

Cycles of Madness

(Judges 2:1-23)

Yearly Theme: “Joy is...”

Series Title: *Joy in the Promise*

March 8th, 2020

Something to think about:

How many of us are forgetful?

- We forget where we put our phones.
 - We forget where we’ve put our keys.
 - We forget what we were doing.
 - We forget why we walked into a particular room.
 - We forget appointments.
 - We forget to call, or write, or pay a bill.
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- We forget... God?

Today we come to a passage of Scripture in the beginning of the Old Testament book of Judges that explains what happens when we forget God.

The Psalmist writes a very poignant hymn exhorting us to remember, and not forget, God. Listen to what he writes...

Psalm 103:1-5 (NRSV),¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.² Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—³ who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,⁴ who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,⁵ who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

Let’s take a look at Judges chapter 2...

Turn in your Bibles to: ***Judges 2:1-23***

The key point this morning is this...

Key Point: “Forgetting God’s promises leads to disobedience.”

How does this play out?

1. Forgetting God’s promises can set in motion a lifetime of difficulty.

Judges 2:1-3 (NLT),¹ The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said to the Israelites, “I brought you out of Egypt into this land that I swore to give your ancestors, and I said I would never break my covenant with you.² For your part, you were not to make any covenants with the people living in this land; instead, you were to destroy their altars. But you disobeyed my command. Why did you do this?³ So now I declare that I will no longer drive out the people living in your land. They will be thorns in your sides, and their gods will be a constant temptation to you.”

2. Forgetting God’s promises can result in future generations leaving the Faith.

Judges 2:10 (NLT), After that generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the LORD or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel.

Something to take home:

If the Israelites had been willing, they could have been a blessing, but their selfish, sinful side took over and led them away from God and caused them to forget His promises and his benefits. Forgetting God, His commands, and His promises put them in direct opposition to the God they were to be honoring and reflecting in their daily lives.

Do you reflect the glory of God in your life?

Key Point: “Forgetting God’s promises leads to disobedience.”

NOTES:



North Main Exists to...

“Develop completely committed followers of Christ who:

Know Christ intimately,
Grow in Christ continually, and,
Go for Christ daily;

Through:
Core Families,
Community Partnerships, and
Global Connections.”

Joy in the Promise

Lesson 2:
“Cycles of Madness”
(Judges 2:1-23)

Cycles of Madness

(Judges 2:1-23)

Series Title: “Joy in the Promise”

KICK STARTERS:

- ⇒ Define “forgetfulness?”
- ⇒ What are some things that are easy for you to forget? Why is it easy for you to forget these things?

SCRIPTURE: (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

Judges 2:1-23 (NLT)

¹ The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said to the Israelites, “I brought you out of Egypt into this land that I swore to give your ancestors, and I said I would never break my covenant with you. ² For your part, you were not to make any covenants with the people living in this land; instead, you were to destroy their altars. But you disobeyed my command. Why did you do this? ³ So now I declare that I will no longer drive out the people living in your land. They will be thorns in your sides, and their gods will be a constant temptation to you.”

⁴ When the angel of the LORD finished speaking to all the Israelites, the people wept loudly. ⁵ So they called the place Bokim (which means “weeping”), and they offered sacrifices there to the LORD.

⁶ After Joshua sent the people away, each of the tribes left to take possession of the land allotted to them. ⁷ And the Israelites served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and the leaders who outlived him—those who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel.

⁸ Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110. ⁹ They buried him in the land he had been allocated, at Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

¹⁰ After that generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the LORD or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel.

¹¹ The Israelites did evil in the LORD’s sight and served the images of Baal. ¹² They abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They went after other gods, worshiping the gods of the people around them. And they angered the LORD. ¹³ They abandoned the LORD to serve Baal and the images of Ashtoreth.

¹⁴ This made the LORD burn with anger against Israel, so he handed them over to raiders who stole their possessions. He turned them over to their enemies all around, and they were no longer able to resist them. ¹⁵ Every time Israel went out to battle, the LORD fought against them, causing them to be defeated, just as he had warned. And the people were in great distress.

¹⁶ Then the LORD raised up judges to rescue the Israelites from their attackers. ¹⁷ Yet Israel did not listen to the judges but prostituted themselves by worshiping other gods. How quickly they turned away from the path of their ancestors, who had walked in obedience to the LORD’s commands.

¹⁸ Whenever the LORD raised up a judge over Israel, he was with that judge and rescued the people from their enemies throughout the judge’s lifetime. For the LORD took pity on his people, who were burdened by oppression and suffering. ¹⁹ But when the judge died, the people returned to their corrupt ways, behaving worse than those who had lived before them. They went after other gods, serving and worshiping them. And they refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

²⁰ So the LORD burned with anger against Israel. He said, “Because these people have violated my covenant, which I made with their ancestors, and have ignored my commands, ²¹ I will no longer drive out the nations that Joshua left unconquered when he died. ²² I did this to test Israel—to see whether or not they would follow the ways of the LORD as their ancestors did.” ²³ That is why the LORD left those nations in place. He did not quickly drive them out or allow Joshua to conquer them all.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. As the Israelites begin conquest of the land, things don’t happen as they should. Describe what is going on in this passage of scripture, and explain why the Israelites aren’t taking the Promised Land:

2. Explain how forgetfulness can lead to disobedience.

3. Instead of remaining faithful and obedient to God as they began to take the Promised Land, the Israelites completely reneged on their covenant with God and began to make covenants and treaties with the people of the land, and didn’t destroy their altars. What was the result of their disobedience (vv. 1-3)?

4. What was the response of the Israelites after the angel of the LORD spoke to them (vv. 4-6)?

5. What did the next generation do after the death of Joshua (vv. 8-15)? Why do you think this was their response?

6. After the LORD raised up judges within the land to rescue the people of God from their attackers, what was the cycle of behavior that ensued (vv. 16-19)? Why did this cycle of behavior continue? Does this happen today? Explain...

7. The new, and subsequent, generations of Israelites were no different than their ancestors who wandered in the wilderness for 40 years; because of this, what was their punishment (vv. 20-23)?

8. There is a cycle that repeats in the Old Testament: *Sin, Slavery, Supplication (Repentance), Salvation*. Have you, or someone you know, gone through or repeated this cycle? Explain...

SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **WHAT WE SEE IN JUDGES CHAPTER 2** is a cycle of madness that goes from sin, to slavery, to supplication (or repentance), to salvation, and back again to sin. There seems to be a “forgetfulness” of not only God’s promises, but also of God’s warnings. One generation is faithful, the next generation falls into the temptation to sin, which leads ultimately to slavery. While enslaved to sin, and the consequences that result in a depraved society, there is a cry of repentance and calling out to God for forgiveness. God hears their cry and saves them from slavery to sin, but before too long, temptation looms and the people’s resolve weakens, and the cycle starts all over again.
- ⇒ **HAVE YOU SEEN THIS CYCLE** in societies? Have you seen this cycle in individuals? Where’s the hope that can break the cycle? For the Israelites it was their faithfulness to the covenant relationship with God. For us today, it is faithfulness to Christ through the new covenant in His blood. Jesus has broken the cycle, and in order for us to keep from repeating the cycle in society and in our own lives, we must believe in Him and confess our sins, take up our cross and follow Him daily.
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSES:** *Judges 2:18-19* and *Psalms 103:1-5*.