

Sunday Night Message

September 16, 2018

Judges 9 – The Rise and Fall of Abimelech

Series – *Judges*

Text – Judges 9

Introduction

In chapter nine, we will learn what happens to the descendants of Gideon's family after driving out the Mideonites.

We will also see the principle of sowing and reaping in action here. Sometimes we think that people actually get away with the evil acts that they commit. Not true.

"He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail." (Proverbs 22:8)

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Galatians 6:7-8)

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

The main character in chapter nine is Abimelech, one of Gideon's sons, who decided to have all of his brothers killed so that he can be the king. You will remember that Gideon turned down the job of king. He stated that the Lord would be their king. (Judges 8:22 – 23)

The only thing we know about Abimelech is that he is the son of a concubine that Gideon had in Shechem. (Judges 8:31) Gideon had "many wives", which led to this problem with one of his many sons. Abimelech apparently did not like being a "second-class son," so he decided to do something about it.

Note polygamy caused many problems in the Bible – Abraham's sons, Jacob's sons, David's sons.

I The Slaughter of Gideon's Sons (vs. 1 – 6)

Gideon conspires with the people from his mother's side of the family, and they agree to help Abimelech. They give Abimelech the money which they take from the "house of Baal-berith," which was one of their false gods. The money is used to hire "vain and light" persons to assassinate Gideon's sons.

This was a public execution, no doubt intended to instill fear in the people.

II The Story told by Gideon's Surviving Son (vs. 7 – 21)

The youngest son of Gideon escapes, and stands atop Mt. Gerizim where he could be heard by all of the people and he delivers a parable, which is the first parable recorded in Scripture.

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." Edmund Burke

The olive tree refused to act, the fig tree refused to act, the vine refused to act, so there was nobody left but the bramble, a sticker bush.

What he was saying through this parable was that oftentimes good men will refuse to take their place of leadership, perhaps because they are already busy doing good things. However, when good men refuse to act,

there will always be an evil person that will seize the opportunity to gain power, and use it for his own purposes. This is what happens to the people of Shechem. Gideon refused to lead, and then a void in leadership creates an opportunity for an evil person to gain control.

Bad things happen when good men do nothing. By refusing to get involved, we sometimes create a scenario where the wrong kind of people start calling the shots. Let's apply this to the local church. Often times there are carnal people within the church that are hungry for power, and they are always looking for opportunities to advance themselves. And there are others within the body, who are good men, who just sit back and let it happen: perhaps because they have a lot of things going on in their lives, or maybe because they are just trusting men, who are willing to yield to others. By the way, it is never a good sign when an individual is seeking position. Truly spiritual people will often be reluctant to take positions because they either feel unworthy, or doubt their own ability. However, we need to not neglect the opportunities and responsibilities that God places in front of us, because when we refuse, it opens up the door to someone else who may not be God's choice.

We can also see this in government. Good people often refuse to get involved, leaving the door wide open to men who may not have the best interests of the people at hand. The end result of all of this is that things begin to change for the worse for everybody. Good people need to stay in the process, so that we all can keep the good things that God has entrusted to us. How involved are you in the process? Do you get involved in the local church, and in your community and local government? Do you even vote? We need good people to do their part. The devil never stops trying to advance his agenda. We need to stay in the game in order to keep him from taking from us the wonderful blessings that God has given us.

Gideon refused to become their king. He stated that God should be their king. That was good, but he should have made sure this nation was actually allowing God to be their king. The nation gradually went back to her old ways. After the death of Gideon, some godly person should have stepped up and lead the nation in a godly direction. And, even after the death of all of Gideon's sons, somebody should have rallied the troops against Abimelech.

People need to get involve, not because they are seeking notoriety, but because they want to make sure that the devil's crowd or the carnal crowd doesn't gain a foothold.

Jotham fled to Beer (probably Beersheba), which was as far south as he could go. Perhaps, he should have stayed to fight.

III The Satisfaction of Justice for Abimelech's Slaughter (vs. 22 – 57)

In the end, both the people of Shechem and Abimelech himself, got what was coming to them.

"Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate." (Psalm 34:21)

"The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness." (Proverbs 21:12)

Throughout Israel's history, people remembered the humiliating way that Abimelech died:

"Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also." (2 Samuel 11:21)