

Vision 2026:

Advance

Introduction

Before we read, let me speak to every person here — whether you've been walking with Jesus for decades, whether you're checking out Christianity for the first time, or whether you're somewhere in between with doubts and questions — you are welcome here. This is a safe place to bring your uncertainty.

We're not pretending to have it all together. But we believe God still speaks through His Word, even through the uncomfortable parts, & we're praying that today He will reveal truth to every heart.

Hands on the Threshold

Judges 19:1

Before we turn to the Word of God today, I want to prepare your heart for where we're going. There are some passages of Scripture that inspire us. Some that comfort us. Those that fill us with hope & faith. But there are other passages that confront us, disturb us, & force us to look honestly at the condition of humanity apart from God. **Judges 19** is one of those passages.

Judges 19:1 *And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. NKJV*

A. Today is a sermon I struggle with...

a. If you've been in church for any length of time, you've probably heard sermons about David & Goliath, Daniel in the den of lions, Elijah on Mount Carmel, or the Day of Pentecost.

But very few people volunteer to preach from **Judges 19**. It is one of the darkest chapters of all Scripture. It contains violence, betrayal, cowardice, abuse of power, & the heartbreaking failure of people who should have known better.

It's a story that will make you uncomfortable. It's a story meant to shock us. And yet the Holy Spirit saw fit to preserve this story in His Word. – Why? –

b. Because God does not merely reveal His glory through the victories of His people; He also reveals truth through their failures. God wants us to see what happens when a society abandons His authority. God wants us to see what happens when spiritual leaders stop leading. God wants us to see what happens when people know what is right but refuse to do it.

c. The Book of Judges repeatedly tells us, "*In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*" That statement is not merely describing ancient Israel. It sounds familiar to the world we're living in today.

We live in a culture where truth is often replaced by opinion, conviction is replaced by convenience, & righteousness is sacrificed on the altar of personal preference.

B. Before we point fingers at the world, we must allow the Word of God to examine us. Because this sermon is not primarily about the depravity of Gibeah. It is about the responsibility of God's people. It is about what happens when those who should stand in the gap refuse to stand. It is about what happens when those entrusted with protecting others choose self-preservation instead. It is about what happens when people value their comfort more than their calling.

a. The nation of Israel is in moral freefall. The closing chapters of Judges repeat this haunting refrain: *“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”* There was no central godly leadership. No moral anchor. And the result was chaos, violence, & heartbreaking injustice.

b. In the middle of that darkness, we meet a Levite — a man who should have been a spiritual leader — traveling with his concubine. They end up spending the night in the town of Gibeah. What happens next is one of the most tragic accounts in the Bible.

Judges 19:22-27 (BIBLE)

22 As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house and beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, “Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him carnally!”

23 But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act so wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage. 24 Look, here is my virgin daughter and the man’s concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!” 25 But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought her out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.

26 Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man’s house where her master was, till it was light.

27 When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen at the door of the house with her hands on the threshold. NKJV

Remember the application:

I. **Loss of Moral Responsibility**

I will not take time to talk about the sin & trouble in our land today. You are aware of it.

The point God wants us to hear & understand is how we deal with those who are at our door...

A. Selfish Safety Over Sacred Duty

*“Send out the man who came home with you!” ...
“We want to have sex with him!”*

a. The old man (Ephraimite) knew the sin & depravity of the city. He took them into his home; his care should have been ready to guard & protect them. He showed warm hospitality but failed to defend them.

Initially he said, *“don’t be so vile! Don’t do this outrageous thing!”*

- i. In the same breath he says, *“Here, take my virgin daughter and this man’s concubine.”*
- ii. He exchanges the honor, safety, & dignity of the women under his roof for the preservation of one man.

b. Why doesn’t he fight for the good of his daughter & the concubine? Why doesn’t he call on God? - *Instead, he opens the door of hell for the women in his care. –*

c. Church, we have a culpability, a responsibility... We have an ***assignment*** to shield the vulnerable. The strong are not to hide behind the weak!

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d. God, raise up this church body to stand in the gap, & be willing to lay down their lives rather than offer up the helpless & defenseless to the depraved.

B. Threw his Concubine to the Wolves

a. There is no indication how long this went on. The men banging on the door, the conversation of the old man before the *“Levite took hold of his concubine and pushed her out the door.”*

She was recognized as his “legal partner.” But he was callous & heartless towards her.

- i. This Levite was to be guardian of worship, teacher of Torah, & a stabilizer of righteousness — but scripture indicates he was not fulfilling his calling. He was not serving in the House of the LORD.
- ii. *He is called a sojourner:* A concubine was contrary to holiness for a Levite. He represented the moral decay by casting her to the mob.

b. The Levite perverted covenant love & his Levitical calling.

- i. The old Ephraimite & the Levite know enough to recognize evil (*“don’t do this vile/outrageous thing”*) yet choose compromise instead of righteousness.
- ii. The Levite cared enough to go get his wife who had left him, but when the mob demands he doesn’t protest or fight for the right – He thrusts *“her out the door.”*

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c. Church, may we come into alignment with the commission of God's Word. "Seek & save that which was lost." Disciple. Teach. Protect.

TRANSITION: After being abused in every way, all night – At daybreak she feebly finds her way back to the door where her husband had cast her out. She painfully falls, distressed, abandoned & destitute. The Levite opens the door and finds...

C. Her Hands on the Threshold {saf (שַׁף)}

a. That threshold is a symbol of protection, support & God's sustaining power. A position where God encircles & preserves His people.

Yet this woman died there...

b. The threshold represents the spoken Word, revelation & Divine communication.

Yet this woman died there...

c. It was a place of transition - *Yet this woman died there...*

An entrance into God's presence & promises - *Yet this woman died there...*

The testimony of God's Word at the doorway of life - *Yet this woman died there...*

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d. She was found desperately reaching for the protected boundary of the house that ***failed*** her.

D. Hard Questions

God is asking us a question today:

- a. Who is reaching for the threshold in our generation?
- b. Who is looking for help? Who is looking for hope?
- c. Who is looking for protection? And what kind of church will they find when they arrive at our door?

II. Conclusion

A. Church, hear me today: We are not called to save ourselves at the expense of others—we are called to lay down our lives as Jesus laid down His life for us! The Holy Ghost did not fill us so we could protect our image, preserve our comfort, or maintain our status; He filled us to love, serve, and stand in the gap for the broken and the vulnerable.

May we be a people who refuse to sacrifice their families, their convictions, or their brothers and sisters on the altar of selfishness & convenience.

We are not the people of Gibeah, & we will not live by the spirit that ruled the Levite; we are the blood-bought Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, empowered by the Spirit of God! May we be determined to protect what is holy, defend those entrusted to our care, & reflect the sacrificial love of Christ in a dark & perverse world.

B. The reason we can do this is because of the resurrection of Christ.

- **He asks us to:**

* *Repent*

* *Live by Faith*

* *Be Baptized*

* *Be Filled with His Spirit*

Conclusion: PRESENT THE GOSPEL FOR SALVATION – EVERY WEEK – AND THE NEED TO COME FORWARD IN PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF CHRIST.