



Stuff They Didn't Teach Me In Sunday School



Episode 060 - The Tribe That Nearly Went Extinct Judges 19-20

The last story in Judges is shocking to the core. It sounds hauntingly similar to the experience of the angels when they visited Sodom (Genesis 19:1-11). But, if anything, Gibeah was more wicked than Sodom. At least they should have learned from the devastation God had sent on the men of Sodom. But the guilt in this situation belonged to more than just the wicked men of this town in Benjamin.

- Discuss the different ways the Levite demonstrated his callous heart toward his concubine.
- What causes us to sometimes feel callous toward the suffering of others?
- Discuss the guilt of the whole tribe of Benjamin when the crime of its city Gibeah was brought to its attention.
- When have you put loyalty to family or friends above duty to God?
- Why is this misplaced loyalty actually a callous and unloving action toward them?

The tribe of Benjamin stubbornly refused to join Israel in opposing the sin and guilt of the men of Gibeah. Rather, it mustered an army of 26,700 to fight against 400,000 men in the Israelite army.

- What reasons might Benjamin have had for going to war against such an overwhelming force?
- What reason do we sinners have for defying God our Judge and thinking we can be victorious against His overwhelming power?

At the end of the war only 600 men of Benjamin remained. All the women and children in the towns of Benjamin had been wiped out.

- How was this mass extermination a warning and reminder of Judgment Day?
- Discuss the significance of the fact that Jesus paid for the stubborn rebellion of Gibeah and Benjamin when He was dying on the cross.
- What do you feel when you realize Jesus also paid the price for your stubborn rebellion?

The warriors of Benjamin paid a steep price for their misplaced loyalty. But God still had mercy on the remaining 600 men, providing wives for them (see Judges 21) and gradually rebuilding this devastated tribe. In fact, when Israel demanded a king, God chose a humble man from this lowly, humiliated tribe to be its first king. That man, Saul, answered the prophet Samuel's announcement that he was God's choice and Israel's delight with these fascinating words, "Am I not a Benjamite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin?" (1 Samuel 9:21).

God's mercy for us is also amazing. Just as rebellious in our lives as the men of Gibeah and Benjamin, He still has mercy on us and is ready to forgive us for Jesus' sake.

- What great, astonishing things has God worked through you after He first humbled you?