



## Week of May 20, 2019: Judges Series: Ehud (Judges 3:12-30)

### Discussion Questions Set #1

“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. Getting the Ammonites and Amalekites to join him, Eglon came and attacked Israel, and they took possession of the City of Palms. The Israelites were subject to Eglon king of Moab for eighteen years.” (Judges 3:12-14)

The City of Palms – aka. Jericho - which was once a scene of incredible victory for the people of Israel had become a place of incredible oppression for them. This alerts us to a painful reality: there is painful destruction that comes from permitting oppositional culture to influence the realms of God’s victory. On a spiritual level, there is chaos that results from allowing the flesh – the part of us so intrigued with worldly culture – to gain victory over the spirit – Christ’s kingdom culture in us.

For a New Testament example, consider what happened when Peter allowed Jewish teachings on eating with Gentiles to impact his church fellowship, even after experiencing a direct revelation from God in the form of a vision (the sheet vision of Acts 10). See Galatians 2:11-13.

1. Can you think of a time where you permitted the flesh to gain traction in an area where you had previously experienced spiritual victory? What was the outcome of this?
2. Why is it important that we allow strongholds of spiritual victory to remain unaffected by oppositional culture? What happens when we do not?

### Discussion Questions Set #2

King David gathered “from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do” (1 Chronicles 12:32).

“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16)

“God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong” (1 Corinthians 1:27).

In sermon, we learned that two really important principles emerge from our text for us to consider as we engage the culture around us. The first was that there is a need for us to operate with shrewdness, thoughtfully and skillfully navigating culture. As followers of Jesus, we ought to thoughtfully understand to culture around us, so that we can then skillfully create a counter-culture that is foundationally centered on Jesus’ teachings, but also keenly positioned in opposition to that of the culture around us. Secondly, we ought to recognize that through the church, God has chosen those whom the world considers to be puny and powerless to baffle the cultural powers of the world.

1. What do you think it means to be “as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves”? What might this look like in our world? What happens if we forget to embody either side of this equation (if we fail to be “as shrewd as snakes” or fail to be “as innocent as doves”)?
2. How might understanding “the times” benefit us as a church?
3. How might recognizing our perceived weaknesses or handicaps as strengths in the hand of God change our understanding of our place in culture? How does the fact that God changed the world though an obscure and marginal group of people some 2,000 years ago offer us encouragement today?
4. Why do you think the church often fails to shrewdly and boldly create culture in our world, highlighting its weakness or marginality as a reason for failing to do so? Why have we, in large part, abandoned our call to create God-pleasing culture?



### Discussion Questions Set #3

“In [Christ] you have been enriched in every way ... therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift” (1 Corinthians 1:5,7).

1. Do you believe that God has equipped the church in every way necessary to overcome the oppositional culture around us? Explain.
2. What might it look like for you to engage in creating a culture that is radically different than that of the world, rather than scheming about how we can condemn, criticise, copy or consume various aspects of present culture? What difference might such an approach make?