

--We are studying the entire book of JUDGES!

TODAY:

WEEK 10 – I'M STUCK, WHAT DO I DO?

Last week, after basically imploding...Israel goes back in to oppression because Gideon is gone, his son Abimelech, exalted himself above God, took everything in his own hands...and because he did that, he died IN PRIDE, the people of Schechem, which he led, were killed and punished...and now ISRAEL is once again...in oppression...

Judges 10:1-5 (NLT)

1 After Abimelech died, Tola son of Puah, son of Dodo, was the next person to rescue Israel. He was from the tribe of Issachar but lived in the town of Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. **2** He judged Israel for twenty-three years. When he died, he was buried in Shamir. **3** After Tola died, Jair from Gilead judged Israel for twenty-two years. **4** His thirty sons rode around on thirty donkeys, and they owned thirty towns in the land of Gilead, which are still called the Towns of Jair. **5** When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.

We don't know much about Tola or Jair....

Just that Tola served as the JUDGE for 23 years

And that Jair served as JUDGE for 22 years

THEY SERVED as the JUDGE of Israel – the ones God used to bring the people of ISRAEL back in to it's rightful place and position...

And JUST like Gideon, Jair had a few wives, which is why he had 30 sons and they rode around on fancy transportation of they day and all owned their own territory..

SO it can be assumed that even though JAIR didn't take the title of a king, he kind of acted like one, living above the people, kind of like Gideon at the end of his time of judging...

AND OF COURSE...as his term of judging came to an end...the PEOPLE did evil AGAIN...

because when you start to exalt yourself above God – YOU WILL fall

Look at this parable in Luke 18....

Luke 18:9-14 (NLT)

9 Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: 10 "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! 12 I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.' 13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' 14 I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

I DO THIS, I DO THAT – Ive got all my law right...

I tithe, I fast, I pray, I go to church – IVE CHECKED ALL THE BOXES

- But he is more concerned about the worship of his checked boxes than the worship of GOD

When the SINNER, so recognized the GREATNESS of God, that he humbles himself before God by keeping himself in a posture of "im not worthy to even look to Him"

And out of that HUMILITY – HE was justified before God, not the proud church member

AND A LOT of us can get TOO easily caught up in

"look what I do" "Look what I have" "Look how far I have come"

AND before you know it; you become more obsessed with YOU than GOD...

AND YOU GET STUCK in a place....

And God says "YOU PEOPLE will be humbled"

THIS IS NEW TESTAMENT – even with JESUS saving you, THOSE who exalt themselves WILL be humbled

Judges 10:6 (NLT)

6 Again the Israelites did evil in the Lord's sight. They served the images of Baal and Ashtoreth, and the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, and Philistia. They abandoned the Lord and no longer served him at all.

This time when they did evil in God's sight...it wasn't just to a god called BAAL..
IT WAS 7 gods!!!!

Baal – weather god

Ashtoreth – fertility god

God provided for them ALL they didn't earn, and in an effort to EARN MORE for themselves, they started to EXALT and SERVE the things THEY wanted more of
GOOD weather to produce crops and wealth
FAVOR for love, sex, and romance and more population

AT one time, they learned to DEPEND on GOD

NOW – in a place of MORE THAN ENOUGH, they turn their eyes to themselves and what THEY have created..

AND IF THAT wasn't enough....they worshipped 5 MORE gods in addition to Baal and Ashtoreth.... ARAM, SIDON, MOAB, AMMON, PHILISTIA

And these gods were simply neighboring gods of the nations around them..

IN OTHER WORDS – they started to worship and conform to the culture to gain favor with the culture....rather than TRANSFROM the culture to worshipping YAHWEH god...

And the PEOPLE OF GOD so often fall in to a place of worshipping what the world worships....exalting what the WORLD says is good..

And a lot of the problem with the world today

Is not so much that they don't believe in God, rather they believe in ANYTHING and so have become BLIND to the ONE TRUE god

We worship CHURCH MODELS

We worship CHURCH STRUCTURES

We worship political parties

We worship our opinion

We worship THE RIGHT of oneself...

We worship FREEDOM of choice....

SO we start to BUILD our own gods...

And we find ourselves in bondage, in debt, alone, and TOTALLY blind...

AND STUCK

AND THEREFORE – we fall in to worshipping what we ACTUALLY believe God is ok with...and we fall out of line with Him and out of relationship with Him and we start PRAISING our own things.....that we have created....

This passage in Ephesians is titled "living by the spirit's power"

Ephesians 5:15-20 (NLT)

15 So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. 16 Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. 17 Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. 18 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, 19 singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. 20 And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. MAKE THE MOST OUT OF every opportunity...to allow Spirit to move...
Not – make every opportunity work for you....
2. DO NOT ACT THOUGHTLESSLY – think on "what does God want me to do"
3. DO NOT be under the direction of anything other than God – and if something else is leading you, like wine...or obsession...or YOU needs – shift what fills you up...
4. GIVE THANKS TO GOD for everything – no other thing should get glory...

THE ISRAELITES....have shifted their praise to EVERYTHING ELSE other than God...

Judges 10:7-9 (NLT)

7 So the Lord burned with anger against Israel, and he turned them over to the Philistines and the Ammonites, 8 who began to oppress them that year. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites east of the Jordan River in the land of the Amorites (that is, in Gilead). 9 The Ammonites also crossed to the west side of the Jordan and attacked Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. The Israelites were in great distress.

God said – YOU WANT TO SERVE THEM – GO FOR IT

And now they were serving FALSE gods thinking that service would get them out of oppression – **but they STUCK in a stronghold....**

OFTEN times when you get down...you give worship to ANYTHING in order to get up...and YOU try to figure it out...and YOU try to manage it...and YOU try to strategize an exit strategy....

Isaiah 54:17 (NLT)

17 But in that coming day no weapon turned against you will succeed. You will silence every voice raised up to accuse you. These benefits are enjoyed by the servants of the Lord; their vindication will come from me. I, the Lord, have spoken!

NOT the servants of self or false gods – but the SERVANTS OF THE LORD

And just because you proclaim His name does NOT mean you serve Him..

BUT if we would START to serve HIM – it would get us out of our STUCK place....

Judges 10:7-14 (NLT)

10 Finally, they cried out to the Lord for help, saying, "We have sinned against you because we have abandoned you as our God and have served the images of Baal."

11 The Lord replied, "Did I not rescue you from the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, **12** the Sidonians, the Amalekites, and the Maonites? When they oppressed you, you cried out to me for help, and I rescued you. **13** Yet you have abandoned me and served other gods. So I will not rescue you anymore. **14** Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen! Let them rescue you in your hour of distress!"

DANG GOD...I thought you would never do that to your people

What happened to "I'll never leave you or forsake you or abandon you"

Their cry SEEMS fine....but crying out to God without repentance won't get you anywhere when you have given your service to all but Him

1 John 1:9 (NLT)

9 But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

AND WHEN many of us get STUCK

We are so QUICK to say God help, but the KEY to unstuck is
LORD; forgive me for depending on EVERYTHING but YOU

Luke 9:57-62 (NLT)

57 As they were walking along, someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go." 58 But Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head." 59 He said to another person, "Come, follow me." The man agreed, but he said, "Lord, first let me return home and bury my father." 60 But Jesus told him, "Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead! Your duty is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God." 61 Another said, "Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but first let me say good-bye to my family." 62 But Jesus told him, "Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God."

SOMETIMES your STUCK – is you cant STOP LOOKING BACK; and it's preventing you walk FORWARD with JESUS...

And GOD loved these people of Israel so much that he said

Im gonna allow you to SIT in the environment you created and allow the NATURAL consequences of your sin to devour you until you get so sick of it that you will finally come to me with repentance rather than just "God rescue me"

Judges 10:15-16 (NLT)

15 But the Israelites pleaded with the Lord and said, "We have sinned. Punish us as you see fit, only rescue us today from our enemies." 16 Then the Israelites put aside their foreign gods and served the Lord. And he was grieved by their misery.

GOD – do what you need to do – we have sinned...

And they SERVED GOD even in the middle of NO RESPONSE IN SIGHT

REPENT – even if I don't see immediate fruit of serving; I WILL serve God

THEY SAID – we will serve you and be punished, just resuce us from oppression brought on by a worship of false idols... ***THE WORST of serving God is better than the BEST of serving idols...***

And after they made that cry....

GOD WAS GRIEVED by their misery...

He looked upon the people with COMPASSION

And because it was now GOOD for them to be rescued, God, in the next chapter decides to raise up a judge to REDEEM them again...

WHY Was it good now? They wouldn't just be rescued from pain, they would be REDEEMED from it and in to their RIGHTFUL identity

WHAT is the point of a rescue if you are just gonna jump right back in to the place of torment??? – REPENT – CHANGE YOUR MIND....A NEW way....

Judges 10:17-18 (NLT)

17 At that time the armies of Ammon had gathered for war and were camped in Gilead, and the people of Israel assembled and camped at Mizpah. **18** The leaders of Gilead said to each other, "Whoever attacks the Ammonites first will become ruler over all the people of Gilead."

Israel gathers together in response to the Ammonite threat....

And the leaders say "WHO IS GONNA LEAD US"

God's pattern to do a great work among HIS people...find someone to lead under His authority..

He did it through Jesus – and now Jesus has commissioned us to go and do the same..

KEY TO GETTING UNSTUCK – Lead like JESUS and lead UNDER his authority and NOTHING ELSE... God wants us to be renewed and start being the LIGHT of GOD and IMAGE of God throughout the earth...

AND THAT PEOPLE will take us in to a NEW DAY where HIS NAME is the ONLY NAME to be worshipped throughout the earth!

AMEN

TODAY – if you're stuck...REPENT and ask Him to deliver you!