

The Greatest Story (Part 11):

Depravity and Deliverance

Judges 2:7-23

Memory Verses: Psalm 34:17

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

When I was growing up as a kid the best music was Guns N Roses, Metallica, DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince... but I loved Michael Jackson. Beat It, Thriller, Billie Jean... as soon as the beat came on you just started moving right? I remember wanting to hear "Man in the Mirror." So I sat by the radio just listening for hours to hear that one song. There wasn't no internet, spotify, itunes... none of that. So if I wanted to hear the latest song I had to just sit there and wait until it came on the radio. But we also had these (tape player). And if I was quick enough... when the song came on I could pop in one of these (tape) and hit record and boom... now I had the song recorded. I would go to school and show my friends... I got Man in the mirror recorded last night. And my friends would be like man.... make me a copy. So I would pop in my copy and then I would pop in a new tape and copy my recording to their tape. And then their friends would be like... make me a copy and so they would pop in their copy of the copy and make a new copy. And then the friends of my friends friends would say, make us a copy and then my friend's friends would make their friends a copy of a copy of a copy of the original copy. And their friends would be like... mannn... this sounds like junk! Why? Because each time you make a copy from a copy you lose quality and eventually someone is getting a really funky copy.

Tapes don't hold the quality of music from copy to copy. Something is lost each time it is transferred. The same is true for us. If we are not careful each time we transfer our values and morals and principals to the next generation we can degrade the quality of those values... all the way up until there is nothing left of the original.

I think about the dangerous trend in our country towards socialism. It seems that we've forgotten that for the last 200 years we've been fighting to protect democracy and our way of life and now all of a sudden we desire to be... not free. Ronald Reagan said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

You see... if we aren't careful, we will only reproduce at best a

muddled and less sturdy version of our values in our children and so on. John Wesley put it this way, "what one generation tolerates, the next will embrace." And I'm here today to tell you this... if we tolerate sin in our generation... our children will embrace it in theirs.

Look with me in the book of **Judges 2:7 and 10**. The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua... but after all of that generation died there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work he had done for Israel. There was a disconnect somewhere. There was a loss of the integrity of the values of the people in the transfer of those values to their children so that in only one generation "they did not know the Lord." It's scary how quickly we can lose our values... especially in the church.

Last week we saw how to keep from losing it. God demanded that idols and idolators be devoted to destruction. Of course we don't kill people who are idolators anymore, but we are to kill our own sin and to strive towards holiness in our lives. If we allow any sin a way into our lives we are in danger of being completely depraved.

Joshua was told to devote all the inhabitants of the promised land to destruction... but as we will see today, he did not obey... and because of his disobedience, in one generation Israel had completely abandoned God.

Today it is my prayer that we will recognize the power of sin to destroy our love for God in one generation... but that we will also recognize the power of God's mercy to deliver us from sin and bring revival. Today I want you to see that... **The Power of Sin Corrupts Quickly But The Power of God's Mercy Delivers Immensely**

Let's read **Judges 2:10-23** together and see what God wants to show us about the power of sin and the power of his merciful deliverance in the book of Judges.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we notice is that we are utterly depraved and corrupted by sin. **Depravity: The Lure of Sin is Greater Than Our Resolve (Judges 2:11-15)**. Depravity is the sinful state of mankind that we cannot escape under our own strength. If there is anything we have discovered over the course of the last 10,000 years, it is that our flesh is very weak. We can try to white knuckle it and give it our best shot... but in the end lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life will get the best of us. Why?

Because sin is seductive. Look at **vs.11-13**. They served the Baals and went after other gods. Who are the Baals? Are they gods they invented? No, they were the gods of the Canaanites. As we've been looking through Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua we've seen God warn the Israelites time and time again to not associate with the inhabitants of the promised land. When they met them in the desert,

God said destroy them. When they were to take the land they were to devote them to destruction. They were to kill them because if they left any of them alive they would be seduced by their gods. This is exactly what happens... because sin is seductive. It is very hard to resist. So when they left the inhabitants alive they became their neighbors and friends and girlfriends and wives. They saw the Baals everyday and eventually adopted them because it was familiar to them. **The sins we tend to fall into are the ones we see the most often.**

It reminds me of a conversation I had with a missionary who had just come off of the field in Thailand. Her and her husband had been ministering with women who were in the sex industry there. Their goal was to free these women from sex slavery... and that is a noble goal indeed. But I'll never forget what she said... that is no ministry for a man. They see these women offering themselves up to men all the time and the temptation is too great. I couldn't help but wonder where that temptation had led her husband and if that was the reason they came off of the mission field. Sin is seductive and if you let yourself be exposed to it... it will defeat you. You are not strong enough to avoid sin because you are depraved. The sins we fall into are the ones we expose ourselves to.

What about television, video games, and music. There is most definitely a connection to behaviors and what people are exposed to. That is why we must guard our eyes and our hearts. That we flee temptation rather than allow it to be prevalent in our lives. The bottom line is... **Sin must be put to death – if you allow it to stick around, it will infect you.**

My wife will clean for days and days after any one of our children get sick. Why? Because the only thing worse than one kid being sick is all the kids being sick... and she hates that scenario more than anything in this world. So she cleans and she disinfects and she cleans some more and disinfects some more. All to avoid the sickness to spread. If you don't do something to stop the seductiveness of sin it will infect you. And just like with the Israelites... from one generation to the next... the sins we tolerate will be embraced by those who follow us. Mom and Dad... be careful you aren't spreading sin to your children.

Sin is seductive and it is destructive. We can't stop sinning and we can't avoid the consequences. Look at **vs.14-15**. The lord gave them over to their enemies. It even says that the lord was against them. Why? Because he had warned them and begged them to not be seduced by the gods and sins of the inhabitants... and they did not listen. It says... they were in distress because of their sin. Get this... Sin does nothing but destroy!

So what can we do? If we cannot escape sin... we need a savior.

The Power of Sin Corrupts Quickly But The Power of God's Mercy Delivers Immensely. What is deliverance? **Deliverance: The Mercy of God to Help Us Escape Our Depravity (Judges 16-18).** God knows we can't escape sin on our own so he is moved with pity and helps us – **vs18**. Because of God's mercy and pity he saw that the Israelites were blinded to God in their depravity and so he sent judges to save them from their distress.

There are 12 judges mentioned in the book of Judges. 12 is a regularly used number in the Bible. 12 Tribes of Israel. 12 Disciples. 12 Judges. And of these 12 really only 6 are given much attention. I encourage you to read through the book of Judges and get a read on each of these. Their stories are powerful and interesting. Judges is not a dull book. But of those 6 only 2 are really emphasized over multiple chapters. Gideon and Samson.

Gideon was a weak man who lacked courage or faith in God. But God raised him up as a leader who led the nation out of the oppression of the Midianites. Samson was a strong and courageous man who lacked self control. Both of these men show us that God uses flawed people to continue his plan. Men like Gideon and Samson would save the people of Israel but each time they did the Israelites would turn back to false gods and God would have to discipline them. Look at **verses 19-23**. What a vicious cycle.

So eventually God sent us a judge who was not flawed and through whom the cycle would not continue. That judge's name is Jesus. God has sent us Jesus to pay the discipline of sinful depravity in our place. God has sent Jesus to stop the cycle of the distress of sin on humanity.

And he has also sent us his Holy Spirit to help us flee the seduction of sin. Get this... we can't escape sin on our own... but through the power of the Holy Spirit we can. So our dependence is upon his strength to defeat sin, not ours. I hope you understand this today... the only way to stop the cycle of sin being handed down from one generation to the next is Jesus. **The only cure for the depravity of men is Jesus. The Power of Sin Corrupts Quickly. The Power of God's Mercy Delivers Immensely**

Application (Resolution, You)

So... are you depraved in your sinfulness? Let me ask it another way; have you noticed that no matter how hard you try to keep from sinning, you can't stop? If so... you need Jesus?

Have you noticed that when you rely on your own strength to be pure, it hardly works? If so... you need the power of the Holy Spirit in you.

Do you fear the final consequence of your sin? Do you fear the destruction and distress of eternal hell because of your sinfulness? If so... you need to meet the Judge named Jesus Christ who saves from sin, and

hell and can make you pure before God forever. Yes, you will still sin, but because of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, God will not hold that sin against you. All you have to do is put your faith and trust in the his Judge, Jesus.

For those of you who are saved... stop sinning? Just stop giving in to it? Why would you keep going back to sin the way the Israelites did, when your sin has been paid for? **Stop turning to a depraved sinfulness when Jesus has already paid the price for your sin.** Get this... Jesus shows us that God desires to deliver us so be delivered. Listen to this... our memory verse for this week. **Psalm 34:17** when the righteous cry out for deliverance, Jesus delivers. You can find the power of deliverance over your sin today in Jesus Christ. **The Power of Sin Corrupts Quickly. The Power of God's Mercy Delivers Immensely**

Conclusion

So real quick I want us to come back to the illustration of the tape player and the copy of the copy of the copy. When you keep making copies on tapes you lose the quality. When you go from generation to generation you can lose your values and fall into sinfulness. We are only one generation away from losing our love for God.

But thats why we have CDs. In the mid 1980's the Compact Disc was invented to ensure quality from copy to copy. How was this accomplished? Because when a CD is copied it has a digital code that stores the original song. It's what is referred to as Digital Zero. So... when a copy was made the Digital Zero original was copied too without loss of quality. The source was in the copy.

So.. how do we keep from losing our values from one generation to the next? We stop trying to copy ourselves, and instead we point the next generation to digital zero... to the source. The source is Jesus Christ. The only one who can save us from our depravity is Jesus Christ. Point people to him and you will ensure that the next generation does not fail. **The Power of Sin Corrupts Quickly. The Power of God's Mercy Delivers Immensely**