Judges 20

“A War Among Brothers”

**Scripture:** Judges 20:1-48

**Memory Verse:** *“Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”* Luke 6:37

**Lesson Focus:** Dealing with the sin in our lives.

**Introduction:** Game of “Would You Rather”

 Ask the kids:

 Would you rather eat an ant or eat a bee?

 Would you rather clean your room or do the dishes?

 Would you rather do homework or help your little sister or brother?

 Would you rather obey your parents or try to get away with things?

 Would you rather climb a mountain or run a marathon?

 Would you rather get caught doing something bad or confess to doing something

 bad?

 Would you rather have a punishment for doing wrong or just get away with it?

 Would you rather forgive someone who has hurt you or hold a grudge?

Today we are going to talk about the result of a big sin in the nation of Israel. It is not always easy to decide what direction you should take in many situations. Do you think that the Nation of Israel would rather go to war OR work together to solve a big problem among the tribes? Let’s find out?

**Activities and Crafts:** Coloring Page – Cross Word Puzzle

Craft for 1st and 2nd: “I am Falling for Jesus” Leaves Poster: Have the kids color leaves and cut them out and attach to their poster.

**Bible Lesson:**

 **Judges 20:1-2:**

√ Who is “gathering together” in 20:1? (all the children of Israel)

 √ Where they united? (yes, as one man)

 √ How many gathered together? (400,000 soldiers)

 **Judges 20:3-7:**

 Teachers: Tell the kids the basics of the outrage….do not read these verses!

Outrage against the tribe of Benjamin: They abused a wife of a man and she died. She was treated horribly and it was an outrage to the nation of Israel.

 **Judges 20:8-11**

 **√** Do you think that it is important that the Scripture keeps saying that they arose as

 “one man.” What does that mean? (they were united to fight this cause)

 **√** What was their plan?

1. To divide up the men to fight
2. To repay the vileness that has been done is Israel
3. To be united as “one man”

The entire nation of Israel had been in sin. The Bible tells us that the entire nation was “doing right in his own eyes.” But it took an evil outrageous act to unite the nation and take action against the sin within.

**√** Do you think that they had to go to war to solve the problem?

**√** Do you think that the sin needed to be punished and consequences paid for the sin?

There will always be consequences to our sin. I believe the men who did this terrible thing deserved punishment. I am not sure that going to battle was the way to do it. The nation of Israel did not ask God if they should fight…they asked who should go first….

**Judges 20:12-17** *“Preparation for Battle”*

 **√** What message does Israel send out to the tribe of Benjamin?

1. What wickedness have you done
2. Deliver up the men that did the wickedness for punishment

**√** Did the children of Benjamin listen to them? (no) Instead what did they do?

 **(**They gathered together to prepare to go to war against their brothers)

**√** How many children of Benjamin where there? (26,000 soldiers and 700 select men)

**√** How does the Bible describe these 700 select men in Judges 20:17?

1. Left handed
2. Very good at “stone slinging”

**√** How many men where in the nation of Israel? (400,000 men who drew the sword.)

 **Judges 20:18 – 21: “***Battle #1”*

 **√** What is the first thing that the nation of Israel did? (they went to God in

 prayer)

 **√** What did they ask God? (Which tribe should go to battle first?)

 **√** What was God’s answer? (Judah)

 **√** How did that battle go? (Benjamin defeated 22,000 of the Israelites)

 **Judges 20:22-25:** *“Battle #2”*

**√** What did the nation of Israel do after defeat?

1. They encouraged themselves (they had a “pep rally”
2. Formed another battle line
3. Went to the Lord in prayer
4. What was God’s answer to their prayers? (Go up against them)

**√** What this battle successful? (no, 18,000 more died)

 **Judges 20:26-28:** *“An Agonizing Prayer”*

 **√** What was different about this prayer?

1. Went to the house of God
2. Wept
3. Fasted
4. Offered burnt offerings and peace offerings
5. They asked God for answers
6. The high priest “Phinehas” asked God before the Ark of the Covenant.

**√** What was God’s answer? “tomorrow I will deliver them into your hands.”

**√** Why was this answer different? Why did God tell them to go the other two times but did not give them victory? Did God have something to teach them also?

 **Judges 20:29-48** *“The Final Battle”*

Battle Plan:

1. Set an ambush around the city of Gibeah
2. Draw the men of Benjamin out of the city
3. They let the men of Benjamin think that they were winning as before (they killed 30 men)
4. The men of Israel ran away letting them think that they were winning
5. The men in ambush conquered the city of Gibeah
6. They burned the city and the smoke was a signal to the rest of Israel to let them know they had conquered the city
7. Israel defeated the men of Benjamin with God’s help

**Conclusion:**

 **What can we learn from this sad story?**

 The nation of Israel had been living in sin and sin brought them together. Their first attempt to go to God for direction was a “limited prayer.” They did not go to God and ask “if they should do this?” They asked which tribe should go first. They limited God by giving God a limited response. In their second prayer God gave them the go-ahead also. But they were defeated.

**√** When God gives us direction does that always mean Victory in our lives? Does that always mean the way He has told us to go is going to be easy? God was trying to teach the nation of Israel a lesson also. The entire nation had been living in sin and idolatry. It wasn’t until they wept and gave offerings for their sins that God gave them the victory.

**√** Is it easy to see your own sins or the sins of other people?

Many times we ask God to help us with someone who is treating us badly, when we don’t see that we are treating them just as bad. Do you think God will answer those prayers?

Jesus said in Matthew 7:3-5, *“And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”*

In other words, let’s make sure that we are confessing our sins and staying close to God. Let’s not be focused on everyone else’s sin.