

## Can it get any worse?

- Introduction about situations just going from bad to worse to terrible!
- If you thought we had it bad last week, if anything its worse this week!
  - talking to someone after the service last week - makes a habit of trying to memorise a verse from what they read from the Scripture each day - these last few chapters of Judges prove a challenge!
  - for there really isn't much to commend in this at all!
- Three features may be worth noting:

## Expediency valued over Integrity

- No sense of real values:
  - most vividly in the account of finding wives for the remnant of the Benjamites
  - doesn't seem to matter what is right!
  - just what solves the problem at hand!
- Oh, this is hard...
  - we are so often tempted to do what seems to get us through...
  - money - expediency says we'll spend on our needs over our commitment to give a fitting proportion of our income to God
  - Sunday - expediency says we'll slip into the habit of using a Sunday for work not God
  - truth - expediency says we'll brush over the truth, maybe because "it would only hurt" the person we're talking to, or some other justification...

## In-fighting valued over Kingdom Building

- Fighting each other, not building God's kingdom
  - huge mobilisation of troops!
  - perception that it would be too hard to fight Philistines and others?
- Do we in the church these days merely compete with other churches for a diminishing pie?
  - do we fall out with one another?

## Chaos valued over Purpose

- What that boils down to is not fulfilling God's calling:
  - their call was to conquer the land
  - to establish in the life of the land a witness to the nations around
  - *"Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations."* (Isaiah 51:4)
- What is our core call?
  - to bear witness to Jesus Christ, to enable those around us who have never heard of the Saviour to meet him
  - to live in a way that reflects his glory
  - to speak in a way that gives no one any doubts about who the Saviour is, what he has done for us and how we can respond to him
- Applies individually - and also as a fellowship
  - are we content to just go on keeping things ticking over?
  - doing what has been done before?
  - or will we strive to keep in step with God's purpose?

## Conclusion

- *How do we conclude - this section and this book?*
- **Gaping need for the Saviour**
  - implicitly leaves an unfilled longing...
  - a longing more clearly stated elsewhere in the OT:
    - *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. (Isaiah 9:6,7)*
  - a hope fulfilled in Jesus' coming:
    - *You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." (Luke 1:31-33)*
  - and...
    - *On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. (Matthew 2:11)*