

Judges: R-rated Redemption
“Incomplete Resolution”

Judges 1:1-7; 19-21; 27-28; 33; and 2: 1-5

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“And the more I considered Christianity, the more I found that while it had established a rule and order, the chief aim of that order was to give room for good things to run wild.” - G.K. Chesterton

“Grace is not opposed to effort; it is opposed to earning. Earning is an attitude. Effort is an action. Grace, you know, does not just have to do with forgiveness of sins alone.” - Dallas Willard

“‘Yet even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.’” – Joel 2: 12-13

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered or rabbit trails to be followed for you?
- Judges’ opening chapters reveal a tension between *taking* the land and *possessing* the land. God’s people are supposed to follow up the victories under Joshua by settling the territories and living out the covenant of grace.
 - Verse 2 distinguishes between Judah needing to “go up” against the Canaanites and God’s gift. How should we resolve God’s gift and our agency?
 - When do you feel agency? When powerless?
 - Are you looking for God to fix all the junk in our life? Do we have a role in that?
- It is no secret that Judges is about failure, even repeated failure. In 1: 19-35, there seems to be a distinction between God’s people feeling *unable* because of the chariots of iron and God’s diagnosis of their being *unwilling*.
 - Where in your life do you smack up against the tension between saying “I can’t” and “I won’t”, between perceived inability and outright refusal?
- What is at the heart of the “faithless disobedience” of God’s people and their “halfway discipleship”?
 - What should be the proper motivation for obedience?
 - How do Chesterton and Willard factor in?
- What encouragement do you take from God’s faithful discipline on display in this passage?
 - What is driving his discipline? What’s at the heart of his discipline?
 - What is problematic with his discipline?
 - What difference does it make that God is not simply interested in getting you straightened out and compliant but more so interested in reclaiming you for an intimate relationship?
 - How is discipline here distinct from retribution and punishment?
- The “faithful response” for God’s people in the midst of discipline is to weep and sacrifice.
 - How does the passage from Joel help us not merely feel sorry but actually repent?