without realizing it? Why does compromise seem easier than obedience?

4. The Israelites cried out to God in their distress, and God responded with mercy by raising up a deliverer. Why does suffering often drive people back to God? When has God used hardship to draw you closer to Him?

5. Jesus is the true and better Deliverer who never dies and never fails His people. How does trusting Jesus change the way you view your personal history, struggles, fears, or future?

