

Sermon Title: Glass Houses: When the Party's Over
Scripture: Judges 19-21

*The **layers** of tragedy:*

*A broken **marriage**:*

In those days Israel had no king. Now a Levite who lived in a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. **2But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went back to her parents' home in Bethlehem, Judah. After she had been there four months, 3her husband went to her to persuade her to return.** He had with him his servant and two donkeys. She took him into her parents' home, and when her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him. **4His father-in-law, the woman's father, prevailed on him to stay; so he remained with him three days, eating and drinking, and sleeping there.**
Judges 19:1-4

*A broken **city**:*

Then when the man, with his concubine and his servant, got up to leave, his father-in-law, the woman's father, said, "Now look, it's almost evening. Spend the night here; the day is nearly over. Stay and enjoy yourself. Early tomorrow morning you can get up and be on your way home." **10** But, unwilling to stay another night, the man left and went toward Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine. **11** When they were near Jebus and the day was almost gone, the servant said to his master, "Come, let's stop at this city of the Jebusites and spend the night." **12** His master replied, **"No. We won't go into any city whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah."** **13** He added, "Come, let's try to reach Gibeah or Ramah and spend the night in one of those places." **14** So they went on, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin. **15** There they stopped to spend the night. They went and sat in the city square, **but no one took them in for the night.** **16** That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in Gibeah (the inhabitants of the place were Benjamites), came in from his work in the fields. **17** When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, "Where are you going? Where did you come from?" **18** He answered, "We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim where I live. I have been to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the Lord. No one has taken me in for the night. **19** We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants—me, the woman and the young man with us. We don't need anything." **20** "You are welcome at my house," the old man said. "Let me supply whatever you need. **Only don't spend the night in the square.**"
Judges 19:9-20

*A broken **sexual ethic**:*

While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him." **23** The owner of the house went outside and said to them, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this outrageous thing. **24** Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But as for this man, don't do such an outrageous thing." **25** But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night,

and at dawn they let her go. ²⁶ At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, **fell down at the door and lay there until daylight.**
Judges 19:22-26

*A broken **conscience**:*

When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house and stepped out to continue on his way, there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the house, with her hands on the threshold. ²⁸ He said to her, **“Get up; let’s go.”** But there was no answer. Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home. ²⁹ **When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel.** ³⁰ Everyone who saw it was saying to one another, “Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt. Just imagine! We must do something! So speak up!”
Judges 19:27-30

Then all Israel from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came together as one and assembled before the Lord in Mizpah. ² The leaders of all the people of the tribes of Israel took their places in the assembly of God’s people, four hundred thousand men armed with swords. ³ (The Benjamites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the Israelites said, **“Tell us how this awful thing happened.”** ⁴ So the Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, said, “I and my concubine came to Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night. ⁵ **During the night the men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died.** ⁶ I took my concubine, cut her into pieces and sent one piece to each region of Israel’s inheritance, because they committed this lewd and outrageous act in Israel. ⁷ Now, all you Israelites, speak up and tell me what you have decided to do.”
Judges 20:3-7

The tribes of Israel sent messengers throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, “What about this awful crime that was committed among you?¹³ Now turn those wicked men of Gibeah over to us so that we may put them to death and purge the evil from Israel.” But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites. ¹⁴ From their towns they came together at Gibeah to fight against the Israelites. ¹⁵ At once the Benjamites mobilized twenty-six thousand swordsmen from their towns, in addition to seven hundred able young men from those living in Gibeah. ¹⁶ Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred select troops who were left-handed, each of whom could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.
Judges 20:12-16

*A broken **nation**:*

The Israelites went up to Bethel and inquired of God. They said, “Who of us is to go up first to fight against the Benjamites?” The Lord replied, “Judah shall go first.” ¹⁹ The next morning the Israelites got up and pitched camp near Gibeah. ²⁰ The Israelites went out to fight the Benjamites and took up battle positions against them at Gibeah. ²⁴ **The Benjamites came out of Gibeah and cut down twenty-two thousand Israelites on the battlefield that day.**
Judges 20:18-21

The Lord answered, “Go up against them.”²⁴ Then the Israelites drew near to Benjamin the second day.²⁵ **This time, when the Benjamites came out from Gibeah to oppose them, they cut down another eighteen thousand Israelites, all of them armed with swords.**

Judges 20:23-25

On that day twenty-five thousand Benjamite swordsmen fell, all of them valiant fighters.⁴⁷ But six hundred of them turned and fled into the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, where they stayed four months.⁴⁸ The men of Israel went back to Benjamin and put all the towns to the sword, including the animals and everything else they found. All the towns they came across they set on fire.

Judges 20:46-48

God is an avenger.

A broken gender dynamic:

So the assembly sent twelve thousand fighting men with instructions to go to Jabesh Gilead and put to the sword those living there, including the women and children.¹¹ “This is what you are to do,” they said. “Kill every male and every woman who is not a virgin.”¹² They found among the people living in Jabesh Gilead four hundred young women who had never slept with a man, and they took them to the camp at Shiloh in Canaan.¹³ Then the whole assembly sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites at the rock of Rimmon.¹⁴ **So the Benjamites returned at that time and were given the women of Jabesh Gilead who had been spared.** But there were not enough for all of them.

Judges 21:10-14

So they instructed the Benjamites, saying, “Go and hide in the vineyards²¹ and watch. When the young women of Shiloh come out to join in the dancing, rush from the vineyards and **each of you seize one of them to be your wife.** Then return to the land of Benjamin.²² When their fathers or brothers complain to us, we will say to them, ‘Do us the favor of helping them, because we did not get wives for them during the war. You will not be guilty of breaking your oath because you did not give your daughters to them.’”

Judges 21:20-22

A broken spirituality:

The people went to Bethel, where they sat before God until evening, raising their voices and weeping bitterly.³ “Lord, God of Israel,” they cried, “why has this happened to Israel? Why should one tribe be missing from Israel today?” Early the next day **the people built an altar and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings.**⁵ Then the Israelites asked, “Who from all the tribes of Israel has failed to assemble before the Lord?” For they had taken a solemn oath that anyone who failed to assemble before the Lord at Mizpah was to be put to death.

Judges 21:2-5

Not all sorrow is created equal.

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, **but worldly sorrow brings death.**

2 Corinthians 7:10

In those days Israel had no king; **everyone did as they saw fit.**

Judges 21:25

“No,” they answered, “we will spend the night in the square.”³ But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate.⁴ Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house.⁵ They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.”⁶ Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him⁷ and said, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing.⁸ Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.”

Genesis 19:2-8

When God’s people don’t act like God’s people, the most vulnerable suffer the most.

The lessons from tragedy:

Sin & its effects are deeper & wider than we can ever imagine.

The light of redemption still shines in darkness.

“Who of us is to go up first to fight against the Benjamites?” The Lord replied, **“Judah shall go first.”**

Judges 20:18

Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, **the Lion of the tribe of Judah**, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

Revelation 5:5

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and **the darkness has not overcome it.**

John 1:4-5

The lasting conclusion:

God have mercy—God has mercy.

God’s love & grace are deeper & wider than we can ever imagine.

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, **to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,**¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:17-19

Live as loved by God.

With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? ⁸ He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and **to love mercy** and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:6-8