**Session 10: Conquest and Judges, Part 2**

(Still on the green period)

**Book of Judges**: occupied the Land (in Joshua) but they have not utterly occupied it since there are still pockets of Canaanites. They are going to lose their leader (Joshua); this is the first time when Israel does not have a visual leader. This is a time when people are living doing “what is right in their own eyes.”

Are we not living the life of Judges in our present age? Doing what we think is correct in our own eyes.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 remember the call to worship one God.

Judges 2:8-10: “Joshua died at 110” who was buried in the hill country; another generation arose who did not know the Lord and what He has done.

Vv. 11-15: they serves the Baals; going after other gods; provoking the Lord to anger. This new generation does not know the Lord, because they have not been taught; there was no testimony to the one God; will Israel do what Moses said to do or will the Canaanites have a profound impact and influence on Israel (the latter will prevail).

Very much like today that many people do not know their faith. The more things change, the more they remain the same. We have lost our story.

This cycle (found in the Book of Judges):

1. **Sin** (living as if there is not one God); worshipping the other gods;
2. **Servitude** (of the neighboring nations; slavery) the end of sin is death, bondage and pain
3. **Supplication** (now they cry to God; who brings salvation who raises up a judge (12); Othniel, Ehud, Shamger, Deborah & Barak, Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephtah, Obzan, Elon, Abdon and Samson); these are not like the judges of our times; they are warriors and leaders who rallies the truth (both minor and major); in the middle of these we see more and more the hand of God in words and deeds

Chapter 3:7-11; first of these seven (7) judges; they did what was evil and serving the other gods; he sold them into the hand of the enemies; the Sons of Israel they served them for eight (8) years; then the Lord raised up a deliverer (a judge: Othniel); the land had rest for 40 years. V. 12: the cycle starts up again.

It seems that the Israelites do not learn from repeating their patterns of sin; are we that different (e.g. our confessional experience)?

There is a period of time where there is rest; after the Moabites and Philistines there were 80 years, etc.

Deborah, Gideon and Samson (the Book of Ruth in context of The Book of Judges); Deborah (the “buzzing bee”; the only woman; remember Exodus 23 “God drove the Israelites like bees”) who is raised up; the mighty strategist, almost like a prophetess;
a spiritual sense of warfare who calls for war against Cicero.

Gideon; who am I? Why does God want to use me? This is God calling the unlikely one; Chapter 6:11-12: “You mighty man of valor;” he gets this message from the messenger of the Lord.

Vv. 13-15; “Go deliver from the hand of Gideon… I am the least in my family.” This reveals his self-image he has about himself; by choosing the weakest link. However, Gideon was not asking to be used by God; he was doing his daily job, working when God chose him. Remember that being used by God, you have to be faithful and be willing to be used by God (“God calls us to be faithful not successful” Saint Mother Teresa). If God is with us, the God of miracles, then why don’t we see them anymore? Certainly, He still does miracles, no? He usually works around those who trust him and are not afraid to walk on the water (cf 1 Corinthians 26-31) “God chose what is foolish to confound the wise.” Remember that God is the faithful one.

Gideon is not sure Chapter 6:36 where he “fleeces” the Lord; “If this…then that…” looking for a sign.

Chapter 7:22; Gideon is triumphant and now the people want to make him King; because they were looking for a leader. He is not going to be their king, but in 1 Samuel 8; they will formally ask him for king (moving closer toward a king in Israel; ultimately Jesus Christ will be the King of kings).

Chapter 10; they start worshiping foreign gods again.

Chapter 13-16; the story of Samson (from the tribe of Dan; southwest corner of Israel); who are attacked by the Philistines. Samson is this huge, strong guy who likes puns and puzzles (his name means “sunshine”); a micro-vision of Israel can be seen here; it is happening to Israel; the way he becomes weak and blind is the same for Israel. Samson was under a Nazarite vow (v. 5) a personal vow to God; his hair is an outward manifestation of his fidelity to God. They were made to consecrate oneself to service and holiness. The strength is his vow not his hair.

Delilah (not quite “night” *lilah*) is going to go after his strength; how do I unlock this mystery? She is a Philistine woman who took a liking to Samson. The night of the Philistines will eclipse the sunshine of Samson because they are not faithful to God. She asked Samson for his secret: “How do you become like any other man?” God continues to call us to be “different” “sanctified” to be his child and a witness to Him in the world.

He answers her: “If they bind me with 7 fresh bowstrings…” He breaks free and she questions him again; “with new ropes” and it happens again. Again, she questions him. The third temptation he starts to get closer to the hair; he does not say “cut the hair” but he begins to weaken; “If you tie up my hair…” Again, it happens and he breaks free. Finally, he tells her everything “A razor has never come to my head.” The cutting of the hair is the reversal of the initiation of the rite. Unlike the priestly rite, this brings him back to where he first began. He assumes and presumes on the grace of God; vv. 20-23, he did not know the Lord had left him.

This is happening to our teenagers today; “If you really love me, then….” They become blind and bondage to shame. The good news for Samson is that his hair grows again
(he begins to repent) and regains his strength; he triumphs.

Chapter 16: the Danites moves up north of the Sea of Galilee.

In the midst of these stories, the story of Ruth (a Moabite woman; which takes place in the context of Judges); is the opposite; unlike the worship of foreign gods; those on the outside when they are faithful are on the inside of God’s family.

Naomi lives in Bethlehem (married to Eli Melek) have two sons Chilion and Malone; then a famine hits the land; they end up leaving to the land of Moab; they meet up with some sisters and get married; then tragedy strikes; everyone dies on Naomi, left with only two daughter-in-laws. She returns to Bethlehem but Orpah; (“to the turn the neck”) wants to stay. Naomi says to Ruth that she does not have to come either; she responds (Ruth 1:15-17); “Where you go, I will go… Your people shall be my people, your God will be my God….” When she came back over (as a widow) everything looked bad; but she was faithful. She was allowed the glean the fields and find grain where she found the man Boaz (a kinsmen who cares for her); the one who cares for us is Jesus Christ Himself. They land up having children (Obed and his wife had Jesse and he and his wife had David); she becomes part of the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1); she becomes the great Grandmother of David. What a great story of faithfulness!

Chapter 19: the Benjamites; a terrible story that should shake your faith in humanity (in its fallen nature); it is a difficult chapter; it should shock you; we should not be shocked that men are living to such an old age, the shock should be that they are dying. In this story is a commentary is how low man can be and how the influence of the Canaanites; V. 22. “base fellows;” one translation is “local hell raisers.” The literal in Hebrew is “sons of Beliel” which speaks of extreme perversion. 2 Corinthians 6:15 “this term is used for Satan and the opposite of God.” Pay attention to the little things. What should wake us up that we too can become what we never thought what we could become; determined by the small and daily decisions in our lives; to worship God alone and teach our children. What is “normal” and “shocking” will change. Let us not ask: how did I become this?