

Dark Times. Broken People. FAITHFUL KING.

Week 7

Judges 10:6-12:15

This is the beginning of the acceleration in the downward spiral of Israel. It is the first time that their period of peace will be shorter than their period of oppression. We read once again those fateful words, "Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, served the Baals and the Ashtaroth, the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the sons of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; thus they forsook the Lord and did not serve Him" (Judges 10:6).

I. Total Rebellion – Judges 10:6-9

Seven gods are mentioned which covered the entire Promised Land. An idol is anything you look to for power, joy and significance instead of God. What is it you think you must have other than God?

The Israelites had completely abandoned God. God names seven groups from which He had already delivered them.

II. God's Rebuke – Judges 10:10-16

For the first time in the book of Judges, God says no.

There is a difference in using God and seeking God.

The moment the immediate danger is gone do we go back to life as usual?

III. Negotiating with God – Judges 10:17-11:33

Jephthah makes a rash vow.

Practically speaking you are an atheist when you decide that you will do what you want even though you are aware of what the Bible says. It is what happens when you exchange your plan for God's plan.

Words matter! "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:10) and we will be judged by every idle word we speak (Matthew 12:36).

IV. The Least of These – Judges 11:34-40

It is how a society's helpless are treated that reveals where that society is headed.

"My daughter, you have brought me very low..."

Animals were not kept in the house – the word for "greet" was intended for a human. He probably thought it would be one of his servants.

Jephthah was desensitized to violence. Military dominance was an idol.

Tim Keller observes,

Today we are more likely to let worldly attitudes toward sex and money come in and live alongside other true beliefs. Paul says: 'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind' (Romans 12:2)...We must beware of mistaking God's work through us for evidence that God has finished his work in us" (*Judges for You*, Loc. 1592-1593).

We commit similar excesses with our idols:

Romantic love – destroy family to be happy

Our culture confuses self-love with true love

Workaholics – sacrifice relationships and integrity

Pregnancy – inconvenient so she turns to abortion

Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10

Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac was a test of faith and obedience. Jephthah's is due to his assimilation of the idolatrous culture around him. Jephthah thought he had to incur God's favor by following through the same way you would with a pagan god. He had no idea of God's grace and value for life because he did not know the Word of God.

We don't have to make promises to God. There is only one way to please God and that is through faith – Hebrews 11:1 & 6.

Jephthah's daughter is memorialized, he is not. (Judges 11:40)

V. Fighting Our Own – Judges 12:1-15

Galatians 5:15

Keller notes,

Jephthah was careful to be diplomatic and peaceful when his own position was at stake (11:4-11), and when facing the enemies of God's people (v.12-28). But here, he does not hesitate to strike out at those within God's people who oppose him. He treats God's people far worse than he does himself or the world. We are not so different. If we spent as much time pursuing unity and overlooking insults within our churches as we do seeking to remain on good terms with

the world, our communities would be far less divided and far more loving" (*Judges for You*, Loc. 1620).

Example - Recent social media uproar over comments made by John MacArthur about Beth Moore.

This is a grassroots call to repentance - a prayer movement across denominational and racial lines. This is not a slick marketing campaign. No person will be exalted, only the Name of Jesus and the advancement of His Kingdom will be our focus. If you claim Jesus as your Lord and Savior and believe in prayer, you are welcome.

--Donna Gaines, recent recording for *She Loves Out Loud*

Message by Dr. Al Mohler:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcjRTKnDqE8&t=754s>

Message by J. D. Greear - <https://jdgrear.com/broadcasts/hotdog-faith-part-2/>

A. We are far more influenced by our culture than we realize.

We absorb the values of our culture by either assimilating or isolating.

We must recreate - we must be more shaped by the Word of God than our culture.

Psalm 119:9 - "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your Word."

Put the Word of God so deeply inside you that you are not lured away by the culture and its lies.

B. Our idolatry has devastating effects on those around us.

Jephthah's idolatry killed his daughter and our idolatry is killing our daughters.

Facts:

- One out of every three children grow up in a single parent home.
- Abortion - 3,000 performed every day in America
- Pornography has created an industry where the average age of the girls who enter that industry is 13 years old.
- In 2018, over half (51.6%) of the criminal human trafficking cases active in the US were sex trafficking cases involving only children.
- The average age a teen enters the sex trade in the US is 12 to 14 years old. Many victims are runaway girls who were sexually abused as children.

(dosomething.org/us/facts/)

- 30 million (mostly teenage girls) have been diagnosed with anorexia and bulimia because we have idolized a certain figure or size.

- C. We have a hard time believing in God's grace.
"We are hard-wired for works righteousness" – Martin Luther.
My plea is not based on my righteousness, but on Christ's righteousness given to me as a gift.

- D. We need a better judge – Jephthah was a broken savior. He was not the real Savior that we all need.

Jesus is the only Savior who never failed and never will. He said and did exactly what God said He would. All we must do is believe! But it is belief that leads to a change of heart and action. Remember the words of James, "Be quick to hear and slow to speak" (James 1:19).

Think and pray before you speak!