

JUDGES 5:6-8
LIFE UNDER OPPRESSION!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 5 as we continue our study through the book of Judges.

Keep in mind that Judges deals with a period of time where the children of Israel are in rebellion towards God, they have turned from God and God brings them into bondage with their enemies.

As they spend time in this bondage, as they realize what they have done, they repented and return to the Lord.

It is out of that we see the Lord raise up a deliverer, a Judge to deliver them from the bondage that they were in.

And things go well until that Judge dies and then this pattern begins all over again.

It is a cyclical pattern of sin, servitude, supplication and salvation.

Now what we read here in Judges chapter 5 is born out of what took place in Judges chapter 4.

The Judge Ehud died, and the children of Israel did evil before the Lord.

And the Lord sold them into bondage by the hand of Jabin, the King of the Canaanites.

And for twenty years they were in bondage until they cried out to God to be delivered from the bondage that they were in.

And there was no man that was willing to step forward and God raised up Deborah to Judge Israel and to deliver Israel from this bondage that they were in.

Remember that God tried to get Barak to go forward and lead the children of Israel, but he did not listen to the Lord, even after Deborah reminded him of what the Lord instructed him to do.

We see that in Judges 4:6-7, where we are told, **“Then she [Deborah] sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, ‘Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, ‘Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand’?”**”

The Lord already spoke to Barak, but he did not step forward and now that Deborah reminded him of what the Lord had said, we see that his response is not really a step or walk of faith.

We are told in Judges 4:8, **“And Barak said to her, ‘If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!’”**

In other words, even though God had instructed Barak to go forward, he was not going to go into battle unless Deborah went with him.

Now some don’t see this as a problem, they even think that Barak did the right thing since Deborah was a prophetess. But here is the problem I have with that line of thinking. God did not call Deborah to go into battle, He called Barak to step up, and he refused to go without Deborah going.

And all you have to do to see this and how wrong it was for Barak, is look at Judges 4:9, where we are told, **“So she [Deborah] said, ‘I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.’ Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.”**

And that is exactly what happened. In this battle against these Canaanites, Sisera being the commander of this army, was killed by a woman, Jael, and not by Barak! A woman got the victory because Barak refused to walk by faith. And we also see Deborah get the victory in this as well.

And it is out of this victory we see the song of Deborah and Barak. And songs tend to stay in our minds longer than other things.

Think about it for a minute. You haven’t heard a song in thirty years and all of a sudden, it is on the radio and you are singing the words to that song! Songs stick in our memory and that is why I think this song that they put together was important. It was to remind the children of Israel of the victory that God had given to them over their enemies when they returned to Him.

In our first two studies of this song, here in Judges chapter 5, we looked at ***WHEN LEADERS LEAD*** and we covered Judges 5:1-2, 9.

And last time we looked at ***REMEMBER GOD!*** And that was in Judges 5:3-5.

This morning we are going to focus on ***LIFE UNDER OPPRESSION*** in Judges 5:6-8. And in these verses, there are a few points I want to bring out. I have broken these verses down into three main points and they go like this:

LIFE APART FROM GOD – JUDGES 5:6-7a

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS – JUDGES 5:7b

NO PEACE FOR THE WICKED – JUDGES 5:8

And I think you will see how this applies to our lives today, the conditions we can find ourselves in and find our nation in because we have turned from the Lord!

Now let me also say this. Persecution is also seen in those who follow the Lord because the darkness does not like the light, and they try to extinguish it.

But today, the church does not like to be persecuted, they want to be liked by everyone and to do that, many have compromised what they believe so that they will be molded into the worlds image!

One person put it like this, and I think he is right. He wrote,

The greatest criticism of the church today is that no one wants to persecute it: because there is nothing very much to persecute it about.

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With that said, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 5, beginning in verse 6 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we look at this topic – ***LIFE UNDER OPPRESSION!***

JUDGES 5

VERSES 6-7a

Here we see what life is apart from God and it is not good. But before I deal with that, let's look at what was taking place during this period of time.

We are told, "**In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, In the days of Jael. . .**"

We know that Shamgar is mentioned back in Judges 3:31 as one of the Judges in Israel and that he defeated six hundred Philistine men with an ox goad, probably at one time. But we don't know much more about him.

And it seems to imply that this fear to be out in the streets because of the enemy was going on during the time of Shamgar.

I tend to see this as speaking of what life was like before Shamgar was a Judge and delivered Israel. Yes, obviously he was living during that persecution from the Philistines, and that made life tough. And it is out of that we see God raise up Shamgar to deliver Israel.

We also see this fear to be out in the streets during the time of Jael, the woman who ended up killing Sisera, the commander of the army of Jabin, King of the Canaanites.

And I think the big focus here is that this is what life is apart from God. People stayed out of the streets for fear of the enemy. They did not travel far. And if they did travel, they would stay away from the main thoroughfare, the open places and take the side roads where you could avoid being seen. In the villages, there was no life, only fear, no social life, no going out into the streets for gatherings. Isolation, fear, all because they turned from God.

One writer put it like this. He wrote, "During the days of Shamgar and Jael the Canaanites were so strong that the people with the birthright to the land feared to go out on the main highways. Instead they traveled the back roads to avoid molestation. Peasant farmers could not raise or sell crops because of the Canaanite threat. They stopped working because of the Canaanite oppression." (Dr. Thomas Constable)

That truly is a life for individuals and for a nation that turns from God!

Think about our nation and it was not that long ago that things were vastly different.

I remember growing up, some fifty years ago or so, and we did not lock the doors to our home. We would keep the windows open to let the air in during those hot summer nights without fear of someone breaking in. I would travel all over the place on my bike, walking and no fear of someone kidnapping me or assaulting me. For young girls, there was not that fear of human trafficking.

I am not saying things were perfect, that there was no crime, that there was no abuse, there was. But not like we see it today.

Let me show you what I mean just from one state and this article is from 2019. We are told,

A cold sweat. A suddenly racing heart. The hairs on the back of your neck standing up.

Those are the physiological symptoms of fear. And they are felt by women in Seattle every day - simply by walking down a sidewalk.

When the Dori Monson Show put out a call for women's personal stories of fear on the streets of Seattle, over 400 people shared their feelings and experiences. When another popular Facebook page (*warning: mature content*) shared the post, it garnered over 200 more comments.

It's a sad time to be a woman in downtown. Scared to walk alone at night and sometimes even during the day . . . Something needs to change. I've been dealing with this disgusting and scary issue since I was 16. To being afraid of downtown for the last six years is so incredibly disheartening. – Alyssa, a Seattleite who commuted to class in Capitol Hill before beginning a job downtown

Every time I walk the streets of Seattle, I immediately take precautions to protect myself in any situation. It doesn't matter the time of day, what street I am walking down, it is a constant in my head to be aware and protect myself walking down the streets. – Stephanie

I am fairly small in stature, and for some reason undesirable men tend to target me for striking inappropriate conversations. As a woman I am afraid because of how easily someone could pick me up and carry me off, or simply overpower me; I am a target. – M.

Women working downtown talked of carrying weapons in their purses while on their lunch breaks along Seattle's most expensive, designer-store-laden streets.

Recent random attacks on Seattle women going about their daily lives, such as the rape of a woman named Lindsey in a Ballard car dealership bathroom one morning, or the attempted rape of jogger Kelly Herron at the Golden Gardens bathroom in the middle of a Sunday afternoon run, have no doubt heightened this fear.

. . . In the survey, conducted by Seattle University's Criminal Justice Department, over half the responding residents from South Ballard, Georgetown, SoDo, and Belltown reported feeling afraid of crime not just at night, but during the day as well.

“Whether or not the actual crime is equivalent to someone's fear of crime, it doesn't matter - if you're afraid to walk in your neighborhood, that fear is real and no one should be afraid to walk in their neighborhood,” said Professor Jacqueline Helfgott, the director of Seattle University's Crime and Justice Research Center. “That takes away people's power.”

- <http://bit.ly/38sUo9e>

Please understand that this is not some war-torn country, this is here in the United States, in Seattle!

Why all this fear? Why all these problems?

The answer is really simple and yet, many don't want to hear it. They can't believe it is that simple. Why do we have to make things so complicated when they really don't need to be.

Let me ask you this. What was the problem for the children of Israel and what did they need to do to resolve that problem?

They were oppressed by the enemy, in bondage to the enemy, in fear of the enemy. I think we can clearly see that here in the book of Judges. They turned away from the Lord!

What did they need to do to rectify that problem?

Since they had turned away from the Lord and were embracing the false gods, they needed to repent of their sin and return to the Lord, the One who loved them so much and wanted to bless them.

I told you, not very difficult to understand. Not very complicated. It is pretty much straight forward and then it is up to the individuals and a nation to accept it or reject it, but if you reject the idea of turning back to God, there are consequences to those actions, and it is not good.

I know many of you are very familiar with these passages in Romans chapter 1, but if you doubt at all that the violence and immorality and the like, that we see going on is just a random chance happening, you are very wrong!

Listen to what Paul tells us in Romans chapter 1, beginning in verse 18. We are told, **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew**

God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man - and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.” Romans 1:18-32.

First of all, we see that they know that there is a God, but they suppress that truth. How can they know that there is a God? Because creation itself testifies that there is. But they reject God.

And then we see what God does and then what man does apart from God.

Paul gives us this very sad statement as he says that God gave them up, He allowed them to have what they wanted, the lusts of their flesh, the lusts of their hearts, dishonoring their bodies, all kinds of uncleanness.

And, as you look at what God gives man over to since man has rejected God, we see that being played out today.

I know what some may say; that we have always had problems like this in America, and that is very true.

But listen to how this has come upon us, look at how we took God out of our nation and, as you will see, the consequences of those actions.

Listen to this and you will see what I mean. We are told,

Nations and individuals that turn away from God incur his wrath. Romans 1:18 states, ***“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.”*** God’s wrath is always just and to be feared, it is patient, consistent, and stores up; it is for sinners and for God’s glory. At times, it is partial and at other times, it is complete. At times, though their ultimate end is Heaven and not Hell, even Christians may be swept away in the judgment of a nation. . . .

As to America, it is already under divine judgment. America has been in a continued state of decline for decades:

- In 1962, in *Engel v. Vitale*, school prayer was ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court.
- In 1963, in *Abington School District v. Schempp*, Bible reading in public schools was ruled unconstitutional.
- In 1973, in *Roe v. Wade*, restrictions on abortion were lifted, and abortion clinics began to permeate the nation murdering children.

- In 1985, in *Lynch v. Donnelly*, nativity scenes in public places were ruled to violate the so-called “separation of church and state.”
- In 2003, in *Lawrence v. Texas*, laws against homosexual sodomy were ruled unconstitutional.
- In 2009, ObamaCare was passed by Democrat and Republican alike, enslaving millions to higher health care costs and socialism; further abusing the poor, widow, orphan, disabled, and the elderly.
- In 2017, in the Washington Supreme Court case *Arlene’s Flowers v. State of Washington*, a Christian florist was denied “free speech” and forced to participate in same sex marriages, if she desires to remain in business.

America, as Jonah of old, is going “down,” “down,” “down” away from the Lord; down to Tarshish, down to Joppa (Jonah 1:3); down into the ship, down to sleep (Jonah 1:5); down into the sea (Jonah 1:15); and down into the great fish (Jonah 1:17). . . .

While the United States of America has contributed much in a positive way to the world in the past, at present it is a land stained with the innocent blood of abortion; millions have been slaughtered. Adultery, fornication, lesbianism, homosexuality, bisexual, intersex, and transgenderism, etc. are all too common place; even the law of the land. Covetousness, greed, and selfishness is the new red, white, and blue waving over the USA. The grave injustices to the poor, widows, orphans, disabled, and the elderly continue to increase while politicians, judges, and others line their pockets. This is not the America I and many others fought for in our youth.

America is ripe for judgment! . . .

- <http://bit.ly/36ihEoF>

When you look at the morals of our society, you can’t miss that they are on a decline. But some don’t see them that way. You see, they have changed what is right and what is wrong to make sure the sin that they are involved in, is not a sin!

Again, if you take God out of the picture, God will give you over to debased practices, a debased mind and what is taking place on the inside will overflow in our actions!

Let me share this with you and you will see, if you haven't seen already as you look at this nation, that we are moving farther and farther away from God and as we do that we move farther into darkness.

We are told,

What in the world has happened to the United States? What a dysfunctional mess!

While several factors have contributed to our country's chaotic state, one that stands out above the rest is our culture losing its moral and ethical roots.

According to a Gallup poll conducted in May 2018, 49 percent of Americans say the state of moral values in the U.S. is "poor." Meanwhile, 37 percent of U.S. adults say moral values are "only fair" and 14 percent say they are "excellent" or "good."

What is moral and what is not is clearly defined, but sadly, countless Americans these days are choosing to redefine the meaning of moral in order to justify their self-indulgent, hedonistic behaviors and lifestyles.

As our society becomes one of rot, behaviors and principles of Americans become rotten as well - and as the moral compass of Americans continues to decay, so decays the popular culture as well as America's political system. . . .

Much of the moral decay can be directly attributed to our country increasingly opposing God over the years in favor of secular humanism.

As we continue to reject God and push him out of our country, we are swinging our doors wide open and welcoming corruption, hatred and violence into our country with open arms.

In Edward Gibbon's final volume of "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," three of the five major causes he identifies behind the fall of one of history's greatest empires that today's America currently identifies with are: the breakdown of the family, an insatiable craving for pleasure and the decay of religion.

We have digressed into a nation as wicked as (if not more wicked than) Sodom and Gomorrah as clearly evidenced by the increased acceptance of sexual immorality and New York's, gruesome abortion law that Gov. Cuomo pressured the state into enacting.

Our country's rapid descent into apostasy is undoubtedly leading our country into a calamitous [catastrophic] future, and it is imperative that Americans take heed of the words of wisdom of two former presidents.

George Washington stated in his famous farewell address, ***"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."***

The U.S. is steering off course onto the broad road leading to destruction comparable to the one ancient Rome traveled upon that led to their demise. What the United States is in desperate need of is a united spiritual revival.

Otherwise, as Ronald Reagan forewarned, *“Without God, there is no virtue because there’s no prompting of the conscience. And without God, democracy will not and cannot endure. If we ever forget that we are one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under.”*

- <http://bit.ly/2G8YgzR>

I think that both President George Washington and President Ronald Regan were right. Apart from religion, and when they spoke of religion it was not just any kind of faith, it was faith that was built upon the Lord Jesus Christ and surrendering to His will and not ours, there is lawlessness, moral depravity, wickedness and the like.

And as dark as things may be, we need a light in this nation to dispel the darkness and, just as it was dark in Israel, God raised up Deborah to be a light. And that is our next point as we move from *LIFE APART FROM GOD* to *A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS!*

VERSE 5:7b

Like I have said, this section deals with *A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS!*

And that light was Deborah!

Notice her qualifications for this ministry that the Lord has placed her in, **“a mother in Israel.”**

That was her qualifications, she was a mother and now she was going to lead a nation into battle against an enemy that had them in captivity for twenty years!

I don't know about you, but if I want someone to lead me in a battle against a stronger enemy, it is not going to be a mother who has no military experience. I am going after someone like Rambo!

In saying that, my problem is that I am looking at this through human eyes and not with a heavenly perspective, you might say!

Yes, someone like Rambo is great to have at your side, but Rambo will amount to nothing when you put God into the picture. And that is exactly who I left out when I thought that a woman, with no military experience, could not handle this battle!

You see, Deborah was not only a mother in Israel, but she was a prophetess as well or she was being led by God.

And it was the Lord who was directing this battle and that means that all Deborah had to do was walk by faith and see the salvation that the Lord would bring in this battle!

Let me show you that even with adversity, as we see here with the children of Israel and with Deborah, you need to rise up and go forward, keeping your eyes on the Lord.

This is an amazing story and yet, this man moved forward. Listen to what we are told, World-renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman was stricken with polio as a child. As a result, he wears braces on both legs and walks with the aid of crutches.

At concerts, getting on stage is no small achievement for him. He slowly crosses the stage until he reaches his chair. He lays his crutches on the floor, slowly undoes the clasps on his legs, tucks one foot back and extends the other foot forward. Then he bends down and picks up the violin, puts it under his chin, nods to the conductor, and proceeds to play.

One fall evening in 1995, while performing at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City, Perlman had to deal with one additional handicap.

Jack Reimer, a columnist with the Houston Chronicle, described the scene. “Just as he finished the first few bars, one of the strings on his violin broke. You could hear it snap - it went off like gunfire across the room. There was no mistaking what that sound meant.”

There was no mistaking what he had to do. People who were there said, “We figured he would have to get up . . . to either find another violin or find another string for this one.”

But he didn’t. Instead Perlman waited a moment, closed his eyes, and then signaled the conductor to begin again. The orchestra and he played from where he had left off. He played with passion and power.

Of course, it is impossible to play a symphonic work with just three strings. But that night Itzhak Perlman refused to know that. You could see him modulate, change, recompose the piece in his head. At one point, it sounded like he was detuning the strings to get new sounds they had never made before.

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Look at the period of time God has placed us in. It is very dark outside. Morality is in the toilet. People are doing what is right in their own eyes, and it is evil. And we even see this in the church.

And it is very easy to complain about how bad things are. But let me say this. Complaining is not a spiritual gift! Yes, we are very good at it, but we don’t really need God to be good complainers!

Remember the book of Esther and how she was placed in a position to save her people, the Jews from complete destruction by Haman. And Mordecai warns Esther of what is going to happen and that she needs to step up to the plate you might say and do something.

And in Esther 4:10-16 we are told, **“Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: ‘All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days.’ So they told Mordecai Esther’s words. And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: ‘Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?’ Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: ‘Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!”**

Notice how God is working in the heart of Esther through Mordecai. You see, as Esther hears what is happening, she sends word back to Mordecai that there is not much she can do about this situation! Her hands are tied.

For Esther the Queen there is this problem. The King has not requested to see her for 30 days now and if she just presents herself before the King, without being called, she could be put to death. He may be gracious and hold out his scepter and spare her life, but that is not guaranteed. And why take a chance when the King has not called for her these 30 days, it doesn’t sound like he wants to see her.

And Mordecai sends word back to Esther and he makes 3 very important points regarding what Esther has said to him.

First of all, he lets Esther know that if she does nothing, she too will perish when this decree is carried out, for she was a Jew. She could not hide behind her position, for **ALL** Jews were to be put to death! By ignoring the situation, it was not going to make it go away or protect her!

The second point that Mordecai makes to Esther is this. If Esther refuses to step in and try to stop this evil plan from being carried out, then God will raise up someone else to deliver His people. God was not interested in her excuses for not taking that step of faith, but rather will she take that step, or will she refuse to take that step of faith

And the third point is this. Esther's entire life may have been directed so that she may fulfill this one task and save the Jews from destruction. Her entire life was prepared for this moment, and yet it is her choice in what she will do.

Remember what Paul said in Philippians 2:13, "**for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**" In other words, if God has called you to do something for Him, He will work in you or equip you for the task and He will give you the strength to do it if you will only walk in faith!

And in Proverbs 24:11-12 we read, "**Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, 'Surely we did not know this,' Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?**"

In other words, don't ignore the things that God is showing you to do, step forward and do them!

I think Spurgeon nailed it when he said, “You have been wishing for another position where you could do something for Jesus: do not wish anything of the kind but serve him where you are.”

As Esther hears what Mordecai had to say she is now willing to take that step of faith, but before she does, she has all the Jews in Shushan, all her maids, fasting.

And Esther says, basically, ***“If I perish, I perish. If I go down, I go down. If it’s such a time for this that I exist, I’m going to go for it.”***

This was not some fatalistic attitude. She was taking a step of faith.

What are you afraid of? Are you afraid that someone won’t like you? Are you afraid that someone might make fun of you? What are you afraid of?

Esther got her priorities and her perspective right, if God is for us who can truly be against us!

Don’t negate the work that God has called you to do. Serve Him wholeheartedly no matter the cost for, **“... Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”** Esther 4:14.

And I think that was Deborah. She was placed in a period of time, such as this, to deliver the children of Israel from the bondage they were in, to draw them back to God!

And I believe the same is true for us. It may be dark out in this world. The world may be cold and intolerant of you. Persecution may come your way, but don’t let that persecution stop you but rise up above it, keep your eyes on the Lord and be directed by Him!

Also, it may be dark in some churches, but if we truly care for them, we will also shine the light of Christ to them. Yes, they may not like it. They may be angry, but to see them turn from their wicked ways and back to the Lord, that would be wonderful!

The Latin poet Horace lays down the axiom that “adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant.”

Sir Walter Scott compares adversity to the period of the former and of the latter rain - cold, comfortless, unfriendly to man and to animal; yet from that season have their birth the flower and the fruit, the date, the rose, and the pomegranate.

- Practical Bible Illustrations from Yesterday and Today

Don't look at all that is going on in the world as obstacles from keeping you from sharing your faith. Look at them as opportunities for you to share your faith and see the darkness dispelled by the light!

It is what Deborah did and I truly believe it is what we need to do. Shine brightly for Jesus in our homes, at work, in the marketplace, with friends, in the highways and byways as we compel people to come into the Kingdom of God!

Again, you might not feel you can do it, but Deborah was a mother whose faith was in the Lord and He is the one who brought about this great deliverance by Deborah! He can do the same with you, “**. . . Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?**” Esther 4:14.

And the answer to that is simple, you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this, be ***A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS!***

VERSE 8

This last point is simple, and the Bible is very clear on this, ***NO PEACE FOR THE WICKED!***

And notice here what was going on in Israel. First, the action on their part, “**They chose new gods . . .**”

Instead of worshiping the true and living God, they went after the many false gods that were out there, and that number, I am sure, grows all the time because the gods that man worships comes from the imagination of his heart, which is evil!

And, it is out of that action on their part, that we see the response from God, what He brought upon them, “**. . . Then there was war in the gates; Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.**”

One writer summed this up like this,

The Israelites chose new gods in the sense that they turned to idols as a result of God not delivering them for 20 years. These conditions led to war in the gates of the cities, that is, internal strife in Israel. The 40,000, or less likely 40 military units, were evidently Israel’s soldiers who did not have normal weapons.

- Thomas Constable’s Notes on the Bible

So not only war from the enemy outside of Israel, but since they turned from the Lord, they were also fighting amongst themselves. Civil war, in a sense was going on.

Also, they did not have the implements for war to fight with.

I don’t know if you noticed this or not, but there seems to be a slide towards a civil war in this country, yes, another one!

I look at how things are going, how former President Obama stirred the pot in regard to racial tension, supported criminals who shot at police officers and were killed. And now, look at our government and how they are stirring the pot even more, as well as the news media and the like.

One article put it like this in regard to a coming civil war in this nation, and there are many reports out there on this. And I am not saying this to scare you, but we need to be aware and understand that when you turn from God you not only have battles from outside your nation, but within as well.

We are told,

Partisan political division and the resulting incivility has reached a low in America, with 67% believing that the nation is nearing civil war, according to a new national survey.

“The majority of Americans believe that we are two-thirds of the way to being on the edge of civil war. That to me is a very pessimistic place,” said Mo Elleithee the executive director of Georgetown University’s Institute of Politics and Public Service.

And worse, he said in announcing the results of the institute’s Battleground Poll the political division is likely to make the upcoming 2020 presidential race the nastiest in modern history.

- <https://washex.am/2upVLXh>

Agree with that or not, this is what the Lord has to say to those who have turned away from Him.

First of all, in Isaiah 48:22 we are told, “**‘There is no peace,’ says the Lord, ‘for the wicked.’**”

It is interesting that the one thing people are looking for today is peace or an absence of problems. And they can't seem to find it.

And what we read here in Isaiah, and God is very clear on this, there is *no* peace, not *some* peace, not a *little* peace or even *slight* peace apart from Jesus, there is **NO PEACE!**

Like the bumper sticker says, "No Peace, No God. Know Peace, Know God!" That is what is being said here.

Let me share this article about Michael Jordan because it says a lot about a person who lives their life apart from God. They might have everything we would desire, but it is like Mick Jagger said, "***I can't get no, satisfaction!***" and that is truly what we see in this man's life. There truly is no peace that he can find. The article is called, "***Do You Still Want to Be Like Mike?***" and it is written by Matt Smethurst. We are told,

Thompson's piece pulsates with the sense that Jordan isn't happy. "I would give up everything now to go back and play the game of basketball," the Hall of Famer confesses. When asked how he replaces it, Jordan simply states, "You don't. You learn to live with it."

Such an abnormal existence brings certain abnormal hopes, promises, expectations. As Thompson observes:

Most people live anonymous lives, and when they grow old and die, any record of their existence is blown away. They're forgotten, some more slowly than others, but eventually it happens to virtually everyone. Yet for the few people in each generation who reach the very pinnacle of fame and achievement, a mirage flickers: immortality. They come to believe in it. Even after Jordan is gone, he knows people will remember him. Here lies the greatest basketball player of all time. That's his epitaph.

There's a fable about returning Roman generals who rode in victory parades through the streets of the capital; a slave stood behind them, whispering in their ears, "All glory is fleeting." Nobody does that for professional athletes. Jordan couldn't have known that the closest he'd get to immortality was during that final walk off the court. . . .

All that can happen in the days and years that follow is for the shining monument he built to be chipped away, eroded. His self-esteem has always been, as he says, "tied directly to the game." Without it, he feels adrift. Who am I? What am I doing? For the past 10 years, since retiring for the third time, he has been running, moving as fast as he could, creating distractions, distance.

In his supercilious 2009 Hall of Fame speech, Jordan called the game of basketball his "refuge," the "place where I've gone when I needed to find comfort and peace." Three years later, the restlessness remains.

It turns out the voracious drive that turned a shy North Carolina youngster into a household name comes with a price tag. And as the flicker of immortality fades, Jordan stares in the mirror, wondering where to turn.

"How can I enjoy the next 20 years without so much of this consuming me?" he ponders. "How can I find peace away from the game of basketball?" . . .

"How can I find peace away from the game of basketball?" the aging legend asks.

Michael, you never had peace. Triumph and fame, yes, but not peace.

James Naismith invented a game that brought you a sense of purpose, of value, of calm. But it was only that - a sense, a counterfeit of the real thing. You will never find life outside the game for the same reason you never found life in it. It's not there.

The peace you seek isn't available on a basketball court or a golf course but on a little hill outside Jerusalem. There, Yahweh incarnate hung in the place of sinners - wannabe Yahweh's like you and like me.

You've gained the world and found it lacking, Mike. Don't lose your soul.

- <http://bit.ly/2GafM79>

I remember the saying, "I want to be like Mike!" But there is a better saying, "I want to be like Jesus!" and that is where true satisfaction is found, in Him!

Also, in Isaiah 57:20-21 we are told, **"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt. 'There is no peace,' Says my God, 'for the wicked.'"**

How true that is. Life apart from God is like the sea that keeps churning up its waters and as it does all the mire and dirt rise up. And we see that today as a nation, as we have turned from God, and there is all this unrest, there is all this churning up you might say, for this desire of the flesh and that desire of the flesh and thinking it will satisfy, it will give us rest, it will give us peace. And it doesn't and they move on to the next thing to try and find this rest, this peace.

The only solution for Israel, and for us, is the Lord. It is only in the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, that we will find true peace.

I am not saying we will not have storms in this life as Christians. We will, and we do. But what I am saying is that we can find peace in the midst of those storms, and that peace is found in Jesus!

Look at what we have seen this morning.

We looked at:

LIFE APART FROM GOD, and we saw how dangerous it really is.

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS, and how we can shine brightly for the Lord no matter how dark things can get because light always dispels the darkness.

NO PEACE FOR THE WICKED, as we saw that there is truly no peace in the life of a person or a nation who has turned from God.

Let me close with this. We are told,

A daughter complained to her father about how hard things were for her. “As soon as I solve one problem,” she said, “another one comes up. I’m tired of struggling.”

Her father, a chef, took her to the kitchen where he filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to a boil. In one he placed carrots; in the second, eggs; and in the last, ground coffee beans. He let them sit and boil, without saying a word.

The daughter impatiently waited, wondering what he was doing. After a while, he went over and turned off the burners. He fished out the carrots and placed them in a bowl. He pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. He poured the coffee into a bowl. Turning to her he asked, “Darling, what do you see?”

“Carrots, eggs, and coffee,” she replied.

He brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft.

He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg.

Finally, he asked her to sip the coffee. She smiled, as she tasted its rich flavor.

She asked, “What does it mean, Father?”

He explained that each of them had faced the same adversity - boiling water - but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting, but after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak.

The egg was fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside hardened.

The ground coffee beans were unique, however. By being in the boiling water, they changed the water.

He asked his daughter, “When adversity knocks on your door, which are you?”

- More Perfect Illustrations for Every Topic and Occasion

Make no mistake about it, things are heating up. And how are we going to respond to what we are facing?

Are we going to be soft and weak?

Are we going to be hard and insensitive?

Or, are we going to bring forth the rich flavor that Christ has brought to our own lives?

Yes, it is dark outside, spiritually speaking, but we have the light of Christ in us, may we not hide it but shine brightly and see the change that God can bring to those around us, just as Deborah did!