

FINISHING POORLY
JUDGES 8:22-35
2-26-23

Judges 8:1-9, 16-17 – “Then the men of Ephraim said to him, ‘What is this that you have done to us, not to call us when you went to fight against Midian?’ And they accused him fiercely. ² And he said to them, ‘What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the grape harvest of Abiezer?’ ³ God has given into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. What have I been able to do in comparison with you?’ Then their anger against him subsided when he said this. ⁴ And Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed over, he and the 300 men who were with him, exhausted yet pursuing. ⁵ So he said to the men of Succoth, ‘Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.’ ⁶ And the officials of Succoth said, ‘Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?’ ⁷ So Gideon said, ‘Well then, when the Lord has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will flail your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers.’ ⁸ And from there he went up to Penuel, and spoke to them in the same way, and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. ⁹ And he said to the men of Penuel, ‘When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.’ ¹⁶ And he took the elders of the city, and he took thorns of the wilderness and briers and with them taught the men of Succoth a lesson. ¹⁷ And he broke down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.”

I. LEADERS FAIL WHEN THEY SEE PEOPLE WRONGLY.

~ Prayer = See people the way Jesus saw them.

Judges 8:22-24, 27-32 – “Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, ‘Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.’ ²³ Gideon said to them, ‘I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord will rule over you.’ ²⁴ And Gideon said to them, ‘Let me make a request of you: every one of you give me the earrings from his spoil.’ (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) ²⁷ And Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah. And all Israel whored after it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his family. ²⁸ So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel, and they raised their heads no more. And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon.’ ²⁹ Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and lived in his own house. ³⁰ Now Gideon had seventy sons, his own offspring, for he had many wives. ³¹ And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he called his name Abimelech. ³² And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, at Ophrah of the Abiezrites.”

II. LEADERS FAIL WHEN THEY ACT HYPOCRITICALLY.

~ Prayer = Change my heart to align with Your truth.

III. LEADERS FAIL WHEN THEY ARE LED BY THEIR PASSIONS.

~ Prayer = God guide me.

IV. LEADERS FAIL WHEN THEY DEVELOP AMNESIA.

~ Prayer = Remind me of Your salvation.

V. WHAT IS THE PRODUCT OF FAILED LEADERSHIP?

~ A lost generation.

Judges 8:33-9:2 – “As soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel turned again and whored after the Baals and made Baal-berith their god. ³⁴ And the people of Israel did not remember the Lord their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side, ³⁵ and they did not show steadfast love to the family of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) in return for all the good that he had done to Israel. Now Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to his mother's relatives and said to them and to the whole clan of his mother's family, ² 'Say in the ears of all the leaders of Shechem, 'Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal rule over you, or that one rule over you?' Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh.”

GROWING DEEPER THIS WEEK

1. What did you think about the message this week? What stood out to you or challenged your thinking?
2. What areas of leadership do you have at home, work, etc?
3. How can the gospel affect these specific areas of leadership?
4. In which areas of your life do you need to walk more closely or carefully in line with the Gospel?
5. What can we learn by analyzing Gideon's failure in leadership?
6. What do we do when we fail as spiritual leaders? What should our failure in leadership point us back to? Why?
7. Every point of the message on failing leadership was met with a prayer. What role should prayer play in our leadership? Why is it important for leaders to pray?
8. Why is it easy for us to forget the Lord in our success or prosperity? How do we combat this?
9. Israel would establish stones of remembrance to remember what God did and who He was. How can we do that today in our lives and with our families? How can this help the next generation?