

# 3/1/20 - Judges 19 - "The New Sodom"

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's pray. Father God, we know that in our weakness, you are strong. Regardless of our physical ailments, regardless of some mental ailments and stress and anxiety, we know that we can cast our cares upon you because you care for us.

Father, we come to you today, right now, and even me at this moment, and I give you my congestion, and I pray that you can empower me and equip me in my weakness to proclaim your word and to glorify you through your word.

Father, let this word come to life in this congregation, and let us not take away from this word. Let's not try to just sugarcoat the problem of sin in life, but let us just take it head on because when we realize the nature of our sin, we really understand the nature of your grace.

And Father, let us experience that and find Christ in the text today. And we pray this in Jesus' precious and holy name. Amen. Judges 19, we will be...

I don't hear any page flippings, so you guys must have been there already. The first section I'm going to take is a Levite and his concubine.

[ 1 : 33 ] In chapter 19, verse 1 through 21, let's read. In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judea.

And his concubine was unfaithful to him, and she went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judea, and was there for four, for some four months.

And then her husband arose and went after her to speak kindly to her and bring her back. He had with him his servant and a couple donkeys, and she brought him into her father's house.

And when the daughter's father saw him, he came with joy to meet him. And his father-in-law, the girl's father, made him stay and remained with him three days.

So they ate and drank and spent the night there. And on the fourth day, they arose early in the morning, and he prepared to go. But the girl's father said to his son-in-law, Strengthen your heart with a morsel of bread, and after that you may go.

[ 2 : 54 ] So the two of them sat and ate and drank together. And the girl's father said to the man, Be pleased to spend the night, and let your heart be merry. And when the man arose up to go, his father-in-law pressed him till he spent the night there again.

And on the fifth day, he arose early in the morning to depart. And the girl's father said, Strengthen your heart and wait until the day declines. So they ate, both of them.

And when the man and his concubine and his servant rose up to depart, his father-in-law, the girl's father, said to him, Behold, now the day has waned toward evening. Please spend the night.

And behold, the day draws to its close. Lodge here and let your heart be merry. And tomorrow you shall arise early in the morning for your journey and go home.

But the man would not spend the night. He rose up and departed and arrived opposite of Jebus, that is, Jerusalem. He had with him a couple of saddled donkeys and his concubine with him.

[ 4 : 01 ] When they were near Jebus, the day was nearly over. And the servant said to his master, Come now, let us turn aside to the city of the Jebusites and spend the night in it.

And his master said to him, We will not turn aside into the city of foreigners, who do not belong to the people of Israel, but we shall pass on to Gebeah.

And he said to his young man, Come and let us draw near to one of these places and spend the night in Gebeah or at Ramah. So they passed on and went their way.

And the sun went down on them near Gebeah, which belongs to Benjamin. And they turned aside there to go in and spend the night at Gebeah. And he went in and sat down in the open square, for no one took them into his house to spend the night.

Verse 16 continues, And behold, an old man was coming from his work in the field at evening. The man was from the hill country of Ephraim, and he was sojourning in Gebeah.

[ 5 : 10 ] The men of the place were Benjaminites. And he lifted his eyes and saw the traveler in the open square of the city. And the old man said, Where are you going? And where do you come from?

And he said to him, We are passing from Bethlehem in Judea to the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, from which I come. I went to Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to the house of the Lord, but no one has taken me into his house.

We have straw and feed for our donkeys, with bread and wine for me and your female servants, and the young man with your servants. There is no lack of anything.

And the old man said, Peace be with you. I will care for all your wants, only do not spend the night in the square. So he brought him into his house, and gave the donkeys feed, and they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

Let's take a pause. This is a long narrative, which highlights a couple various scenes in this man's life, this Levite and his concubine's journeys.

[ 6 : 20 ] It kind of starts out in verse 1 through 2, with a little marital tiff, a little fight that they had. This led this concubine to leave him.

She was unfaithful to him. And actually, in translations, the text actually suggests, it's more accurate to detail this text, that she wasn't just unfaithful to him in his marriage.

She was more angry with him. She became angry with him, or deserted him. So she went back, just as some of us even tend to do, and sometimes we get in arguments over the past, or things like that.

We kind of run to our parents' house, and spend the night. But she spent four months there. And we met kind of the players in this narrative. We met the certain Levites.

And this is a man of status. He had multiple wives. He had multiple donkeys. This points to his status on this earth. And his concubine. Concubines are kind of odd.

[ 7 : 18 ] They're an old sort of traditional thing, an old culture term. But these were legal spouses, a little bit less than a full status of a wife.

And they were primarily used for sex and bearing children for their spouse. And so after this marital tiff, this certain Levite, we don't know his name.

We will not find out his name. But he gets up, and he goes on a quest to find his concubine after that four months passage. The Levite pursued her, and just as the verse 3 says, he's pursued her to speak kindly to her and bring her back.

And the author is trying to point, communicate a point of that unfaithfulness. There's obviously harsh words that were exchanged that made her leave. It kind of brings that whole situation into context.

So this is kind of like a little moment of reconciliation. This is actually a beautiful picture of him going and seeking out his concubine. And then it makes the situation even better in verse 3 through 8, where we meet the merry father-in-law, this happy-go-lucky guy.

[ 8 : 40 ] And he made their hearts merry. There was lots of joy in this passage from verse 3 to 8. When his father-in-law met him, it turned into a four-day party.

They partied for four days. He was so excited to see this certain Levite. Lots of hospitality from his father-in-law who wanted him to stay longer. He kept figuring out, coming up with excuses to make this guy stay.

But after verse 8, we see that he was a little bit partied out and somehow mustered up the strength to leave the four-day party and took his concubine with him.

In verse 9, they get on the road to Gebeah because he is on a traveling quest to go to the house of the Lord, which is found in Shiloh. This is where Levite's priests were from.

And we see in verse 15 that they sat in the open square. And this is something culturally known in that time, that when you're traveling, it's an indication to people who are locals in that city to know that you need help, that you need somewhere to stay.

[ 9 : 49 ] So they stayed in the open square. But it wasn't until an old man, another merry man, another merry old man from the hill country of Ephraim, he was sojourning as well in Gebeah, the place of the Benjaminites.

And he also, another account of great hospitality toward these travelers when no one else would take them in. Man, what a great old guy.

Man, this is a really good story. Man, we could go on and on about hospitality. We could talk about reconciliation. We could totally just expound on this stuff and go and feel good.

And then verse 18, we see that his destination was the house of the Lord. Presumably Shiloh. Things seem to be going well, right?

So maybe I am crazy. Maybe at this point, maybe I'm crazy to even suggest that this passage is rated R, right? What am I talking about? Am I confused in this passage?

[10:57] Everything is going well. We see reconciliation within the first couple verses. We see this hospitality, this four-day party of hospitality between a father-in-law and this certain Levite.

And not only that, they got the hospitality of this old man. Well, I want us to be careful because this text has a specific purpose.

I want us to be careful because the author is actually setting us up. because sometimes to really feel in our souls the plummet of the narrative, it needs to be built up in this peaceful, harmonious narrative where everything's going well.

This is kind of like how even our modern-day suspense films and our thrillers and whatever scary movies, it always starts out with this, it's just like the dawning of time.

And there's bright sunlight and then, boom, the terror comes. The thrill, thriller, suspense comes.

[12:05] This author is using this passage for that very purpose. So let's see this narrative continue. Let's see it for ourselves in verse 22.

We see it in section 2, the horrific act at Gebeah. Verse 22, As they were making their hearts merry, again, mind you, behold, the men of the city, worthless fellows, surrounded the house, beating on the door.

And they said to the old man, the master of the house, bring out the man who came into your house that we may know him. And the man, the master of the house, that old man, went out to them and said to them, No, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.

Since this man has come into my house, do not do this vile thing. Behold, here are my virgin, here's my virgin daughter and his concubine.

Let me bring them out now. Violate them and do with them what seems good to you. But against this man, do not do this outrageous thing. But the men would not listen.

[13:21] So the man seized his concubine and made her go out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until the morning.

And as the dawn began to break, they let her go. And as morning appeared, the woman came and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was until it was light.

Verse 27, And her master rose up in the morning. And when he opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, behold, there was his concubine lying at the door of the house with her hands on the threshold.

He said to her, Get up. Let us be going. But there was no answer. Then he put her on the donkey and the man rose up and went away to his home.

And when he entered his house, he took a knife and taking hold of his concubine, he divided her limb by limb into twelve pieces and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.

[14:33] And all who saw it said, Such a thing has never happened or been seen from the day that the people of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt until this day.

Consider it take counsel and speak. The narrative has shifted, church. Very, very dark.

Very gloomy in this passage. Leads me to the first point today. History recalls darkness.

We can recall numerous dark moments in life and throughout history, can't we? One thing that I recall being a young middle schooler, I know I'm young, I'm like a 32-year-old middle school, seeing those trade centers on fire in 9-11, 2001, where literally the world seemed to stop that day.

What has happened? You know, you can recall those pictures even on the news, I know you can, of the smoke and the ashes filling New York City.

[15:59] And then with a great blow, both towers come crumbling down. Both of them. People jumping from the building, seeing it better not to be crushed by the metal and the flaming hot steel, the better to plummet to their own death.

Such dark moments. Thinking back, even back to the 70s, and Chimer rogue regime, and this is where the members of the Communist Party of Campuchia, and during their four-year reign of terror

from 75 to 79, they completely destroyed Cambodia.

Economically, politically, and demographically. I think about even going back in time to the 50s and early 60s, the Great Chinese Famine, where China experienced a monumental famine that killed at least 45 million people.

45 million people. And do I even have to mention back in the late 30s with World War II, with the Holocaust, carried out the murder of 6 million men, women, and children by poisonous gas, shooting, beating, torturing, scientific experiments, systematic starvation, and overwork.

And the pretense that the Aryans were superior humans, and that Jews were no better than the cattle.

[17:40] They were worthless beings, in which terms the question asks, how bad do we feel when we slaughter cows for food? This is the darkness of the world in the past, and even going back to World War I, and centuries in the past.

We are naive to these dark moments in history. There will be future dark moments. We can count on that. These dark moments in life which cries out for us to learn something from.

And this nation was not naive either. The sinful act in Judges 19 came from a progression of forgetting.

Cycle after cycle, judge after judge, after the twelve judges listed, ending with Samson, they just couldn't stop forgetting.

And this is arguably one of the darkest accounts we can find in Scripture, arguably. Israel is without an earthly king, without a heavenly king, because within the context of the passages, we know that the Lord gave them up to their false gods.

[18:58] He sold them. They were choosing their false gods. They became an apostate nation over to their own selfish desire in these false gods. Want to know what the fruit, what is produced from religious failures, what we've been talking about for the past two weeks of subjectivism?

subjectivism? It looks like moral failures. When we forget what we know in the convictions that we find within the Word of God, we know that it is going to breed moral failures.

And what deep sinful moral failures are in this passage? It's almost literally unfathomable to consider what happened to this concubine by a man of God, a Levite priest.

Looking back at Judges 19 through that horrific section, from the worthless fellows pounding on the door late at night, to the abominable vile thing they desire to do to the Levite priest, which is suggested that it's homosexual relations, and to the complete disgrace towards human life and the disposal of this concubine's earthly value, just throwing her out to the wolves, not caring about her soul, to these sex-hungry men, to the complete disregard for this poor woman dead upon the threshold of this doorstep and dismembering her piece by piece in Shiloh, mind you, in Shiloh.

This is a horrific act by the Benjamin Knights in Gibeah, something that was remembered, and honestly, I don't know how this Levite even put his head on the pillow because it's suggested in this text in the next morning, he arose.

[21:05] I don't know how this guy even slept. What has sin done in this nation? Well, what we are experiencing today in Judges 19 is the evil consequences of forsaking God's rule and doing what is right in our own eyes.

This is literally hell on earth, complete darkness. This is an account which went down in history. It's something to be remembered.

Not only was it remembered among the people of that day, because we see in verse 30, such a thing has never happened or been seen from the day that the people of Israel came up from the land of Egypt, even back since Moses' leadership in this nation.

It's never been known until this day. They said, consider it, take counsel and speak. Consider it. Acknowledge this horrific act. Take counsel. Look at this and learn from it. And don't fail to speak out against this from ever happening ever again.

[22:19] Not only was this remembered to them in verse 30, but it was also remembered by the prophet Hosea around 200 years after this horrific act in Gebeah.

In Hosea 10, 9, it says, from the days of Gebeah, you have sinned, O Israel. There they have continued.

Shall not the war against the unjust overtake them in Gebeah? Even Hosea is acknowledging the deep amount of sin and God's judgment upon the state of Israel, the nation of Israel.

And man, looking at this passage, passage. You know, I don't know if it's any coincidence that this is Judges 19, because if you look back to Genesis 19, we see Sodom and Gomorrah with a very similar account of men pounding on the door and this woman being thrown out to the wolves. This is literally the new Sodom. It's even worse than before. And the one striking difference is that the Lord directly intervenes and consumes Sodom and Gomorrah.

[ 23 : 27 ] Right? He threw down fire and Sodom and Gomorrah was no more because of their sin. But remember, in this narrative, the Lord allows the self-inflicted sin of this nation to collapse upon one another.

And we're also going to see this next week as we finish the book of Judges within the last two chapters next week. And Lord willing, we'll jump into the narrative as the judgeship continues into 1 Samuel in the next year or two, Lord willing.

And these events foreshadow Saul and his own failures as Israel's leader. Like this continues. This was a moment in history that shook this nation that we just read.

What dark days for this chosen nation, right? An elect nation, a supreme and sovereign nation. Like those times we can recall back in history of the Twin Towers being on fire, maybe even now we can recall a dark moment in our lives where sin consumed us.

All the sin from those who have gone before us, maybe family members and relatives, maybe friends that we know who have gone before us, who have died and passed away, and also even in our own lives.

[ 24 : 55 ] Sin is dark, it separates us from God. And nothing we do can ever compensate for that transgression. Nothing we can ever do.

It took the divine intervention of God, which leads me to the second and final point today. His darkness cannot overcome the light.

God's love. I know you guys are searching for something good in this passage. I want to find Christ in this and we're going to find him right now. Fortunately for us, if you are a believer in Christ, there is light in that darkness.

If you can remember the sin that consumed you before knowing him intimately and knowing him personally, you see that little, little flame from a distance as the Lord's drawing you to him.

And that light is the light of Christ and forgiveness of those dark moments and he takes those.

Isaiah 2, 9 says that the people who walk in darkness will see a great light.

[ 26 : 09 ] For those who live in the land of darkness, a light will shine. And even Isaiah prophesied, prophecy was fulfilled in Matthew 4, 16 where it says, the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light.

And for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned. And to all those who trust in him by faith are brought from the depths and the pits of the darkness that consumes our lives and we are rescued, literally, rescued, a helicopter dropped into history for say and rescued us, picked us off the ground and revived our soul.

As Colossians says, Colossians 1, 13, he has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

God, do you not know who you belong to this morning?

Or have you become apathetic to the grace of God? And this is not something that is to be withheld from the world around us. It's not something that we keep in and we just go about our merry way.

[ 27 : 38 ] We go to work, we go to church, we go to the grocery store, we do this and do that. No. We give this truth away. We take special care of seeing what happened just like in verse 30 says.

We consider our sinfulness. We take counsel. We acknowledge that and we speak. This is what we ought to do as well.

This truth we give away in word and in deed the forgiveness of this sin. The light in this darkness. This is the light we see when we have nowhere to turn.

When the Lord gets us in these moments where we have nowhere else to go, no other posture to stand but to fall upon our knees and say, God, I need you.

We turn to him and submit and surrender all of our mess to him. And we're confident in this. That when we do this, he takes it.

[ 28 : 45 ] He takes our sin and he deals with it for us. And he did this upon the cross where our sins were placed upon him. Our sins lay there with him, died with him, were buried with him, and we are

now a new creation who are resurrected with him.

While the consequences of sin are still imminent. Sin is really messy. And even if you're coming to Christ, if you're in your new or newly years of walking with the Lord, yeah, sin's still going to have a ripple effect.

But that guilt is gone. You're still going to have to deal with the issues that happened in your past darkness. sin is still going to have to deal with it.

You're still going to have to worry about those traffic violations. You're still going to have to do all that. But man, that guilt is gone and you are free. Remember Romans 8, verse 1.

For there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. No condemnation. You are set free. Well, some may ask, Brent, why this story?

[ 29 : 59 ] It's horrible. Why would you put this image in my head? Are you nuts? Well, stories like this, I just had a conversation yesterday after the men's breakfast with a gentleman, that stories like these, when we see that darkness from the past.

It truly showcases human potential, doesn't it? When we act apart from God's will. And it shows us the extreme levels of sin, similar to 9-11, how horrific that was that day.

So what we do is cling to Jesus Christ. We cling to Him who keeps watch over our souls, over our lives. And we always watch over the souls of one another, our brothers and our sisters in Christ, just as the one watches over our soul.

This is how we must read the horrific act in this narrative. We must consider it. We must take counsel. We must speak. If only, if we would only realize sin's tremendous potential in our lives, we would be driven daily to the feet of Jesus Christ, in desperation to never become the person that we used to be.

Literally to hate sin, as 1 John talks about. But instead, instead of dwelling upon that past, seeing that potential of sin, we know that we've become a new creation by the power of the Holy Spirit.

[ 31 : 45 ] Okay? This is the truth that does not just come and go. It's not something that's here today and is gone tomorrow. It's here on your best days. It's here on your worst days.

It's here if you feel like it's here or if you feel distant from God. This is truth in His Word. It lasts. It's an anchor for your soul. It pulls us forward even in those moments of darkness when the next 9-11 happens.

If you are His, you are free from your past sins and He has bought you with a price, church. If you aren't in Christ today, if you are still walking in this darkness, if you relate to the dark history of this nation, if something rings a bell when I'm talking about that light at the end of the tunnel that really hasn't made a formal commitment to, it doesn't matter what you have done.

You hear me this morning? It doesn't matter what you have done. It doesn't matter how many times you did anything in your past. What matters is that you respond right here and right now to the grace of God through the power of Jesus' cross and come to Jesus by faith.

And let's do this together. Come to the light of the gospel and experience the light of life He has for you. You may ask, how deep is your sin? Well, Jesus' love is far deeper for you.

[ 33 : 24 ] You may ask, how dark is your sin? Well, Jesus' grace is far brighter. You might ask, how strong is your sin? We will answer, Jesus' power is far stronger.

Just as we sang this morning, Jesus is a mighty Savior. And those who are saints in the room, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation just as the people of Israel, a people for God's own possession religion.

So that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you from darkness into His marvelous light. Darkness has no place in your life.

And how often we try to tempt ourselves and we're captivated by that darkness at times. Yeah, this sometimes haunts us as Christians, but we know who we belong to.

We know who we belong to, church. It doesn't matter how much your past haunts you. I know some people who have a really rough history and these fines just keep coming out of the woodwork.

[ 34 : 40 ] Another fine for some little theft that they did when they were on drugs in the past. It haunts us. It comes out and it just kind of tries to trip you up. Don't let it. Let the word of God be sufficient for you and draw you to confidence in the blood that bought you.

Consider it. Take counsel and speak. Let it instead encourage us. Let it root us so that we never forget the freedom that you are your sins grips.

The sins grip in your life has no grip in your life anymore once you trust in Christ. Think. There's something that anchors us in who we are when we remember who we were.

There's something that anchors you church saints in this room. There's something that anchors you of who you are when you're anchored and you understand you take counsel in who you were.

It humbles you. You know that what you speak is not of your own doing. This is not grace that you can conjure up. There's no amount of money that can purchase the payment for your sin.

[ 35 : 53 ] It took grace alone through your faith. The church should probably look a little bit different than the world, right? You can pay the officer to get out of a fine but you can't pay the fine of your sin.

It's time our lives look a little different than the world because our God is quite different from the world. He is not of this world and the world is very dark.

So let us shine as bright lights together and get busy in this church to shine this light and as verse 30 says to consider this, consider our own darkness, our own sin, take counsel in it and speak.

Let us speak, church. Let's pray.