

SICK OF EVIL • Week 1: The Infected Society

Daily Briefing • Day 3 of 5 • Right in Your Own Eyes

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

1 Corinthians 5:6

Sunday's message named self-authorized morality as one of the ways evil spreads, the posture of deciding you get to define right and wrong for yourself. Today we look at what that posture actually costs, one person and one whole nation. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I am constantly trained that what I think and desire and feel is the ultimate authority. If it's not that, then it's what the culture thinks or my parents tell me, or what is most practical and expedient in getting what I want. I pray that You would help me to know Your standard of right and wrong and then to live it out by the Holy Spirit. God, please keep me from excuse-making and justification so that I can have Your best and nothing less. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

Every winter, search and rescue teams in Montana pull people out of the backcountry who saw the avalanche warning, decided it did not apply to them, and went anyway. They were not reckless by their own account. They had done this run before. They knew the mountain. The sign was written for someone else, some less experienced person who actually needed the warning. Sunday's message named this same posture as one of the ways evil spreads through a society: not just breaking a rule, but deciding you are the exception to it. Today we look at what happens when an entire nation decides everyone gets to make that call for themselves.

The book of Judges covers a violent, chaotic period in Israel's history, centuries before the nation ever had a king. The same cycle repeats again and again. The people abandon God, they suffer for it, they cry out, God raises up a judge to rescue them, and the cycle starts over the moment that judge dies. The book ends with some of the darkest stories in the whole Bible, and its final verse explains why: "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). There was no shared standard left. Everyone had become their own highest court.

Proverbs 30:12 names the same posture at the individual level: "There are those who are clean in their own eyes but are not washed of their filth." Notice this is not someone who does not care about right and wrong. It is someone who cares a great deal, and has simply appointed themselves the judge of it. Judges 21:25 describes what happens when an entire society is made up of people like that. Nobody is above their own opinion, so nobody is actually under anything at all.

This is not a problem for ages past. It is the operating system underneath a lot of modern life. "Do what's right for you." "Live your truth." "Who are you to judge?" These are just modern translations of "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." The verse is not describing ancient Israel. It is describing what happens whenever a person, or a whole culture, decides personal judgment is the highest and final court.

READ & MEDITATE

Judges 21:25

"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

Proverbs 30:12

"There are those who are clean in their own eyes but are not washed of their filth."

Read Judges 21:25 and notice the phrase "in his own eyes." Not in God's eyes. Not according to any shared standard. Then read Proverbs 30:12 and notice that this person is not confused about whether right and wrong

exist. They are confused about who gets to decide. Both verses describe the same self-appointment, just at two different scales.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment is far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

Nobody thinks of themselves as the villain of their own story. The person in Proverbs 30:12 is not lying to other people. They have managed to convince themselves first.

Where do you tend to trust your own judgment the most, the place you would be most surprised to learn you were wrong? Think sexual ethics, financial stewardship, “venting” anger, prioritizing recreation over worship, etc.

Now think about whether you have ever used your own good intentions as proof that something must be fine. This might look like justifying a harsh text message because the other person deserved it, justifying a purchase you could not really afford because you work hard and deserve it, or justifying gossip because it was technically true. Where have you done this?

Judges 21:25 is not just a historical footnote. It is Scripture's own diagnosis of what a nation looks like without a shared authority and an absolute standard of morality everyone actually answers to.

What does this verse suggest about what God intended a functioning society, or a functioning person, to actually live under? What was Israel missing that made the chaos in Judges possible?

Fill in the blank from Proverbs 30:12:

“There are those who are _____ in their own eyes but are not washed of their filth.”

(Proverbs 30:12)

**These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.*

Why do you think the verse pairs that word with someone who is not actually clean? What does that gap tell you about how convincing self-deception can feel from the inside?

“Right in his own eyes” does not mean the person felt no conviction about right and wrong. It means their own opinion became the final court of appeal.

Who or what functions as the actual final court of appeal in your life right now, when your own judgment and God's revealed Word disagree? Consider your parents' opinion, cultural norms, your fluctuating emotions, whatever seems practical at the time, etc.

Be specific. Name one area where you have quietly made yourself the judge instead of submitting to what God has already said.

A society does not collapse into everyone doing what is right in his own eyes all at once. It gets there one person at a time, one small exception at a time.

Is there a specific command or conviction you already know God has spoken clearly on, and you have been treating as optional?

This might look like a financial decision you have not brought into the light, a relationship you know does not honor God but have not ended, or a pattern of speech you have excused because you are “just being honest.” Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. As we've read, God's ear is not dull. Talk to Him like He is listening and wants to hear from you.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite 1 Corinthians 5:6 from memory:
