

Chat with the Children

- Vain promises/bargains:
 - start with silly, sweet based ones...
 - eg for getting through exams, or for healing someone we love...
 - promise something spiritual sounding - like reading Bible every day - or giving money or...
 - Can't buy God's favour
 - and sometimes our rash promises get us into trouble... like person in today's reading who promised to sacrifice to God the first thing that came out the door of his house when he got home... and it was his daughter!
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Introduction

- "Of course God will forgive me; that's His job." Heinrich Heine
 - what is God's job?
 - what does he do for us?

The Kindness and Severity of God (10:6-16)

- Bad day?
 - one thing going wrong.... maybe a bad day!
 - a whole catalogue.... yeah, OK, you've had a bad day!
- Judges 10:6 is a **bad day** for Israel:
 - not just a wee bit of straying off the beaten path!
 - not like some of the previous statements in Judges about apostasy, about turning away from God!
 - here the writer piles up the statements through the verse...
- Here is faithlessness stacked high
 - Israel's state is not merely critical, but disastrous

Hear Yahweh's Threat (v.11-14)

- I will not save you any longer!
- God really hates sin
 - and he really, really hates those who think that he, God, is their pet forgiveness machine, ready to jump out and rescue them at a moment's notice!
- Sometimes a parent or a doctor needs to inflict something painful, uncomfortable or unwelcome for the good of the person in their care:
 - perhaps allowing a teenager to face the consequences of their actions so that they learn...
 - here God needs to let Israel learn that they are responsible for their actions, it matters!
 - he's not just going to spoil them...

See Yahweh's Heart (v.16b)

- Careful - not about them finally getting round to "truly" repenting!
 - we've been here before - they haven't delivered on their repentant words over the long term!
 - and the compassion shown by God is linked in the passage, not to their repentance, but to their suffering and how God feels about that
- This is about God's heart, about his, deep love for his people, his compassion
- Let's not be judgemental Christians who have a lively sense of God's severity, his holiness
 - but little sense of his kindness!
 - let us see God's heart, his deep compassion

Judges 10:1-11:11 Jephthah: Doing the Repentance Thing try, 9/6/2013, am

- and remember that it was shown to us here in Judges, deep in the OT, in the mire of murder and violence that is this chaotic period in Israel's history!

The Instrument of Salvation (10:17-12:7)

- Plumbing story:
 - someone did it themselves to save some money... used lots of "pipe-joint" compound... didn't fix it!
 - needed to go and get a plumber
 - plumber nearly had a coronary trying to disassemble the mess he'd left!
 - but the real problem with the whole affair was having to eat humble pie!
- Who is this Jephthah bloke?
 - geography of the events - maps - Gilead, Ammonites
 - outcast, son of prostitute, rejected by his brothers the Gileadites
- Draw parallels between Judges 10:6-16 and 11:1-11:
 - see p.141 of Dale Ralph Davis!
 - Jephthah is being set up as the divine deliverer!
 - and then compare with Israel and Jesus!
- Most striking feature is that God will use this man Jephthah to relieve Israel:
 - son of a prostitute, born outside marriage
 - rejected by his brothers
 - leader of a band of thugs!
- He's not got the credentials!! (cf Othniel)
 - yet the Spirit of God came upon this loser, this bottom of the pile outcast!
- **Good news:** He saves
 - hallelujah!
- **Bad news:** imperfectly
 - daughter sacrificed after rash vow
 - evidence of tragic pride in incident with Ephraim and slaughter at the ford
- The writer is pointing out that if we seek a perfect salvation we will have to look to one who is greater than Jephthah!

Conclusion

- True repentance - not just a God who forgives because that is his job
- A God who has a huge compassion on his people
- God used a weak and unlikely Saviour:
 - this time the salvation is imperfect, but in Jesus (of whom there are echoes here) we have a perfect Saviour!