

Be Yourself!

August 16 & 17, 2008

Othniel

The Lord raised up a rescuer to save Israel. His name was Othniel, the son of Caleb's younger brother.... The Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel &...he went to war against the king of Aram, and the Lord gave Othniel victory over him. So there was peace in the land for forty years. Judges chapter 3 verses 9 - 11 (190)

- His uncle Caleb was an all-star...very influential & famous
- Othniel didn't sit back & let his uncle or someone else fix this problem
- He didn't let birth-order, social or family expectations limit what God could do through him
- He was willing to let God use him in whatever way...no matter what others around him thought
- ***Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. 1 Timothy chapter 4 verse 12 (911)***

Ehud

The Lord again raised up a rescuer to save them. His name was Ehud son of Gera, a left-handed man of the tribe of Benjamin. The Israelites sent Ehud to deliver their tribute money to King Eglon of Moab. So Ehud made a double-edged dagger that was about a foot long, and he strapped it to his right thigh, keeping it hidden under his clothing. Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you!" As King Eglon rose from his seat, Ehud reached with his left hand, pulled out the dagger strapped to his right thigh, and plunged it into the king's belly.

Judges chapter 3 verses 15, 16, 20 & 21 (190)

- Ehud probably went through life being seen as a "reject," as having a "defect"
- He didn't hide his "defect" or try to become like everyone else around him. He had the courage to be different
- What others saw as a weakness in Ehud's life became his strength, the very thing God used to catapult him into leadership & to bring about good
- ***God said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses.... For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians chapter 12 verses 9 & 10 (888)***

Deborah

Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, was a prophet who was judging Israel at that time. She would sit under the Palm of Deborah...and the Israelites would go to her for judgment.

One day...she said to him, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, commands you...."

Judges chapter 4 verses 4 - 6 (190)

- Deborah didn't let the social customs of her day limit her work, her influence or her leadership
- She was a "mover & shaker" in a world dominated by men
- God used Deborah's wisdom & leadership in a powerful way to shape the man's world she was part of
- ***You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ...There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male & female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

Galatians chapter 3 verses 26 & 28 (892)

Jephthah

Jephthah...was a great warrior. He was the son of Gilead, but his mother was a prostitute.

Gilead's wife also had several sons, and when these half brothers grew up, they chased Jephthah off the land. "You will not get any of our father's inheritance," they said, "for you are the son of a prostitute."

So Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob. When the Ammonites attacked Israel, the elders...sent for Jephthah...and said,

"Come and be our commander! Help us fight the Ammonites!" ...So Jephthah led his army against the Ammonites, and the Lord gave him victory.

Judges chapter 11 verses 1-3, 5, 6 & 32 (198)

- Jephthah was marginalized in life because of his dad's poor choice...something he had absolutely no control over
- His entire family rejected him, chasing him off (*why didn't his dad speak up when his brothers ran him off??*)
- In spite of Jephthah's personal pain, he was willing to let God use him to help the very people who hurt him
- Jephthah understood that that even though his family & friends rejected him, God never did!
- ***The Lord says, I would no more reject my people than I would change my laws that govern night and day, earth and sky.*** *Jeremiah chapter 33 verse 25 (602)*

In Christ, I am a masterpiece!

We are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago. *Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10 (896)*

☒ "masterpiece" refers to hand-made craftsmanship

Next week: Be Rich!