

Read the Whole Bible with Pastor

Monday (June 5) – Judges 4

In Judges 4 we read the story of Deborah and Barak. Israel cries out to the Lord for a deliverer, and He provides. This deliverer was supposed to be the man Barak, who would lead God's people to freedom, as Othniel and Ehud before him. However, Barak's cowardice forces the prophetess Deborah to take on the leadership role which should have been assumed by Barak. This leadership role assumed by Deborah is the exception which proves the rule of God's order of creation. In the beginning, the Lord created man to be the head and woman to be the helper, as St. Paul reaffirms in 1 Timothy 2. Barak's failure in this regard leaves him without glory in his victory (v. 9). But the Lord still granted Israel the victory. This reminds us that even when husbands break from God's order of creation by failing to lead, or when wives step beyond their vocational responsibilities, the Lord is still at work to accomplish His purposes. However, life according to God's order of creation will always be best.

Tuesday (June 6) – Judges 5, 6

In Judges 5 we read the song of Deborah and Barak, which gives us further details on the events of chapter 4. In verse 7 Deborah speaks of her role in Israel as that of a mother. In verse 24 Jael is said to be "most blessed of women." These phrases place blame squarely on Barak for his failure to lead rightly. The Lord can and will use women mightily to accomplish His purposes, just as He did with the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is also called "blessed...among women," (Luke 1:42) and who mothered the Man who brought ultimate deliverance for God's people, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Judges 6 presents Gideon as a new Moses. The angel of the Lord appears to Gideon and calls him, and just like Moses, Gideon is reluctant. However, God is gracious with Gideon because He is determined to use this man to deliver His people. Gideon twice tests God at the end of the chapter. The Lord is gracious with Him; however, we should not take this example as free license to test the Lord. The Scriptures say: "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah" (Deut. 6:16). At Massah, Israel tested the Lord by saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?" (Ex. 17:7). We must not test the Lord by doubting His presence among us when He has promised to be with us to the end of the age (Matt. 28:20). Because of the grace of our Lord, we do not test Him, but we trust His gracious Word to us.

Wednesday (June 7) – Judges 7

In the well-known story of Gideon's victory over the oppressive Midianites in Judges 7, we see the Lord's desire that Israel know without a doubt that He and He alone delivers them from the Midianites. So, with 300 men, the Lord empowers Gideon to defeat the vastly superior army of Midian, just as He had done for Joshua at Jericho (Joshua 6). The Lord alone works salvation for His people. This is why we must always keep the cross of our Lord Jesus before us. In the cross we are stripped of our prideful desire to claim victory for ourselves. Christ alone delivers us from our oppressors of sin, death, and the devil.

Thursday (June 8) – Judges 8

In Judges 8 we see a far-too-common response to God’s gracious act of deliverance. Ephraim quarrels with Gideon, and Succoth refuses to grant hospitality. The human tendency to not recognize the Lord’s working through ordinary men, instead seeing only the man, is on display in this chapter, as it so often is in our lives. Even Gideon falls prey to this attitude in his retribution on the men of Succoth. However, this is what makes the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ so amazing—though we are often like these men, spurning God’s good gifts and failing to see His work through pastors, parents, or friends, the well of His grace never runs dry. The Lord is always merciful to accept our repentance when we turn from our evil ways and trust in His rule over us by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus.

Friday (June 9) – Judges 9

The son of Gideon, Abimelech, seizes the kingly throne over Israel through much unwarranted bloodshed. He reigns apart from the Lord’s will, and so is destined to fail in his efforts. In his selfish pursuit of power, Abimelech becomes like the very kings from whom his father and the other judges had worked to deliver Israel. In setting an ambush against Shechem (v. 34), Abimelech returns Israel to the days of oppression when the highways were abandoned (Judges 5:6) for fear of the evil that would happen there. This story is a warning of where the selfish pursuit of power leads—to evil and death. Such evil and death can only be overcome through the perfect humility of our Lord Jesus (Philippians 2:5-11), to whom we look for help, deliverance, and eternal rescue.

Saturday (June 10) – Judges 10

In Judges 10 we see further disobedience from Israel and the oppression that results in the Lord’s punishment of them. Beginning in verse 10, it seems that the cycle of oppression, which is so common throughout the book of Judges, will be broken again by Israel crying out to the Lord. In verse 13 the Lord refuses to hear the cry for mercy because Israel has not truly repented. The Lord will not be treated as a helper in times of need who is otherwise despised. “Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means!” (Romans 1b-2a). The Lord will not forgive those who revel in sin, thinking that their sin is acceptable because the Lord always forgives. This is why the Lord gave His apostles the responsibility to both forgive and to retain sins (John 20:23). We must take this as a solemn warning concerning the gravity of sin and repentance.

Sunday (June 11) – Judges 11

Jephthah makes a rash vow, which ends up costing him the life of his only child. (Note that God did not command or endorse this vow.) We must not be rash to make promises and vows. Instead, we trust in the One whose vow to sacrifice the life of His only Son was by no means rash, but grants unto us forgiveness, life, and salvation. Therefore, we ought to avoid evil by letting our “yes” be “yes” and our “no” be “no” (Matthew 5:37).