

SERMON
OUTLINE

GOD’S WORSHIP AND PAGAN
WORSHIP

JUDGES 18:1-31 I REV. LITO VILLORIA

Judges 18 continues the disturbing trajectory of spiritual confusion and religious compromise in Israel. After the moral collapse in Micah’s household in chapter 17, the Danites now enter the scene—seeking land and a blessing, but not God. Their search for inheritance was not grounded in trust or obedience, but in convenience and human strategy. They adopted a priest who had already been part of a compromised worship system and treated him as a good-luck charm. God’s name was invoked, but His will was never truly sought (Judges 18:1-6).

This chapter reveals how far Israel had drifted from God’s design. The tribe of Dan, rather than fully conquering their allotted territory (Joshua 19:40-48), chose an easier target—a peaceful and unsuspecting people in Laish. They justified violence in the name of God but failed to seek His direction. Along

the way, they stole Micah’s idols and priest, believing these would secure divine favor. Their conquest was successful, but it was built on spiritual corruption and theft, not faith or obedience (Judges 18:7-20).

The Levite priest, previously content to serve in a private shrine, was easily swayed by prestige. His ambition led him to serve an entire tribe rather than one man, but the idolatry remained the same—only larger in scale. He represented a corrupted priesthood more interested in opportunity than truth. Meanwhile, Micah—though a thief himself—lamented the loss of his gods and his hired priest, exposing just how hollow his religion had become (Judges 18:21-24).

In the end, the Danites settled in Laish, renamed it Dan, and established a shrine with graven images. The closing verse is chilling: *“So they set up Micah’s carved image that he made, as*

long as the house of God was at Shiloh” (Judges 18:31). False worship persisted side-by-side with God’s ordained center of worship, reflecting a nation comfortable with contradiction and compromise (Judges 18:25-31).

God’s rule does not adapt to human desire. True worship is not determined by tradition, emotion, or success—but by God’s truth alone. He is not pleased with sincerity that ignores His Word, nor with religion that mimics pagan practices

Sermon Focus: Judges 18 warns us of the dangers of religious compromise. When we replace God’s truth with convenience or tradition, we slide into pagan worship dressed in spiritual language. May we reject distorted religion and return to worship grounded in God’s Word, centered on His presence, and submitted to His rule. ✱

AMAZING JESUS

PARSON TO PERSON

PATTY NERMAL

In the early 2000s, there was a popular reality series called The Amazing Race. It was a big hit back then, and I was one of those who loved watching it. The competition featured teams of two, each tasked with completing various challenges while avoiding being the last to arrive at each pit stop to prevent elimination. The ultimate goal was to be the first to reach the final pit stop and win the cash prize. The race took place in different locations and even across countries—many of which the contestants were unfamiliar with. Like in many other competitions, despite the obstacles, participants went to great lengths to complete each task, often not knowing where they would be heading next.

But what if the prize had no economic value, and instead was of eternal worth? Would one still persevere through every challenge to see God’s greater purpose for their life? This was the same situation Abraham faced when God called him to leave the life he had always known.

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house

to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” - Genesis 12:1-3

Abraham followed God’s instructions. Amidst not knowing how God will make His promise to happen, he took the courage to obey Him. Like Abraham, only in our obedience will we see His bigger plans for us and experience how amazing our God is.

As we culminate Missions Month in GCF South Metro, it is a joy to see the members of the church persevering in their call to carry Christ’s message into the world. The Amazing Mission Race is an activity prepared for the Missions Month celebration to engage the church in creatively experiencing and reflecting on the call to ‘go’ and ‘send’ that will help them deepen their understanding of the Gospel mission, and inspiring action in supporting and participating in the work of sharing Christ with the world. The tasks focus on sharing

Jesus with others—whether in person or online—through prayer, conversation, and engaging with culture. These tasks can be done anytime, anywhere: at school, in the workplace, in their neighborhoods, or even at home!

It is encouraging to see how the participants are stepping out of their comfort zones to reach out and share how amazing Jesus is to transform their lives. In the process, they are also learning about others’ culture and beliefs, which often opens the door to meaningful Gospel conversations. Just like Abraham, we are being challenged by God to go and follow Him, even when we do not know exactly where the journey will lead us.

Our journey with God is not like following a Google map that tells us exactly when and where to turn. Instead, it requires deep faith to discern His leading. It is more like using a compass, where we must stay aligned with the true north to reach our destination, and for us, that true north is Jesus Christ. And unlike a reality show, we are not in it for a material prize. We continue to run the “race” of faithfully walking with our amazing Jesus, allowing Him to lead us and follow His call to make disciples until His return. ✱

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