

GCFSM SUNDAY BULLETIN

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SERMON OUTLINE

GOD'S JUSTICE AND MAN'S EVIL DEEDS

JUDGES 9:1-57 | REV. LITO VILLORIA

Judges 9 is unique in that it lacks both a foreign oppressor and a God-appointed deliverer. It tells of Abimelech's ruthless rise to power through manipulation and bloodshed, aided by the people of Shechem who forsook Gideon's legacy. Yet, the same evil that lifted Abimelech brought about his fall under God's justice. His story mirrors the oppression we see today and reminds us that God's justice, though it may seem delayed, is certain. This chapter challenges us to examine our hearts and consider how we respond to the injustices we witness or endure.

After Gideon's death, Abimelech returned to Shechem, persuading his mother's family that one ruler was better than seventy. Funded by silver from Baal-Berith's temple, he hired mercenaries, killed his brothers with one stone, except Jotham, and was crowned king under the sacred oak,

forging a corrupt alliance of power and idolatry (Judges 9:1-6).

Jotham, the sole survivor, climbed Mount Gerizim and told a fable: the olive, fig, and vine (symbols of blessing) refused kingship, while the bramble was accepted, offering worthless shade and threatening fire. He warned that if Shechem acted wrongly, both the city and Abimelech would be consumed. He then fled to Beer (Judges 9:7-21).

Abimelech ruled three years, but God sent a spirit of discord to avenge the blood of Gideon's sons. Gaal son of Ebed challenged him, but Abimelech ambushed and defeated him. In vengeance, he slaughtered Shechem's people, burned the city, and set fire to the tower of El-Berith, killing nearly a thousand (Judges 9:22-49).

Later, while besieging Thebez, a woman dropped a millstone on Abimelech's head. Mortally wounded, he asked his armor bearer to kill him, fulfilling Jotham's curse. His reign ended in disgrace (Judges 9:50-57).

This chapter warns against the lust for power, the danger of compromising integrity, and the inevitable consequence of evil. God's justice may be delayed, but it is never denied.

Sermon Focus: Abimelech's story is not just about politics—it's about the heart. When pride and selfishness rule, destruction follows. But God remains just. He sees every evil deed, and in His time, He makes all things right. Let us fear the Lord, walk in integrity, and never forget: man's evil never escapes God's justice. ✨

GOD'S GRACE EVERY DAY

TEACHER CAROL FELIPE

Deuteronomy 7 is part of Moses' final message to Israel before they entered the Promised Land. It reminded them that God chose them not because of their strength or merit, but because of His faithful love and covenant. They were to live set apart, wholly devoted to Him, in response to His grace. Their identity was rooted in divine love, not human worthiness. The same grace that sustained Israel reaches us today through Jesus Christ. What Israel experienced in part, we now receive in full through our union with the Son. Deuteronomy 7 reminds us that grace is not just a gift to receive—it's an invitation to live distinctly for the Lord.

God's grace is available to us every single day. We enjoy it freely, though we never deserve it. Yet, because of who God is—gracious, merciful, and faithful—we have access to it. Grace is a gift, not a reward. As Ephesians 2:8 says, *"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."* Grace is what saves us. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, sinners are forgiven and made new. It is grace, not effort, that makes salvation possible.

Grace also sustains us. As Paul testified, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Corinthians 12:9). Grace empowers us to endure, serve, and grow, especially in weakness. More than that, grace transforms us. It teaches us to say no to sin and yes to godliness—not out of fear but from love (Titus 2:11-12). And God's grace is not in short supply—it is abundant. His mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23). No matter how yesterday went, today begins with fresh grace. Truly, grace after grace!

Still, even as recipients of grace, we often live as if we lack it. We compare, complain, and fall into entitlement. Forgetting God's faithfulness, we lose joy in the present. That's what happened to Israel. Despite all that God had done, they were forgetful and ungrateful. In Deuteronomy 7, God reminded them to drive out the nations, not to intermarry or adopt their gods, because He knew how quickly their hearts would wander. They had already shown this tendency: at Marah, they grumbled about bitter water (Exodus 15). In the wilderness, they longed to return to slavery, forgetting the miracles of manna, quail, water from the rock, and the guiding cloud. God gave them grace, but they grew complacent. Their sense of entitlement overshadowed their gratitude.

Like them, we can live as though grace is something owed rather than a gift. But God does not stop pursuing. Deuteronomy 7 shows us not only the people's condition, but God's character. In the midst of their forgetfulness, He reminded them of His power, presence and promises.

God's Power was at work. *"Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love..."* (Deuteronomy 7:9). God had rescued them with a mighty hand in Egypt and would do the same in Canaan. They were not to fear, for the Lord would fight for them.

God's Presence was central. *"The Lord your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God"* (Deuteronomy 7: 21). Even the hornets that drove out their enemies were signs of His nearness. His presence had always gone with them—pillar by day, fire by night—and would continue to go before them.

PARSON TO PERSON

God's Promises were sure. *"He will give their kings into your hand, and you shall make their name perish from under heaven"* (Deuteronomy 7:24). The promise was sure but as to how the Lord would drive out the nations little by little—not all at once. Why? Because He knew what was best. In His wisdom, He chose gradual progress over instant victory. He promised to give them the land and to fulfill what He had sworn to Abraham, even after 430 years! God would throw their enemies into confusion and deliver them—because He always keeps His word.

But He also gave strong warnings: do not bring idols into your homes, do not covet silver or gold, do not tolerate what God calls abominable. Grace is not a license to compromise. God's purpose for His people was not their destruction, but their holiness, maturity and joy in Him (Deuteronomy 7:25-26).

So where does this leave us? We, too, are forgetful and thankless. We enjoy God's grace but sometimes drift into entitlement. We break faith, lose focus and grow weary. But God who is rich in mercy, continues to show us His power, presence and the little by little fulfillment of His promises. Thus, He also invites us to remember.

How do we live in the Lord's grace every day? By Remembering. Remember God's power—what He has done for you in the past and what He is doing today. Remember God's presence—He is with you, even in challenging times. Remember God's promises—He has spoken and He will not fail.

Remember. Rest in His power. Stay close to His presence. Hold fast to His promises. And day by day, live in His grace and walk by His grace. ✨

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