

GCFSM SUNDAY BULLETIN

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SERMON OUTLINE

GOD'S SPIRIT AS THE SOURCE OF MAN'S COURAGE

JUDGES 3:7-31 | REV. LITO VILLORIA

In this passage, we meet the first three judges—Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar. These men came from different backgrounds and used different methods, but with one thing in common: they were ordinary men empowered by God's Spirit with the courage to act. Their stories remind us that when we feel inadequate or fearful, God's Spirit gives us the courage to take the first step of obedience.

When Israel did evil in the sight of God, the Lord sold them into the hands of Cushan-rishathaim for eight years. The people cried out to God, and He raised up Othniel to rescue them. Empowered by God's Spirit, Othniel delivered Israel from oppression. His leadership brought peace for forty years. (*Judges 3:7-11*)

After Othniel's death, Israel fell again into evil. This time, the LORD

allowed Moab under King Eglon to oppress them for eighteen years. The people cried out to God, and He raised up Ehud, a left-handed man from the tribe of Benjamin. Guided by the Spirit, Ehud strategized and executed a bold plan to assassinate Eglon. The success of Ehud sparked a national uprising that defeated the strong Moabites. His courage brought rest for eighty years. (*Judges 3:12-30*)

The brief story of Shamgar demonstrates the same theme—that God uses the ordinary to deliver His people. Presumably, the Israelites again fell into another cycle of sin, resulting in oppression from the Philistines. Then God gave courage and strength to Shamgar to defeat the Philistines using an extraordinary method—an ox-goad to strike

down six hundred Philistines. (*Judges 3:31*)

The common thread is this: every judge was able to fulfill God's call when they were given courage through the Spirit. These ordinary men became extraordinary leaders through the empowerment of the Spirit. God's Spirit gave them the courage to take the first step of obedience.

Sermon Focus: This story reminds us that true courage comes from God's Spirit. It is not found in our abilities or experiences, but in our availability and empowerment from the Holy Spirit. When God calls, He empowers His people with the courage to obey, even when the odds seem impossible.✱

WHY BOOK OF JUDGES?

REV. LITO VILLORIA

Every year, we go through at least one book of the Bible in our pulpit ministry. Earlier this year, we studied the Book of Philippians and were reminded through Paul's words that we are called to "*shine as lights in the world*" (Philippians 2:14-16).

Now, as we enter the second half of the year, we begin a new sermon series on the Book of Judges, a portion of Scripture that may seem dark, violent and disjointed at first glance. So why preach through the Book of Judges? The answer lies in the world we live in today.

Our generation faces mounting spiritual and moral challenges. We are surrounded by a culture that increasingly rejects godly values and biblical convictions. Moral depravity is celebrated, spiritual superficiality is normalized, and political confusion clouds the direction of our nation. In such times, we don't need shallow encouragement or surface-level optimism. We need clarity, rooted in truth.

The Book of Judges offers exactly that. It's not just a historical account, it's a mirror. It reveals the consequences of spiritual compromise, the dangers of forgetting God and the cost of failed leadership. But it also reveals something greater: the heart of the faithful God who never gives up on His people, even when they repeatedly turn away from Him.

The Book of Judges gives us three essential reminders for this critical season.

First, the Book of Judges calls us to trust in God's unchanging faithfulness. The hardships of Israel were not due to God's failure, but their disobedience. Still, God raised up deliverers, flawed but Spirit-empowered leaders, who rescued the people time and again. This cycle of sin, judgment, repentance and deliverance reveals God's persistent mercy. Even in our failures, whether personal, spiritual, or national, God remains faithful. His promises stand.

Second, Judges warns against cultural compromise. Israel gradually absorbed the beliefs and behaviors of the Canaanites. Their moral collapse wasn't sudden—it was slow and subtle. That's how compromise works. When we forget God's mighty acts, like the Cross, we become vulnerable to spiritual amnesia. We lose our distinctiveness and our witness dims. Judges challenges us to stay rooted in Scripture, alert to the creeping influence of the world, and committed to living as God's holy people.

Third, Judges emphasizes our desperate need for godly leadership. The repeated phrase—"*In those days, there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes*" is more than historical commentary. It is a theological warning. Without righteous, God-fearing leadership, chaos reigns. Judges exposes the failure of leaders who lacked spiritual

discernment or moral strength, and points forward to the need for a true King, ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

This 20-part sermon series on Judges is not just about ancient Israel, it is about us. It is a spiritual invitation to wake up, remember God's faithfulness, and live distinctively in a compromised world. It calls us to reflect Christ's light in our homes, schools, workplaces and communities. Judges is not an easy book, but it is a necessary one for such a time as this.

As we listen to these messages and study each passage, I pray that God stirs in us a holy longing for revival in our churches, righteousness in our communities and reform in our nation. Let us not shy away from the hard truths. Let us lean in. And as we do, may we shine ever brighter in this dark and twisted generation.

I encourage you to get a copy of our new Book of Judges study material, available in both hard copy and PDF format. Use it for your personal devotions and Growth Group discussions. If you're not part of a group yet, this is a great time to start.

We also invite you to attend our Sunday School class on the Book of Judges, a great opportunity to go deeper, ask questions and grow in community.

Let's journey through this powerful and timely book together, and allow God to shape our hearts and lives for His glory. ✱

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