



Growing...

1. The united tribes were so outraged by the death of the Levite's concubine that they went and killed the wives of Jabesh-Gilead. How do you explain such hypocrisy? How do you see the same hypocrisy today?
2. What is wrong with our fallen race? And to what extent have you fallen?
3. What happens when God withdraws his voice of correction from a society?
4. Why is this story in the Bible? What important lessons does it teach us?
5. Read Judges 21:25. How do you see this playing out in our world today?
6. How does the brokenness and flaws of these judges/deliverers emphasize the work of our deliverer Jesus?



Serving....This week, if you're able, offer to pay for someone's coffee

“Weird, deprived, and too much like America Today”

By Alvin Bertram
(Based on Judges 19)

I didn't get much out of the book of *Judges* when I read the Bible fully a few years ago. The Old Testament seemed then to be weird and irrelevant to today's problems. This time, however, I sat down and really studied the content. I saw that *Judges* is a history lesson and its purpose is to warn mankind from repeating those mistakes. I fear that the America of today is doing just that.

The Levite assumed that he and his party would be safe among children of God, but that was not true. Still today, Christians are held to a higher standard, and rightfully so since one of the Ten Commandments involves loving our neighbors as ourselves. How often do we act in a way that our neighbors would view as “not very Christian”?

It amazes me that the people in *Judges* surrounded the house and demanded that the Levite give up this stranger so they may have their way with him. The Levite was appalled by the demand, but he gave up his concubine to be abused by a crowd of guys for a night. Women were valued so poorly.

Even though the city lacked any sort of morality, God showed up and redeemed them. Our hope for America, for our society could also be described as “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

Distributing body parts among the tribes seems like a harsh way for the Levite to get his way. Maybe he knew a sternly written letter wouldn't work? Either way, the point is that we are responsible for the direction of our society. The Levite's wakeup call reminded Israel of their responsibility. When they boldly acted, God was there to help. Today a sternly written letter or editor also seems ineffective. Our responsibility is to find effective ways to bring about change in our own small circles, as well as our larger society.

Heavenly Father, you use our failures and our sin as a chance to prove your love and your willingness to forgive. History has proven that you keep your promise to forgive. Like parents who want the best for their child, your heart breaks when we sin and need your forgiveness, but when we turn back, you will always forgive. Help us to recognize our sin, learn to appreciate it in our own lives. Give us the wisdom and courage to become the people of rebirth that this country needs. Amen.



Sharing... What’s the most ridiculous thing your parents ever embarrass you?

1. God’s dealings with His unfaithful people follow a clear, four-step pattern:
 - 1st—Israelites worshiped _____ gods.
 - 2nd—In anger, God delivered them into the hands of their enemy.
 - 3rd—The Israelites would cry out of God for deliverance to save term.
 - 4th—God, out of His steadfast love for Israel, would _____ up
deliver them.
2. God continues to save sinners because of His divine _____ and
3. Note in Judges 3:27, Ehud’s courage and success then _____ t
fight!
4. Harry Wendt writes. . .” Attempts to determine the total period of years
by judges. . .can be _____.”



Sharing...In your opinion , what is one important skill everyone sh

1. He (Samson) was the only one of the judges chosen by God even _____
was conceived.

2. The Nazirites were put under three particular vows:
 - A. No _____ or strong drink.

 - B. Not to _____ their hair.

 - C. No contact with anything _____.

3. Samson encounters a lion and _____ it with his bare hands!

4. Samson violated his Nazirine vow not to _____ anything de

5. That also foreshadows the coming of the ultimate _____ ser
Lord.

“In the Arms of a Savior”

By Marsha Schmit

(Based on Judges 4 and 5)

This was a sad time in the history of the world. In reading the book of *Judges*, I wonder again and again just how much we need and have always needed a Savior. As the Israelites continued in a downward cycle. They liked their idols, they were disobedient, they married people who led them away from God. They were afflicted by those who oppressed them, and, in their misery, they cried out to God. Because God loved them, He would raise up a judge (a political and military leader) to deliver them from their oppressor for a time, the people would rest. After the judge died, it didn’t take long, and they went back to their evil ways. I wondered as I read this book – when will they/we

In Chapter 4, the Lord raised up Deborah to lead Israel. Although a woman judge, surprising at that time, she was the right person at the right time to do God’s will. When she died, the Israelites fell back to their sinful ways and because of this were sold into the hands of their enemy King Jabin. In their oppression, they cried out to God for help. God raised up Deborah the wisdom and the manpower (and another woman!) to conquer King Jabin’s army and the Israelites found relief.

This kind of thing happened throughout the book of *Judges*. It isn’t pretty; in fact, it’s depressing. We don’t learn, we continue to sin, but, because we have a gracious God, we find rest in His loving arms.

Lord, forgive us for falling back into sin again and again. Thank you for sending the right people into our lives at the right time. Amen.



Growing...

1. What kind of promises have you made?
2. Why do you think Jephthah kept his terrible promise?
3. How do you explain why God would honor such a terrible vow?
4. What do you wish would have happened instead?
5. This story, and many others in *Judges*, shows us how God works his deliverance through some pretty broken people with deep flaws. What other deeply flawed, even immoral people has God used throughout history?
 - A. What implications does that have for you?
6. Read Matthew 5:33-37. What is Jesus saying here? How do we put that into practice today?



Serving...Bring something for the Blessing Box this week.



Growing...

1. Who is the strongest female leader that you know? What makes her strong?
2. Read Judges 4:8-9. What do you think of this interaction? What is behind the request, and why does Deborah respond as she does?
3. For the women in the group: what obstacles do you encounter in leadership?
4. For the men: what challenges have you had to overcome when it comes to leadership?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. What do these verses seem to say about women's leadership?
 - A. Read 1 Corinthians 11:5. What does this verse seem to say about women's head covering? How does it reconcile with the previous verses?
 - B. Skim the list of people Paul lifts up in Romans 16:1-16. How many women?
6. Some Lutheran churches refuse to ordain women or even allow them in pastoral leadership. Faith Lutheran both recognizes women's ordination and women in leadership? Why the difference?



Serving... Send a letter or write a note to a strong woman in your church to encourage her.

“These are the Days of Our Lives”

By Lexie Fitzwater
(Based on Judges 11)

The story of *Judges* 11 is deeply troubling. Jephthah is asking for victory over the Ammonites and is willing to do whatever it takes to have victory for the great Lord. Jephthah told the Lord he would sacrifice whatever came out of his house first. He was victorious over the Ammonites, and what came out of his house first was his only daughter. He was a good man, but hard, knowing his promise to the Lord and knowing what he had to do.

To sum up Romans 8:28, God is working things for his purpose through his people. We often don't see the bigger picture that we don't see. Jephthah's daughter was faithful to her father's promise to the Lord, but asked for two months to go see people before the moment of her sacrifice.

As humans, we tend not to see the bigger picture of what's happening and struggle to control our lives. We tend to want control and the “best outcome” for ourselves rather than to God's best. In a world full of hurt and devastation today, we're so divided and looking for good news to grasp onto. 2020 was a hard year for all, and the phrase, “I just wish it would end” was said constantly. As we wished away a hard year, we also wished for the good of 2020 as well.

Continue to trust that God's got you and has a plan greater than we could ever imagine. The news and social media today are a dark place, but there is a light amid the heaviness. The light is Jesus Christ.

Dear Heavenly Father, forgive us for not trusting you with what is best in our lives. We want to be in control and for sometimes wishing our lives away. Amen.



Sharing...What's the craziest fashion trend you ever rocked?

1. As you read this text, Gideon goes by two different names. Besides Gideon, he was also called _____.
2. It is more than a bit ironic when the angel of the LORD comes to him and calls him as a _____ warrior.
3. God frequently called those who seemed _____ likely to serve in important roles.
4. God informed Gideon that the army he raised was much too _____.
5. Lessons for us:
 - 1st—God _____ leaders.
 - 2nd—God works _____ to equip leaders.
 - 3rd—God does for us what we _____ do for ourselves.
 - 4th—God alone will and does see to it that _____