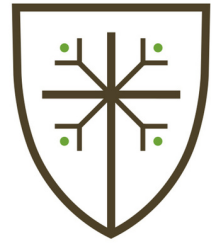


SERMON NOTES



SUMMER SERMON SERIES

THE TWELFTH JUDGE

A Return to Judges



June 4, 2023

SERMON INFO

TITLE

The Twelfth Judge -
A Miraculous Birth

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Judges 13:1-3, 5-6, 8-25a

1 Peter 1:13-15, 18-21

Luke 1:26-34

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Like the Israelites, what are ways in which we, as a culture, or individually, have grown so accustomed to the things which enslave us that we have stopped crying out for deliverance?
2. What are some areas of your life in which you seek to be "named" by people in this world?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Tim began our 5-week series on Samson. And he asked the question, what can Samson's story teach us about life in times like ours? We considered two points in answering this question – the times (Samson's and ours), and the couple (Samson's parents).

The Times

Judges begins with the death of Joshua. They are leader-less and afraid. The constant refrain of the book is "there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in his own eyes." This should sound familiar to us. It should sound like our own world today in which how we feel is the ultimate standard for truth and goodness. The pattern we see in Judges is the pattern in which we live as well. It begins with forgetting God – who he is, what he has done. And then it progresses on to doing what is evil in his sight, God giving them over to their desires, the people crying out, and, finally, the Lord raising up a judge to rescue the people.

But in Samson's story, there is no crying out. The people have become so accustomed to their servitude that it is now normal to them. They no longer feel their pain and they stop crying out. They no longer seek healing or even relief from the Lord. They no longer seek him at all.

The Couple

Samson's story begins with a miraculous birth narrative. There is no one alive in Israel that God will use to bring about his plans, so he starts from scratch. He chooses an unimportant man from the tribe of Dan and his barren wife to accomplish his purposes. The Lord uses those who cannot make a name for themselves to bring about his rescue of his people.

We all want to be "named." Whether in work, raising children, sports, education, we all seek to have our name recognized. But nothing in this world that names us can ever be wonderful enough to give us that peace for which we long. We need something to name us that is too wonderful for this world. Manoaah and his wife are not names by the standards of the world, but they are named and chosen by the one who is too wonderful for this world. And they are a picture of what it is to follow in faith in this world. They don't know all the plans that God has, but they have his presence and they have straightforward instructions, and it is enough.

We have more than they did. We have an even more miraculous birth narrative, a greater ultimate sacrifice, and a defeat of all sin and death. God and all he is doing is too wonderful for us, but we can trust it and trust him. Just as Samson was, from before his birth, set apart to God, so are we set apart, holy for God. So trust him, and follow the one who is too wonderful for this world.