Murray Baptist Church – 12/1/20 – Bible Study Outline – Judges

**Judges 12**

The Ephraimites seems to have a chip on their shoulder. In Chapter 8 the Ephraimites criticized Gideon for not calling them when it was time to fight the Midianites. That made sense because people belonging to the half Tribe of Manasseh would quarrel with those of the half Tribe of Ephraim. Again, in Chapter 12 the Ephraimites take offense to Jephthah because he did not call on them to help fight the Ammonites. I take those passages as a reminder that sometimes some of your greatest and most hurtful criticism, frustrations and heartaches will come from people who are related to you. While you cannot choose family, you can choose whether or not you will engage with them.

**Vs. 1-3** – We don’t have any of the details of the interaction between Jephthah and the Ephraimites in regard to fighting so we don’t know who is telling the truth but we know God gave the victory. **Lesson** – When we focus so much on ourselves in the middle of a situation, it will be hard to see what God is doing around us. The Ephraimites are so focused on finding anything offense that Jephthah has committed that they don’t hear and realized what Jephthah is saying when in the statement “the Lord gave me the victory over them.” (v.3) Cross reference (Judges 11:29) – “Then the Spirit of the Lord…”

**V. 3** – when people have made up their mind about something, their foolishness gets the best of them. The Ephraimites choose to pick fight with their relatives, even though God has just given Jephthah victory for Israel. Common sense says lets be on the side of the group who God has given the victory rather than go against that group. Foolish thinking can lead to dangerous results (See Proverbs 12:15; 18:2, 13; 18:6-7; 26:6-7, 11)

Vs. 4-6 – Consequences of the fight between Jephthah and Ephraim

* Ephraim was struck down because they talked to much
* Ephraimites were betrayed by their accents (Shibboleth was mispronounced Sibboleth)
* 42,000 Ephraimites were killed because of foolish thinking

V. 7 – Jephthah led Israel for six (6) years.

Vs 8-10 – The rule of **Ibzan**

* He had 30 sons and 30 daughters and allowed them all to take spouses outside of his clan (his clan is not mentioned).
* Ibzan led Israel for seven (7) years, was buried in Bethlehem

Vs. 11-12 – The rule of **Elon**

* Elon was from the Tribe of Zebulun
* Led Israel for 10 years and was buried in Aijalon

Vs. 13-15 – The rule of **Abdon**

* He had 40 sons and 30 daughters
* He led Israel for 8 years

For Further Study

1. Look up Acts 15:36-41. Was Paul right to divide from Barnabas?
2. What were the roots of division in Corinth (see 1. Corinthians 1:10-17? How would the teaching given in 1 Corinthians 13 resolve it?
3. Are there times when division between Christians is unavoidable and even necessary? Think about it in the context of differences over doctrine and church practice. What should be the basis of Christian unity and the criterial for issues over which Christians divide?
4. Are there division and tensions in your church arising from differences of personality, class or culture? What positive things can you do to help defuse them?