

Judges: R-rated Redemption
 “The God Who Hears, The God Who Saves”
 Judges 3: 7-11

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“Behind every agonizing ‘No’ from God is his ‘Yes’ to something better, his ‘Trust Me’ with the timing, and his ‘I AM with you right now’”. - Walter Henegar

“When the scriptural people of God seek redemption, they want personal salvation, and they express their desire in what sounds like a cry of the heart. But to them redemption goes far beyond personal salvation. When biblical people want God to redeem, what they want is freedom and righteousness throughout the land. They want God to unseat Pharaoh or Caesar. They want God to drive the Midianites back across the border. They’re Exodus people, after all. They’re Passover people. They have a history of being squeezed by Egypt, Babylon, or Rome. In their eyes, God’s redemption means justice is coming, liberation is coming, the King of all the earth is coming!” - Cornelius Plantinga, *Engaging God’s World*

“Answer me this question, and I will tell you — Has God the Spirit taught you that you are accursed? Has he made you feel the bitterness of sin? Has he made you cry, ‘Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner?’ Then, my dear friend, Christ was cursed for you; and you are not cursed. You are not cursed now. Christ was cursed for you. Be of good cheer; if Christ was cursed for you, you cannot be cursed again.” - Charles Spurgeon

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?
- With this passage we encounter the cycle of decline and renewal at the heart of the book of Judges:
 - Are you bored yet? Frustrated that the covenant people of God can’t get their act together yet?
 - Are you more sensitive to your need for renewal as you smack up against the repeated failings of the Israelites? Do you have compassion for them?
 - How would you counsel them, if you could?
- One of the focal points for the passage is the crying out of God’s people (3:9).
 - Where do you sense the world crying out for relief?
 - How are you, personally, crying out for relief? Where is the brokenness of the world encroaching and messing with you?
 - Do you think that believers and unbelievers are honest about and in touch with the “emergency” of our world not being the “way it’s supposed to be”?
 - What are good and commendable ways our culture cries out and brings this expression? What are unhelpful ways?
 - How, as Christians, can we grow in our honesty about the lamentable fallout from sin?
- More weighty than our cries for relief and our cries of lament are God’s compassionate expressions and movements for redemption.
 - What is clear about God’s heart towards his people in this passage? Do you feel that personally?
 - How do you reconcile what one author calls “the fundamental miracle of the Bible”: the same God who brings discipline and casts his people down stoops low to raise them to redemption?
- One assertion from the sermon is that spiritual renewal and revival does not necessarily hinge upon discovering new information but rather in having new eyes to see the same timeless truths of the Gospel afresh.
 - What truths of the Gospel do you want new eyes to see?
 - What have you forgotten or pushed to the margins that needs to return to the center?