



## Mt Lebanon Evangelical Presbyterian Church

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*Making and Growing Followers of Jesus*

April 24, 2025

***“After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. They forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt.” (Judges 2: 10 – 12)***

Dear Church family and friends,

As we continue to celebrate the joy of Jesus' resurrection and all of the promises that God has given us in Jesus, it is easy to forget that our ancestors in the faith didn't have Jesus, and didn't have the relationship with God that Jesus has made possible to us.

This Sunday we begin a new sermon series from the book of Judges, which takes us back to a time in Israel's history that proved just how lost God's people are when they trust in themselves instead of following God.

Even though their leader, Joshua, had died, Israel should have been enjoying the blessings of the newly inherited Promised Land. But because they were not faithful to God, they instead suffered through several centuries of spiritual darkness and estrangement from God.

As we read Judges, it becomes obvious that Israel's continual cycles of despair and suffering were the result of their neglect of God. They forgot to remember the God who had called them to become His beloved nation. They no longer appreciated that God had led them out of slavery under Pharaoh. They didn't remember that He had parted the Red Sea for them or kept them alive with manna from Heaven for forty years in the wilderness.

They chose not to worship God, and so, only one generation after Joshua and all the elders with Joshua had died, Israel turned away from God. How could this have happened in such a short amount of time? I think the reason is best summarized in this verse from Judges: ***“Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 21:25)***

We know what happens when we deviate from God's way and trust in our *‘own understanding’* instead, don't we? (*Proverbs 3:5*) When Israel let God slide from being a priority in their daily lives, temptation crept in and enticed them away from ***‘knowing’*** God. The consequences were tragic.

The book of Judges is very sobering, because in their stories, we are able to see how easy it is for us to fall away from God as well. When God was no longer a priority in the Israelite's lives, temptation festered, and sin led generations of them away from God and into a downward spiral.

Join us this Sunday as we learn from Israel during the time of Judges the necessity of keeping God the foremost priority in our lives.

In Gratitude for God's faithfulness with you,

Pastor Cinda