

Bedford Presbyterian Church

105 West Main Street, Bedford, Virginia

From 1844 to 2021 (177 Years)



Week of November 7th

We will continue sending out this combination of the newsletter and bulletin to keep you up to date on announcements, prayers, needs and scheduled activities for those that are uncomfortable to attend service yet.

Included will be the usual newsletter information along with prayers, scripture and a sermon.

We hope that you can utilize this format to keep up to date while being away from actual services, meetings, activities and watching the online sermon.



Bedford Presbyterian Church
serving Christ since 1844

A Biblically Guided Christian Community,

Loving God, Loving Others,

Serving the World & Growing Disciples

The Approach to God

One: The peace of Christ be with you

All: And Also with you

Prelude

"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"

Franklin Ritter

Welcome and Announcements

- Offering Plates currently are not being passed. They are located at the front and rear of the sanctuary along with 5 ¢ a meal offering baskets. You can place your offering as you enter or leave the church.
- Prayer time meets in the Anna Latimer room following service.
- Grief Sharing will start today at 4pm in the fellowship hall for those having a difficult time dealing with the loss of a loved one
- Something More meets Tuesdays at 3 pm. Those who wish to ZOOM can link into the meeting by 2:45 pm.
- For other announcements, be sure to read the emailed version of the weekly bulletin.

Call to Worship

One: O give thanks to the Lord, who is good.

All: God's steadfast love endures forever.

One: Some wandered, far and near, and cried out for help – which came from God.

All: God's steadfast love endures forever.

One: Some sat in darkness; some rebelled; they cried out for help – which came from God.

All: God's steadfast love endures forever.

One: We come now to worship the God who saves through love:

All: God's steadfast love endures forever!

Hymn of Praise

"Holy, Holy, Holy"

Reginald Heber

Prayer of Confession:

O God who gathers us into Your care, we confess that more times than not, we have strayed from You. We have wandered into places of our own choosing, rather than heeding Your call to follow You. We have gotten lost, hurt, waylaid all because we failed to hear You call our names. At times, we have even blocked the path of others who seek You. Be merciful to us, we pray. Welcome us into Your presence once again and remind us that nothing we do can keep us away from You. Amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

One: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Through Jesus Christ we have been born again to new life.

***Gloria**

"Glory to the Father"

Bill Rutledge

Proclaiming the Word of God

Time for all God's Children

Scripture

Judges 3: 1-11, 2 Corinthians 10: 3-5

Worship Song

"There's Just Something About That Name"

Gaithers

Sermon

The Weapons of Warfare

Adapted from Wiersbe, *OT Commentary*, pgs 432-439.

Last week, our "All The Stories of the Bible" series came to the conclusion of the Book of Joshua with this comment: *Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that the Lord did for Israel* (Joshua 24:31). But as you know, the history of Israel from the very start has been a continuous dance between rebellion followed by revival, which is exactly what you will find recorded in the next book: Judges.

In Judges, two verses can set the general theme for the entire book. The first verse is found at the beginning:

The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, forgetting the Lord their God, and worshipping the Baals and the Asherahs. Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of [some foreign ruler]. But when the Israelites cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the Israelites, who delivered them (Judges 3:7-9).

The second verse is then found at the very end of the book, ***In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes*** (Judges 21:25). In between these two verses are the stories of 12 judges that God raised up to rescue and restore Israel in their times of need. The greatest and last of these judges was Samuel who would need the next two books of the Bible just to record the events of his lifetime.



Since Philip Parker has already brought you three excellent messages on the most famous judges, Deborah, Gideon, and Samson, all that remains for me is to fill in some of the missing stories. Today you will meet the first three judges, Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar. So, let's begin.

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. That statement could have been made by a space alien in a sci-fi novel, but it wasn't. The apostle Paul wrote those words to the believers in Corinth (2 Cor. 10:4), reminding them of a principle every Christian needs to take to heart: **When God goes to war, He usually chooses the most unlikely soldiers, hands them the most unusual weapons, and accomplishes through them the most unpredictable results.**

For example, since he had no other weapon, Shamgar used an ox goad to kill 600 men. The woman Jael used warm milk, a rug, a hammer, and a tent peg to kill an enemy captain. Gideon routed the whole Midianite army with just water pitchers and torches. Samson slaughtered 1,000 Philistines using the jawbone of an ass and young David killed the giant Goliath with a stone hurled from a shepherd's sling. Though I am sure they would admire all this improvisation, West Point isn't likely to offer courses on how to use such weapons.

While our world has changed dramatically since the days of the judges, the “world system” is still the same because human nature hasn’t changed. As long as we’re in this world, God’s people will be involved in a spiritual battle against Satan and his armies (Eph. 6:10–19), and **God is still looking for men and women who have what it takes to win: faith in God’s guidance and the courage to follow His lead.** These essentials for victory are illustrated in the lives of the first three judges.

The book of Judges opens by noting that even though ordered to do so Israel had failed to clear all the pagan nations out of their land. Rather than finish the job for them, God left those nations in place both to test Israel’s continued faithfulness towards their covenant with Him and to train future Israelites in art of warfare (3:1-4). As predicted, these remaining nations at first adopted a “good neighbor” policy toward the new residents which defeated Israel’s faith from within. By swapping their sons and daughters in marriage, this eventually led to Israel worshipping their gods.

Of course, Israel should have been a witness to these remaining nations, seeking to win them to faith in the true and living God, but they failed in that responsibility as well. What a difference it would have made in their national history if the Israelites had won the Canaanites to the Lord instead of the Canaanites winning them over to Baal! Their idolatrous mates gradually stole the hearts of the Israelites away from worshipping Jehovah to worshipping false gods. King Solomon made this same mistake. After all, when you marry outside the will of God, you have to do something to keep peace in the family!

God had put a wall between Israel and her neighbors, not because Israel was better than any other nation, but because she was different.

- Instead of worshipping idols, the Israel worshipped the one true God who made the heavens and the earth.
- Humans did not devise the laws and covenants of Israel; God did.
- And only through Israel was the promise that one day all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

When Israel obeyed the Lord, He blessed them richly; both their conduct and God’s blessing were to be a testimony for their unbelieving neighbors. Like **Rahab** the harlot, the pagan people should have seen that, “*these Israelites are different. The God they worship and serve is a great God!*” And the Hebrew people would then have had opportunities to tell their neighbors how to trust Jehovah and receive His forgiveness and blessing. But, instead of trusting God to change their neighbors, the gods of their neighbors changed the Israelites, and everything Moses warned them not to do, they did.

Is it any wonder that God became angry, and humiliated Israel by using pagan nations to discipline His own people? Had the Israelites been faithful to the Lord, He would have sold the other nations into Israel’s hands, but now that they were acting like pagans, He sold them into the hands of their enemies (Deut. 32:30).

Charles Spurgeon said that *God never allows His people to sin successfully. Their sin will either destroy them or it will invite the chastening hand of God.* If the history of Israel teaches the United States of America anything it’s the obvious lesson that

righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people” Prov. 14:34

Here is a side note, pay attention to people's given names in the Bible, they almost always say something about that person which is pertinent to their story. For instance, the first enemy king, who came from the region of Mesopotamia to defeat and enslave Israel was literally named, "**doubly wicked Cushan**;" a nickname probably given to him by his enemies.

After Israel suffered eight years of enslavement under Cushan, they were ready for another Exodus experience: "*God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them.*" (Ex. 2:24–25). The deliverer He raised up was **Othniel**.

When God called Othniel, *the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and empowered him for battle* (Judg. 3:10).

Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit.' says the Lord of hosts Zech. 4:6

This was the secret of Othniel's strength, as it was with all of the judges to lead Israel and it still must be the source of the believer's power today (Eph. 5:18).

Othniel not only rescued his nation from bondage under Doubly Bad Cushan, but he also served as Israel's judge for the next forty years. It was his spiritual and civil leadership that restored peace to the land. **Never underestimate the good that one person, who is obedient and filled with the Spirit of God, can do.**

However, unlike Moses, who appointed Joshua to lead Israel and the later kings who would pass the crown on to their sons, the judges had no authority to name a successor. When God called men and women to serve as judges, they obeyed, did His work, and then passed from the scene. One would hope that their godly influence would make a lasting difference in the spiritual life of the nation, but such wasn't the case. No sooner was a judge off the scene than the people went back to worshipping Baal and forsaking the Lord. Somewhere the system broke down, and I think it was with the priests and the parents.

The priests and Levites were not only to officiate at the tabernacle, but they also were to teach the law to the people and encourage them to obey it. Israelite parents were expected to teach their children the ways of the Lord and be good examples for them to follow. During the period of the judges, however, it appears that the older generation neglected this important ministry of instructing the new generation about the fear of the Lord.

The armies of Mesopotamia came from a long distance away to invade Israel, but their next oppressors, the Moabites, Ammonites, and Amalekites were not only neighbors but also distant relatives of the Israelites. Lot, the nephew of Abraham, was the ancestor of Moab and Ammon; Esau, the brother of Jacob, was the ancestor of Amalek.

Eglon, the king of Moab, whose name meant "round" – *remember that* – had organized a confederacy out of these remnant nations and for the next eighteen years they made life miserable for the Israelites. It must have been especially galling for Israel to be under the heel of blood relatives who were also their longtime adversaries.

Ehud, the second judge to deliver Israel, was described as *a left-handed man*, but perhaps a better translation of the text was that he was "*a man crippled in the right hand.*" **So Ehud's story should be great encouragement for people with physical or mental disabilities**

who don't think that God can't use them in His service. Working with his disability, Ehud successfully solved three problems in his plan to liberate Israel from their current captors.

First, to gain access to King Eglon, Ehud volunteered to lead the commission that brought Israel's annual tribute. This payment of tribute not only added to the king's wealth, but also acknowledged Moabite authority over Israel. Of course, Eglon didn't suspect that Ehud was God's next appointed judge; otherwise, he would have had him killed on sight.

The second problem was in securing a private audience with the king without raising the suspicions of his attendants and guards. Ehud did this by first leaving with his fellow emissaries after they had delivered their tribute, but then returning alone, claiming to have a secret message for the king, from God!

A solitary man with a crippled right hand couldn't be much of a threat to a powerful king and perhaps this despised Israelite really did have a personal message for him from God. Since Eglon was no doubt afraid not to listen to this message from God, he first dismissed his guards and attendants and gave Ehud a personal interview in his private chambers. Eglon even stood up to receive his message from God, which for him was quite an effort because he was immensely fat (*remember the meaning of his name?*).

At which point, using his good left hand, Ehud reached into his robes for a custom made dagger strapped to his right thigh – a place that the guards would not have thought to look, especially on this cripple. And shoving the knife so far into obese Eglon that his fat closed over the entire blade, thus Ehud quickly dispatched the evil king. Then as he left, Ehud shut and locked the doors to the king's chamber behind him so that when the attendants returned they would think Eglon was resting and did not wish to be disturbed. With their king now dead, Ehud rallied the Israelites not only to defeat the Moabite confederacy, but also to turn the tables on them; thereafter the Moabites became subject to Israel and the land enjoyed another eighty years of peace.

If the Israelites had been voting on a leader, Ehud probably would have lost on the first ballot. But he was God's choice and God used him to set the nation free. Moses was slow of speech – meaning that he either stuttered or was tongue-tied – Paul, at the end of his life was not a pretty sight to look at, but Moses and Paul, like Ehud, were all giants of faith who led others to victory. **Ehud turned a disability into a possibility because he depended on the Lord.**

This brings us to **Shamgar**, who only gets mentioned in a single verse at the end of chapter three. He may or may not have been a judge, but he also "*delivered Israel.*" Shamgar was probably a contemporary of Judge **Deborah** and the warrior general **Barak**, because she mentions him in her victory song (5:6). While the name "Shamgar" translates as "*He is a stranger here,*" his designation as a "**son of Anath**" indicated that he was from the same tribe as Barak. That designation can also be translated as "*son of war,*" so we may assume that Shamgar was a warrior of distinction in Barak's campaign against their next oppressors.

What was significant about Shamgar was the weapon that he used. An ox goad was a strong pole about eight feet long. One end was either sharpened or had a metal point for prodding along the plowing oxen. The other end had an attached metal hook for cleaning dirt off the plow. This was the closest thing Shamgar could find to a spear because the enemy had confiscated all of the Israelites weapons.

Here was another man who obeyed God and defeated the enemy even though his resources were limited. Instead of complaining about not possessing a sword or spear, Shamgar gave what he had to the Lord, and the Lord used it. The 19th century preacher Joseph Parker said, "*What is a*

feeble instrument in the hands of one man is a mighty instrument in the hands of another, simply because the spirit of that other burns with holy determination to accomplish the work that has to be done."

Shamgar may have killed all 600 Philistines at one time in one place, but it's also possible that 600 is a cumulative total, since an ox goad would be an unwieldy weapon to use if 600 soldiers had attacked him at one time. While we don't know the details, we can be encouraged by knowing that God enabled him to overcome the enemy even with very limited resources.

The few words that are recorded about Shamgar give the impression that he was a man of persistent courage, to stand his ground against the enemy, having only a farmer's tool. Charles Spurgeon once gave a lecture at his Pastor's College entitled "*To Workers with Slender Apparatus.*" Shamgar didn't hear that lecture, but I'm sure he could have given it! And I suspect he would have closed his lecture by saying, "***Give whatever tools you have to the Lord, stand your ground courageously, and trust God to use what's in your hand to accomplish great things for His glory.***"

As the prophet Hanani would later tell King Asa of Judah,

The eyes of the Lord range throughout the entire earth, to strengthen those whose heart is true to Him
2 Chronicles 16:9.

This was certainly true of Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar.

May it also be true of us?

Let's pray about this.

Response to the Word of God

Affirmation of Faith

Ephesians 6: 10-13

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the People

Blessed Giver of All: what is love but giving? What is love, but offering back to You what we have already received from Your overflowing grace and care? Bless our gifts, we pray, that they may be used in acts of love. Bless our lives with peace and justice and mercy, so that we may pass those gifts on to others as we work for the coming of Your reign upon earth. Bless our sight, so that as we look around us, we will see and be moved to help serve the needs of our neighbors; help us to see what You see and respond as You would respond. This we ask in the name of Your son who saw us and reached out to help us find our way home to You.

Invitation to Communion

Hymn of Preparation

"One Bread, One Body"

Hymn 689

Lord's Supper

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Closing Hymn

"Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart"

Henry Smith

The Sending Forth

Benediction

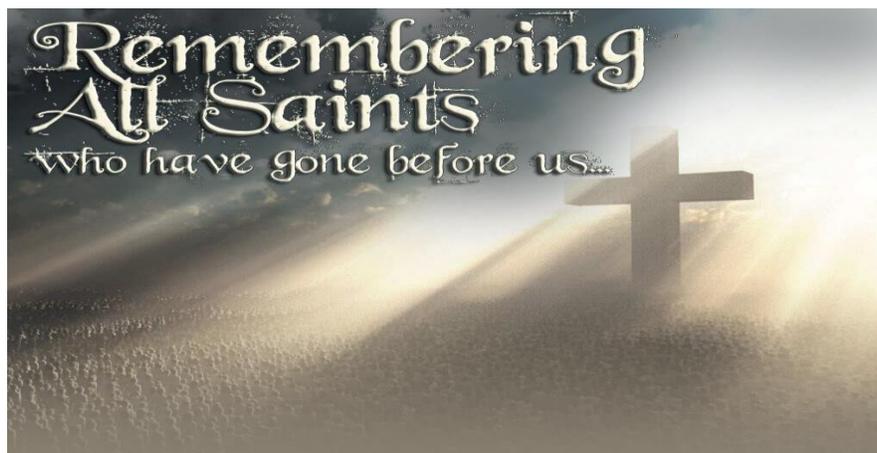
Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come ... and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Postlude

"Day by Day"

Todd Kendall

The flowers are given to the Glory of God and in memory of our loved ones, Roy & Sally Cram.



Al Toney
Anna Latimer
John Dooley
Sandy Arrington
Nick Chryssikos
Janet Eagler
Anne Arthur

Joys- November 7th

Joy- Afghan offering has reached over half the goal

Joy- Patty Meyers thanks everyone for their prayers for her mom's cataract surgery which went well

Concerns- November 7th

Avery: Tinkie, hospice care, Frank medical procedure, Nov 9th

Barnes: Kim Hedrick- (friend) cancer

Joey Hedrick- (Kim's husband) cancer

Benton: Linda Crawford- (friend) not doing well, chemo

Roger- (friend) in rehab

Roger Harris- (friend) recovering

Kim- sister's neighbor- thyroid cancer

Carolyn- sister diagnosed with bone cancer

Blair: Tonya Blair's friend (Shelly Longnecker) recurring cancer

Boone: Trish Berghorn- cancer- final days

Casdorph: Sarah- (friend) has Delta variant after being vaccinated

Chryssikos: Kathy- home

Compter: two brothers- unbelievers

Prayers for friends to come to the Lord

Bob- (friend) Parkinson's

Michael Compter- (brother) heart failure

Steve & Mary- (friends) Steve disabilities

John & Bobbi- (friends) John's mom passed and now Covid

Cram: Winslow's-(friends of Sally) family & medical problems

Janice Campbell-(friend) under hospice care

Ryan- (grandson) searching for faith

Nancy Holmes- (friend) stage 4 ovarian cancer, chemo, surgery

Gayle Mauser- health issues

Doris Koch- cataract surgery

DeHart: Dick Hatch- fell and broke hip

Fleming: family dealing with addiction and self-esteem

Their children- having difficulties

Dominic- (Ann Marie's brother) doing better

Foster: Joyce Abbott- (former member) doing better

Howard- (Tom's brother) problem with legs

Goodman: Charles- health issues, heart monitor, dialysis

Mike Virts- (nephew) may have liver transplant

Graboyes: Leslie's mom, Janice, nursing home, hospice, not eating

Leslie's dad- fell broke hip, recovering from surgery

Brenda & Willie-(friend) Brenda under hospice care

Harris: Judy- not doing well, doing PT

Heinrich: Steven - (grandson) autoimmune disorder

Barbara Lore- (Helen's sister) heart problems

Hopkins: Mark- colon cancer, chemo

Kuhn- Kibbey: Nancy & Jeff Milton (friend) both in memory care

Dot- idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, wet macular degeneration

Dick- macular degeneration, taking shots

Mauser: Joyce Reese- (friend) health problems

Steven-(son's boss) going blind

Barbara-(Al's sister-in-law) intense headaches

McGuire: Catherine, car accident in ICU
Morris: all law enforcement, firefighters and all other first responders
Forensic scientists who deal with crime
Doris Jean Coble- (cousin) in nursing home
Nichols: JC (nephew's son) mitochondrial disease
Palmer: Jim (friend) heart attack and bypass surgery
Poindexter: Heather- rheumatoid arthritis
Rutledge: Sherry (friend) covid complications
Saunders: (Ronnie) Colin Bridges- (grandson)
Scott- (son-in-law) terminal brain cancer
Scheurer: Jim Hedrick- (friend) cancer
Bob Lindell-(friend) prostate cancer
Sonny (son) colon cancer, recovering from surgery
Fred & Sandy- both are home doing well
Smith: Dorothy Smith- (John's mother) pray she comes to the Lord
Stetson: Clay Ramsey- thyroid cancer
Katy Dubinski-(daughter) friend Michelle, depression
Kaleb- (grandson) pneumonia, possible feeding tube
Stevens: Jackie Landis- heart problems
Duncan Elliston- (fireman)
Bill Gray- loss of leg, cancer
Jessica Canfield- (friend) struggling after surgery
Van Dyke: Donna Mannel (friend) MS
Eleanor- (Nancy's mom) stable, nursing home, pray for Salvation
Thomas Blythe- (friend) cracked his hip
Winberry: Chris- heart issues

Prayers for Afghanistan citizens

Prayers for our nation and our President

Prayers for those dealing with loneliness

Prayers for healing the divisive spirit among our leaders/nation

Prayers for an end of the coronavirus and for those infected

Prayers to speak and listen to those who are different

Prayers on ways to help Massanetta, who are hosting 50+ Afghan immigrants

Prayers for the missionaries that were kidnapped in Haiti

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Thank you for continuing to send in your contributions and pledges.
You can mail your pledge or contribution, or you can drop by the office,
Mon-Thurs between 8 am -4 pm.**

Activities for week of November 7th

Sunday: 10 am Worship with
Communion
Prayer Time following service
Grief Sharing 4 pm

Monday: Cubs

Tuesday: 3 pm Something More
6 pm Quilters

Sunday: November 14th
10 am Worship
5 ¢ a Meal Offering
Session
Prayer Time following service

November Birthdays

Tom Foster- 7th
Judy Harris-13th
Gerda Schubert-13th
Betty Easter-18th
Bill Rutledge- 23rd
Dianne Fain- 29th
Barry Schubert- 30th

November Anniversaries

Dick & Lois Diddams- 25th
Harold & Janet Neal- 29th

Afghan Collection to date: \$2990



First Responders “Christmas Snack Trees”

Our youth group will once again be collecting “edible decorations” for Christmas Snack Trees that we will be decorating on Sunday, November 21st. These small trees filled with goodies will be delivered to First Responders, who find themselves working during the Christmas season, hoping to spread a little cheer to them from the folks at BPC.

Over the next few weeks we hope you will be generous and donate these snacks. We ask that you drop them off at the church office. All snacks should be wrapped and small enough to hang on the tree. Granola bars, snack size candy, small bags of chips, dried fruit and nuts are some examples of what we need.

We plan to “decorate” the trees after the Pot Luck on November 21st. We invite you to join us after the Pot luck to help our youth decorate these small trees as we remember our Bedford First Responders.