

Judges 17:1-13
When We Get Our Independence
Sermon Outline

Introduction: Judges 17-21 describes on an increasingly broadening canvass what happened to Israel when she got the independence from God for which she had been lobbying all along. Chapter 17 tells the first of three stories.

I) Deadly independence at the domestic level

A) Masked by happiness, religious propriety, and signs of blessing

1) Domestic happiness

- A mother and son find peace
- A wandering Levite finds work and love

2) Religious propriety

- The Lord's name invoked (3x!)
- Micah devoted to religion

God's 'blessing' all around

B) Meaning for us

Was Micah a consciously bad man?

II) Deadly independence: using God—not worshipping him

A) No real worship

B) Customized religion

C) Take away

Proverbs 3.5-6: Trust the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

III) The Upside of the Story

A) Micah was “on” to something

- Wanting God near

B) God has addressed the ache

John 4.23: The hours is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) List all the “good things” that happen to Micah and his family. Compare Micah’s response to his circumstances (v 13) with the narrator’s (v 6). Why the different take?
- 2) Think of an event in your life or in the life of a friend when good outcomes or circumstances led you or your friend to a false appraisal of how things were going from God’s point of view. What happened? Why do you conclude that appearances (your view) and reality (God’s view) were at odds?
- 3) Compare Abimelech (Judges 9) to Micah. Which of the two men would you rather have known and dealt with? What warnings does Micah’s story leave you with? How might you be like Micah?
- 4) Give evidence for the fact that there is religion but no real worship in Micah’s household. How might you guard against being merely religious?
- 5) Micah is like people everywhere. His motives and methods may be confused, but he is nevertheless groping after God. He wants God close. Where do you see this pattern in secular, even atheistic, friends (you will probably need to broaden your definition of “god” to do this)?
- 6) Read through Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well in John 4. What does this conversation tell us about God’s attitude and God’s action with regard to the problem of people getting close to him?
- 7) Pray for greater closeness between you and God.