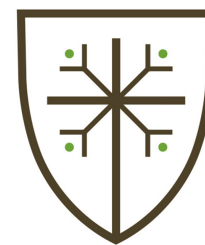


# SERMON NOTES



## RIGHT IN THEIR OWN EYES

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Sermons for Lent

February 26, 2023

### SERMON INFO

#### TITLE

Right in their Own Eyes

#### PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

#### TEXTS

Judges 3:7-25

Hebrews 2:1-3, 8-9

John 12:20-26

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We are all somewhere in the pattern of the book of Judges. Where do you find yourself?
2. What are some ways during lent that you are seeking to pay closer attention, to wake up to the ways in which sin has you in its grasp?

### SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Tim began our sermon series for Lent on the book of Judges. It's an odd book full of gruesome and disquieting stories such as the one we saw in chapter 3 this week. So, what is the point of this book in the Bible? Tim led us through three points to answer that question: the caveat, the pattern, and the message.

**Caveat:** The book of Judges takes place after the Israelites have entered the Promised Land, Canaan. They were told, upon entering Canaan, to expel the rest of the peoples in the land; and they don't do it. This seems like a strange thing for God to tell his people, like it is not fitting for the character of God. It is especially discordant with the pluralism of our day in which there are no moral absolutes; there is no one right way. In Deuteronomy, God explicitly tells Israel it is not their goodness that gets them the land. It is by his hand, using the people of Israel to drive out the wickedness in the land. But the stories we see in Judges show us that instead of driving out the wickedness, the wickedness takes hold of Israel. God is offended by everything in the book of Judges that offends us, it is the very reason he sent the Israelites into the land to begin with. But instead of driving them out, the people of Israel become more and more like those living in the land.

**Pattern:** There is a pattern that emerges in Judges from the very beginning. The pattern looks something like this:

1. Israel does what is evil in God's eyes
2. God gives them into the hands of their enemies.
3. Israel serves the oppressor.
4. Israel cries out to God.
5. God sends a deliverer (judge).
6. The Spirit of the Lord rests upon him.
7. God gives the oppressor over to the judge.
8. God gives the people rest.

The beginning of this pattern, the beginning of any spiritual decline is "they forgot God." This is not a cognitive forgetting. What the Lord had done in the past no longer captured their hearts. Throughout the book, the pattern unravels. The people don't get better, they get worse. And we exist in this same pattern, given over to the power of sin as our oppressor.

**Message:** When we finish this story, and even more so when we finish the book of Judges, we wonder where is the hope? The redemption? The answer lies in the story of Ehud and Eglon. Eglon is the picture of power abused, moving for no one, everything revolving around him. And he is foolish. Foolish enough to eagerly come close to hear Ehud's special message. And the message is a sword plunged into his belly by a weak, unassuming Savior. The name "Eglon" is based on the Hebrew word for "calf" – the round, fattened calf, sacrificed on the altar of his own power.

This is, thankfully, not the end of the story for us. The message of Judges is that the scandalous grace of God for his people remains. The darkness that grows throughout the book highlights the unimaginable grace of God to his people. Eglon reaped what he sowed, but Christ reaped what we sowed. He was the fattened calf, sacrificed so we might be forgiven, and so we might be freed from the power of sin to do to do what is right in God's eyes.

Lent is a time to pay attention, to wake up to those areas of our life where we do what is right in our own eyes without regard for whether they are right in God's eyes.