

Judges: The Relentless Grace of Rescue

Lesson 2: January 20th & 21st

Read Judges: 2:6-3:11

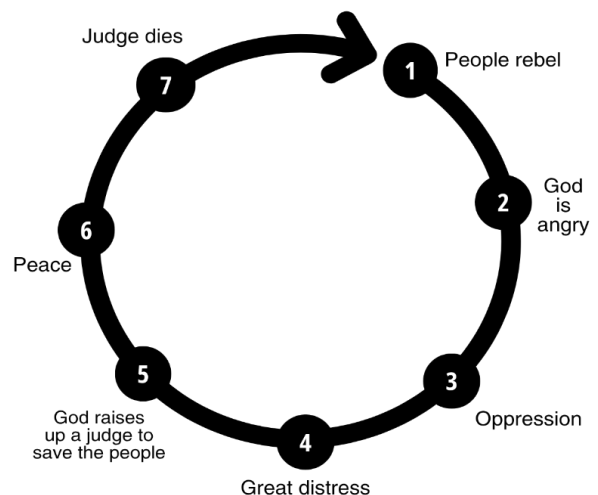
Sermon Reflection Question: What captured your attention from Sunday's sermon?

Observation and Reflection Questions:

1. Ch. 2: 8-9 takes us back to the same point Judges 1 began with—Joshua's death. What happened after the people of Joshua's generation had died (2:10)?

The Judges Cycle: Now we are introduced to the cycle we see repeatedly in Judges:

1. The people rebel—forgetting the LORD and worshipping other gods.
2. God is angry.
3. As a result, he allows them to be oppressed by their enemies.
4. In great distress, they cry out to the God they have rejected.
5. In compassion, he raises up a leader, a “judge.”
6. The judge rescues the people, and leads them into peace, and obedience to God.
7. The judge dies.



2. Let's notice one particular detail: Who exactly do the people worship (Ch. 2: 12–13)?

Reflect and Apply:

The point here is that it is possible (even natural, perhaps) for humans to worship many gods at the same time. The worldview at the time—and the worldview of our time—can accept the existence of the God of the Bible, but not his exclusive sovereignty. He can be one of many—but he mustn't be the one true God. The LORD had asked the people he had rescued and blessed to worship him alone. But they worshiped him plus others.

This is a subtle temptation for Christians. We live in a world which offers us an array of alternative gods. The greatest danger, because we can hide it even from ourselves, is not atheism but asking God to co-exist in our hearts with other gods.

3. Spend as much time as you need reading, praying, and responding to the following prompt from *“Counterfeit Gods”* by Tim Keller.

What is an idol? It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, or anything you seek to give you what only God can give. It is anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living

“Whatever controls us really is our god ... The person who seeks power is controlled by power. The person who seeks acceptance is controlled by the people he or she wants to please. We do not control ourselves. We are controlled by the lord of our life.” (Rebecca Manley Pippert)

Confronting Your Idols: Consider the following chart and following prompts and ask God to give you insight into where you might be prone to worship other things rather than God. Perhaps ask a trusted friend, family member or spouse to give you perspective as well. Spend time praying and writing out responses to **“How to Expose and Repent of Idolatry in Our Lives”**

Idol You Seek	Your Greatest Nightmare	How People Around You Often Feel	Your Problem Emotion
POWER (Success, winning, influence)	Humiliation	Used	Anger
APPROVAL (Affirmation, love, relationships)	Rejection	Smothered	Cowardice
COMFORT (Privacy, lack of stress, freedom)	Stress, demands	Neglected	Boredom
CONTROL (Self-discipline, certainty, standards)	Uncertainty	Condemned	Worry

How to Expose and Repent of Idolatry in Our Lives:

- **Name Your Idol(s) Out Loud:** The first step is giving voice to what has taken priority in your heart.
- **Confess Your Heart's Dependence:** Acknowledge your reliance on your idol(s) to God and to someone else.
- **Repent, or Turn Away from, the Idol(s):** This means consciously changing your direction and actions away from the idol.
- **Rejoice in Jesus' Mastery:** Take joy in the absolute certainty that Jesus is the true master of your life, not the idol.
- **Replace Your Idol(s):** What is a practical action for you to turn from the idol and toward a renewed passion to follow Jesus Christ.

Interpretation Questions:

4. Compare Ch. 2:7 and 2:10–11. Within a generation, Israel had gone from being people who “served the LORD” to people who “served the Baals.” There is no automatic passing of faith from one generation to the next, from parents to children. Read Deuteronomy 6:4–9. Why and what do we need to do to pass our faith on to the next generation?

5. Did you know that as children of God, we are the temple of the living God? What reason does God give us in 2 Cor 6:14–18 to live differently from the world around us?

Resources: Timothy Keller, “Judges,” in *90 Days in Judges, Galatians & Ephesians*, Explore by the Book, 2017.

Fasting Reflection:

RELAX: Take a moment to relax. Close your eyes and breathe deeply - inhaling slowly, then exhaling slowly. Repeat this several times as you imagine yourself coming into God's presence. As you finish and get ready to read, pray something simple like "Lord, speak to me through the words of your gospel. Amen."

READ. Read this story about Jesus two times. Read slowly, pausing at the line breaks:

Luke 19: 1-10 (NIV)

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

REFLECT. After the reading, take some time to reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:

- What word or words in this passage caught your attention?
- What in this passage comforted you?
- What in this passage challenged you?
- What is God inviting you into?

RESPOND. Read the scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, questions, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

REST. Soak in the moment, rest in it, don't rush through it. Do you sense anything that Jesus is inviting you to know, see, believe, or do? Pray: Thank you God for meeting with me in this time. Give me courage and faith to follow you this day.