

Sunday morning
teaching plan

Date: 8th June

TITLE:	Ehud and Jael. Is violence ever right?
THEME:	The Bible is filled with violence, does that mean God likes it?
AIM:	YPs to understand that violence and bloodshed are a means for God to achieve justice. Ultimately achieved through Jesus' death on the cross.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Old Testament is often described as being violent and that the God of the OT is different to the God of the NT. But is this true? I don't think so. It is true that at times God deals with sin radically and violently. There are battles, plagues, supernatural events where people die, but what are we to make of it? God is holy, compassionate, patient and merciful, but He is also JUST and RIGHTEOUS. This means He cannot allow sin to go unpunished. Before Jesus, God dealt with sinners (individuals, tribes, nations) directly. It was often violent, but it was just and fair. In the NT Jesus deals with our sin. This too was violent, but Jesus took the violence on Himself.

WARM UP

Arm wrestling challenge / Thumb/peanut wars / foot wrestling. (Right foot to right foot touching then grip each others right hand and try to push the other person's foot away)

MAIN TEACHING

Activity 1 Watch Ehud video and then the story of Jael and Cicera. Some background is needed.

In both stories the people of Israel were under threat or occupation from enemies. They were struggling.

Ehud was a judge God raised up to rescue Israel from King Eglon of Moab.

Deborah was a judge God raised up during the time when the Canaanites were ruling the Israelites. King Jabin was cruel and his commander Sisera was strong and powerful.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNG1Ylhtkv4>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tw7Evj41M_g

1. What do you notice about both stories?
2. What do you think of the way the bad guys were dealt with?
3. Why do you think God allowed such violence to take place?

Key teaching point.

In both stories, God's people were in trouble. They were being treated badly and cruelly by evil people.

God must respond to evil and cannot allow it to go unpunished. Whilst we might consider it “over the top” by today’s standards, God’s judgement on the evil nations is a picture of the final judgement at the end of time. The righteous will be vindicated and the evil destroyed. Evil is like a cancer, that destroys life. It must be dealt with radically. The Bible teaches that in order to rid the world of evil, blood is shed. Usually sacrifice of an animal, but ultimately Jesus blood!

Activity 2: The Amalekite problem

Read Genesis 12:2-3.

1. What does God promise?
2. What might a blessing or a curse look like?

Key Teaching: Anyone who supports/helps Abraham and his descendants will be blessed, anyone who crosses them will be cursed. Abraham’s descendants will be a blessing to the world.

The Amalekites were a race of people descended from Esau. They were a constant thorn in the side of Moses as he led the people out of Egypt. They would attack, ambush and kill the stragglers, the old and weak from God’s people.

Read: Exodus 17:8-15. THEN Read 1 Samuel 15:1-3,

1. What does God promise in Exodus?
2. What does He command in 1 Samuel?

Key teaching: God is faithful and keeping His promise to bless and curse. He has given the Amalekites plenty of time to repent for their sin. They have not. They were still causing problems! Again this is a picture of God’s final judgement on those who refuse to repent. To rid the world of evil, requires it ALL to be removed not just some of it. In God’s new creation in Revelation, there will be no evil because at the return of Christ evil is totally destroyed (Rev 20). That is a violent and bloody time.

Activity 3. Jesus and violence

1. What does Jesus say about violence? Look up Matthew 5:43-48 Matthew 26:52
2. Why was Jesus’ death violent?

Key teaching: Jesus has taken God’s wrath upon Himself, had His blood shed so that we don’t experience it. Our role now is to demonstrate mercy to others, not violence. Jesus takes the punishment for sin, we must show mercy and forgiveness. God has poured out His wrath on Jesus, whereas in the OT He demonstrates His wrath on sinners directly.

TAKEAWAY

In 1 Samuel 15, Saul does not obey God completely and spares the lives of the King of Amalek and many animals. This disobedience cuts him off from God’s blessing. What are the things in our lives that God wants us to destroy (sins) but we are still clinging to? Are they worth missing out on God’s blessing?

EXTRA INFORMATION