

The Weekly Word

Feb 20-26, 2017

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Grace and Peace, Bill

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As I consider what I just journaled about Israel I realize, in many respects, we, as humans, haven't changed much over the millennia. How many of our leaders are little more than the big strong guy today? Sadly, even in the church, moral leadership isn't always at the top of the list.

I think about what it means to be filled/empowered/used by God. I mean Sampson was no jewel of a person. He was impulsive. He was a womanizer who couldn't maintain a relationship, and was easily manipulated by women. He doesn't seem to be too sharp. Come on Sampson, can't you sniff what Delilah is up to?

Sampson certainly has a vindictive, get-even mentality. There is little wonder why he doesn't seem to have many (any) friends. Where other leaders in Judges called people around themselves, Sampson is a one-man wrecking crew.

And yet, despite all these negatives, he is a tool in God's hands to free Israel from the oppression of the Philistines.

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When we lose the anchor of the Word of God situations go from bad to worse... and that is what this slice of Israel is experiencing.

My heart circles up to today. It seems that there are entire segments of the church careening off course. The Word of God has become peripheral and left to their own judgments, people are falling off the cliff of self-indulgence and sexual pleasure.

Oh, God, send your prophets to call the church back to You and the grounding of Your Word. Oh, God, release Your Spirit in powerful ways to call the wayward home.

I cannot be content and smug to point fingers only at others... I must examine myself. I must keep the Word of God central in my life. I must allow the word to correct and instruct me. I am talking about the plain and originally intended meaning of the Word of God. I cannot take only those portions of the Word that I 'like.' I must let the entirety of the Word speak to me, to correct me, to train me in God-honoring living...

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I think... wow, the traveler avoided pagan cities in favor of an Israelite city and this is what happens. He may have been better off in a pagan city! And this angers me. How can God's people be so blatantly evil!

And if by some small chance the *wicked men of the city* (22) were not Israelites but foreigners, the fact that the townspeople allowed depraved behavior in their city is disgusting. God must weep when the people of God look the other way when vile behavior persists and they have an opportunity to do something but do not!

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Then heaped on top of all the vileness is the apparent tossing of his concubine (basically his wife) out to these disgusting men. I cannot fathom that kind of disregard for a woman... a woman you supposedly love? Then the coup de gras, his response to his dead concubine lying at the threshold in the morning comes across so cold and uncaring. *Get up, let's go* (28),

My stomach is churning... how horrible we humans can be. The depth of our depravity is so great. Thoughts of German 'science' experiments on internees and Japanese POW camps during WW2 flash in my mind.

Oh, God, we humans are brutal people and without the general restraint of Your grace extended throughout the world things would be soooooo much worse.

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Am I turning a blind eye, like the leaders of that town, toward injustices of my day?

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