

3/8/20 - Judges 20-21 - "Final Battle: Civil War"

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[0 : 00] Today, open your Bibles, where we'll be towards the end of Judges, in Judges chapter 20. Like I said, we're going to reach, we have reached the end of the book of Judges.

And it's interesting, as we get into this text, we're going to see something quite profound. Because in chapter 20, we see that God is back into the narrative.

It's been a while since this nation has consulted the Lord. It's been quite a long time since we've heard the mention of God.

And He actually is back in the story today to bring justice. And you might have, that might leave you with like a good feeling, like He's bringing justice.

This is good news. However, this justice is not in Israel's favor. And it actually nearly wipes out an entire tribe of Israel.

[1 : 20] And I want to help us today connect the dots. Because being in the end of this book, yes, there's a lot that has taken place. And there's a lot of context of what we speak and what we study today.

So I want to kind of help us all connect the dots. If you've jumped into, if this is like your first Sunday here, or first Sunday in a while, you may have missed some things that have been building up to this point.

So looking back to chapter 1 through chapter 7, 1 to 7, we know that God was raising up deliverers, judges.

And He often intervened on Israel's behalf of routing the enemy and intervenes in mighty ways from chapters 1 through chapter 7. And we see something change in about chapter 8 towards the end of Gideon's life.

And that continues to chapter 16. So 8 to chapter 16. God continues to deliver Israel from their foreign oppressors. But throughout all of this, there's kind of like an intermittent frustration.

[2 : 32] Got a little lisp on my tongue. And there's a weird silence from God in this. And then in chapters, after chapter 16, 17 and 19 get very interesting.

Because God is mostly withdrawn from this nation. He's very passive. And there's various religious failures. And we talked about that in the terminology of subjectivism.

Where they thought that they were worshiping the Lord. But they were actually worshiping the Lord the wrong ways. And creating their own man-made ways of worshiping the Lord.

And then now in chapter 20 through 21, God is back to bring justice against Israel. For all that has taken place. So Israel at this point is severely Canaanized.

Their mission was to drive out the Canaanites. But they have been living among the Canaanites. And they are becoming like the Canaanites. And God is now Israel's enemy.

[3 : 41] If this is your first Sunday, you may be a little lost. It's kind of like jumping into the end parts of a movie. And you have no idea what took place.

So if you're new today, bear with us. I'm going to try to connect the dots without creating over an hour-long message. Of trying to bring a comprehensive context to this.

But you are jumping into the last five minutes of like a two-hour movie right now. So bear with us. But the truth of God's Word is that we should be encouraged. Because God's Word can speak to us through one word.

God's Word can speak to us through one verse. Or one passage. Or one chapter. It is severely dynamic. It is deep within context.

And we can always get something out of everything that we read in God's Word. It is active and breathing in our lives. So let's pray for the Holy Spirit to help us in this endeavor.

[4 : 39] We definitely need the Holy Spirit to help us. And to seek His guidance. And break these remaining two chapters down. And sort of like bite-sized pieces this morning.

So please join me in a word of prayer. And we're going to take this section by section. Let's pray. Lord God, we are humbled before You with Your Word.

And we know that within this Word we find You. And You have revealed Yourself through this Word. And Father, You are communicating to us today. You've been communicating to the centuries past.

And Father, we know that You communicated to us through natural revelation. Through all of creation that surrounds us. But this is a special form of communication.

This is where we find You. This is where we find Jesus Christ. This is where we find the Gospel. And so as we open this Word, let us know that this Word has power of bringing the dead to life.

[5 : 41] And Father, only by Your Spirit we can navigate these pages. How You intend them to be navigated. So help us, Lord, at this time. As we lean upon You.

And let us trust in the working of Your Word this morning. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to take this in five different sections.

I'm going to read Judges. There's my first cough. Judges. Verse 20. Verse 1 through 14.

We're going to see this first section of preparing for battle. And I'm going to bring a little bit of context just real quick. Because last week we saw this horrific act in Gebeah.

A Levite, a certain Levite, literally massacred his concubine. And sent her parts to the 12 tribes of Israel. It's so horrific.

[6 : 42] And so after that, it raised the attention. This was a cultural way of, usually they send animal sacrifices to the 12 tribes.

And this was just absolutely horrific. And so everyone got the message. And now they're preparing for battle. The 12 tribes are assembling.

Most of them are assembling. And they are ready to prepare for battle against this awful thing that happened in this little tribe of Benjamin.

So verse 1 says, Then all the people of Israel came out from Dan to Beersheba, including the land of Gilead, and the congregation assembled as one man to the Lord at Mizpah.

And the chiefs of all the people of Israel presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God.

[7 : 46] 400,000 men on foot that drew the sword. Now the people of Benjamin heard that the people of Israel had gone up to Mizpah. And the people of Israel said, Tell us, how did this evil happen?

And the Levites, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, I came to Gebeah that belongs to Benjamin. I and my concubine to spend the nights.

And the leaders of Gebeah rose against me and surrounded the house against me by nights. They meant to kill me. And they violated my concubine. And she is dead.

So I took hold of my concubine and cut her in pieces and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel, for they have committed abomination and outrage in Israel.

Behold, you people of Israel, all of you, give your advice and counsel here. Verse 8 continues, And all the people arose as one man, saying, none of us will go to his tent and none of us will return to his house.

[8 : 59] But now this is what we will do to Gebeah. We will go up against it by lots. And we will take ten men of a hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel.

And a hundred of a thousand. And a thousand of ten thousand to bring provisions for the people. And when they come, they may repay Gebeah of Benjamin for the outrage that they have committed in Israel.

So all the men of Israel gathered against the city, united as one man. And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What evil is this that has taken place among you?

Now, therefore, give up the men, the worthless fellows of Gebeah, that we may put them to death and purge evil from Israel. But the Benjaminites would not listen to the voice of their brothers, the people of Israel.

Then the people of Benjamin came together out of the cities to Gebeah to go out to the battle against the people of Israel. And the people of Benjamin mustered out of their cities on that day 26,000 men who drew the sword besides the inhabitants of Gebeah, who mustered 700 chosen men.

[10 : 16] Among all these were 700 chosen men who were left-handed. Everyone could sling a stone at a hare and not miss. And the men of Israel, apart from Benjamin, mustered 400,000 men who drew the sword.

All these were men of war. Let's take a pause there. There was never a time in Israel's history where this nation could more desperately need God's guidance.

There's no other moment other than now. They have become so consumed in blood lust. They want revenge on their behalf as they see fit.

After receiving this message from this Levite priest of what happened in Gebeah. Even the Levite who was asked, who was interrogated in this passage, recalled all these things that happened in Gebeah at this old man, the sojourning old man's house.

And even his recollection of what happened in Gebeah was severely one-sided. It was, yeah, it was kind of the truth. But he really, the men really weren't interested in the concubine.

[11 : 34] They were interested in him. And he just threw out his concubine to the wolves. And doing what is right in their own eyes, this nation makes three vows in this passage.

But being made without reference to seeking God's will. Similar to the words of Abimelech. The first vow in this passage was that no one could go home until Gebeah was obliterated.

That was the first vow. And this is important because we're going to see how this vow manifests itself in chapter 21. The first vow was no one could go home until Gebeah was obliterated.

The second vow was any person or group that did not join this crusade against Gebeah was to be treated the same way as Gebeah.

So if they're called to obliterate Gebeah, anybody who's not on their side and not joining this effort against Gebeah is going to be destroyed. And the third vow is no one present was to allow his daughter to marry a Benjaminite.

[12 : 47] So they sent messengers to Benjamin to turn over the men who were the worthless fellows that raped and killed this concubine of this Levite.

But Benjamin would not cooperate in the passage. They even gathered an army to defend themselves. And so what we have here as they prepare for battle, you have 26,000 Benjaminites versus 400,000 Israelites.

Think about that odd. So let's see how these odds work out as we kind of broadly see these battle efforts. We're not going to be going in this next passage verse by verse, but observing thought by thought.

Because broadly speaking, just a lot of people die through these efforts. A lot of people die between verse 18 through 45. But look at me.

If you have your Bible open, it's not going to be on the screen. If you have your Bible open, put your finger on the text as we kind of go through this passage and see the account of this civil war.

[13 : 56] Verse 18 starts with, in the second section, Israel sought God's direction in verse 18.

Not whether they should go to war, but who would go first. They already had their minds made up. We're going to war. Now who's going to go first? So in verse 18 it says, The people of Israel arose and went to Bethel and inquired of God, Who shall go up first for us to fight against the people of Benjamin?

And the Lord said, Judah shall go up first. Interesting. So between verse 19 through 20, this is day one of battle. Judah.

They lost 22,000 men against Benjamin. And where Benjamin only lost a handful of people until verse 22.

And so after that first day of battle, Israel in verse 23 goes back to seek God's direction once more. They say, should we go? Go up?

[15 : 00] And the people of Israel, it says in verse 23, I'm sorry. And the people of Israel went up and went before the Lord until the evening and inquired from the Lord. Shall we go again?

Shall we again draw near to fight against our brothers, to the people of Benjamin? And the Lord said, go up against them. No promise of how this is going to work out for them. So in verse 24 and 25, this is day two of this battle.

And Israel lost another 18,000 men. Day one, they lost 22,000. Day two, they lost 18,000.

And then in verse 26, Israel sought God's direction. This time, they received not only permission, but they received a promise in verse 26 through 28.

They're saying, shall we go up once more to battle against our brothers, the people of Benjamin, or shall we cease? You know, we can't miss and make any more of this mess.

[16 : 03] We're losing men. What are we going to do, God? And the Lord said to them, go up, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands. Promised victory in this passage in verse 26 through 28.

And it wasn't until the significant and precise military tactics and ambush was carried out that Israel finally found victory that they desired.

But unfortunately, that victory came at their own people's expense. This is what they call civil war. And we see this happen and come to a close.

This battle comes to a close in verse 29 through 44. Where the tribe set an ambush. And Benjamin fell into it. And the Lord defeated Benjamin before Israel.

In verse 35. The death toll in this passage, this ending passage, was stunning. 25,000 Benjaminites fell.

[17 : 05] Reducing that tribe to only 600 men who then were fleeing to the rock of Ramon. What should be note-worthy, church, in this passage is that God gives the Israelites the victory that they desired.

But that meant that they would be defeating, they would be their own defeat. That the very enemy that they were seeking to defeat was themselves.

God's actions in this story should be understood by the broader scope of the literary context of the passage. Because you see in the chapters before, with anybody who's been plugged in with this study, you see that declining spiral all throughout the book of Judges.

One judge comes and they're worse off than when that judge began. And then also, realizing the biblical context that stretches far back to Deuteronomy.

Of the realization of the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 27 and the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28. So what we see God doing and intervening on Israel's behalf is getting what they deserved.

[18 : 19] They deserved discipline in this case. And sadly, Israel wins its battle against the Benjaminites. Only because Israel lost the war against the Canaanites.

They lost the war that they were commissioned to do against this Canaanite. The foreign enemy, the foreign oppressors that the covenant was stated in Deuteronomy 7.

The Canaanites at this point were probably sitting back, if you could imagine, almost the humor in it. The Canaanites, enemies of God, were sitting on the bleachers, eating popcorn, watching the Israelites fight each other.

How pathetic, right? The Israelite nation is completely upside down. And the Benjaminites are nearly extinct.

There's only 600 of them left over. And so let's see what happens after the civil war takes place. Their armies reduced. In verse 45 continues.

[19 : 24] We see the Benjaminites. Benjaminites retreat. And they turned at that point, being reduced, and fled toward the wilderness to the Rock of Reman.

5,000 men of them were cut down in the highways. And they were pursued hard to get them.

And 2,000 men of them were struck down. So all who fell that day, with Benjamin, were 25,000 who drew the sword. All men of valor. But 600 men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the Rock of Reman.

And remained at the Rock of Reman. Four months. And the men of Israel turned back against the people of Benjamin. And struck them with the edge of the sword. The city, men, and beasts.

And all that they found. And all the towns that they found, they set on fire. At this point, the battle is completely over. Only 600 Benjaminites are remaining.

[20 : 29] This is utter chaos, destruction, and utter confusion at this point. So should Israel blame God for all of this? Or maybe blame themselves?

Let's see what happens as the narrative comes to a close in chapter 21. And we're going to break this up into two separate sections. Section 4 of Rebuilding Benjamin, phase 1.

Chapter 1 continues. Now the men of Israel who had sworn. The men of Israel had sworn at Mizpah. None of us shall give his daughter in marriage to Benjamin.

And the people who came to Bethel and sat there till evening before God. And they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly. And they said, O Lord, the God of Israel, why has this happened to Israel?

That today there should be one tribe lacking in Israel. And the next day the people rose early and built there an altar. And offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

[21 : 33] And the people of Israel said, Which of all the tribes of Israel did not come to the assembly of the Lord? For they have taken a great oath concerning him who did not come to the Lord to Mizpah.

Saying, He shall surely be put to death. And the people of Israel had compassion for Benjamin, their brother. And said, One tribe is cut off from Israel this day.

What shall we do for wives? For those who are left, since we have sworn by the Lord that we will not give them any of our daughters for wives.

And they said, What one is there of the tribes of Israel that did not come up to the Lord of Mizpah? And behold, no one had come up from the camp of Jabesh Gilead to the assembly.

For when the people were mustered, behold, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead was there. So the congregation sent twelve thousand of their bravest men there and commanded them.

[22 : 38] Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the sword, with the edge of the sword, also the women and the little ones. This is what you shall do. Every male and every woman that was lain with a male you shall devote to destruction.

And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known a man by lying with him. And they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

Then the whole congregation sent word to the people of Benjamin, who were at the Rock of Raymond, and proclaimed peace to them. And Benjamin returned at that time, and they gave them the women whom they saved alive, the women of Jabesh Gilead.

But they were not enough for them, and the people had compassion on Benjamin, because the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel. Let's take a pause.

Let's take a pause.

[24 : 08] Let's take a pause.

Let's take a pause.

Benjaminites who are looking to rebuild their tribe. Like typical human beings, again, they blamed the Lord in verse 15. How is this happening?

It's like, duh. Like, look at yourself here in this passage. and then as this as this whole narrative comes to a close we see there are 200 women short for these 600 benjaminites who are hiding the rock of reman we see in verse 16 as we come to the end of judges then the elders of the congregation read with me said what shall we do for wives for those who are left since the women are destroyed out of benjamin and they say there there must be an inheritance for the survivors of benjamin that a tribe may might not be blotted out in israel yet we cannot give them wives from our daughters according to their vow church for the people of israel had sworn in their vow curse be who he who gives a wife to benjamin so they said behold there's a yearly feast of the lord at shiloh which is north of bethel on the east of the highway that goes up from bethel to shechem and south of lebanon and they commanded the people of benjamin saying go and lie in ambush in the vineyards and watch if the daughters of shiloh come out to dance in the dances then come out of the vineyards and snatch each man his wife from the daughters of shiloh and go to the land of benjamin and when their fathers or their brothers come to complain to us we will say to them grant them graciously to us because we did not take for each man of them his wife in battle neither did you give them to them else he would now be guilty in verse 23 and the people of benjamin did so and took their wives according to their number from the dancers whom they carried off then they went and returned to their inheritance and rebuilt the towns and lived in them and the people of israel departed from there at that time every man to his tribe and family and they went out from there every man to his inheritance in those days there was no king in israel everyone did what was right in his own eyes this tribe has found a loophole in the system we're always we're always like professional loophole seekers especially when it's tax season come on let's be honest being professional legalists again they found a legal technicality in this in these vows no one can give daughters to benjamin according to their vow but what if what if we took daughters what if we kidnapped wives for themselves this turned into a mass kidnapping of women dancers at an unknown festival in shiloh and this is not uncommon i mean even thinking about today it is not uncommon for our western civilization to um think of these things like like kidnapping all these things that we're reading in this in this uh narrative of killing death destruction i mean this sounds like a modern movie you might see in a theater this is what we spend millions of dollars on in our in our society today i often think that israel has nothing on us and we we sometimes read the the bible and we're just like oh i can't believe this is in the word of god i can't believe you saw that movie last week either you know it's like we see this this standard where we act like we're so naive to to what what the human condition really really truly entails so looking back kind of summarizing at this point as far as the men of gebea were concerned rape was okay

to the old farmer looking all the way back in in chapter chapter 19 the old farmer and and the levite in the house homosexual rape was unthinkable but the sacrifice of of a blameless woman to protect themselves was completely justifiable the men of benjamin thought it was right to overlook sin and to defend evil men to israel revenge and retaliation could be justified upon their own parameters and to solve their own problems about the marriage of the benjaminites and the massacre in this passage think about all the innocent people who died in this passage because of foolish vows the massacre of innocent people and the kidnapping of young young girls could be condoned do you sense the utter chaos in this in this book do you feel it this is nuts church absolutely nuts the moral elevator in this in this nation is free falling from a tower as tall as the eiffel tower they are in complete lost despair probably the most insightful observation in this passage is this the original conquest that they were supposed to embark on was against a foreign enemy none of this none of this this battle none of this war none of this this obliteration of people had anything to do with idolatry or bail worship it began with individuals number one ignoring god's written word his law and it also had to do with subjectivism doing what is right in their own eyes and it led a whole nation into moral collapse where all of a sudden they're condoning rape murder they're justifying sin they're justifying sin they're trying to fix sin with more sin and just as the final refrain kind of just leaves an intensity in this book in those days there was no king in israel everyone did what was right in their own eyes and this leads us to the end of our study in the book of judges church you know we we live in a culture of happy endings don't we we love the notebook we love like all these these you know flowery stories that leave us feeling good and especially the the christian uh christian films like fireproof yeah the husband finally got the woman and oh man so beautiful and how courageous he was we live in a culture so kind of programmed for happy endings and then we read an interesting book in judges where we see everything but a happy ending it makes us feel uncomfortable and this is good church the author meant to make us feel uncomfortable israel has faced quite an issue of the threat of benjaminite extinction due to genocide and rash vows and israel's own solution was more genocide and seizing virgins for benjamin i often joke especially with with matt sometimes we we have discussions sometimes with instruments and and how i love just a clean resolve i like just just ending on just a nice resolving note where you know it's the end of the song and matt sometimes liking to

[33 : 28] stir up the pot a little bit he likes to leave i call it a clincher note where it's like you you feel like something's coming and then it's like it's like you just held held in a sneeze and you just you just feel like you're getting a headache you know what i'm talking about and and so you know when when that's a that was an ongoing uh funny situation with with uh with matt but for the average audience who reads this book this book tends to leave us in that in that sort of mentality it leaves us uncomfortable leaves us kind of disoriented like okay there's what happens next uh thomas merton in his book uh opening the bible he says this interesting quotes it is of the very nature of the bible to affront perplex and astonish the human mind hence the reader who opens the bible must be prepared for disorientation confusion incomprehension and perhaps outrage at times and church we must be ready to meditate upon the whole counsel of god we can't just be reading through the epistles and everything and unhitching from the old testament as some uh you know modern day theologians might tell us to encourage us to just get rid of all that stuff it's just legalism it's it's just religion but it's sometimes if we are meditating on the whole counsel of god from genesis to revelation we are going to come this means we're going to come face to face with god's wrath and god's discipline at times which this helps us see the cross so clearly might this be why judges ends in such a disoriented disoriented tone where you're just confused like there's got to be something more well that's the point because there is something more god was orchestrating the cross he was unraveling his redemptive plan for mankind which points to the cross a w pink in his is writing the attributes of god says our readiness or reluctance to meditate upon the whole upon the wrath of god becomes a sure test of our hearts true attitude toward toward him and we come to that today we come to god's wrath we come to an uncomfortable passage of murder rape homosexuality all sorts of sinful things in this nation and we come face to face with it but shouldn't this speak towards just as pink says isn't that a sure test of our hearts attitude towards him do we understand the whole counsel of god i have a point i want to make today two points kind of it's like one and a half i turned to one and a half this morning from time to time we have a tendency of creating our own civil wars this nation uh went on their own whim to solve problems that god was only meant to solve and they made vows they created uh their own parameters they they found loopholes within their their parameters and it's interesting from time to time how how much we could actually avoid in our own lives of avoiding this surrendering our own civil war tendencies of not repaying wickedness for wickedness lest we experience our own civil wars i mean this has been going on since genesis this is going on in the church down the road this is going on um in in this church's history this is going on in in all sorts of churches around this globe of little civil wars from anything

as the color of the wall paint to some doctrinal severe doctrinal errors we create our own civil wars and often we repay wickedness for wickedness let's think about this story in israel okay we're gonna we're gonna hypothetically think of writing a different ending let's think of a godly solution in this narrative what if the story looked drastically different what if israel had kept god's written law upon their hearts keeping god in the narrative well number one it would involve taking responsibility for their own actions and repenting of their sin right rather than asking how is this awful thing happened like they say in chapter 20 verse 3 how's this awful thing happened guys is god against us listen this is happening because you made it happen it's your own fault what if everyone did what was right in the eyes of the lord ooh that would be interesting right having your self-interest surrendered in this narrative and god's authority acknowledged i think about how that would correct this narrative i think about how it would correct all the narratives within these these arguing in these churches in civil war against one another and within their walls what if we did this well of surrendering our self-interest and and and upholding and acknowledging god's authority in our lives and in our in our community the author of author of this book in judges explains how this awful thing happened four times within the epilogue in those days israel had no king everyone did what was right in their own eyes in church that was called subjectivism which we spent two weeks speaking about a couple weeks ago and it calls us to beware as well because being right in our own eyes the devil who is prowling around he there's nothing the devil likes better than to see this side battling that side and this church battling this church and this woman battling this man and he loves stirring that pot within congregations across the globe since genesis and being right in our own eyes the devil can play these mind games with one another and and create this reality that never existed all of a sudden miscommunications divide one another and what do we create our own civil war and take arms against one another or being right in our own eyes we tend to find it therapeutic to gossip after church we find it therapeutic to hold grudges for an odd reason within our human condition it just feels right we remain bitter and often become offended easily offended almost weirdly offended and we shut down from this and what do we do?

we begin a civil war with one another or being right in our own eyes we tend to shut down conversations with those who don't read scripture the way that we do right?

and sometimes our condemning manner can begin a civil war with one another the devil has been at work let's not be naive to that work let's learn a thing or two about subjectivism and doing things that are right in our own eyes brothers and sisters we are to fight the battles battles in this life and battles for the faith but we're supposed to fight the right ones if your battle is not being fought of reconciliation unity and grace we are missing the gospel church we are human just as human as the Israelites and before we create our own vengeful civil war within God's people the gospel calls us to fight the greatest battle and that is for unity and grace now God is not to blame people have always been responsible for these civil wars right?

people have always been responsible God created mankind to make their own choices and this account in Judges shows us the consequences of those choices and quite sinful consequences they were and the result of selfishness and subjectivism doing what is right in your own eyes being personal personal advocates for your own for your own campaign it is also important to identify God's grace though in this book yes there is quite a bit of death death and destruction and chaos but God providentially preserved his people he didn't allow the Benjamites to completely be obliterated he preserved his people and he can preserve us as well in the midst of our little battles church God's grace is far more tenacious than people's depravity God's grace is far more tenacious than people's depravity so we must do one thing in this first point we must stay true to his words we must be dedicated to his written words and if I sound like a broken record player good because we need to do this and we need to do this well and we have to practice this because this is the whole root of the problem in Israel the book of judges sin after sin after sin time and time falling after this and subjectivism and doing what is right in our own eyes here and doing what's evil in the sight of the

[43 : 28] Lord here all comes because they neglected the law of the Lord so if I sound like a broken record player I'm not sorry we must stay true we must stay true to the written word and adhere to what it says not just be people of the word but be doers of this word to be to apply this word well and also we must surrender our selfish tendencies surrender our selfish tendencies with godliness how often the church can battle one another and look often chaotic to the world looking in man even social media I don't know who would want to be converted after some social media arguments between this Christian and that Christian I mean the world is just like the Canaanites watching in eating popcorn just like well this is this is interesting and Christians are supposed to have the answers to life right supposed to have the truth we often get so lost in these civil wars and the second point is upholding the comprehensive gospel and I want to explain it in a certain way of good news and bad news we often are good news people we're happy ending people we love just the the fluttery happy endings and stories and narratives and movies it keeps us coming back for more and we're also good news people we have the good news of the gospel we are looking back upon the cross and we proclaim this good news to people but you cannot have an overweighted good news without a balanced bad news okay isn't the gospel about fallen man being united with a holy God and the the mystery of that of everyone through faith being grafted into that by the blood of Jesus Christ this is the good news which we should understand have a proper understanding of that bad news as well that we are just that fallen man we cannot just have an isolated good news without a bad news church the good news the gospel is more is more than a message of all this good news of like a life enhancement like all the things that God will give you if you become a Christian if you trust in Christ then all this stuff without this bad news because with that you lose repentance you lose sanctification you lose that whole reality unhinging from the wretchedness of man the gospel is more than a message of life enhancements being all good news the reality is it took the shedding of flesh it took the shedding and the blood payment of the cross of Christ where the bad news put him there

I was talking to a Buddhist at our last international dinner that we had on Thursday and an interesting question came up she asked me what why do we desire bad why do we desire to do what's wrong and it came into an interesting dialogue where for about five minutes I introduced her to the problem of sin if the gospel didn't incorporate the bad news nobody would truly know who Jesus is and the payment that he suffered upon the cross were our sins the bad news was placed upon him and through the shedding of his blood was the propitiation for our sin the satisfaction for our sin and she heard the gospel she heard the bad news she heard the good news by the power of God hopefully that will register with her in her hearts how might that bad news bring good news to you today church like for instance like have you been living your life in ways that are justified as right in your own eyes but actually living as an enemy of God have you been have situations has sin been been something that's been rising up and the enemy has just been devouring you day by day your

Bible collecting dust his grace becoming something that you're becoming desensitized too yeah it's not as interesting as it once was back when you were in this church or in this stage in life it's just kind of like a dry and dull thing anymore I want to encourage us to preach the gospel not only to others but you need to preach the gospel to yourself in grace and in truth always having your words seasoned in grace and allow the Holy Spirit to convict yourself allow the Holy Spirit to convict others in a conviction that only he can do okay sin is sin according to scripture and Jesus is who he is according to scripture we have the bad news and we have the good news church we have such great potential looking at at this mess in Israel we have such great potential of creating the biggest mess in our own lives and it is a miracle what God can do with us even in the midst of our own sinful tendencies starting our own civil wars so let's be warned okay let us be encouraged by judges let us be rooted in the reality of sin and the reality of our fallen nature and our sinful tendency as we continue the ministry of the word in this church as we go into prayer and go into the gospel of John because the reality is our sin is great and our greatest enemy is often ourselves we create these civil wars but his love is greater church let our love also be greater than our sin that we have in our own lives and the sin that we have and express to one another let our love be greater towards one another just as Christ's love is greater in our own lives let's join in a word of prayer in our last prayer in this judges series reverky Matches