

“Enslaved by Sin”
Judges 3:1-12
(Preached at Trinity, December 14, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In these early verses of **Chapter 3** we find an unsettling pattern that runs throughout the Book of Judges. We find the pattern of Israel falling into grievous sin, God's judgment falling upon them, the people crying out for mercy, God showing pity upon them by sending a deliverer, Israel enjoying a period of peace, they again sin against God.
Judges 3:7 NAU - "The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD"
Judges 3:8 NAU - "Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel,"
Judges 3:9 NAU - " When the sons of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to deliver them"
Judges 3:11 NAU - "Then the land had rest forty years."
Judges 3:12 NAU - "Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD."
2. We can't help but ask the question, why would they return to sin after God had demonstrated His rich goodness to them?
 - A. Notice **Verse 11**. They knew what it was like to live under the kind blessings of God. They enjoyed peace and rest for forty years. But when the judge died they acted more corruptly than their fathers. Why would they do that?
 - B. We can see a pattern. In **Verse 30** we read they had rest for 80 years but then they repeated the pattern. They again fell into sin. This happened over and over again. The Book of Judges teaches us that there is a bondage to sin with no escape.
3. This is the teaching of the Bible regarding the condition of all men.
Romans 3:9-10 NAS - "we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; ¹⁰ as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one;"
4. All are under the power and dominion of sin.
 - I. We have to understand the extent of sin's hold upon us
 - A. Apart from Christ Adam was truly the only free man who ever existed
 1. He was created holy and without sin. He had the freedom to serve God. He had the ability to serve God and he found great joy in serving and obeying God. He was in fellowship with God and enjoyed sweet communion.
 2. Sin changed this. When Adam sinned he died. He no longer desired God. By nature he now sinned. Sin gripped him.
 3. We have inherited Adam's sinful nature. Fallen humanity is horribly broken.
 - B. Every lost man is enslaved to Sin and Satan
 1. The lost man is a willing slave to sin
John 8:34 NAU - "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."

2. He gladly serves the lusts of his own flesh
 3. He is incapable of willing or doing the things of God perfectly. He is incapable of keeping the Law.
Romans 8:7 NAU - "because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,"
Romans 6:20 NAU - "For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness."
 4. The sad thing is the lost person is blind to the chains of his imprisonment
 - a. Most people have a high view of their own righteousness and will become quite angry if you expose their sin.
 - b. The lost person is satisfied in his preference for sin and love for self. He is in love with this present world
- C. We have to understand that this is a universal problem
1. Paul described our sinful condition in **Eph. 2**
Ephesians 2:1-3 NAU - "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."
 2. Why do people act the way they do?
 Why is it we find that people are so attracted to the things of this world and are so averse to those things that are spiritual? Why do they stiffen when you start to share the Gospel?
 3. Why do they consistently choose that which satisfies their own flesh.
 When I say that people always do what they want to do I'm simply making a statement of heart issues.
 Jesus stated it in a similar way:
Matthew 6:18-21 NAU - "our Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you. ¹⁹ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
 4. When people disregard the Sabbath it is really a heart issue.
- D. The lost man is consumed by his sin
1. Like a steel trap, sin has wrapped itself around him so that there is no escape.
 2. He has no ability to free himself. He is enslaved. This is the description of the people we approach with the Gospel. They need a powerful deliverer.

3. Dale Ralph Davis – “Until the church gets a proper view of sin, we will never see salvation as much more than a moving religious charade rather than as a act of holy, vicious violence by which Christ wrenches his people out of the clammy clutches of the prince of darkness.”
1 John 3:8 NAU - "the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil."
4. This is the context for the entrance of the Gospel

II. The Gospel describes a powerful Deliverer

A. This is at the heart of the work of Christ

1. Jesus came to deliver His people from their sins
Matthew 1:21 NAU - "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
Isaiah 61:1 NAU - "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners"
2. We can see Israel's bondage in Egypt as a type of our bondage to sin under the Law.
 - a. Their bondage was under cruel taskmasters who ruled them with no mercy. They made demands of them that they could not possibly meet. And there was no way of escape.
 - b. Their only hope was through a great deliverer.

B. Jesus enters as a powerful King to bring about a powerful deliverance

1. He frees us from the power of sin. Too often salvation is presented only as a deliverance from the penalty of sin; it is presented as a means of freeing us from hell.
2. On one hand this is certainly true. Jesus provides for us atonement. Jesus has redeemed us from the guilt of our sin - Our sins are forgiven.
 This is at the heart of the New Covenant
Jeremiah 31:34 NAU - "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."
3. Our salvation, however, has resulted in more than just forgiveness. Jesus has also delivered us from the *power* of sin so that we are no longer servants of sin. This has taken place through our transformation of heart and through the indwelling Spirit.
Romans 6:6-7 NAU - "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin."

III. This places a powerful charge to us

- A. Israel's problem was they remained unregenerate
1. They were enslaved by their sin. They possessed no power for obedience
 2. As long as a powerful judge ruled their sinful hearts were kept in check and they enjoyed the pleasures of obedience.
 3. But when the judge died they ultimately returned to their master, sin.
- B. For us the condition of our heart has changed.
1. We have been delivered from sin's slavery
Our duty is to continue in faithfulness to our King. The Bible continually admonishes us not to return to our former bondage.
Romans 6:12-14 NAU - "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, ¹³ and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not be master over you"
 2. You must not continue in sin because you have received the Gospel –
Romans 6:17-18 NAU - "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."
 - a. What does Paul mean by the phrase "that form of teaching"
He is referring to the Gospel
 - b. It is the Gospel which must be trusted and obeyed
1 Corinthians 15:1-2 NAU - "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain."
 - c. Notice Paul says "obedient from the heart"
Obedience is at the heart of the Gospel
Obedience requires the denial of self
 3. What is the result of obeying the Gospel from the heart?
We are delivered from our slavery
Romans 6:18 – "having been freed from sin"
 4. Jesus has come to accomplish what no one else could accomplish
Acts 26:18 NAU - "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins"
 5. The Christian should never even consider returning to sin for Christ has delivered him from sin.
 - a. Why would we return to that which He went to the cross to redeem us from?
 - b. Why would we make a mockery of God's grace? Your heart should be so captivated by Christ that you flee from every appearance of sin.
 - c. Our life is one of praise directed to the one who saved our soul
Notice how Paul begins **Verse 17** – "Thanks be to God."

- C. We also must not continue in sin because we have been delivered unto righteousness – we have become servants of righteousness
Romans 6:17-18 NAU - "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."
1. We have exchanged masters
 - a. Everyone is serving something. The whole world is enslaved by sin and Satan.
 - b. We have been delivered from servants to sin to servants of righteousness.
 2. This is the nature of the new birth
 - a. The Law was a taskmaster making demands that we could not fulfill. It was a heavy burden
 - b. Christ came and fulfilled the Law and then made its demands easy for us
Matthew 11:29-30 NAU - "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰ "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
 3. We have found true freedom – freedom to obey
John 8:31-36 NAU - "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." ³³ They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free '?" ³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵ "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶ "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

Conclusion:

1. When you choose to sin you become its slave
 - a. Sin becomes your god
 - b. When we sin sin once again gains the throne
Romans 6:16 NAU - "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?"
2. The Book of Judges teaches us something else about sin. If it isn't arrested it will always increase. This was true with the Nation of Israel. We find with each of the first five judges Israel enjoyed rest. But each time they returned to their sin. With the final judges we read nothing of them finding rest. Instead we find a continuing pattern of moral, political, and military decline until we reach the disgraceful climax of the Book.
 - A. We find Barak afraid to lead and a woman leading the armies of Israel
 - B. We find Gideon distrusting God and promoting idolatry
 - C. We find Jephthah's sinful vow
 - D. Samson's intermarriage with the Philistines
 - E. Micah's making idols and finally they become like Sodom.
3. God's words to Cain are true for all of us.
Genesis 4:7 NAU - "sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."
4. Sin always waits lurking at your door.
 - a. Sin is always seeking to regain its dominion
 - b. God tells us "you must master it"
 - c. If you do not master sin sin will master you.