



Judges: No King, No Compass

Lesson 10: March 17th and 18th

Read Judges 17-18

Sermon Reflection Question: What captured your attention from Sunday's sermon?

Observation and Interpretation:

In some ways the end of Samson is the end of the story of the judges. In these last chapters, we see what life was like in Israel without a judge and without a king.

Read Judges 17: 1-13

1. Micah returns silver that had been stolen from his mother. What does her subsequent action of making an idol and who she consecrates it to from the silver reveal about the spiritual state of Israel?

God had told his people not to worship images (Exodus 20:4); he had told his people to be wholehearted in their devotion to him, as he was wholehearted in his commitment to them (Exodus 19:3–6); he had told them they should meet with him and make sacrifices to him in his tabernacle, which at this point was in Shiloh (Judges 18:31); he had told them that only those of the tribe of Levi were to be priests, based in particular towns.

2. How does the refrain 'In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes' speak to the primary problem in Micah's life, his mother, and all of Israel?

The real issue in worship-by-images is the desire to shape and revise God—to refuse to let God “be himself” in our lives. So, we worship a distorted image of God whenever we say, “I like to think of God as ...” or, “I can’t believe in a God who ...” or, more subtly, when we simply don’t think about the implications of God’s revelation in our own lives.

Why is this such a problem? Because it makes it impossible to have a truly personal relationship with God. In relationships with a real person, they can contradict you and upset you and make demands on you, and you have to wrestle with that and deal with that. When we “re-image-ine” God, we are swapping the real God for a much more comfortable, but non-existent, one.

Application and Reflection:

3. What are ways you might be tempted to fall into the mistakes of Micah and his mother?

Observation and Interpretation:

4. What is the Levite’s career path and what seems to be driving his decisions?

5. Micah hires a Levite and says, “Now I know the Lord will do me good.” Why is it a trap to treat God Himself, in a transactional" manner, where we think specific rituals or good behavior force Him to favor us?

Read Judges 18:1-26

6. In Judges 18, the tribe of Dan is seeking an inheritance for themselves. What does this reveal about their trust in God's previous allocation of land?

They are in this situation because they had failed to trust God and take their land and so had been “confined to the hill country” (1:34). They didn’t listen to what God really said, so they now ask a pagan Levite working at an idolatrous shrine for guidance, decide God has blessed them and set out to take the land. Dan’s approach to God is very similar to Micah’s.

7. What do the Danites take from Micah’s house and how does Micah respond?

Fasting Reflection:

RELAX: Take a moment to relax. Close your eyes and breathe deeply - inhaling slowly, then exhaling slowly. Repeat this several times as you imagine yourself coming into God's presence. As you finish and get ready to read, pray something simple like "Lord, speak to me through the words of your gospel. Amen."

READ. Read this story about Jesus two times. Read slowly, pausing at the line breaks:

John 6:47-48, 53-69

"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. Yes, I am the bread of life!

So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever."

He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Many of his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?"

Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, "Does this offend you? Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But some of you do not believe me." (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn't believe, and he knew who would betray him.) Then he said, "That is why I said that people cannot come to me unless the Father gives them to me."

At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?" Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God."

REFLECT. After the reading, take some time to reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:

- What word or words in this passage caught your attention?
- What in this passage comforted you?
- What in this passage challenged you?
- What is God inviting you into?

RESPOND. Read the scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, questions, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

REST. Soak in the moment, rest in it, don't rush through it. Do you sense anything that Jesus is inviting you to know, see, believe, or do? Pray: Thank you God for meeting with me in this time. Give me courage and faith to follow you this day.