

Introduction

We're not so different: clashing worldviews. Everyone living how they want. 'The greatest truth we will ever learn'. Biblical context. Meaning of 'judge'.

1. God is the hero of the book of Judges: He keeps using gifted, but flawed individuals to save his people (v1-5)

Tola, Jair both died. Jair liked power. But God so faithful in continuing.
Illustration: Flawed leaders everywhere

Application: Where is the ideal judge? They all point to Jesus. God the hero but so reassuring that he uses flawed, inadequate people. Read Judges and see poor, uneducated, broken homes, temper problems, confidence issues.

2. Compromise has consequences (v6-10)

Israel compromising with local fertility religions.
Illustration: Compromising in marriage

Application: Culture makes us feel 'mad' not to cohabit (but destroy society's fabric). Reject Bible (but reject truth). Reject Jesus as God (but remove any means of salvation and changed lives). Reject church (remove community). Pornography (degrades women and men). Consumerism (remove rest). All these things say 'Jesus as well as...'. Makes Christianity a little box on a Sunday.

3. God exposes the irrationality and danger of rejecting him (v11-14)

Irrational: Get your other gods to save you (they can't!). Danger.
Illustration: Burning dad's racket.

Application: Irrationality of relying on cynicism, pluralism, individualism, consumerism to save (they can't). Just as ignoring God's track record meant Israel faced the full extent of his fury, so ignoring his offer of forgiveness in Jesus means facing the full extent of his fury in hell.

4. A glimpse into the heart of God shows us the greatest truth we will ever learn (v15-16)

God suffers with his people: Compassion.
Illustration: Pain of parents with wayward children (grief on behalf of someone else)

Application: Don't judge God by unreliable experience. Judge by Jesus' cross. Taking the full fury due to Israel, you and me. God hates rejection and compromise. You don't take other gods to bed with him. By choice he suffers with us; suffers instead of us. This great truth changes every situation (still consequences but not judgment). There is only faithful compassion. (Job/child/health/depression...)

Conclusion: Set up for Jephthah...