

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: Thorns in a Nation's Side

SERMON REFERENCE: Judges 9:8-15

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1805

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide this outline produced from a sermon preached by Adrian Rogers while serving as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. This outline is intended for your personal, non-commercial use.

In order to ensure our ability to be good stewards of Adrian Rogers' messages, Love Worth Finding has reserved all rights to this content.

Except for your personal, non-commercial use and except for brief quotations in printed reviews, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means –electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other– without the prior permission of the publisher.

Copyright ©2024 Love Worth Finding Ministries, Inc.

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The first parable given in the Bible is the parable of the trees who wanted a king.
 - i) Judges 9:8-15
- b) America is in a crisis, and the crisis concerns leadership.
 - i) We desperately need leadership.
 - ii) It has been said that if the gold rusts, then what shall the iron do?
 - (1) If those who are supposed to be in areas of leadership do not lead, then what is going to happen?
- c) What we have here in the Word of God is the story of a pitiful politician and a nation in disarray.
- d) By and large, we get the kind of leadership we deserve.
 - i) It has been said that wicked rulers are God's reward for wicked people.
 - (1) This is not a quote from the Bible, but it is a Bible truth.
- e) What is the difference between a statesman and a politician?
 - i) A statesman works for the next generation.
 - ii) A politician works for the next election.
- f) In today's message, we will look at three steps in the decline of a nation:
 - i) The apostasy of an unthankful people
 - ii) The arrogance of an ungodly leader
 - iii) The apathy of uncommitted bystanders

2) THE APOSTASY OF AN UNTHANKFUL PEOPLE (JUDGES 8:33-34)

- a) Prior to this passage, Gideon won a victory.
 - i) The people shouted, blew trumpets, broke pitchers, held up the lanterns, and said, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon."
 - ii) God put the enemy camp in disarray.
 - iii) There was a mighty victory.
 - (1) One would have thought that the people would have been so grateful that they would never again go back on God.
 - iv) They turned to immorality.
 - v) God had given them a wonderful victory, and they forgot it.
 - vi) They had gone off into a fertility cult.
- b) People say that this could never happen in America.
 - i) We have prayed to God during times of national crisis.
 - (1) People went to the house of God to seek the face of God.
 - ii) As soon as it was over, rather than giving God the praise and the glory, it seemed as though the gates of Hell had been opened on us.
 - (1) The flood gates of filth were poured out onto this land.
 - (2) We became blatantly immoral.
 - (3) Sheer apostasy happened in America.
 - iii) Judges 8:33
- c) The book of Judges has an underlying theme.
 - i) Judges 17:6

- ii) There was no fixed standard of morality.
- d) Politicians today will stand up and talk about values, but whose values?
 - i) They don't know how to get a standard for values.
 - (1) It is morality by majority.
- e) We have gone from authority to relativism.
 - i) Everything is relative.
 - ii) There is no fixed standard.
 - iii) We have a government that is run by polls.
 - (1) Find out what people want, then give it back to them.
 - (2) Imagine Moses taking a poll in Egypt, or Martin Luther taking a poll at the reformation.
 - (a) That is not leadership.
- f) We have gone from truth to pragmatism.
 - i) No longer do we ask, "Is it true?"
 - ii) We ask, "Does it work?"
 - iii) People choose religion to produce health, wealth, and happiness.
 - (1) It is man-centered rather than God-centered.
- g) We have gone from revelation to feeling.
 - i) Psychology has been substituted for theology.
 - ii) Instead of theology, it is me-ology.
 - iii) Sin is no longer the enemy, but sorrow and sadness are the enemy.
 - iv) To feel good about yourself is the number one priority.
- h) We have gone from convictions to opinions.
 - i) Few people have convictions about anything, except their right to be happy.
- i) This is being played out in the government today.
 - i) In the 1960's, the courts ruled that it is unconstitutional for a student in a public school to pray out loud and for students to arrive at school early to hear a student volunteer read prayers.
 - ii) The First Amendment says that congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or the free exercise thereof.
 - iii) When the first United States Congress passed the First Amendment and the Bill of rights, at the same time they passed the Northwest Ordinance.
 - (1) Historians tell us that it is among the four most important documents in our national history, along with the Articles of Confederation, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution.
 - (2) It says, "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and means of education shall forever be encouraged."
 - (a) Religion, morality, and knowledge are necessary to good government.
- j) Not only has the religion become apostate and the revisionists remodeled our Constitution, but the media moguls are also systematically seducing our children.

- i) They have normalized that which is abnormal and subnormal.
 - (1) A physical, intimate relationship between unmarried couples is seen as normal.
 - (2) Profanity and filth are known as polite conversation.
 - ii) They have desensitized us.
 - (1) Things don't shock us anymore.
 - (2) What used to amaze us now amuses us.
 - (3) We have a generation today that doesn't know how to blush or flinch.
 - iii) They legitimized the illegitimate.
 - (1) Sexual perversion has gone from a sin to a sickness to a socially accepted practice.
 - (2) They have legitimized the things that God calls sin.
 - iv) They have stigmatized that which is good, decent, and godly.
 - (1) The word "virgin" is a word to be laughed at.
 - (2) Monogamous marriage is a joke.
 - (3) Those who stand up for Bible truth are called a part of the radical religious right.
 - (4) Those who stand up for what is right are now no longer tolerated.
 - (a) They are stigmatized.
 - (b) They are looked upon as a threat to society.
 - (5) Isaiah 5:20
 - k) A former congressman once said the following:
 - i) When children grow up in homes without a father's discipline and love and without a mother's nurture and comfort, we consign a young generation to problems they have not created and do not deserve.
 - ii) America without a foundation of stable families is an America built on shifting sand.
 - iii) When we accept the denigration of religious freedom, we compromise the means of our deliverance.
 - iv) We believe in a free church and a free state, but that freedom of religion does not mean freedom from religion.
 - v) We, as a nation, were conceived in faith, founded on faith, and prospered through faith.
 - l) Judges 8:33-34
- 3) THE ARROGANCE OF AN UNGODLY LEADER (JUDGES 9:1-6)
- a) There arose an ungodly leader named Abimelech.
 - b) Judges 9:1-2
 - i) Abimelech was a bramble; he was a thorn bush.
 - ii) He had an unholy ambition to lead the country.
 - c) Abimelech built a coalition.
 - i) Judges 9:1-2
 - ii) He went to his friends back where he was raised.
 - (1) He told them that he was one of them.

- d) Abimelech bought his constituents.
 - i) Judges 9:3-4
 - (1) Baalberith was the god of sexual immorality.
 - (2) This was a slap in the face of the God of Israel because the money came from the house of Baalberith.
 - ii) Sometimes, an election can be bought.
 - e) Abimelech brutalized his competition.
 - i) Judges 9:5
 - ii) He was a bloody man.
 - iii) In today's world, governments can still be built on blood; the blood of innocent little babies.
 - (1) Habakkuk 2:12
 - (2) If we were to build a memorial for the little babies who have died since Roe vs. Wade, it would have millions of names on it.
 - (3) There are some who have had abortions unknowingly, unwittingly, and out of fear or ignorance.
 - (a) There is a God of grace and forgiveness.
 - (4) Someone needs to speak up for the unborn.
 - f) Abimelech had himself inaugurated with a show of religion.
 - i) Judges 9:6
 - (1) Some translations say, "By the great tree that is in Shechem."
 - (a) Most believe this is where God spoke to Abraham and gave him the covenant.
 - (b) There in that place, Abimelech tried to associate himself with things that were good and holy, and he made a farce of the whole thing.
- 4) THE APATHY OF UNCOMMITTED BYSTANDERS (JUDGES 9:7-15)
- a) Judges 9:7
 - i) There was a prophet named Jotham.
 - ii) Listen to God's Word if you want God to listen to your word.
 - (1) Proverbs 28:9
 - b) Judges 9:8-15
 - i) Jotham told a parable about trees that wanted a king.
 - (1) The trees asked the olive tree to reign over them.
 - (a) But the olive tree was too busy prodding fatness.
 - (i) That is a national necessity.
 - (2) The trees asked the fig tree to reign over them.
 - (a) But the fig tree was too busy producing figs with their sweetness.
 - (i) That may not be a necessity, but it is a nicety.
 - (3) The trees then asked the vine to rule over them.
 - (a) The vine was too busy producing wine to cheer the heart of man and God.
 - (i) That was a luxury.

- (4) They were all so busy with their necessities, their niceties, and their luxuries, that the trees went to the bramble.
 - (a) The bramble was glad to rule over them.
 - (b) The bramble has no fruit, shade, nor lumber.
 - (c) The bramble rips, shreds, chokes, clings, and grows.
 - (i) It is very hard to remove.
- (5) They all fled their responsibilities and let the bramble rule.
- c) It has been said, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

5) CONCLUSION

- a) The book of Judges shows that God had rather forgive than judge.
 - i) He is a God of mercy.
- b) We must disabuse ourselves of the idea that there can be no revival and no restoration.
 - i) There can be, and we dare not lose hope.
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16