

Judges 8:33-9:24
Idolatry, Ingratitude and Fratricide
Sermon Outline

Introduction: Stories like the one told in Judges 9 remind us that God is not in denial about life's dark side—even inside the church. Yet even in this story there is a ray of light.

I) The darkness

A) Nobody in this story is the obvious 'good guy'

Not even Jotham

B) The God of the covenant is gone—a secular world

- Idolatry – *The people whored after the Baals (v 33)*
- 'Amnesia'—*The people...did not remember Yahweh (v 34)*

C) Good faith and integrity (v.16, 19) ripped out of human relationships

- Gratitude gone-- 8:35
- Sacred places defiled: Shechem
- Scoundrels rise to power: Abimelech

Self-destruction unleashed

II) The light

A) A prophetic voice

v. 7: ...he stood on Mt. Gerizim and cried aloud

B) The message

- The darkness will not last
- A good king will come
- God loves and remembers his king

C) The meaning

- God loves the faithful, even if they are not perfect
- God has a king for us—greater than Gideon

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Judges 9 is a dark story. Why does God include it in the Bible?
- 2) One of the disturbing things about Judges 9 is that nobody, not even Jotham, shines as a spiritual hero. Recall a similar situation either in your own experience or in human social history.
- 3) Reflect on the following statement by Dale Davis (from his commentary on Judges): “When the text condemns Israel for not remembering Yahweh (8:34), it is not suggesting that Israel forgot the identity of Yahweh nor even that they could no longer list the enemies from whom Yahweh has rescued them. It means that what they knew of Yahweh exercised no control over them, held no grip on their loyalties. They could still answer catechism questions about Yahweh but that knowledge did not determine their commitment.” How accurately do these words describe you at the moment? Answer in the light of the following Biblical statements/commands: “Be still and know that I am God”; “Do not covet your neighbor’s house...or his wife...or anything that is your neighbor’s”; “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”.
- 4) Twice in Judges 9 (v 16 and v 19) we are told that “good faith and integrity” have been ripped out of human relationships. Itemize the ways in which this is demonstrated in the story. What steps might you take to inject “good faith and integrity” back into your social situation at work, in your neighborhood, and at home.
- 5) Sometimes all we have to go on in a bleak situation is the voice of God—a scrap of a verse we once memorized, something that struck us from a sermon last week (in many ways like Jotham’s brief and fleeting word from Mt. Gerizim). But that word is true and can be relied on. Recall a story from your life in which such a word came to you in a dark and desperate time (maybe you are in such a time now). What did you do with it? Or, what will you do with it?
- 6) Judges 9 makes clear that God remembered and honored Gideon, despite his imperfections (His faith was weak and the ephod he unwisely set up put the people on an idolatrous trajectory). This gives us reason to hope that God will remember us, not because we are super saints, but because we look to him in trust—the very thing God says in Psalm 2.12: “Blessed are all who take refuge in him.” Thank God for this and trust him afresh about whatever is troubling you.
- 7) In 9:17 Jotham honors his father Gideon by recalling what he did for Israel: “he fought for you and risked his life and delivered you from the hand of Midian.” How in all these acts is Gideon a forerunner of Jesus? How is Jesus different and better? Thank God for Jesus.