

Judges, Sermon #7

Judges 2

A wicked generation of people had come on the scene – they did not know the Lord –
vs. 10

They went into idol worship – serving false gods – Baal and Ashtaroth
Because of their sin, it brought severe judgment – vs. 15e

And we pick up our reading in Judges 2:16

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

Judges 2:16-19

I have entitled tonight's message "Faithfulness"

Let us pray

You may be seated.

Faithfulness

The repetitious cycle of the book of Judges is given in these four verses.

Last time, I began to give you the pattern of an unfaithful people:

First – abominable sin – they forsook the Lord – no other gods

Second – Lord’s chastisement – punishment, judgment

That brought about great distress (#3), and out of this great distress came prayer (#4) –
they cried out to God for deliverance

This crying out – praying – was the fourth part of the pattern of an unfaithful life

How many people cry out to God – when sin has run its full course?

God used the distress of the Israelites to drive them to their knees.

In their terrible distress they finally cried out to God.

Their *crying out to God* is not explicitly mentioned here, but it is mentioned in v. 18 and elsewhere (3:9, 15; 4:3).

The word “groaning” means to cry out under heavy affliction.

The LORD heard the cry of His people and He delivered them.

The deliverance by God is the fifth part of Israel’s unfaithful life

God had to constantly deliver His people from their distress and carnal living.

How? By raising up “judges” to save them – vs. 16

God delivered His people by raising up judges, who defeated the enemy and set Israel free.

The Hebrew word translated “judge” means “to save, to rescue, to deliver”

This word is used six times in vs. 16-19

This is the only place you will find it in all of this book

The judges functioned locally rather than nationally; and in some cases, their terms of office overlapped.

They were chosen from all walks of life and from different tribes – all used by God to save His people from their enemies.

Repeating their evil was the sixth part of Israel's unfaithful life.

Once the enemy had been defeated, the Israelites settled down to live in their new-found peace and freedom.

But tragically, they became spiritually complacent just as they had done before. In their laziness, the Israelites refused to listen to the counsel of their judges. They soon began to rejoin their neighbors.

In God's eyes, the Israelites committed spiritual adultery. They played the harlot, prostituting and giving themselves over to false gods – vs. 17

They failed to learn from what the Lord did. Whenever Israel turned away from the Lord to worship idols, He chastened them severely; and when in their misery they turned back to Him, He liberated them.

But just as soon as they were free and their situation was comfortable again, Israel went right back into the same old sins. (3:7-8, 12; 4:1-4; 6:1; 10:6-7; 13:1)

The people wasted their suffering.

They didn't learn the lessons God wanted them to learn and profit from His chastening.

And so, a continued cycle of progressive sin and failure

This was the final culmination of Israel's unfaithful life (vs. 19) – that the cycle was not broken

God's deliverance should have stirred the people to obey and serve Him more faithfully than before.

But their commitment to God was short-lived.

The people's cry and confession to God was only a temporary, brief, fleeting repentance.

As soon as a judge died and passed from the scene, the people returned to their sinful, evil ways.

And with each turning, they become more corrupt than ever before.

Their sin became progressively worse, their evil increasing more and more, becoming more degenerate and depraved, adding corruption upon corruption and sin upon sin.

Oh, if that is not America!

The Book of Judges is the inspired record of Israel's failures and God's faithfulness.

But if we study this book only as past history, we'll miss the message completely.

This book is about God's people today.

Psalm 106:34-44

Are we in this downward spiral?

Why not determine to be faithful to the Lord – what was the title of the message tonight?

Faithfulness

Judges 2:1

What did God say? Judges 2:1, “. . . *I will never break my covenant with you.*”

I want to talk to you about faithfulness

God places a very high premium on faithfulness.

He is faithful to us in so many ways

(I Corinthians 1:9 says that God is faithful; II Thessalonians 3:3 says the Lord is faithful).

God did not call us to be successful, He called us to be faithful to Him.

In fact, God measures success by our faithfulness.

Many offer excuses why they cannot be faithful.

I can't serve God because I'm not able, not qualified, not gifted, not talented, not smart, not a good talker, and on and on and on.

We feed Him that kind of garbage.

Our problem is not inability but inconsistency.

Why is a faithful man or woman so important? The Bible gives some insight.

I. The Bible has a lot to say about faithfulness

1. The **RARITY** of Faithfulness: Proverbs 20:6, *"Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?"*

Pastor down at Faith Community Bible Church – faithful man

2. The **REWARD** of Faithfulness: Matthew 25:21 – *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."*

Notice the basis of God's "well done." It is faithfulness.

3. The **STABILITY and SUSTENANCE** of Faithfulness: Psalm 31:23, *"O love the Lord, all ye His saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful."*

Here are some . . .

II. Areas We Should Be Faithful In

We should be faithful . . .

1. In **SERVICE**: Matthew 24:44-46, *"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. [45] Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? [46] Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing."*

2. In **STEWARDSHIP** of What God Has Given Us: I Corinthians 4:2, *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."*

3. In **SPEECH**: Proverbs 14:5, *"A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies."*

We should be faithful . . .

4. With the **SECRETS** of Others: Proverbs 11:13, *"A talebearer revealeth secrets. but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter."*

5. Faithful In **SUPPORTING** Others and Meeting Needs: III John 1:5

6. In **STRENGTHENING** and Challenging Others: Proverbs 27:6, *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."*

7. In **SMALL** Things: Luke 16:10, *"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much . . ."*

8. In **SHARING** a Message: Proverbs 25:13, *"As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters."*

History has a host in the Hall of Faithfulness (Hebrews 11).

The blind Gospel writer Fanny Crosby impacted the lives around her for Christ in such a way that they recorded on her tombstone, "She hath done what she could."

(Mark 14:8) She did quite a bit, writing over 8000 songs.

In spite of the rebellion and disobedience in Judges, there still could be found examples of faithfulness.

* In Judges 2:1, God is faithful and will not break his covenant with His people.

* In serving the Lord: 2:6-7 . . . The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua.

* In keeping His Word with a promise: 2:15 . . . God keeps His promise of blessing and chastening. God keeps His Word.

* In obedience with God's commands: 6:25-27 . . . Gideon destroys the altar of Baal.

Do we obey God's commands? If not, we are not faithful to Him. Jesus told us if we loved Him, we'd keep His commandments.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Will you say to the Lord tonight, "I will do what I can"?

Can you say to the Lord tonight , "I am a faithful servant of Yours"?

Salvation