



“Pay Day Some Day: The Consequences of Sin”
Judges 1:1-7

Idea: There is a payment and day of reckoning for your sin.

Intro: Did you hear about the guy who fell in love with an opera singer? He hardly knew her, since his only view of the singer was through binoculars from the third balcony. But he was convinced he could live *happily ever after* married to a voice like that. He scarcely noticed she was considerably older than he. Nor did he care that she walked with a limp. Her mezzo-soprano voice would take them through whatever might come. After a whirlwind romance and a hurry-up ceremony, they were off for their honeymoon together.

She began to prepare for their first night together. As he watched, his chin dropped to his chest. She plucked out her glass eye and plopped it into a container on the nightstand. She pulled off her wig, ripped off her false eyelashes, yanked out her dentures, unstrapped her artificial leg, and smiled at him as she slipped off her glasses that hid her hearing aid. Stunned

and horrified, he gasped, “For goodness sake, woman, sing, sing, SING!”

Poor and hasty decisions usually result in disastrous disappointment. So also do sinful decisions. It has been said that sin will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you’re willing to pay. Ruth Copeland said, “When you have finished committing sin, sin is not finished with you. The first cost is high, but it is only the down payment. You keep paying in your conscience, in your body, in the suffering you produce for your family, your friends, and your community. And finally, you will have to pay in hell.” Our decisions have consequences.

Inquiry: We see this reality lived out by the people of Israel throughout the book of Judges. In fact the theme of Judges is the Canaanization of Israel. God’s people had entered and began the conquest of the Promise Land under the leadership of Joshua. They had won decisive victories against the people of Jericho, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. The inhabitants of the land, however, were not fully destroyed. After Joshua’s death the people of Israel became content to settle down amongst the Canaanites and lost the incentive to possess the whole land. They intermarried with the pagan peoples, which resulted in their worship of Yahweh being syncretized with the worship of Baal.

According to Daniel Block, “Herein lies the key to the relevance of this ancient composition for North American Christianity, for like the Israelites of the settlement period, we have largely forgotten the covenant Lord and have come to take for granted His gracious redemptive work on our behalf. Like the ancient Israelites we too are being squeezed into the mold of the pagan world around us. Evidences of the *Canaanization* of the church are everywhere: our preoccupation with material prosperity, which turns Christianity into a fertility religion; our syncretistic and aberrant forms of worship; our refusal to obey the Lord’s call

to separation from the world; our divisiveness and competitiveness; our moral compromises, as a result of which Christians and non-Christians are often indistinguishable; our [male] exploitation and abuse of women and children; our reluctance to answer the Lord's call to service, and when we finally go, our propensity to displace 'Thy kingdom come' with 'My kingdom come'; our eagerness to fight the Lord's battles with the world's resources and strategies; our willingness to stand up and defend perpetrators of evil instead of justice. These and many other lessons will be drawn from the leaves of this fascinating book." Judges has much to say to us today.

We should note that chapter 1 begins with the obedience of Judah and ends with the disgrace of Dan. Therefore, it should not surprise us to find that the overall history of the twelve judges is likewise an increasingly unsatisfactory one all the way from Othniel the Judahite to Samson the Danite. Their partial obedience was no obedience. Consequently, their payday was coming someday, and that is what I want to speak on this morning: Payday Some Day: The Consequences of Sin.

Read Judges 1:1-7.

Chapter 1 begins by informing the reader that Joshua has died. As is common, the passing of a leader precipitates a political crisis. Who will take charge now? Joshua had not appointed a successor like Moses had, so the people came to the chief priest and inquired of God. Judah was selected to lead the fight against the Canaanites, and Judah asked their brothers of Simeon to join them. Together the two tribes marched on Bezek where they defeated 10,000 Canaanites and Perizzites. That number is most likely a rounded figure and perhaps meant to convey the idea of "innumerable." Nevertheless, the victory was great. Adoni-bezek (Lord of Bezek) attempted to hide within the city after it fell, but Judah found him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. This seemingly cruel and unusual punishment of a prisoner was common in the ancient world. It was meant to incapacitate and humiliate the prisoner by rendering him unable to wield a weapon.

The narrator restrains himself and permits Adoni-bezek to offer his own commentary on the situation (vs. 7). He obviously fully understood the law of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Adoni-bezek interpreted his fate theologically: God is repaying him for his own similar cruelty to seventy kings, whom he reduced to scavenging scraps from under his table. He treated them like dogs, and now he is being treated like a dog.

The actions or better yet the inaction of the Judahites also teach a similar lesson. When Judah caught Adoni-bezek, they should have immediately killed him along with everyone else in Bezek (Deut 20:13). Instead, they brought him to Jerusalem where he later died. The author doesn't present all the details that took place, but what we do know is that Judah's failure to destroy the inhabitants would continue and increase in subsequent generations. Their partial obedience was disobedience, and that disobedience plagued Israel.

Adoni-bezek's comment is loaded with irony. On the one hand it reminds us that everyone in the ancient world perceived life theologically. On the other hand, the author employs a Canaanite to announce that human beings are held accountable to God for their actions. The words of Adoni-bezek give the idea that the king had always expected God to repay him for his sin. It is as if he knew there would be a payday some day.

This reminds me of the story King Ahab and Jezebel in 1 Kings 21. Ahab had desired to have a vineyard that was close to his palace. A man named Naboth owned the vineyard but refused to sell it to the king. Ahab threw a fit, so his wicked wife came up with a plan to have Naboth murdered. When King Ahab went down to take possession of the vineyard, the prophet Elijah met him with a message.

Thus says the Lord, "Have you killed and also taken possession?" ... Thus says the Lord: "In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own

blood."...And of Jezebel the Lord also said, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel within the walls of Jezreel.' Anyone belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall eat, and anyone of his who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens shall eat."

– 1 Kings 21:19, 23-24

Did God mean what He said through the prophet? Would a payday come some day? The prophecy against Ahab was fulfilled in 1 Kings 22:38, and it was fulfilled against Jezebel in 2 Kings 9. The dogs licked up the blood of Ahab and ate the flesh of Jezebel.

We learn from both Adoni-bezek and Ahab three realities:

1. Your sin is real.

It is a fact of life for every single person. You and I were born into sin; it is a part of our fleshly nature. The Bible makes it clear that we were born into this world in rebellion against God. Therefore, we must come to terms with the reality of our sin. Only then can we find forgiveness and freedom from it.

“Denying sin has not freed us from it any more than hiding death has kept us alive. It has only made us unable to deal with it...If we dare not admit to any sin, in the end we dare not admit that anything is sinful.”

– Malcolm Nygren

And so, we must diligently search out any and all sin that lurks within the corridors of our hearts. We must not hold onto it. We must not strive to manage it. We must not desire to massage it. It is as dangerous as a viper and as deadly as poison. It plays for keeps and wrecks our lives.

2. God knows your sin.

Everything in your life is an open book before the Lord. There is nothing hidden from His all-seeing eyes. He knows your thoughts. He knows your intentions. He knows your desires. He knows your heart. He knows if you truly love Him or if you're just going through religious motions. He knows the man or woman who is hiding an adulterous affair. He knows the man or woman caught up in sexual immorality. He sees past the "everything is alright façade" and knows the wickedness of your heart that you are hiding. God knows your sin better than you do.

God fully understands how your sin separates you from Him. He knows the destruction it is causing in you and your relationships. Men, you might be able to hide your sin from others, but you cannot hide it from God. Ladies you might be able to put on a good front that fools others, but you are not fooling God. He knows your heart. He knows your thoughts. He knows everything.

3. Your sin demands judgment.

Have you ever wished that God would just overlook your sin? As nice as they might seem, that is one thing God cannot do. And we would not want Him to do so because by not overlooking our sin, He is able to give us something much greater than a pass. He is able to forgive and cleanse us from all sin. To do that, however, requires for sin to be judged. There has to be a payday.

Sin has consequences. When a father sins, the children reap the whirlwind. The sin is passed on to the third and fourth generations. When a man or woman enters into an adulterous affair a payday is coming. Proverbs 7:22 says that he is heading to the slaughter. He is destroying his life. The one who lives for alcohol will never inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:10) but will

in this life feel the devastating affects of its poison
(Prov 23:32).

7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. – Gal 6:7-8

God's holiness demands the judgment of your sin. It'll be judged in one of two ways: on Christ or on you. Jesus died on the cross as a perfect sacrifice for sin.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. – 1 Peter 2:24

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. – 2 Cor 5:21

When we come to Christ and by faith place our trust in His work upon the cross, we receive forgiveness and are made right with God. We are cleansed from all of the eternal consequences of sin, but if we sin, and we will, there are still temporal consequences. The reason we should search our heart and live in a constant state of repentance is because we want to both please God and be free from the consequences of sin.

Conclusion: “Sinners cannot find God for the same reason that criminals cannot find a policeman: They aren't looking!”
– Billy Sunday

We live in a disordered, chaotic, and sinful world – in some ways not very different than the world described in the book of Judges. God calls you to be utterly ruthless about the bad stuff. He does not want you to compromise. He does not want you simply to cut down the areas of your life that you know are

wrong, but to cut them out completely and ruthlessly.

Don't flirt or entertain sin in your life because they are destructive. There is a payday for your sin. They bring devastating consequences. Instead, turn from them and find forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Allow Him to transform your life and replace sin with holy living.

Sins, like weeds, seem to get started where nothing else is growing.