

Judges, Sermon #31

Judges 9

Last week, we saw the disgrace of Gideon—greedy, idolatry, immoral—many wives plus a concubine—70 sons, plus a son through the concubine, second-class wife
The fella's name was Abimelech—he lived in a different city

Gideon was sowing the seeds of sin, which in turn, reaped destruction—as we shall see—for his family and nation.

I've entitled tonight's message "The Seeds of Gideon"

Judges 9:1

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

Judges 9:1-7

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

Gideon named the illegitimate son of the concubine Abimelech (Judges 8:31).

The name “Abimelech” means “my father is a king.”

Is that a true statement?

David/Solomon – power corrupts

It is strange that Gideon would name his son this, and now this son will try to live up to his name.

Gideon should not have had a concubine.

More often than not, sin leads to more sin.

This is the longest chapter in the Book of Judges and one of the most depressing.

This chapter records three stages in Abimelech’s political career.

How he got it!

How he held it!

How he lost it!

The first stage was Abimelech’s . . .

1. Seizing the kingdom – vs. 1-22

Abimelech was the son of Gideon by a concubine who lived with her father’s family in Shechem.

Abimelech lived apart from his daddy.

The conspiracy of Abimelech begins with selfish ambition/lust for power after Gideon’s death.

Abimelech covets the throne, doing what was right in his own eyes.

Selfish ambition (vs. 1-3)—it wasn’t about what is best for his brothers or sister—it was all about him.

When we are selfish or have selfish ambition, we are never more like the Devil—“I will ascend into heaven!” (the five “I wills” of Satan)—if we exalt ourselves

In Matthew 23:12, Jesus said, *“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”*

Abimelech was his own god and he had no interest in God’s will for the nation. His only interest was his own—Abimelech works the system.

He took money from the Baal worshipers to finance his crusade.

This was a public announcement that he had renounced the God of Israel and was on the side of Baal – vs. 4.

Abimelech hired some worthless fellows – 9:4

Abimelech hired these men to destroy his step brothers.

He sets out to murder his family.

We see this destruction – 9:5

Abimelech reasons that if he kills all the competition he will be left to take the throne.

Sixty-nine boys are slaughtered on the butcher block of greedy ambition.

How does the nation of Israel respond? They do nothing.

They tolerate treachery and wickedness and do nothing.

The reason the United States has a murder problem is it tolerates killers.

As our nation becomes more anti-God, it will be getting more cruel.

We are cruel especially to unborn babies that are being slaughtered at a rate of one and a half to two million babies per year.

The degree of man’s wickedness is reflected in his cruelty to others.

Men inflict cruelty to gain, maintain, or demonstrate power over others and to instill fear in others.

Satan is vicious, ruthless, and cruel and is out to destroy what God has done.

When men are controlled by sin or Satan, he or she becomes cruel too.

Cruelty does not build up, it tears down and destroys.

There is nothing good about cruelty.

Cruelty not only hurts others, it hurts you too.

Proverbs 11:17, *“The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.”*

What Does God Consider Cruel?

1. **Jealousy:** The Bible says that **jealousy is cruel as the grave** (Song of Solomon 8:6a). Jealousy can do some cruel things; jealousy can say some cruel things.
2. **Wrath:** Proverbs 27:4 – **Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?** How many of us have been the object of someone’s wrath?
3. **Hatred:** Psalm 25:19 – Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and **they hate me with cruel hatred.**
4. **False Witnesses:** Psalm 27:12 – Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for **false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.**
The cruelty of words—lied about and slandered.

Folks, you want to see cruelty?

Choosing some huge stone as the site of execution, Abimelech and his assassins committed the heinous crime of mass murder, the unspeakable crime of beheading his own half-brothers one-by-one (vs. 5).

There is a good ambition and bad ambition, a righteous ambition and an evil ambition. Ambition becomes evil when it is for selfish purposes.

Abimelech had such a passionate desire to be king that he allowed nothing to stand in his way, not even the lives of innocent people.

But, the youngest brother *Joe thum* escaped—hiding in a place

Vs. 7 – first parable in the Bible

The trees in Israel decided to anoint a king over them.

They first asked the olive tree—“Reign over us.”

Olive tree said, “no”—for the olive tree produced food, ointment, and medicine.

Olives were one of the most valued products of Israel.

Moreover, it was the oil from olives that kept the lamps burning in the Holy Place.

They asked next the fig tree to serve as king.

The fig tree also refused.

Figs were an important crop and the tree provided abundant shade from the sun.

Nathaniel was under the fig tree.

Vine – produced grapes

These were all valuable and productive and too busy to rule the other trees.

Bramble bush said, “Sure, come and shadow thyself” [laughable]—its meager shade

The bramble has nothing to offer

It’s a worthless bush—thorny bush grew low to the ground and produced no fruit and very little shade

Constant problem for farmers, only good was fuel for the fire.

The bramble bush is a reminder of our sinful nature

It produces no good fruit; it entangles and destroys its victims, its thorns produce infections in us

The bramble king is Satan

But the bramble bush, *Joe thum* said, was Abimelech.

Vs. 19-21

There is a throne within us—if it is not filled by Christ, it will be filled by something of our flesh.

There is a constant struggle between our flesh and the Holy Spirit.

There is a constant conflict for the crown of our life

If the Lord is not in control, then our carnal nature will dominate our decisions—dating, relationships, authority issues, perception of ourselves, financial decisions, work decisions

If the Holy Spirit does not rule, the flesh rules.

Who is on the throne of my life? Is it Christ or is it me?

Are we yielded to the Lord or to ourselves?

Abimelech yielded to his own self; he was the sinful and wicked son of Gideon.

We see the seeds of Gideon.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Who's on the throne of our life?

Who's driving our ship?

Are we under the control and leadership of Jesus Christ and His Word?

Or, are we under our flesh—

our attitudes

our language

our thoughts

our actions

are unkind, unholy, and selfish?

We need to make up our minds if we want to live for Christ or not—then yield ourselves to Him every day.

Are we cruel? Wrath? Jealousy? Hatred?—with our words?