

Judges 2:16-3:6

Toleration, Participation and Peer pressure

Pastor Don started his sermon with two opening statements,

1. We don't think ourselves away from God, we sin ourselves away from God
2. What one generation tolerates, the next generation participates in.

1. Take some time to discuss the fine balance of living in the world but not tolerating sin?
2. How do we guard ourselves from complacency over sin?
3. How do we communicate boundaries and the reason for them, to the next generation?

“Bad socialization” and “no socialization” were phrases mentioned in the sermon. Bad socialization refers to negative peer pressure to engage in harmful behaviours, e.g. drugs. Although this is in decline, it has given rise to “no socialization”.

4. Make sure your group knows what both these terms mean?
5. What are the negative effects of both of these socializations?
6. Are you affected by either of these?

Then the Lord raised up Judges v 16-23

7. Why should Judges be a very short book with only a couple of chapters? Why would God have been justified in writing off the Israelites?

In v16-19, we see the components of the “5 part cycle of Judges”

8. What are the parts of the cycle? Find the verses that contain each part.

5 terms characterize this time

1. Sin-apostasy from God
 2. Servitude-anger of the Lord
 3. Supplication-groaning to the Lord
 4. Salvation-Grace of Lord
 5. Spiral (downward)-Israel's return to even worse sin
9. How do these 5 terms play out in our own lives, the life of the church, and the life of our nation.
 10. In 2:17 what is emphasized about the peoples response to the judges and the reason for that response?
 11. Sin is not just breaking the law, but also covenantal unfaithfulness. What makes this so tragic and sad?

Grace-edy (Pastor Don's new word) Characterized by Grace

In spite of the sin, unfaithfulness and ugliness of our passage, it also contains tremendous grace.

12. Spend some time reviewing the four descriptions of grace.

1. Grace in the face of betrayal (v 17 records the betrayal)
Why is it so comforting that mercy triumphs over judgement (James 2:13)?
2. Grace from compassion (v18 the Lord was moved to pity)
Can you think of other Bible verses that speak of God's mercy, pity and compassion?
3. Grace that persists (v18 Whenever the Lord raised up)
Again God in his grace, raises up Judges. It's plural. God's grace outlasts sin and betrayal
4. Grace that was abused (v19)
-Go through v19. What are the ways that they abused grace?
They didn't treasure Grace. What does it look like when God's people treasure grace?

Tests 2:21-3:4

In v21 we read how the people transgressed God's law and didn't obey his voice, yet God could still work in the midst of the sin and judgment to bring his redemptive purpose.

13. In what two ways was God going to use the judgement to teach the people?
(v. 22 & Ch. 3:2)

14. We read how God wanted to train them for war. Pastor Don said, it really wasn't training as we might picture it, God gave the Israelites strange instructions on how to win the battles. Rather, God was teaching them to depend on him. Why?

15. Has there been times in your life that God has trained you to depend on him? If so, feel free to share your experience with your study group.

Five purposes God accomplishes through tests.

1. To let us see that we are growing in faith.
2. God uses trials and tests to lead us and direct us. We can look back and see how God has guided through these tough situations. Sometimes he uses situations to give us the "push" that we need.
3. Testing is for discipline [learn your statutes (Psalm 119:71)]
4. Sometimes it protects us from greater harm. eg traffic jams on the highway.
5. To grow us (Romans 5:3&4)

Let us pray

As the group spends time in pray, take some time to pray through the four points on Grace. Thank God for his grace in your life.

Pray for those in the group that are going through tests and trials. Make sure that you don't pray that the trial will come to an end, but that the lessons God has for us to learn, will be learned.