

## Judges, Sermon #9

Judges 3

I have entitled tonight's sermon "Cold People"

Judges 3:1

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

Judges 3:1-7

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

## **Cold People**

In Chapter 3:1-7 – the proving of Israel – the testing of God’s people

What principles can we gain to help us in our living for the Lord?

The first one is found in vs. 1a

God left some nations in the land after Joshua.

Here’s the principle:

**Did you know that the Lord may leave obstacles in our lives for the purpose of developing our faith and trust in Him and to develop obedience and maturity in us?**

These obstacles may involve hostile people, difficult situations at work, school, or in a marriage, health, or financial troubles.

God challenged us in II Timothy 2:3 to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

God tested His people to prove who would really obey His commandments (v. 4)

It is easy to serve God when there is no pressure, difficulties . . .

We find out about ourselves and others when things are thick.

★The result of God’s test was most tragic: the Israelites failed and disobeyed God.

They committed three very serious evils.

First, the Israelites lived among the worldly (v. 5).

They settled down into the towns and communities and became neighbors to the people whom they were to destroy.

Consequently, they engaged these people in fellowship, in trade, and eventually took on their lifestyles and ways – compromising, excusing, reasoning their way from the truth

They refused to live a life of separation from the world, a life devoted to God and His righteousness.

They were assimilated into the heathen culture.

That carried on until . . .

Secondly, the Israelites compromised their own children by permitting intermarriage with the Canaanites (v. 6).

Sometimes the sins of the parents allow greater deviation for the children

What parents do in moderation, children do in excess

God had clearly and forcefully forbidden intermarriage. Deuteronomy 7:1-4

Joshua 23:11-13

Why had God been so forceful in forbidding intermarriage?

Because the effect of intermarriage is so serious: through intermarriage, two distinct people become one people (Genesis 34:16) – become one people

Dinah, daughter of Jacob, was raped by Shechem

Two kinds of people in this world – saved and the unsaved

In marriage – the saved marry the saved

Saved people can marry saved people – regardless of the color of their skin.

The New Testament tells us not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

When the Israelites intermarried with the Canaanites, they lost their identity.

In this, the Israelites failed God—miserably failed Him.

They married ungodly people, the women and men of the Canaanites.

The Israelites lived amongst them, then they married them

And, third, the Israelites engaged in false worship and idolatry.

The unbelieving marriage partner brings his religion (practices and beliefs) and implements it upon the family

This sounds a lot like the story of Lot – pitched his tent, dwelt, children were married

Which Psalm reflects this same teaching? Psalm 1 – walk, stand, sit

★The obstacles of our life are a gymnasium of training for the purpose of developing faith in God and obedience in us

**Principle #2 is found in vs. 8**

**Principle #2 – God chastises because we have been disobedient and are under His correction.**

God does chastise or discipline His people when they continue to sin.

But chastisement is for a very specific purpose: to drive the believer to his knees, arousing him to turn back to God – that's what happened in vs. 8

Did it work? Yes – vs. 9

Hebrews 12:11 says that chastisement is for yielding the fruits of righteousness within us

It is the suffering of chastisement that shows a believer the error of his way – that drives him to cry out to God for deliverance.

This is the clear teaching of Scripture:

1) God chastises or disciplines the believer.

Jesus said to the church at Laodicea – lukewarm – plenty of material goods –  
 Revelation 3:19, *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”*

Proverbs 3:11-12, *“My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of His correction: For whom the LORD loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.”*

God does spank His children (Hebrews 12).

We do reap what we sow.

Second, when a believer cries out to God in sincerity and repentance, God delivers him.

★ God chastises when we are disobedient to bring about repentance, renewal, and revival

Israel got into trouble because they compromised with the enemy and found out they could not do it.

Jesus warned us we could not do this in Matthew 6:24.

No man can serve two masters.

By straddling the fence and developing a taste for sensuality, God's people lost their first love and served Baal and Ashtoreth and anything else that came along  
 – vs 7e

The same pattern occurred at the church in Ephesus

Revelation 2:4-5, *“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”*

What happens when a Christian loses his first love for the Lord or when he does not seek first the kingdom of God?

- The Lord is not as special as He used to be – vs. 17 – forgot Him
- We spend less time or no time with Him in prayer and Bible study or even church
- We become uncomfortable around other Christians
- Sinful habits begin to surface again in our life
- A person's heart begins to grow cold and hard – widow woman who lived in pleasure – she was dead even though she was alive

These are just a few things that happen when we lose our first love.

The question I want to ask at this point is "Are these things happening to us right now?"

If so, we need to put on the brakes and ask the Lord to turn our life around.

Get back on track and do the will of God in our life.

**When we disobey God, folks, we lose ground.**

**We lose power, blessings, and influence for Jesus Christ.**

The Bible warns us of the dangers of losing spiritual ground in our life.

- Ephesians 4:27 – **Neither give place to the devil – don't give any room to operate, don't give any opportunity**
- II John 8 – **Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.**

Are we growing or slowing in our spiritual growth?

In the area of spiritual growth, Christians are to be:

- swimming not sinking
- developing not declining
- dilating not decreasing
- stretching not shrinking
- flourishing not fading
- inflating not imploding
- working not withering
- helping not hindering the cause of Christ

## **Cold People**

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Where are we? Look at ourselves and judge ourselves.

Are the obstacles in your life the result of God's testing or His chastisement?

Have we lost our first love for Jesus Christ?

Are we trying to serve two masters?

Have we lost spiritual ground in our life?

If so, acknowledge the problem; confess it to the Lord; clear your conscience with God and others you have wronged; get Christian counsel; get back into the Bible and to church; remove any hindrances in your life; serve the Lord and others with a heart of love and compassion.

Are we really excited in our devotions?

Is our walk and talk with God active and alive?