

JUDGES 13:1-25

RADICAL GUILT AND RADICAL GRACE.

Did you notice what was missing between vs. 1 & 2? (no cry for deliverance from the people)
This story starts off, the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD-
But as we can see from their response; in their own eyes they see no wrong or need for deliverance.
What has happened now is that Israel is entirely comfortable with Philistine oppression. In their sin they have totally assimilated into Philistine culture. The lullaby's of the world had sung God's people to sleep...
They no longer even sense their need for God's deliverance...everything they are doing seems "right" in their own eyes...while only evil in the Lord's. No longer able to distinguish between a life that glorifies God and one that glorifies the gods and motives of their surrounding culture

We like Israel, can find ourselves like the proverbial "frog in the kettle"...so acclimated to our surroundings that we don't realize they are killing us.

"If we are merely wayward, we only need direction; merely sick, we need medicine; merely weak; we need strength. Radical grace on the other hand answers radical sinfulness - not simply to moral mistakes, lack of zeal, or spiritual lethargy, but to the condition that the Bible defines as nothing less than condemned, "children of wrath," "dead in trespasses and sins".

What ought God do when His people don't want to forsake their false gods?

What does he do? He begins to work their deliverance for them. This is Grace - greater than all our sin. Why is this so amazing? If God's help / grace was only given when we saw our need and asked for it... where would we be?

And Look where he chooses to start...he starts with a barren woman. Who in herself had no hope for a future and was powerless in herself to fix it.

This is RADICAL GRACE. God displays his power precisely when and where we can contribute nothing... Why? that our eyes may be lifted towards Him, no illusions or delusions as to where our hope is found.

"God is always Previous" - Tozer He is always at work before us...ALIVE...DOING STUFF. What humility this can cultivate if we'll just listen.

Yet, what does our culture say? "Normally, God doesn't get involved with us; but if a special situation arises where we need someone to do some heavy lifting for us, then God will lend a hand. We just have to whistle him up and he'll lighten our load."

Ch. 13 gives us a a different picture of Our God who is always previous...always at work for His glory and our greatest JOY. Story is written to emphasize the work of God in this situation...it's not about Samson...it's about God going before His people to provide a deliverer. The majestic, One, True, Perfect, and Sovereign God condescended in mercy to save those who cannot save themselves.

OUR RESPONSE

God will use Samson to rouse a sleeping Israel...a people lulled into compromise and deception
Meant to be a light to the nations...bless the nations through them...assimilation causes the light to dim...
David will come later and finally defeat the Philistines.

But they both serve as pointers, dim echoes, to the PERFECT, FINAL DELIVERER that God would send.
MT 1 - another angel appears to a man named Joseph, delivers a special message about a special boy

that was to be born...not barren, but a virgin “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

In Jesus, God brings his salvation to a people who are not crying out in repentance; who have no talents or gifts or righteousness to distinguish them from others; and a people with no hope and no prospects in themselves... “dead in trespasses and sins”

Radical Grace for Radical Guilt gives Real Hope. Salvation is not the product of acquiring a certain amount of info - turning over a new leaf...Receiving His Grace through Faith in Jesus

And here’s the thing about Grace: I know that if God chose me when I was running away from him, and so he’s not going to discard me when I stumble. Remember Richard Sibbes analogy of the mom and baby in the surf: I’m not holding onto him nearly as tightly as he is holding on to me. And the reason I have hope for the future; the reason I know I’ll make it, is his grip on me is tighter than mine on him.

Friends, as God’s children now through Christ - we too have a purpose:

1 Peter 2 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Proclaim the excellencies - surpassing-ness...of God who has lavished on you His Grace for your Guilt through His Son!