



Christ Church of Atlanta
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Newsletter – November 2011 – Heather Werle

His Love Never Fails

It's the greatest story ever told. God creates. People mess it up. God redeems. The Bible. It's filled with more characters than names I could remember, more questions than I could dream of asking and more love and hope and truth than anything we could ever imagine.

We're looking at the whole story - beginning to end - with students in Kairos this year. Each week, we look at how the characters and events fit into the greater story of God's redemption, all pointing toward or a reflection of Christ's life and sacrifice on the Cross. It's been an interesting discipline to go through Scripture at what some may consider a fast pace. Investigating the lives of those who make up this great story, we pause to look at the details and how God interacts with them.

We saw how a people were born through Abraham and Sarah. We met Joseph and were encouraged that frustrating circumstances in our own lives at the time may have great benefit in the future. We walked with Moses in the desert. And we entered the Promise Land with Joshua. Along the way, there were great wonders preformed, necessities provided and battles won...all revealing the power and love of the God who created these people.

But then they forgot.

Yes, they forgot.

Judges 2:10 tell us that, "after that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, and who knew neither of the Lord nor what he had done for Israel." Somehow, amidst the busyness of life, the chaos of circumstances and the forgetfulness of the faithful...the next generation simply failed to learn or remember the glory of the Lord, so "the Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord" (Judges 2:11).

This book of these people called judges, who are more like renegade teenagers at times orchestrating seemingly ridiculous military tactics, is an odd story to read after sitting and soaking up the "heros" before them. Sure, the heros were flawed. No one is without sin. But these characters before the judges seemed to have some sort of redeeming quality that kept their names at the forefront of history for thousands of years to come. Some of the judges, however, the men and women who were sent to "save" Israel when they cried out to the Lord for help, didn't seem to have it all together. They'd destroy the Baal idols, engage in a successful battle...and then have a great fall into sin that would make it a rather disappointing movie if the stories were retold in current cinematic format.

There were no big, blockbuster heros that ended up having chapters and books written about them. Many of the names are unknown. Sure, God uses them in great ways, but it wasn't the people who stuck



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out to me as I read. Instead, it was the roller coaster ride of sin and redemption that jumped off the pages. Israelites sinned. Israelites suffered. Israelites called out for help from the Lord. The Lord saved them. *Repeat.* Again. And again. And again.

But God never gave up.

For some reason beyond any relational understanding that I have with the people in my life, God never gave up. God persistently pursued them. And he still does. I was overwhelmed with how much God loves the Israelites that even after all the wandering away and worshiping of other gods that he still seemed to want to work with them. Our modern understanding of success would probably tell him to find new people, people who weren't so forgetful and defiant. People who did their job well and obeyed and trusted and loved. People who didn't mess up so much.

But I am so thankful that God doesn't need nor ask for a consultant. He knows what he's doing. His love is so ridiculous that it pursues through such circumstances. He sees the bigger picture. He forgives. He desires so badly to restore relationship with him that he sent his own Son to die on a cross. He woos and chases and battles for our hearts, even when we, like the Israelites, forget and try to run away.

- Heather Werle, Director of Youth Ministry Services