

Judges 9:1-57 Abimelech son of Jerub-Baal went to his mother's brothers in Shechem and said to them and to all his mother's clan, v2 "Ask all the citizens of Shechem, 'Which is better for you: to have all seventy of Jerub-Baal's sons rule over you, or just one man?' Remember, I am your flesh and blood." v3 When the brothers repeated all this to the citizens of Shechem, they were inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother." v4 They gave him seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, and Abimelech used it to hire reckless adventurers, who became his followers. v5 He went to his father's home in Ophrah and on one stone murdered his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerub-Baal. But Jotham, the youngest son of Jerub-Baal, escaped by hiding. v6 Then all the citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo gathered beside the great tree at the pillar in Shechem to crown Abimelech king. v7 When Jotham was told about this, he climbed up on the top of Mount Gerizim and shouted to them, "Listen to me, citizens of Shechem, so that God may listen to you. v8 One day the trees went out to anoint a king for themselves. They said to the olive tree, 'Be our king.' v9 "But the olive tree answered, 'Should I give up my oil, by which both gods and men are honoured, to hold sway over the trees?' v10 "Next, the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come and be our king.' v11 "But the fig tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to hold sway over the trees?' v12 "Then the trees said to the vine, 'Come and be our king.' v13 "But the vine answered, 'Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and men, to hold sway over the trees?' v14 "Finally all the trees said to the thornbush, 'Come and be our king.' v15 "The thornbush said to the trees, 'If you really want to anoint me king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, then let fire come out of the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon!' v16 "Now if you have acted honourably and in good faith when you made Abimelech king, and if you have been fair to Jerub-Baal and his family, and if you have treated him as he deserves-v17 and to think that my father fought for you, risked his life to rescue you from the hand of Midianv18 (but today you have revolted against my father's family, murdered his seventy sons on a single stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his slave girl, king over the citizens of Shechem because he is your brother)-v19 if then you have acted honourably and in good faith toward Jerub-Baal and his family today, may Abimelech be your joy, and may you be his, too!v20 But if you have not, let fire come out from Abimelech and consume you, citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo, and let fire come out from you, citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo, and consume Abimelech!" v21 Then Jotham fled, escaping to Beer, and he lived there because he was afraid of his brother Abimelech. v22 After Abimelech had governed Israel three years,v23 God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem, who acted treacherously against Abimelech. v24 God did this in order that the crime against Jerub-Baal's seventy sons, the shedding of their blood, might be avenged on their brother Abimelech and on the citizens of Shechem, who had helped him murder his brothers. v25 In opposition to him these citizens of Shechem set men on the hilltops to ambush and rob everyone who passed by, and this was reported to Abimelech. v26 Now Gaal son of Ebed moved with his brothers into Shechem, and its citizens put their confidence in him. v27 After they had gone out into the fields and gathered the grapes and trodden them, they held a festival in the temple of their god. While they were eating and drinking, they cursed Abimelech. v28 Then Gaal son of Ebed said, "Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should be subject to him? Isn't he Jerub-Baal's son, and isn't Zebul his deputy? Serve the men of Hamor, Shechem's father! Why should we serve Abimelech? v29 If only this people were under my command! Then I would get rid of him. I would say to Abimelech, 'Call out your whole army!' " v30 When Zebul the governor of the city heard what Gaal son of Ebed said, he was very angry. v31 Under cover he sent messengers to Abimelech, saying, "Gaal son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem and are stirring up the city against you. v32 Now then, during the night you and your men should come and lie in wait in the fields. v33 In the morning at sunrise, advance against the city. When Gaal and his men come out against you, do whatever your hand finds to do." v34 So Abimelech and all his troops set out by night and took up concealed positions near Shechem in four companies. v35 Now Gaal son of Ebed had gone out and was standing at the entrance to the city gate just as Abimelech and his soldiers came out from their hiding place. v36 When Gaal saw them, he said

to Zebul, "Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!" Zebul replied, "You mistake the shadows of the mountains for men." v37 But Gaal spoke up again: "Look, people are coming down from the centre of the land, and a company is coming from the direction of the soothsayers' tree." v38 Then Zebul said to him, "Where is your big talk now, you who said, 'Who is Abimelech that we should be subject to him?' Aren't these the men you ridiculed? Go out and fight them!" v39 So Gaal led out the citizens of Shechem and fought Abimelech. v40 Abimelech chased him, and many fell wounded in the flight--all the way to the entrance to the gate. v41 Abimelech stayed in Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers out of Shechem. v42 The next day the people of Shechem went out to the fields, and this was reported to Abimelech. v43 So he took his men, divided them into three companies and set an ambush in the fields. When he saw the people coming out of the city, he rose to attack them. v44 Abimelech and the companies with him rushed forward to a position at the entrance to the city gate. Then two companies rushed upon those in the fields and struck them down. v45 All that day Abimelech pressed his attack against the city until he had captured it and killed its people. Then he destroyed the city and scattered salt over it. v46 On hearing this, the citizens in the tower of Shechem went into the stronghold of the temple of El-Berith. v47 When Abimelech heard that they had assembled there, v48 he and all his men went up Mount Zalmon. He took an axe and cut off some branches, which he lifted to his shoulders. He ordered the men with him, "Quick! Do what you have seen me do!" v49 So all the men cut branches and followed Abimelech. They piled them against the stronghold and set it on fire over the people inside. So all the people in the tower of Shechem, about a thousand men and women, also died. v50 Next Abimelech went to Thebez and besieged it and captured it. v51 Inside the city, however, was a strong tower, to which all the men and women--all the people of the city--fled. They locked themselves in and climbed up on the tower roof. v52 Abimelech went to the tower and stormed it. But as he approached the entrance to the tower to set it on fire, v53 a woman dropped an upper millstone on his head and cracked his skull. v54 Hurriedly he called to his armour-bearer, "Draw your sword and kill me, so that they can't say, 'A woman killed him.' " So his servant ran him through, and he died. v55 When the Israelites saw that Abimelech was dead, they went home. v56 Thus God repaid the wickedness that Abimelech had done to his father by murdering his seventy brothers. v57 God also made the men of Shechem pay for all their wickedness. The curse of Jotham son of Jerub-Baal came on them.

Introduction

Over the last two weeks we have been looking at the STORY OF GIDEON and we looked at **THE RIGHT AND WRONG WAY OF DOING THE WILL OF GOD.**

We discovered that **THE RIGHT WAY OF DOING THE WILL OF GOD IS:**
DOING GOD'S WILL IN GOD'S STRENGTH

And we discovered that **THE WRONG WAY OF DOING THE WILL OF GOD IS:**
WHEN WE TRY TO DO GOD'S WILL IN OUR OWN STRENGTH

Today I want to look at Judges 9 and see what happened to Gideon's family after he died. I have called this message:

The RESULT of REJECTING **RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Before we consider the RESULT of REJECTING RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. WHEN RIGHTEOUSNESS WAS ROOTED IN THE NATION.

Joshua 24:14-27 "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. v15 But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." v16 Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! v17 It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our fathers up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we travelled. v18 And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God." v19 Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. v20 If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you." v21 But the people said to Joshua, "No! We will serve the LORD." v22 Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD." "Yes, we are witnesses," they replied. v23 "Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel." v24 And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and obey him." v25 On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he drew up for them decrees and laws. v26 And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the LORD. v27 "See!" he said to all the people. "This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the LORD has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God."

JOSHUA established the rule of RIGHTEOUSNESS in Israel at the end of his life in doing **SIX** things:

1. HE REMINDED THE NATION THAT THEY HAD A CHOICE –

*v14-27 "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. v15a But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, **then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve**, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living.*

2. HE CALLED FOR A COMMITMENT AFTER SETTING AN EXAMPLE –

*v15b **But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.**" v16 Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! v17 It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our fathers up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we travelled. v18 And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. **We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God.**"*

3. HE CHALLENGED THE NATION TO CONSIDER THEIR COMMITMENT –

v19 Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins.

4. HE ESTABLISHED A COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND ISRAEL –

v25 On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he drew up for them decrees and laws. v26 And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the

Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the LORD.

5. HE DEMANDED THEY PUT THEIR OLD LIFE BEHIND THEM –

*v14 Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt
v16 Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods!*

v23 "Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."

TRUE REPENTENCE AND RENEWAL

6. HE WARNED ISRAEL OF THE CONSEQUENCES –

v26 And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the LORD. v27 "See!" he said to all the people. "This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the LORD has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God."

In Matthew 10 Jesus reminds us of the cost of **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, the cost of **FOLLOWING HIM!!** He says:

Matthew 10:28-33 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. v29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. v30 And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. v31 So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. v32 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. v33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

Now as we consider the RESULT of REJECTING RIGHTEOUSNESS

2. HOW RIGHTEOUSNESS IS REJECTED IN THE NATION.

Judges 9:1 Abimelech son of Jerub-Baal went to his mother's brothers in Shechem and said to them and to all his mother's clan, v2 "Ask all the citizens of Shechem, 'Which is better for you: to have all seventy of Jerub-Baal's sons rule over you, or just one man?' Remember, I am your flesh and blood." v3 When the brothers repeated all this to the citizens of Shechem, they were inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother." v4 They gave him seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, and Abimelech used it to hire reckless adventurers, who became his followers. v5 He went to his father's home in Ophrah and on one stone murdered his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerub-Baal. But Jotham, the youngest son of Jerub-Baal, escaped by hiding.

1. SIN PROSPERS WHEN IT GAINS A FOOTHOLD –

Judges 9:1 Abimelech son of Jerub-Baal went to his mother's brothers in Shechem and said to them and to all his mother's clan.

Last week I told you about **ABIMELECH** whose name meant "My father the KING". He was an illegitimate child Gideon had with his Concubine (8:31) from the city of **SHECHEM**. This town is often the source of rebellion against God.

James 1:13-15 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; v14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. v15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

2. SIN PROSPERS WHEN IT APPEALS TO PRIDE –

Judges 9:1 Abimelech son of Jerub-Baal went to his mother's brothers in Shechem and said to them and to all his mother's clan, v2 "Ask all the citizens of Shechem, 'Which is better for you: to have all seventy of Jerub-Baal's sons rule over you, or just one man?' Remember, I am your flesh and blood." v3 When the brothers repeated all this to the citizens of Shechem, they were inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother."

ABIMELECH appeals right into the HEART OF PRIDE. Basically, he is saying, "I AM YOUR FLESH AND BLOOD" or "WE ARE BETTER THAN THEM".

How much hurt and hatred is being promoted in our OWN COUNTRY by people who continue to EMPHASIZE our DIFFERENCES rather than our unique strengths so that we can build a Nation Together.

3. SIN PROSPERS WHEN MONEY ENTERS THE PICTURE –

v4 They gave him seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith,

The BIBLE is very clear about the danger of MONEY

1 Timothy 6:9-10 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

v10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Friends we don't need to look beyond the borders of our own country to see the devastation brought on by GREED.

4. SIN PROSPERS WHEN EVIL PEOPLE RULE –

*v4 They gave him seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, and **Abimelech used it to hire reckless adventurers, who became his followers.***

This is one of the first records of a MAFIA style group of gangsters.

History is full of examples of BULLIES. Hitler, Starlin, Pol-Pot, Kim John-un, Putin,

5. SIN PROSPERS WHEN VIOLENCE RULES –

v5 He went to his father's home in Ophrah and on one stone murdered his seventy brothers"

Violence and murder was the order of the DAY

6. SIN PROSPERS WHEN RELIGION GETS CORRUPTED –

*v5 He went to his father's home in Ophrah **and on one stone** murdered his seventy brothers"*

Should most like read "ON ONE STONE ALTAR". The brothers were Sacrificed on the Stone Altar.

CONCLUSION

I want to read you a New Testament Version of the message we have looked at today

Romans 1:16-32 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. v17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

v18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, v19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. v20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

v21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. v22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools v23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

v24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. v25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.

v26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. v27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

v28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. v29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, v30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; v31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. v32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.