

Series introduction: The Others

Hebrews 11:1-40

By Faith We Understand

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. **2** For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Faith at the Dawn of History (4-7: Abel, Enoch, and Noah)

Faithful Abraham and The Heavenly Hope (8-16: Abraham and Sarah)

The Faith of the Patriarchs (17-22: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph)

The Faith of Moses (23-29: Moses)

By Faith They Overcame

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. **31** By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: **33** who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, **34** quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. **35** Women received their dead raised to life again.

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. **36** Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. **37** They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— **38** of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in dens and caves of the earth.*

39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, **40** God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

What were the names of the others? The Bible does not tell us. I came to the conclusion many years ago that I would never be famous. When I die, CNN will most likely not report on it. I will be among the billions who have died before and will be forgotten. I will be an 'other.'

However, the 'others,' in Scripture are the most fascinating people. Without them, many of the stories in the Bible would never be possible. In addition, there are far more others than famous people. The odds are in your favor that you will be an other too.

For the three weeks, I will share with you their stories—stories that you did not learn in Sunday school, but stories that are critical to understand the narrative of the Scriptures.

Last week, we looked at the rope holders and I implored you to, 'Don't let go of the rope.' Tonight, we will look at the Levite's concubine. Next week, we will look at the other 70 that followed Jesus.

LEVITE'S CONCUBINE

This lesson is rated R

A Life of Subjugation

Judges 19

Preview

How many of you grew up in the city or in the country? If it was in the country, how far was it to the nearest town?

Caedmon's Call: Petrified Heart

This old heart's been left
Out on my sleeve
And I have paid as it's been rent
Into pieces
Seems everyone I've loved has
Taken a bit of my insides
I'm scattered as the woman whose body
Was torn for the twelve tribes

When did my heart get so petrified?
When did it get so hard to feel?
When did my heart get so afraid to love?
When did it get so hard?

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Judges 19 (Author = unknown)

1 And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel [This phrase sets the stage for everything that happens—it doesn't just mean, 'no one was in charge.' This story is a direct result of man left to man's own devices. Many times in Scripture, we are not explicitly told that something is wrong—it is left up to the reader to discern what is right and what is wrong.], **that there was a certain** ["a certain" means this was not a parable, but an actual story—this story represents their society] **Levite** [the tribe that was descended from Levi specially set aside by God for God's service] **staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim** [approximately 20-30 miles north of the events of this story]. **He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.** [A slave that served as a secondary **wife** and sometimes mother (sort of a "legal mistress" according to **David Guzik**); the Hebrew word for concubine is close to the Hebrew for divide—implying that the husband's time was divided between more than one woman. *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* has a great article on the subject of concubines. God never condoned having concubines, but He did in His wisdom set out laws to protect them. Problem: This Levite was not satisfied with God's structure for **marriage**—one man and one woman for as long as they both shall live.] **2 But his concubine played the harlot** [literally, 'was unfaithful'—anything from a one-time event to a life of prostitution] **against him, and went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there four whole months. 3 Then her husband arose and went after her** [Why did it take him four months to go after her? When problems arise, **act** immediately. We live in a culture of apathy and avoidance when we should be constantly confronting instead of actively avoiding. I think that the word engagement is a great way to prepare for marriage—because engagement is critical in marriage and that time is great for practicing engaging in another's life.], **to speak kindly** [literally, 'speak to her heart'] **to her and bring her back, having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him. So she brought him into her father's house; and when the father of the young woman saw him, he was glad to meet him. 4 Now his father-in-law, the young woman's father, detained him; and he stayed with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there.**

5 Then it came to pass on the fourth day that they arose early in the morning, and he stood to depart; but the young woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way."

6 So they sat down, and the two of them ate and drank together. Then the young woman's father said to the man, "Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry." 7 And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged [pushed, pressed] **him; so he lodged there again. 8 Then he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart, but the young woman's father said, "Please refresh your heart." So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate.** [I have no clue why he was delaying]

9 And when the man stood to depart—he and his concubine and his servant—his father-in-law, the young woman's father, said to him, "Look, the day is now drawing toward evening; please spend the night. See, the day is coming to an end; lodge here, that your heart may be merry. Tomorrow go your way early, so that you may get home."

10 However, the man was not willing to spend that night [Problem: he left at the wrong **time**—forcing him to spend the night in an unfamiliar place]; **so he rose and departed, and came opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem).** [Coffman: In the Conquest, Joshua had indeed captured this city (Joshua 10:23; 12:10). The Pulpit Commentary: But the Israelites had withdrawn and left the city entirely to the Jebusites who continued to hold it until David captured it and made it his capital (2 Samuel 5:6).] With him were the two saddled donkeys; his concubine was also with him. **11** They were near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said to his master, "Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it."

12 But his master said to him, "We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who are not of the children of Israel; we will go on to Gibeah." **13** So he said to his servant, "Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in **Ramah.**" [Gibeah was about four miles away from Bethlehem in Judah and Ramah was about six miles away from Bethlehem in Judah] **14** And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin. **15** They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city, for no one would take them into his house to spend the night. [There was no room for them. David Guizk: They find no hospitality in Gibeah; this is a warning sign, because God commanded such hospitality among the people of God (Leviticus 19:33-34; 25:35; Matthew 25:35; Hebrews 13:2) and there is something wrong where it is lacking. At this point, there begin to be parallels with **Lot's** story in Genesis 19.]

16 Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening, who also was from the mountains of Ephraim; he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place were Benjamites. **17** And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?"

18 So he said to him, "We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I am from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; now I am going to [I walk at / I frequent / I work at] the house of the LORD [John Gill: the tabernacle in Shiloh]. But there is no one who will take me into his house, **19** although we have both straw and fodder [feed] for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your female servant [the English is awkward, but the Hebrew clearly refers to his concubine], and for the young man who is with your servant; there is no lack of anything."

20 And the old man said, "Peace be with you! However, let all your needs be my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square." [If this were a movie, slightly ominous music playing in the background] **21 So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder [feed] to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.**

22 As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men [literally, sons of Belial—meaning they were worthless, good for nothing, unprofitable, and wicked—Paul is blunt in his approach to the sons of Belial in **2 Corinthians 6:15**], **surrounded the house and beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him carnally!"** ['Carnally' is not in the Hebrew, but it is clear that homosexual relations are intended. **David Guzik: the picture is clear: Israel is as bad as Sodom and Gomorrah. Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: Both men ought to have protected the women in the house, even though at the expense of their lives, or thrown themselves on God's providence.** If there was ever a time for a man to stand up and be a man, it was now.]

23 But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren! [Why he calls them his brethren when they were not is confusing to me] **I beg you, do not act so wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage** [senselessness, disgraceful folly immorality, profane actions]. [You almost get the feeling that he is going to do the right thing. Then he keeps talking.]

24 Look, here is my virgin daughter and the man's concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them [Sometimes when I study, I hope that words do not mean what they look like they mean. This one means what it looks like it means—it means to humble, mishandle, afflict, and to humiliate. Let me be clear—there is never an excuse for humbling, mishandling, afflicting, or humiliating any woman or your **spouse**. It has no place in society and it certainly has no place in Christianity. It is wrong and goes against everything that **Ephesians 5:25** commands. Their offer is a despicable act of wicked men too cowardly to confront the problem and too quick to seek an easy solution.], **and do with them as you please** [literally, 'whatever makes your eyes happy.' Are you disgusted yet? You are supposed to be disgusted. This is not intended to be pleasant.]; **but to this man do not do such a vile** [senselessness, disgraceful folly immorality, profane actions] **thing!"** **25 But the men** [outside beating on the door] **would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought her out to them.** [Her blood is on the Levite's hands.] **And they knew her and abused** [to collectively deal ruthlessly, to collectively abuse—the modern equivalent is, 'gang rape'] **her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go** [sent away, dismissed, cast off. **Adam Clarke on Gibeah's sinful men: "Rascals and miscreants of the deepest dye; worse than brutes, being a compound of beast and devil inseparably blended."**].

26 Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down [the Hebrew word for 'fell down' can be used for anything from exhaustion all the way to death] **at the door of the man's house where her master was, till it was light.** [It is incredibly sad that she practiced sexual sin in **Judges 19:2** and died because of sexual sin 24 verses later]

27 When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way [the Hebrew implies that he was OK leaving without her], **there was his concubine** [She was his—she was his responsibility—and he abdicated], **fallen at the door of the house with her hands on the threshold.** [Like so many who die within the shadow of a church steeple or who die within the shadow of a silent Christian, so close to salvation yet uncared for enough to be loved, she died alone and unloved—and there is a powerful message here that we must not miss—it is never acceptable to **delay** doing the right thing.] **28 And he said to her, "Get up** [an imperative] **and let us be going."** [His response was callous, cruel, and cold. **Coffman: It was a mercy of God that she did not survive to hear the unfeeling voice of her lord.**] **But there was no answer.** [It was now too late—because sometimes time runs out to do the **right** thing.] **So the man lifted her onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place.**

29 When he entered his house he took a knife [if you are squeamish, please understand that this story now turns into a Quentin Tarantino movie and you may want to go to your happy place], **laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb** [literally, along the joints], **and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel** [to incense everyone who saw it into action—which it did in the following chapters]. **30 And so it was that all who saw it said, "No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it** [an imperative, think about it], **confer** [an imperative, plan], **and speak up** [an imperative, to speak a promise about it]!"

[This is mentioned hundreds of years later in **Hosea 9:9**]

Summary: **Coffman: the brutal murder of a helpless bride whose husband sacrificed her to cruel Sodomite sons of the Devil without lifting a little finger to protect her.**

Before we get to the application and the personalization, we need to answer a more fundamental question: **Why is this story in the Bible?** For most of us, this is a disgusting and sickening story. **Richard Halverson: the sewer of Scripture . . . To read these chapters is to be repelled by them; and one cannot help feeling rather dirty.** I do not have the vocabulary to adequately describe my disdain and horror at the acts committed in **Judges 19**. However, we cannot ignore four words in **2 Timothy 3:16**—'**All Scripture . . . is profitable.**' It is all profitable. From the genealogies to the epistles to the history to the horror of **Judges 19**—it is all profitable. It is not all equally palatable, but it is all profitable. We must not skip over Scripture because it is not comfortable. It is all profitable.

So, why is this in the Bible? Two obvious reasons:

1. It actually happened. The Bible does not skip over the **depravity** of man. The Bible calls it out and shows it for what it really is—sin. We, when describing ourselves, are often inclined to skip over the less palatable portions of our stories. When I give my testimony, I sometimes gloss over, reword, or reframe the past to make Jim look good. The Bible does not do that. The Bible tells stories as they happened.
2. It had a significant impact on the **political** landscape of Israel. The political ramifications were that the tribe of Benjamin in the following chapters is almost wiped off the face of the earth because their tribesmen did this. The other tribes came together and warred against the tribe of Benjamin and it forced Israel to look in the mirror to see how far she had fallen away.

Application (What is the point?)

1. Man is inherently **evil** and through the retelling of evil stories, we are reminded of that. Every character in this story is guilty of something. The concubine was guilty of cheating on her husband in **Judges 19:2**. I asked Marty Lasley (a judge in our congregation) to study the passage and let me know what each person in the story would be charged with if this had been committed in Hixson, TN: (1) The Levite would be charged with Aggravated Rape, possibly Felony Murder, and Abuse of a Corpse. (2) The old man would be charged with Criminal Facilitation of a Felony, Aggravated Rape, and Felony Murder (but this might not stick). (3) The men of Gibeah would be charged with varying degrees of Murder, Aggravated Rape, and Aggravated Sexual Assault.

We may not like to admit it, but the same sin nature that is in those wicked characters in this story is in us. I am capable of these atrocities. It is only by God's grace that I have not done those things. I am far more sinful than I care to admit, and I need to be reminded of that.

2. Families fall short when **God** is ignored. Many of you come from broken homes and I hate that. I hate that you have not gotten to experience a family where everyone stayed together their entire lives. I hate that sin ruins things, but when God is ignored, families crumble. If you want to guarantee a failed marriage, ignore Him. Commit to keeping God as the focus of both of your lives and this will not happen.

Caedmon's Call: Petrified Heart

Strike this rock with Your rod
I'll take the blows
Till Your living water begins to flow
As it flowed from the Man of Sorrows' side
On that day when his body
Was torn for the twelve tribes
Was torn for the twelve tribes

When did my heart get so petrified
When did it get so hard to feel
When did my heart get so afraid to love
When did it get so hard
When did it get so hard

3. **Jesus** was treated the exact same way as the Levite's concubine. His body was mistreated for the twelve tribes of Israel. His hand is at the door of each life, waiting to be brought in and prized. His sacrifice stirs us to act for a cause that is greater than we are. If you read this chapter through again and look for Jesus, you will see Him.

Personalization (What do I do with that?)

1. Hate the sin that is in **my** life (lest it grow more perverse). Sin always grows more uncontrollable when it is not addressed. Sin always requires intervention.
2. Passionately pursue after **God** in my family. Pursue God, love your spouse, and rear your children.
3. Look for **Jesus**—even in the brokenness and depravity of the Bible's worst stories. I serve a Savior who is not scared to engage with the horror of the sin of the world. I serve a Savior who actively engages where sin abounds. I serve a Savior who laid down His life for mine. I serve a Savior who will forgive me for my sin and my lack of engagement. I serve a Savior who is my champion—who stepped into the middle of two camps and fought for me. We must never forget that His story is the most unfair and broken and depraved story of all of Scripture—the Perfect Man suffered for all of our sins unfairly.

POINT TO PONDER: HATE THE SIN THAT IS IN MY LIFE