

# The Self-Destructiveness of Evil

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Preacher: Cory Brock

[ 0 : 00 ]     So tonight's reading is from Judges 9 and it's long so we're gonna break it into two readings. So we'll read and then sing and then read again. We'll read verses 1 to 28 to begin.

Now this is carrying on the story of Gideon through his son. So Gideon's died now and we're reading now about, especially about his two sons. Now Abimalech, The son of Jerubbal went to Shechem to his mother's relatives and said to them, into the whole clan of his mother's family, Say in the ears of all the leaders of Shechem, Which is better for you that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbal rule over you, or that one rule over you.

Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh. And his mother's relatives spoke all these words on his behalf, in the ears of all the leaders of Shechem, and their hearts inclined to follow Abimalech.

For they said, He is our brother, and they gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-Bareeth, with which Abimalech hired worthless and reckless fellows who followed him.

And he went to his father's house at Ofra, and he killed his brothers, the sons of Jerubbal. Seventy men on one stone. But Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbal, was left, for he hid himself, and all the leaders of Shechem came together, and all of Beth-Milo, and they went and they made Abimalech king, by the oak of the pillar at Shechem.

[ 1 : 30 ]     When it was told to Jotham, he went and stood on top of Mount Gerazim, and he cried aloud and said to them, Listen to me, you leaders of Shechem, that God may listen to you.

The trees once went out to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, Rain over us. But the olive tree said to them, Shall I leave my abundance, by which gods and men are honored, and go to hold sway over the trees?

And the tree said to the fig tree, Why don't you come and rain over us? But the fig tree said to them, Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to hold sway over the trees?

And the tree said to the vine, You come and rain over us. But the vine said to them, Shall I leave my wine that cheers God and men, and go to hold sway over the trees?

Then all the trees said to the bramble, You come and rain over us. And the bramble said to the trees, If in good faith you are anointing me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade.

[ 2 : 27 ]     But if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon. Now therefore, if you acted in good faith and integrity, when you made a beam like king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubal all, and his house, and have done to him, as his deeds deserved, for my father fought for you, and he risked his life, and delivered you from the hand of Midian.

And you have risen up against my father's house this day, and you've killed his sons, 70 men on one stone, and you've made a beam like the son of his female servant, king over the leaders of Shechem, because he is your relative.

If you then have acted in good faith, and integrity with Jerubah all, and with his house this day, then rejoice in a beam like, and let him also rejoice in you.

But if not, let fire come out from a beam like, and devour the leaders of Shechem, and Beth Milo, and let fire come out from the leaders of Shechem, and from Beth Milo, and devour a beam like, and Jotham ran away, and he fled, and he went to Beir, and lived there, because of a beam like his brother, and a beam like ruled over Israel for three years, and God's son, and evil spirit between a beam like, and the leaders of Shechem, and the leaders of Shechem, dealt treacherously with a beam like, that the violence done to the 70 sons of Jerubah all, might come, and their blood be laid on a beam like their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem, who strengthened his hand to kill his brothers, and the leaders of Shechem put men in ambush, against him on the mountaintops, and they robbed all who passed by them that way, and it was told to a beam like, and God all the son of Abed, moved into Shechem with his relatives, and the leaders of Shechem put their confidence in him, and they went out into the field, and gathered the grapes from their vineyards, and trod them, and held a festival, and they went into the house of their God, and they ate, and they drank, and they reviled a beam like, and God all the son of Abed said, who is a beam like, and who are we of Shechem, that we should serve him?

Is he not the son of Jerubah all, and is not Zabul his officer? Serve the men of Hamalor, the father of Shechem, but why should we serve him? This is God's holy word.

[ 4 : 40 ] We'll pick back up with that in just a minute. Let's read together from verse 39 to 57 of Judges chapter nine. And Ga'al went out at the head of the leaders of Shechem, and he fought with Abimelech, and Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him, and many fell wounded, up to the entrance of the gate, and Abimelech lived at Aruma, and Zabul drove out Ga'al and his relatives, so that they could not dwell at Shechem.

On the following day, the people went out into the field, and Abimelech was told. He took his people, and he divided them into three companies, and he set an ambush in the fields, and he looked, and he saw the people coming out of the city, so he rose against them, and he killed them.

Abimelech and the company that was with him rushed forward, and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city, while the two companies rushed upon all who were in the field, and killed them, and Abimelech fought against the city, all that day.

He captured the city, and killed the people who were in it, and he raised the city, and he sowed it with salt. When all the leaders of the Tower of Shechem heard of it, they entered the stronghold of the house of El-Bereef.

Abimelech was told that all the leaders of the Tower of Shechem were gathered together, and Abimelech went up to Mount Zalman. He and all the people who were with him, and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and he cut down a bundle of brushwood, and he took it up, and he laid it on his shoulder, and he said to the men who were with him, what you have seen me do, hurry, and do as I have done.

[ 6 : 19 ] So every one of the people cut down his bundle, and following Abimelech put it against the stronghold, and they set the stronghold on fire over them, so that all the people of the Tower of Shechem also died, about 1,000 men and women.

And then Abimelech went to Thabez, and camped against Thabez, and captured it. But there was a strong tower within the city, and all the men and women, and all the leaders of the city, fled to it and shut themselves in it, and they went up to the roof of the Tower, and Abimelech came to the Tower and fought against it, and he drew near to the door of the Tower to burn it with fire.

And a certain woman threw an upper millstone on Abimelech's head, and crushed his skull. Then he called quickly to the young man, his armor bearer, and said to him, draw your sword and kill me, lest they say of me, a woman killed him.

And his young man thrust him through, and he died. And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, everyone departed to his home. Thus God returned the evil of Abimelech, which he committed against his father, and killing his 70 brothers.

And God also made all the evil of the men of Shechem return on their heads, and upon them came the curse of Jotham, the son of Jerubal. Thank you very much, Corey.

[ 7 : 35 ] That was a very long chapter. And as we make our way through the Book of Judges, we've had a lot of long stories, and there are always many things we can point out and talk about.

So we have to be a bit selective. And today, there are three things that I would like to talk about. And the first thing is how we are like Gideon. We are like him good, faithful, but also bad, sinful.

He falls into sin towards the end of his life. And we can see that in his sons as well. We are like Gideon's sons, like Abimelech, who kills his brothers, but also like Jotham sometimes, who praises God and who rebukes his brother.

Have you ever felt like that, committed to God, yet struggling with sin, like a sinner and a saint at the same time? Like maybe Gollum from Lord of the Rings, something evil in you, like Jackal and Mr. Hyde.

At night, you're a different person than in the day. That's one thing we want to look at. And the second thing is the nature of sin, evil. How it's always self-destructive.

[ 8 : 42 ] How it always seeks to kill and destroy wherever it is. And the third thing is that we will see that this story points us to a king, to a righteous leader who will destroy and get rid of sin and lead us in justice and in love and who seeks to rule over our own lives.

So let's start with the first thing. Let's start to look at Gideon and his sons. The text, as Cori said, is a continuation of the Gideon story.

So last week, we read that Gideon denied the people's request for him to become king over them. In the end of chapter 8, he says that he won't rule over the Israelites.

He says, nor his son, nor his grandson, won't rule over them, but only the Lord, only Yahweh. And you think, fair enough, that sounds good, Gideon.

But then he proceeds to make an ephod. He makes an idol out of gold, and he leads the Israelites into idolatry. He has many wives.

[ 9 : 46 ] He has 70 sons. And he basically lives like a king without officially being the king. He gets the qualities of a king without taking the responsibilities of a king.

And that is kind of continued in this chapter. In chapter 9, we read about his sons. And I already mentioned we are like Abimelech sometimes, and we are like Jotham sometimes.

Gideon had 70 sons with a lot of different women. And one of them, one of those women, was from a city called Shechem. And that's the woman who gives birth to Abimelech.

And Abimelech, he grows up, and he goes to Shechem, to his hometown, where his mother is from. And he convinces the people there to take him as a leader. And because his mother is from Shechem, he tells them, let me rule over you.

I'm your brother. So the people say, fair enough, you are related to us. You can rule over us. And Abimelech goes, and he takes money out of the temple there.

[ 10 : 49 ] And he hires mercenaries. He hires worthless people, the Texas. And he slaughters his 70 brothers on one stone.

And only one of them escapes, which is Jotham. And we can see that the whole chapter is a chapter of ambiguity.

Because on one hand, we have Gideon, who in this chapter is called Jerubal, which means the Baal fighter. And on the other hand, Gideon builds an ephod, which is clearly an idol.

He has wives. He has children. He doesn't live like a person who fears God in his law. And then we also see in this chapter the fight between Yahweh and Baal.

We see the fight between the God of the Bible and Baal, the gods of the Canaanites. One thing that I want to point out is that the money that Abimelech takes from the temple is from the house of Baal Berit, which in English means Baal of the Covenant.

[ 11 : 55 ] And that's important, because we usually talk about the God in the Bible as a God of the Covenant. So the God we believe in, he works through Covenants.

He enters into agreement with his people. And he says, if you accept this, then we are in a covenant. Now Baal doesn't do that.

So what we see in this story, what is going on, is there's some sort of mixture of religion in Shechem. They say Baal of the Covenant. But that doesn't make any sense, because Baal doesn't do that.

The God of the Jews does that. But they have walked so far away from him that they've mixed that together. So what's going on?

It's the same theme that we've seen the whole book of Judges. It's the war between Yahweh, the God of the Bible, and Baal, the idols. And in this chapter, we get a few different ways of how that plays out.

[ 12 : 57 ] And one of them is the relationship between Abimelech and Jotham. Abimelech is representing Baal, and Jotham is representing Yahweh.

And you can see that even in their names. Abimelech is drawn towards the city of Shechem, false religion, and a desire to rule over the people. And as Robin pointed out last week, Abimelech means, my father is king.

So Gideon called his son, my father is king. But Gideon is the one who denied the people's requests to be king. And his youngest son is called Jotham, which means Yahweh is perfect.

So you see Abimelech on one side, my father is king, Jotham on the other side, Yahweh is perfect. And they're both like their father, aren't they?

One of them is Bedeon and God-fearing, like the God-fearing Gideon. And the other one, like Gideon who falls into sin and who becomes cold towards God's laws.

[ 13 : 55 ] Jotham who's faithful to God and Abimelech, who just goes off the rails and wants to be king. And maybe you will agree with me that often, we feel like Jotham, right?

Yahweh is perfect. We go to church on a Sunday and we praise him together with our family, with our friends, with our church family here. But then during the week, it all kind of starts to change.

And the Abimelech in us comes out of us. And in our hearts, in our minds, we are actually quite a bit like him.

Maybe you say, I'm not like Abimelech because I haven't slaughtered my 70 brothers on a stone. And that's good. I hope you haven't. But I think symbolically, we have killed people with our words.

We have killed our brothers and sisters with our thoughts. And if we think about it, we are not that different to Abimelech.

[ 15 : 00 ] Greedy, self-righteous, selfish. It's all about me. I want to be the king of my life. I want to call the shots. I want to rule over my life and make the decisions.

So as Abimelech kills all his brothers, and it's almost like a sacrifice on a stone, he slaughters them. Only one of them, the youngest one, escapes Jotham.

And then we get the centerpiece of the passage, which is a prophecy in form of a story, a fable. Jotham tells us a story about speaking trees and a bramble.

So if you thought Tolkien and Lord of the Rings was the first person to write about speaking trees, that's actually not right. Jotham here in the Old Testament, he tells us a story about speaking trees as well.

And he goes up on the mountain. And we're going to talk about that mountain later a little bit. And he tells them this story about a few trees and a bramble.

[16:04] And they try to decide who becomes king. And the story is not very complicated. Basically, he compares the people of Shechem to trees who are good and productive.

And they bring fruit. But they don't want to rule over others. And then the bramble comes. The bramble, a thorny, dry bush that doesn't produce good fruit.

And the bramble, he says, I want to be king. But the bramble actually is dangerous, because you see in the dry heat in Israel, in the country where they are, it can start a wildfire.

It's dangerous. So the bramble, he uses that as a threat against the other trees and says, come and take refuge in my shade. But if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

So what does the fable mean? What's the point of this story? It means that Abimelech is becoming king. Abimelech is the bramble. But he's not becoming king because he's the most suitable option.

[17:12] He's not becoming king because he's called by God, but actually becomes king by crime, because of his greediness, because of his threats, because of his lies.

And Jotham is saying, you're the bramble Abimelech. You're lying and you're deceiving. And at the end of the day, you're worthless.

And you're dangerous. And you will destroy yourself and others. And why does he say that? In order to understand that, we have to talk a little bit about sin.

We have to talk a little bit about what evil is, what evil does. And in the Old Testament, in Joshua, we get a little story which also takes place in Shekhar at the same place where the crown Abimelech king.

So the crown Abimelech king by the oak of the pillar at Shekhar. And in the same place, in Joshua chapter 24, the book Just Before Judges, we read that they gathered in Shekhar and Joshua talks to the people of Israel.

[18:18] And he reminds them of all the good things God had done and how he delivered them from the Egyptians, how he brought them out of slavery. And then he asks the people and says, will you serve this God?

And the people say, yes, we will serve this God. And Joshua says, well, you have to mean it. I'm not sure if you actually are serious about that. And he asks them again, will you serve the Lord?

And the people say, yes, we will serve the Lord. And then Joshua says to them, you're witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord to serve him. And they said, we are witnesses.

And then Joshua makes a covenant with them. They all agree they will serve the Lord. And he puts up a big stone, which is supposed to remember them, to remind them of their promises.

And that is this pillar where Abimelech is crowned king. And why is that important?

[ 19 : 19 ] It's important because there, that is the place where they made a covenant. But that is also the place where they break the covenant, where they mess it all up, where they fall into sin and walk further away from God and further away.

And as if that is not enough, the mountain where Jotham goes up to tell the story about the trees is one of the mountains where the covenant blessings and curses that we read about in the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 27 are being read from.

So we get a passage where some people go up on Mount Garizim, the other people on Mount Ebal. And in between is the city of Shechem. And from there, they proclaim the covenant blessings and curses.

So if you keep the covenant, you will be blessed. If you break the covenant, you will be cursed. And everyone knows about that. So in Judges 9, in the story we are looking at today, they break the covenant.

They sin. And what they're not aware of is that sin always has repercussions. Sin is always destructive.

[ 20 : 37 ] So a few curses that they mention is, you must not dishonor father and mother. So Abimelech does that because he kills his brothers.

You must not take a bribe to shed innocent blood. Abimelech does that. He pays people to kill his brothers. And you must not break any other rules of the law. Abimelech breaks quite a few rules.

So Jotham prophesies that something's going to happen because sin will always have consequences. And it's really interesting what Jotham says here because it's important for us.

Jotham says, if you then have acted in good faith and integrity with Jerobal and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech and let him also rejoice in you.

But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the leaders of Shechem and Bethmelo. And let fire come out from the leaders of Shechem and from Bethmelo and devour Abimelech.

[ 21 : 37 ] And in this little statement we learn a lot about what sin does. And that's the second thing I want to talk to. I want to talk to you about, which is the nature of sin.

That sin is always self-destructive but also destructive for the people around you. Sin is like a cancer that spreads in your life if you don't fight it.

Sin seeks to destroy you and sin seeks to destroy your family, your marriage, your friends, everything around you. That is what sin does.

Sin will ultimately always lead to death. In Romans 1 we get a very helpful verse that describes how God sometimes deals with that.

It says that since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. And that means that one way in which God punishes sinners is that just letting them do whatever they want.

[ 22 : 43 ] Have you ever thought about that? Letting someone do whatever they want is a punishment. Maybe there are some children here tonight who think, but that's great. Nobody tells me what to do. I can do whatever I like.

But if you're a parent, a grandparent, someone who has babysit as watched children, you know that it's not very loving to let your child do whatever it wants to do.

It's not loving to let your child eat chocolate for breakfast every day. It's not good for them. And that's the same here. It's not loving to leave people to their own devices.

And that's what this story is teaching us. God leaves a bimilek and the people of Shachem says, if you think that what you're doing is great, then do it.

But you have rejected me. You don't want to hear my warning, so therefore you do it. That's how He's punishing. And in our world, in our culture, isn't that the same?

[ 23 : 42 ] The vast majority of people will tell you that they have a right to do whatever they like. Isn't it my right to do whatever I like? Isn't it my right to just go and live my life in the way I like to do it?

As long as it hurts, nobody, right? But the problem is that sin will always hurt you. That it will leave you broken. It will leave you in despair.

And it will leave you hopeless. And it will destroy your families, your marriages, your relationships, and finally yourself. And sometimes you think, well, that's a problem of modernity.

People like that, people in the past didn't struggle with that. But it's been the same ever since Genesis 1. Go and read about the ancient Romans and the ancient Greeks.

Modernity, our times, will seem harmless compared to what they did. There's nothing new under the sun. There's nothing new that we want to be ruled by our desires.

[ 24 : 42 ] And there's nothing new about the fact that our desires don't line up with God's desires. We are sinful people, meaning we like to do what we want. I want to be king.

I'm a bimelek, right? And like Romans 1 says, if we don't acknowledge God, then if we reject God, that's what that means, then He can leave us to our own devices.

And that is not where we want to end up. And I'm not here to make you scared, to make you afraid or anything like that. But I'm just realizing that this text is warning us that sin is destructive.

A bimelek, he rejects God. Therefore God lets him alone, he lets him be, he leaves him. And there is a clear warning that there are going to be repercussions of his sin.

The Westminster Catechism, which we refer to quite often in our tradition, it says that God punishes by leaving people in the blindness of their own minds with hardness in their hearts, with leaving them in their sinful affections.

[ 25 : 48 ] And sometimes that can happen to Christians, who have been Christians for many years, who have grown numb to their sinful patterns in their lives, who feel indifferent about it, who don't care about it anymore.

And we don't have to be that way. God does not desire for you to live in sin. God desires for you to be free of sin. It's all about God and Jesus, and Him leading you out of that.

So let me ask you a couple of questions to think about that. When you look at your spiritual life at the moment, right now, would you describe it as planted next to a stream of living water, like a tree that brings fruit?

Or would you describe it as a bramble in the desert, as chaff blowing in the wind, as dry and dangerous for a wildfire in your life?

Do you know that God loves you no matter what, and that He doesn't want you to continue to live in sin, but that He wants you to recognize Him and to follow Him and to fight sin?

[ 26 : 58 ] That sin is not what makes your identity. It doesn't define you. What God says about you defines you. And maybe looking back over the last few years, or the last 50 years, if you've been a Christian for many years, can you see the progress that you have made in fighting sin, or do you feel indifferent towards sin in your life?

Because that makes a difference. There's a well-known author called John Owen. He's lived a few years ago. He puts it like this. He asks, do you mortify?

Which means do you kill your sin? Do you make it your daily work? Be always at it whilst you live. Please not a day from this work. Be killing sin, or it will be killing you.

And at the same time, we have to remember that Jesus has promised to go through that fight with us, that He is with us forever, and that He has loved us even when we were still sinners, and that it's all about what He has done.

And Tim Keller is very helpful here. He writes, we are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever did believe. And at the very same time, we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hoped.

[ 28 : 21 ] So the command is clear. We must fight sin, but we must do it with Jesus through His strength, through His victory over sin.

And as the story continues, we see how Abimelech actually turns into the bramble that Jotham had prophesied. Abimelech goes about, he does his business, he rules over the people of Shechem for three years and it seems to go just fine, but then God decides to put an evil spirit between Abimelech and the people of Shechem.

And then the story turns a bit complicated. And I think we skip part of that in our reading. And basically, I give you the short version, okay? There's some fellow called Ghal. He comes into the city and he wants to see Abimelech dead because he wants to be the king there.

So Ghal, Abimelech, they all want to be king. And he plans to set an ambush against Abimelech, but there's another guy called Zebul, and he's also some sort of ruler in Shechem, and he warns Abimelech.

So the opposite happens. Abimelech sets an ambush against Ghal and defeats him. And Abimelech goes crazy and he kills all the people in the city. And as it happens, all the leaders of Shechem, they gather in what is called the Tower of Shechem.

[ 29 : 41 ] And it's probably the same place as the temple that I talked about earlier, Bal Berid, from the beginning of the story. And it's some sort of fortress temple and all the people go and seek refuge in there.

So Abimelech, he goes there and he sets it on fire and he kills, I'm not sure what the Bible said, around a thousand people, I think. And because that's so efficient, he thinks, well, let's just do that again with the next city.

So he goes to Thebes, and again, all the people, they seek refuge in the tower there, right? But before Abimelech can set it on fire, a woman throws a millstone on his head and hits him, and before he dies, he asks his servant to kill him because he says, no one should say that I was killed by a woman.

So you can see the arrogant and pride even in his death, how sin has made him into this person who thinks he's beyond other people.

And the end of the chapter gives us the reason why all of this happened. The end of the chapter says, thus God returned the evil of Abimelech, which he committed against his father in killing his 70 brothers.

[ 30 : 51 ] You see, the consequences of sin are self-destructive. They came back, they rebounded on Abimelech, and God also made all the evil of the man of Shechem return on their heads, and upon them came the curse of Jotham, the son of Terubal.

The God of the Covenants, he put an end to all of it, and he punished the people of Shechem and Abimelech by giving them over to the consequences of their unwise choices, their self-righteousness, their utter brutality, and their violence.

So sin is what killed Abimelech, and sin is what killed the people of Shechem. In some ways, this is a good end to the story, right? When we watch movies, we always like to see the bad guys die in the end, but in other ways it's really horrible, because so many people die.



It feels a bit like, I don't know, Shakespeare maybe, when everything goes wrong and everyone dies. And maybe this makes you look at the story and say, well, how is this supposed to give me hope?

Is God going to kill me if I do something wrong? Is there ever going to be hope of having a leader who is not morally flawed? And is there someone who can help me and free me from that sin?

[ 32 : 11 ] You see, the whole story is screaming in your face, Israel needs a king. It's screaming in your face, Israel needs a leader who is righteous, and who is just, and who cares for the people, and rules in love.

Not a Gideon who leads them into idolatry again. Not Abimelech, whose lord is brothers. And the question this text is asking is, will God provide this person?

Will God provide a king? Will God hold his part of the covenant, even if we don't?

Will God provide a king like he is described in the Bible, righteous, who knows the law of God, who obeys it, who meditates on it day and night? A tree by the water, not a bramble in the wilderness that starts a wildfire.

You see, Abimelech makes empty promises. He's the bramble that destroys himself and everyone around him. We have seen that over and over again, haven't we?

[ 33 : 14 ] Even in our Christian world, even in our evangelical world, leaders who fall into sin, and we've felt the consequences of that.

And that's something to lament deeply. So again, we ask, where is that leader who keeps the covenant? Where is that leader who seeks spiritual renewal with God?

And in the book of Judges, we don't get an answer to that. Could there even be a king that good? Because let's face it, we are all sinful.

We all want to be king of our lives. We are all a bit like Abimelech. We all need help. We need someone who can redeem us, someone who can rule over us.

We need a Gideon, but a better Gideon. We need a king who will rule in justice and peace and love in all eternity.

[ 34 : 11 ] And that sounds too good to be true sometimes, doesn't it? And to be honest, I think it is too good, but I think it is true. In Jesus Christ, we find the true king of the world, the king of kings, the one who comes into the world and he takes the punishment for all the sins.

He takes away the consequences of sin, which is death, and he takes it upon himself so that we don't have to share Abimelech's fate.

So if you are looking for someone who rules in perfect justice, then look at the man hanging at the cross. If you are looking for someone who rules in perfect love, then look at the man hanging at the cross.

If you look for a leader who serves rather than is served, then look to the cross. If you look for a king who would rather be judged in your place rather than judge you, then look to the cross.

He was crushed in our place so that we would be free from our self-destructive, sinful nature. And he rose from the dead to be the king, the righteous king of the universe, sitting right now at this moment at the right hand of God, interceding for us and ruling over his church and over his people.

[ 35 : 26 ] And that is what Abimelech teaches us. So let us pray. Holy Father, we recognize before you our sinfulness, how we have failed over and over again, and how we have been like Abimelech, wanting to rule over us and others and ignoring your commandments.

And we give you so much thanks, and we praise you that you have made this big plan where you have sent your son Jesus to die at the cross and to be the servant king for us so that in him we would find new life and deliverance from sin, that you have put the crown of thorns on him so that by his blood we would be saved.

Father, I pray that you would make that a reality in our life so that we would live in light of that. Give us all our sins, we pray, in our Savior's name, Jesus.