

That's Messed Up!

Week 2: "Saved By Surprise"

Weekly Summary: A powerful king is murdered on his own toilet by a left-handed spy. That's messed up! But it reminds us of the surprising facts of our salvation. It is surprising that we would turn our backs on God after all of his goodness to us. It is surprising that God would send a deliverer to save us anyway. And it is the epitome of surprise that God himself would be murdered shamefully to save us from our spiritual slavery.

- ◆ Judges 3:12-30 - 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^[b] 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 palace^[c] 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. 22 Even the handle sank in after the blade, and his bowels discharged. Ehud did not pull the sword out, and the fat closed in over it. 23 Then Ehud went out to the porch^[d]; he shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them. 24 After he had gone, the servants came and found the doors of the upper room locked. They said, "He must be relieving himself in the inner room of the palace." 25 They waited to the point of embarrassment, but when he did not open the doors of the room, they took a key and unlocked them. There they saw their lord fallen to the floor, dead. 26 While they waited, Ehud got away. He passed by the stone images and escaped to Seirah. 27 When he arrived there, he blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went down with him from the hills, with him leading them. 28 "Follow me," he ordered, "for the Lord has given Moab, your enemy, into your hands." So they followed him down and took possession of the fords of the Jordan that led to Moab; they allowed no one to cross over. 29 At that time they struck down about ten thousand Moabites, all vigorous and strong; not one escaped. 30 That day Moab was made subject to Israel, and the land had peace for eighty years.

- ◆ **Divine** deliverance is demonstrated the **weak** warriors win.

- ◆ Weak Ehud boldly **trusted** God to deliver Israel, then **acted** accordingly.

- ◆ Jesus is the **new** and **better** Ehud.

- ◆ Through faith in Jesus, God will be glorified through **your** weaknesses.

Points to Ponder

1. We face circumstances in life when we feel helpless and stuck. Think of times when you've felt "there's no way out". The Ehud story reminds us that God easily saves when deliverance seems impossible. Share stories with a friend or family member when God delivered you in an unexpected way. Discuss how the cross of Christ was the ultimate "saved by surprise" moment.
2. Where do you feel you are weakest? Make a list. Include physical, emotional, intellectual, and relational weaknesses.
 - a. Say a prayer thanking God for who you are. He loves you just the way you are!
 - b. Brainstorm ways God might accomplish his will through your weaknesses.
3. Ehud delivered Israel *because of* his disability, not *in spite of* it. Discuss: "Differently abled" isn't just a nice way of saying "disabled", rather it is the God-honest truth. (Refer back to Ehud's story.) How does this change how you think about and treat those who have pronounced and obvious "weaknesses"?

Homework For Next Week: Judges 4 & 5

"Weakness, with acknowledgment of it, is the fittest seat and subject for God to perfect His strength in; for consciousness of our infirmities drives us out of ourselves to Him in whom our strength lies."

~ Richard Sibbes