

# THE LEFT HANDED DELIVERER +++

PASTOR GREG GRIFFITH

---

Well, good morning, church. We continue our series. Hey, don't skip this. And I want to start today with asking a question across all campuses. If you're a lefty, if you're left handed, raise your hand right now. Raise your hand right now. All right, I see a few in this room, a few at Northwest, a few at Fremont. Yeah, we got a few of you. Looks like actually we're about on the statistical slide perfectly of what it is. Did you know that there's 10% of the population is left handed? Just 10%.

Let me talk to you a little bit about what left handedness has been treated like over the decades in the history of humanity. First, in the mid 19th to 20th century across Europe, if you were a lefty, they would have tied your left hand behind you so you couldn't use it and they would force you to learn to use your right hand. In schools, they would continue to do that throughout our country in America throughout up through the 1960s or so. For a while, and this to me is a little bit wild, for a while it was considered a neurological disorder. The word sinister comes from the Latin *sinostra*, which means left. Throughout some cultures, it has been associated with uncleanness or bad behavior.

King George VI, Winston Churchill, Ronald Reagan, and I know for many of you, you will have to go home and Google many of those names. They were all natural lefties that actually used their right hand because they were forced to use it as children. One of the greatest Americans of all time was a lefty. Benjamin Franklin, who we get to celebrate our independence because of his great work, was a lefty.

Today, I want to introduce you to the only individual throughout the entire Bible who was identified as a lefty. His name is Ahud. We don't have a picture of him, but we have a drawing from him and I want to invite you to go ahead and open your Bibles to Judges chapter 3. We're going to get to that in a minute. Today, we're looking at the event of Ahud, this left-handed deliverer. And you can thank my daughter, Macy. When I was telling her about this series, she said, Dad, tell me you are doing the story in the event of Ahud. And I said, well, I don't know. She said, you have to. And I'll tell you a little why in a little bit.

Here's what I pray that God unveils for us today. First, that God sees what others often overlook. Second, God's strategy is often surprising. And point number three that I hope you discover is God delivers through the unexpected. So those are the three things that I'm hoping that we can apply to our lives, we can grow with, and we can go out into the world and share through this amazing event from Judges chapter 3.

So, God sees what others overlook. Let's first look at someone that would have been overlooked by others, and this is Ahud. So chapter 3 of Judges 12-15, here's what the Word of God says for us today. And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. And the Lord strengthened Elgon, the king of Moab, against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Amalekites, and went and defeated Israel. And they took possession of the city of Palms. And the people of Israel served Elgon, the king of Moab, eighteen years.

Then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, and the Lord raised up for them a deliverer, Ahud, the son of Gerah, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. The people of Israel sent tribute by him to Elgon, the king of Moab. So let's jump into this and see 12-15, here's a few things that we discover right away.

First of all, you know, this could be like that song, Oops I Did It Again, the Israel, they've done it again. They've lost their way, right? And so now they're doing evil in the sight of the Lord. They're not behaving as his chosen people. They're not keeping the covenant that was that he would be their people, and they would be his God, right? They've lost their way.

And so God does what sometimes God has done in order to bring them back. He's given them over. Now, please remember, this doesn't mean he leaves them, but he does give them over. And he does that. He raises up someone to fight against them and to conquer them. And this is Elgon, the king of Moab, right? And the Moabites, and they take over, and then they're forced to serve for 18 years, the Moabites, 18 long years.

And he's now ready to deliver them and to bring them back through repentance. And he raises up Ahud, the left-handed deliverer. Notice this too, right? In verse 15, it says, I raised up for them a deliverer, Ahud, the son of Gerah, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. He is chosen because of this difference. God chose Ahud because of this difference. And that's going to be important for you and for me because of the difference.

Now, being overlooked is something that happens to all of us. Benjamin Franklin was overlooked. Benjamin Franklin was kind of a simple man, right? And he was sent to Europe in order to see if he could affirm and acquire the partnership of France in our war against Britain. And Benjamin Franklin went over in his fur cap, in his simple American way, in a culture that was about elitism and looking like prim and proper. He was overlooked by his counterparts, but he was the right person to deliver for us.

Have you ever felt overlooked? I think if you're honest with yourself, you'd say, sure. Have you ever heard or felt like, you know, people say, oh, you can't, you can't do that. Or someone else would do better in that job. We're not gifted enough for this. I think we all have experienced that. If you've ever played sports with cuts, that happens. Or sometimes they look at us and they think you're not the right one just based on appearance or based on some small other thing we have.

I think a greater question that happens more often, honestly, is have you overlooked yourself? Have you said, I'm not good enough for this. I'm not qualified for this. Can I say I believe this happens a lot of times, especially in church and especially in living out our life as a disciple? Hey, will you pray for us? Oh, not me. There's someone so much better, right? Or someone will come to me and say, pastor, I think we should do this. And I go, I agree. Let's do it. Hey, will you start that first? Oh, I'm not good enough. No, no, no, not me. You've got to have someone else. You should do this, pastor.

We see this even in society. Did you know this? This is a fascinating stat. It just boggles my mind. Did you know that studies show that women often will not apply for jobs unless they meet 100% of the listed qualifications? 100% of those listed qualifications in a job. Did you know men will apply if they meet only 60% of the qualifications? It might show us why when a woman's doing a job, they're doing it a whole lot better. Because they've said, I'm good with 100%. Men have been like, I'm just over half. I'm fine.

But here's what I want us to remember, especially when we think about being overlooked and we think about qualifications and we think about all the things. Please understand this spiritual truth for you today. God doesn't call the qualified. He qualifies the called. And when we have that mindset, has God called me to this? Then we can often look and say, He will qualify me for doing it. God qualifies the called.

And if you've been called to something and you know this is the Lord's call for you, don't let Satan or anything else out there tell you you're not good enough. Don't let others deter. Don't let fear. Don't let whatever it may be say, you can't do it. You shouldn't do it. You're not the right one. And step into that calling that God has given to you boldly, joyfully, and confidently. Just like Ahab did.

You see, I believe this. Your difference isn't a disadvantage. It might be exactly what God wants to use. Your difference isn't a disadvantage. It might be exactly what God wants to use. God used Moses who had a stutter, David who was small in stature, and Paul writes in 1 Corinthians that he chooses the foolish things to shame the wise. God is using you. If you're saying, you're saying, oh not me, somebody else, it's probably meant to be you. You don't have a disadvantage. He's going to use it to his advantage. And that's the way God works.

And that's what leads us to see that God's strategy is often surprising. In Judges 3, 16-24, read the yellow with me as well. And Ahab made a sword with two edges, a cubit in length, and he bound it on his right thigh, under his clothes, and he presented the tribute to Eglon, the king of Moab.

Now, Eglon was a very fat man. And when Ahab had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who carried the tribute. But he himself turned back at the idols near Gilgal and said, I have a secret message for you, O king. And he commanded, silence! And all the attendants went out from his presence.

And Ahab came to him, and he was sitting alone in the cool roof chamber, and Ahab said, I have a message from God for you. And he arose from his seat, and Ahab reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. And the hilt also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not pull the sword out of his belly. And the dung came out.

Then Ahab went into the porch, closed up the doors of the roof chamber behind him, and locked them. My daughter said, Dad, you have to do this event because I want to know, why do they write about the dung coming out? Like, why do they write about the guy pooping himself? And she said, plus, no one ever preaches about people pooping themselves. And we're still not preaching about people pooping themselves. We're preaching about Jesus. But we will get to that.

So what's going on here? First of all, I like to point out, notice this, Ahab makes for himself the weapon, right? And then he's left-handed. So that means he puts the weapon on his right thigh. They would have been used to a right-handed, that the weapon's on the left thigh. So they would have guarded, the guards would have checked and secured that there were no weapons, which they believed because his right thigh had nothing on him, or his left thigh had nothing on him.

The second thing is when he goes to fight the king and he says, I have a secret message for you. And he reaches in to his right thigh. The king doesn't put that, oh, he could be getting a weapon. He's probably

thinking he's getting something to show me or to tell me about the secret message from God. And so he's not even expecting an adversary at this point. God used his disadvantage to become an advantage and to become a deliverer.

Now, what about all of this? He's very fat and the fat engulfed the weapon and the weapon couldn't come out. Eglon in Hebrew means young bull or calf. So mighty, agile. This is the writing that lets us know and lets the Israelites know, and especially as they read about the event, that this king had become obese, self-indulgent and is now a joke. And he's one that's all about himself. And he's even laughed at by his people and by their people. He's anything but what his name means. He's done.

What about the dung? Honestly, it just tells us a detail that lets us know that this Scripture is accurate and true. It's not a fairy tale. It's not a fable. It's not filled with things that would be awe-inspiring. It's things that we read and we laugh and we go, what's the deal with that? It has nothing more than to simply verify that this is a true event. It's giving all the dirty details.

In the Scriptures, what we call these dirty details, is we just call them the authority of the footnote. They're the little footnotes that tell you that there's historical evidence and accuracy in the writings that are given, because they're telling an event as if it happened in real life. And so it has the details of an observer. And so if you are one today that says you don't know that the Word of God is true, I just want to tell you that the beauty of the Word of God and that what makes this true is the reality that its authenticity comes from just its real raw details. It's not written to look pretty. It's not written in ways that you would say this is how I would have done it, or this would make sense. It's not written in ways that are to always captivate an audience. It's written as the events happened, with all the details, and that's the purpose of the dome.

Ben Franklin's trip to France was unusual. He didn't talk with eloquent speeches to the French at their parties. He didn't delight them with just winsome words of wisdom and woo them over. He talked to them with wit and with down-home stories in his fur cap. Again, speaking to the French, the prestigious, the proud, and the pompous, and this American that's coming in his fur cap asking for help. It was unusual. It was a different strategy.

And God used Ahab to approach powerful kings not with force, but with a strategy, a strategy to take Elgon out. And sometimes, sometimes we see that there's strategy for kingdom movement that we can't always understand.

In 2009, I had a call to a church in Arizona, and I got back and was deliberating this call, and this person that I didn't really know, his name was Dino, pulls me aside one day in the hallway after church, and pulls me close to him and says, Greg, if you stay, I'll make it worth your while. And I was like, I just was dumbfounded. And I said, okay. I'm like, that's not how this works. And I'm thinking, what can he do for me? Right? I even told the senior pastor at the time, I was an associate pastor, that, and I said, do you know what that means? And he goes, no, that's super weird. And I said, yeah. I said, I don't really understand it.

Fast forward three years later, and his words had no regard in my decision, but I never forgot them. Three years later, I was working with two other churches, and we were starting a 5k run that would benefit nonprofits throughout our community. And this guy, Dino, at that time served on the city board, the township council, and we needed the road closed because we were going to have what we

believed would be a thousand runners. We didn't hit our goal. We had 921 runners do a 5k run from one church to another church, and all the profits would be given away.

So I called him up and said, Dino, I need to take you to coffee. And we went and sat down and I said, do you remember three years ago you said, if I stay, you'll make it worth my while? And he said, I do. I said, I didn't stay because of that. I said, but I am calling you on your promise. I need you to shut down the road because otherwise we can't do this charity event. And he made it happen.

And I'm just, I'm super excited to say that that event still is going on. On, I think it was June 24th, they had 700 runners again, and they've raised now over \$600,000 to give away to the local community. And I say a lot of that is because God's strategy to do something that was through someone, me and Dino, who are usually overlooked, and it was awesome. And that's what we get to see in God's strategy that he gives to us.

And what ends up then happening is God delivers through the unexpected, right? He delivers through the unexpected, not only people, but the unexpected events, right? Judges 3, 24 through 30. Read the, hear this word of God with me.

When he had gone, the servants came and when they saw that the doors of the roof chamber were locked, they thought, surely he's relieving himself in the closet of the cool chamber. And so they waited till they were embarrassed, right? You know this, like when a spouse or someone goes to the bathroom and you're like, they've been gone an awful long time, right? And then you're like, you okay, right? So they're like, gosh, he's been gone for a long time. But when they still didn't open the door of the roof chamber, they took the key and they opened it. And there, their Lord laid dead on the floor.

Ahud had escaped while they delayed. And when he passed beyond the idols and escaped to Sarai, he, and when he arrived, he sounded the trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim. And then the people of Israel went down with him from the hill country. And he was their leader. And he said to them, follow after me, for the Lord has given your enemies, the Moabites into your hands.

So they went down with him, seized the Fords of the Jordan against the Moabites, didn't allow anyone pass over. And they killed at that time, 10,000 of the Moabites, all strong and able-bodied men, not a man escaped. So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel and the land had rest for 80 years.

God did the unexpected. What was that? The delay. While the guards waited outside thinking an embarrassingly long time that Elgon is going to the bathroom, it allowed Ahud to escape and to call Israel to come to catch them by surprise and to deliver the land for two generations of rest, of peace and of living with the Lord.

And Ahud used courageous action, courageous action in order to go. And that's why I love our value of courage here at King of Kings. Like we are courageous. We take new ground. We do the things that God has called us to do, whether or not that seems normal. This is our strategy of video venue, as well as of reaching 10 new campuses over the next 20 years.

We're courageously stepping out. We're saying, Lord, this isn't going to be something we know how to do, but we're going to learn how to do it. And we're going to do it. And we're seeing great fruit

happening in Fremont. And we're praying for that fourth campus to be coming forward. Courageous action is the way of God's people.

Notice this. Benjamin Franklin never fought a battle, but he used his unique giftedness to bring the nation that helped deliver us our nation's freedom, which we just celebrated our 249th birthday a few weeks ago. Right. Franklin never picked up a sword, but he was critical. Without France, we may not have won.

And that's a reminder for us that it's often not the loudest or the strongest people who change the world. It's the faithful, available, and obedient. The faithful, available, and obedient.

I want to ask you this question. What if you're the exact person who God is going to use to bring about peace in your family, in your workplace, and in your church? Not necessarily by being impressive, but by willing to serve in whatever way that God naturally has wired you. And what if that call isn't maybe to do something today, but 18 years later, that will bring about generations of change? Do you see that? Are you with me on that? Are you able to be patient enough in that?

I like what Benjamin Franklin said. He said, hide not your talents. They were made to be used. Where's a sundial in the shade? Right. You get it? When I hear that, you know what I think about? Jesus on the cross, on the hill of Golgotha for all to see. Because right there we see and hear the voice of Jesus. What looks like from the world's eye, the ultimate weakness. And yet we know it was the power and it was the ultimate triumph.

Where on that day, not only did Christ die, but the power and the eternal effect of Satan died with him. And our sins died with him. And three days later, he rose and delivered us and every generation following to a victory, to a deliverance from a pure side, to a triumphant ascension. For your eternal life to begin.

You see, Israel wasn't in a good place. They were doing evil, but God still raised up a deliverer. He didn't leave them. He didn't forget them. He delivered them. Jesus is that deliverer that came in the weakness of a baby and the death on a cross and a deliverance through the empty tomb.

Just like Ahab snuck into the room of a king to win freedom, Jesus walked into death itself to break the power of sin. And whether you're a Jesus person or not today, here's the truth that I want you to take home. Hear this today. You may have been looking for God, may not have been looking for God, but he's always been looking for you. Always.

We began this message asking lefties to raise their hands. I want to end this message asking every one of us across our campuses. If you're ready to live today, tomorrow, and every day courageously, not seeing your disadvantages as those to be denied, but instead to be an advantage to be used by God to deliver someone who he's entrusted to, I want you to stand up today. If you're ready to say, God, use my disadvantage for your advantage to grow the kingdom of God, stand up, stand up across all campuses.

And if you're standing today, here's what I want to challenge you with. Don't fit a mold. Be who God made you to be. Realize that your weakness is so that he is strong. You're his strategy for somebody to be delivered from the oppressor. And don't ever be shocked by the work of God in you because you

hear this now, like Ehud, you are his superpower that he will use to deliver others so that the kingdom of God may be fuller.

Glory be to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Will all of you pray with me.

Father, God, we thank you and praise you for servants like Ehud that responded to the call, that you use their disadvantage for your advantage to deliver your people. We thank you for each and every one of us standing shoulder to shoulder today that you've used to share your love, to share the good news of Jesus.

We thank you for Jesus who gave up all of his authority and advantage to die and to rise for us. And now has the authority to call us friend and to give us everlasting life through his victory over sin, death, and the devil.

Oh God, we're thankful for Oh God, we're thankful for the deliverers amongst us and the one deliverer for us, Jesus. And all of God's people across all campuses said amen and amen.