

Meet the Judges

Week 2: Ehud – The unexpected leader

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing and sharing together.

Sometimes, when we find ourselves in difficult situations, the help we receive that makes the biggest difference comes from people or through circumstances that we didn't expect. Encourage people to share times when they have experienced this.

WORSHIP

Ask four volunteers in the group to each read a verse in turn from Isaiah 55:6-9. After each person has slowly read their verse, take a short pause before the next person reads. When all of the verses have been read, have a time of reflection and prayer, encouraging people to let the Spirit speak through the verses and inspire them to give thanks to God for who He is, and what He does.

WORD

Read Judges 3:12-30.

1. The writer of the passage brings together several literary styles, including high-action adventure and grotesque comedy, to tell a memorable story about Ehud. What aspects of the story particularly stand out to you?



2. At the beginning of the passage, we see that the Israelites had been subjected to the Moabites for eighteen years. What was the problem with Israel that had led to this? What can the situation they found themselves in tell us about how God wants us to live our lives?

3. What do you make of the description of Ehud in verse 15?

4. The worth we place on ourselves and others can often be tainted by our perceptions and also the views and expectations of others and society. How does God's choice of Ehud challenge our thinking in such matters?

You may find it helpful to look at verses 15 and 20-21 alongside 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 and Ephesians 2:10.

5. How would you describe Ehud's actions and strategy and how might his behaviour inform how we should respond when God asks us to do something?

You may find it helpful to consider verses 16-19 and 27-28 and also Deuteronomy 31:6-7.

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6. Eglon was defeated in a humiliating fashion. Why do you think this was?

7. How do you think the Israelites' view of Ehud changed between the beginning and the end of the story?
You may find it helpful to compare verses 15 and 27-28.

8. Paying particular regard to the actions and behaviour of the Israelites and God, how would you summarise the overall flow of the passage? How does it compare to the story of Othniel from week 1 of this sermon series?



WHAT NEXT?

Ehud is portrayed as being an unlikely leader but any such perception was clearly misplaced, for his success resulted in eighty years of peace! In our modern, image conscious, world, many people are overlooked or even actively oppressed simply because they do not fit established or desired norms. Yet each of us is “fearfully and wonderfully made” by God (Psalm 139:14), with special God-given gifts and talents.

Peter encourages us to use our God-given gifts and talents in serving others (1 Peter 4:10). Clearly, to do this we need to be able to discern what we have been given, but we also need to be enabled and encouraged to use them.

How might our society be different if everyone was able to contribute in this way? How can we get better at doing this as a church?

Personal reflection

Ehud stepped out in faith to do what God had called him to do, regardless of any hesitations that he might have had. As you reflect on the story of Ehud, could God be calling you to do something that you feel hesitant about? How will you respond?

In your prayer time, take time to listen to God and hear what He might be asking you to do. You may feel ill-equipped to do what God is asking – if so, ask God to show you what it is that He sees in you that causes Him to see you as the best person to do what He is asking. Also ask God’s Spirit to come on you and guide you forward, helping you, as you respond.