

un·compromising faith

IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES

SERMON TITLE: Our Forgetfulness & Pride. God's Presence & Promises.

DATE: March 13, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Judges 6-8

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The days of the judges were not happy and hopeful. They were dark and despairing. Israel was called to be a holy people – faithful to their God and showing the nations his power and love. Sadly, rather than bless the nations, Israel became like the nations. They bowed to idols and embraced pagan lifestyles. In short, they compromised. As the last line in Judges puts it: "Everyone did what was right in their own eyes." Thus, these stories serve as both a warning and an invitation to us. They warn us against conforming to cultural narratives and they invite us to hope in the face of despair. They ask us, "What does it mean to have an uncompromising faith in a faithful God?"

SERMON SUMMARY

As we pick up the story of Gideon in Judges 6-8, we see the exact same cycle that has occurred on multiple occasions already: Sin-Discipline-Distress-Grace-Deliverance-Peace. However, a shift in the book begins to take place when it comes to Gideon. There are seven judges whose stories are told in a good bit of detail throughout the book, and Gideon is right in the middle. We have shared that the book of Judges is a continuing downward spiral, even in the midst of the continued deliverance, and you can see that in how the judges are talked about with the first three beings looked at positively while the last three are looked at negatively. And then there is Gideon, with both positive and negative parts of his story articulated. With each passing cycle, we observe the children of Israel becoming more and more like those living around them.

While we are obviously not Gideon, there are some things we can be reminded of, as we study these chapters, in regards to the presence and promises of God and our tendencies to be forgetful and prideful and do things our own way. You see it's not that the children of Israel had totally forgotten God. It's that they wanted to worship all the other gods alongside God. It appears that they continue to live from regret to regret instead of walking in true repentance. Maybe you can relate? There is a difference between remorse because of the consequences of our choices and genuine repentance, which leads to true life change. When we are only remorseful, the consequences of our choices drive us to attempt to make changes until the consequences of our choices go away...then...in our forgetfulness and pride, we're back to doing what we were doing. We see this throughout Judges. But what we also see is God's continued kindness, grace, presence, and promises.

While Gideon is in Hebrews 11, along with many others, in regards to having great faith, all of those mentioned are pointing to Jesus...the founder and perfecter of our faith.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:1-2

We would do well to regularly ask the Spirit of God to point out areas of our life where we buy into the false gospels and idols all around us.

SERMON SCREENSHOTS & KEY POINTS

Here is a list that I keep on my desk from author Paul Tripp. May these questions encourage you towards leaning into the promises and presence of God and, in doing so, grow you in remembering, not forgetting and humility not pride.

- Does pride preach to you a false gospel that tells you that you are righteous and able on your own, not needing God's forgiving and enabling grace?
- Does bitterness preach to you a false gospel of God's injustice, telling you that others have been given what you deserve?
- Does doubt preach to you a false gospel of fear that robs you of your courage and causes you to question what is secure in Christ?
- Does envy preach to you a false gospel that tells you that God hasn't been as faithful and good to you as he's been to others?

- Does unforgiveness preach to you a false gospel of judgement that refuses to give others the same grace that you've been given?
- Does legalism preach to you a false gospel of performance that seeks security in what you do rather than what Christ has done for you?
- Does impatience preach to you a false gospel of urgency that keeps you from the blessing of resting in God's perfect timing?
- Does selfishness preach to you a false gospel of entitlement that causes you to turn blessing into demands?
- Does success preach to you a false gospel of comfort that causes you to look at the sacrifice of Christ on your behalf with indifference?

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS

1. In the "welcome" today everyone was encouraged to take their "next step" so that others can step into community at Fellowship. Is there a practical next step for you in regards to belonging and serving at Fellowship Greenville? If so, what is it?
2. Read Judges 6-8
3. In what seasons of life are you most likely to forget the promises and presence of God?
4. Share an example of when you stepped out in faith to answer God's leading in your life. Share an example of when you did not step out in faith to answer God's leading in your life.
5. In what specific ways does pride keep us from remembering the faithfulness of God?
6. Which of the "false gospels" are you most prone to listen to and why?

GUIDED PRAYER

Spend some time remembering and reflecting on what God has done for you. Pray for more self awareness and attentiveness to pride and forgetfulness of his faithfulness in your life. Pray that you would lean into the promises of God and ask the Spirit to point out areas of your life where you buy into false gospels and idols around you.

^[i]The following resources have been a great help to us in preparing messages for this sermon series: *Judges-Ruth*, by Dan Block; *Judges for You*, by Timothy Keller; *Judges: Such a Great Salvation*, by Dale Ralph Davis; *Deserting the King: The Book of Judges*, by David Beldham and Craig Bartholomew; *Finding God in the Margins: The Book of Ruth*, by Carolyn Custiss James; and *Judges and Ruth: Teach the Text Commentary*, by Mark Strauss. Also, I (Charlie) have benefited from the teachings of Tim Keller, Tim Mackie and the Bible Project, and others whom I will credit during my messages. I have adapted and borrowed insights and illustrations from these men and incorporated them into the messages in this series.