



**Tola and Jair:  
Cleaning Up Other People's Messes**

## Judges 10:1-5

- “After Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in the mountains of Ephraim. 2 He judged Israel twenty-three years; and he died and was buried in Shamir. 3 After him arose Jair, a Gileadite; and he judged Israel twenty-two years. 4 Now he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys; they also had thirty towns, which are called Havoth Jair to this day, which are in the land of Gilead. 5 And Jair died and was buried in Camon.”

# Major and Minor Judges

- Major judges: Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Samuel
  - Military leaders who delivered the nation
- Minor judges: Shamgar - 3:31; Tola - 10:1; Jair - 10:3-5; Ibzan - 12:8-10; Elon - 12:11-12; Abdon - 12:13-15
  - Not great military leaders
  - Helped maintain the peace in troubled times

# The Mess They Inherited

- Abimelech, the son of Gideon by his concubine
  - Judges 8:31 - “And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.”
  - Judges 9:23-49 - Under Abimelech, civil war erupts
  - Judges 8:33-34 - After Gideon, Israel returns to Baal worship

# The Mess They Inherited

- God always saves a remnant
  - 1Kings 19:18 - “Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

# The Mess They Inherited

- Serving God is not always easy, but it is always right.
  - Heb. 12:1-3 - “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”
  - Phil. 4:13 - “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

# The Ministry They Performed

- Tola and Jair did not lead any great military campaigns nor command great armies. They did not have left a legacy of great spiritual achievements.
  - They maintained the peace for 50 years in a nation split by civil war and pagan worship
  - They preserved the heritage of their nation
  - They ministered to the faithful remnant in Israel

# The Ministry They Performed

- Tola and Jair did in their day exactly what we are supposed to be doing in our day. They served as salt in a land filled with decay
  - Matt. 5:13 - “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”

# The Ministry They Performed

- A preserving influence - Salt slows decay and spoilage.
  - Gen. 19 - Sodom could have been saved by the preserving influence of just 10 righteous men.
  - Prov. 14:34 - “Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.”

# The Ministry They Performed

- A penetrating influence - Salt will infiltrate whatever it touches. It is an aggressive substance
  - Acts 8:1, 4 - “Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles... 4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”
  - Acts 17:6 - “But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.”

# The Ministry They Performed

- A purifying influence - Salt has powerful cleansing ability
  - 2Kings 2:19-22 - “Then the men of the city said to Elisha, Please notice, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the ground barren. 20 And he said, Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it. So they brought it to him. 21 Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, Thus says the LORD: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.' 22 So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.”

# The Ministry They Performed

- In ancient times, newborn babies were washed in salt to cleanse their bodies and to give firmness to their skin - Ez. 16:4
- Salt in a wound is an ancient remedy to cleanse the area

# The Ministry They Performed

- Christians' salty influence
  - Rom. 12:1-2 - “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

# The Ministry They Performed

- A pleasing influence - Salt adds flavor to food.
  - Phil. 1:27 - “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel”
- A poisoning influence - Salt kills some things: slugs, freshwater fish, grass, bacteria
  - Judges 9:45 - “So Abimelech fought against the city all that day; he took the city and killed the people who were in it; and he demolished the city and sowed it with salt.”

# The Ministry They Performed

- A Promoting Influence - Salt creates thirst for water. Christians have the opportunity to promote a thirst for Jesus
- A proven influence - Salt reacts with many things it contacts.
  - 1Cor. 15:33 - “Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.”

# The Message They Taught

- Tola means “crimson worm” after the Coccus worm found in Mideastern oak trees. These worms produced the red dye used in the articles made for the tabernacle.
- It comes from the Hebrew root “tala”, which means “to be clothed in scarlet of the righteous.”
- Tola is the son of “Puah” which means “light.” Thus, Tola was “the son of light”

# The Message They Taught

- Similarities to Jesus:
  - Tola through humble service and self-surrender became the savior and preserver of Israel.
  - Jesus is “the Light of the World” - John 8:12
  - Jesus was literally clothed in scarlet during His trial when He gave His life for the sins of the world - Isa. 53:1-6; 52:14.
  - Jesus called himself a “worm” - Psalm 22:6

# The Message They Taught

- Jair means “the enlightener”
  - Jesus is the “sun of righteousness” (Mal. 4:2), and “the Light of the World” (John 8:12).
  - We are told that Jair had all thirty of his sons ride on donkeys, the humble animal of peace ridden by Jesus into Jerusalem.
  - He was also able to give each son his own city, like Jesus who owns everything and shares everything with us - Rom. 8:17

# The Message They Taught

- It is not necessary to be famous make a difference
- It is not necessary to accomplish great deeds to live an extraordinary life
- God will help us make the best of a bad situation
  - Eph. 4:13 - “till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”
  - 2Cor. 12:9 - “And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

# The Message They Taught

- God is honored by and will honor a consistent life
  - 1Cor. 4:2 - “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”
  - Matt. 25:21 - “His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'”