

His Love Sovereignly Judges and Disciplines

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[0:00] Take your Bibles and turn to the book of Judges, please. Book of Judges, or if you're visiting with us and you need a Bible, pull out that black Bible in the chair in front of you and start in Genesis.

Find page, first book of the Bible, Genesis, and find page 187. Judges, chapter 8. Judges, chapter 8.

That's where we're actually going to start, 833, the end of chapter 8 in the book of Judges. Again, page 187 in that black Bible.

Judges, chapter 8, and then we're going to study all the way through chapter 9. So Judges, chapter 8, verse 33, all the way to chapter 9, verse 57, because it all goes together.

It would be wrong for us to split this apart. By the way, as you're turning there, I checked out this week on Father's Day, so all you guys, men, and we do men, all men 13 and up, we'll get you something next week like a screwdriver or something like that.

[1:12] I don't know. So we'll do that next week. I was trying to get back in the groove of the thing after vacation. Then like, the thing is, yes, last night, I'm like, oh man, I didn't get anything for Father's Day until I forgot.

Nice. So anyways, so you have something coming next week. All the guys 13 and up. Because it's all men. It should be a Father's Day for all, because there's men who don't have physical fathers, but they're spiritual fathers, right?

So any guy that's 13 and up will stand, and you'll get a little gizwitch it thing. Quest. Yeah.

8.33. Let's start reading. 8.33 of Judges. Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and they Baal Barit, their God.

Thus the sons of Israel did not remember Yahweh their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side, nor did they show kindness to the household of Jeroboam, Gideon.

[2:16] In accord with all the good that he had done to Israel. Chapter 9. And Abimelech. The son of Jeroboam went to Shechem to his mother's brothers, and spoke to them and to the whole clan of the household of his mother's father, saying, Speak now in the hearing of all the leaders of Shechem.

Which is better for you, that 70 men, all the sons of Jeroboam, rule over you? Or that one man rule over you? Also remember that I am your bone and your flesh. And his mother's brothers spoke all these words on his behalf in the hearing of all the leaders of Shechem, and they were inclined to follow Abimelech.

For they said, He is our brother. They gave him 70 pieces of silver from the house of Baal Barit, with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless fellows, and they followed him. Then he went to his father's house at Ophrah, and killed his brothers, the sons of Jeroboam, 70 men on one stone.

But Jotham, the youngest son of Jeroboam, was left where he hid himself. And all the men of Shechem and all Bethlehem assembled together, and they went and made Abimelech king by the oak of the pillar which was in Shechem.

Now when they told Jotham, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice and called out. Thus he said to them, Listen to me, O men of Shechem, that God may listen to you.

[3:34] Verse 8. Once the trees went forth to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, desta come reign over us and the bramble said to the trees if in truth you are anointing me as king over you come and take refuge in my shade but if not may fire come out from the bramble and consume the cedars of Lebanon verse 16 now therefore if you have dealt in truth and integrity in making Abimelech king and if you've dealt well with Jeroboam in his house and have dealt with him

as he deserved for my father fought for you and risked his life and delivered you from the hand of Midian you've risen against my father's house today and have killed his son 70 men on one stone and have made Abimelech the son of his slave king over the men of Shechem because he's your brother if then you have dealt in truth and integrity with Jeroboam and his house this day rejoice in Abimelech let him also rejoice in you but if not let fire come out from Abimelech and consume the men of Shechem and Bethmilo let fire come out from the men of Shechem and from Bethmilo and consume Abimelech then Jotham escaped and fled and went to Beir and remained there because of Abimelech his brother verse 22 now Abimelech ruled over Israel three years then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech in order that the violence done to the 70 sons of Jeroboam might come and their blood might be laid on Abimelech their brother who killed them and on the men of Shechem who strengthened his hands to kill his brothers and the men of Shechem sent men in ambush against him on the tops of the mountains and they robbed all who might pass by them along the road and it was told to Abimelech now

Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers and crossed over into Shechem and the men of Shechem put their trust in him and they went out into the field and gathered vineyards and trod them and held a great feast and they went into the house of their god and ate and drank and cursed Abimelech then Gaal the son of Ebed said who is Abimelech and who is Shechem that we should serve him is he not the son of Jeroboam and Zebul his lieutenant served the men of Hamor the father of Shechem why should we serve him who therefore that these people were under my authority then I would remove Abimelech and he said to Abimelech increase your army and come out and when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed his anger burned and he sent messengers to Abimelech and Tormah saying behold Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem and behold they are stirring up the city against you now therefore arise by night you and the people are with you and lie and wait in the field they shall come about in the morning as soon as the sun is up that you shall rise early and rush upon the city and behold when he and the people are with him come out against you you shall do to them as your hand can find verse 34 so Abimelech and all the people who were with him arose by night and lay in wait against Shechem and four companies now Gaal the son of Ebed went out sipping on his coffee oh that's my version and stood in the entrance of the city gate and Abimelech and the people who were with him arose from the ambush and when Gaal saw the people he said to Zebul look people are coming down from the tops of the mountains but Zebul said to him you're seeing the shadows of the mountains as they were men and Gaal spoke again and said behold people are coming down from the highest part of the land and one company comes by way of the diviner's oak then Zebul said to him where is your mouth now with which you said is this not the people whom you despise go out now and fight with them so Gaal went out before the leaders of Shechem and fought with Abimelech and Abimelech chased him and he fled before him and many fell wounded up to the entrance of the gate then Abimelech remained at Aruma but Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers that they could not remain in Shechem it gets worse 42 and it came about the next day that the people went out to the field and it was told to Abimelech so he took his people and divided them into three companies and lay in wait in the field when he looked and saw the people coming out from the city he arose against them and struck them then Abimelech and the company who were with him dashed forward and stood in the entrance of the city gate and the other two companies then dashed against all who were in the field and struck them and Abimelech fought against the city all that day and he captured the city and killed the people in it then he razed the city and sowed it with salt and all the leaders of the tower of Shechem heard of it they entered the inner chamber of the temple of El Baritz and it was told to Abimelech that all the leaders of the tower of Shechem were gathered together so Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmun he and all the people were with him and Abimelech took an axe in his hand and cut down a branch from the trees and lifted it up and laid it on his shoulder then he said to the people with him what you've seen me do hurry do likewise and all the people also cut down each one his branch and followed Abimelech and he put them on the inner chamber and set the inner chamber on fire over those inside so that all the men of the tower of Shechem also died about a thousand men and women verse 50 then Abimelech went to Thibiz and he camped against Thibiz and captured it but there was a strong tower in the center of the city and all the men and women all the leaders of the city fled there and shut themselves in and they went up on the roof of the tower so Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it and

approached the entrance of the tower to burn it with fire but a certain woman threw an upper millstone

on Abimelech's head crushing his skull then he called quickly to the young man his armor bearer and said to him draw your sword and kill me lest it be said of me a woman struck me so the young man pierced him through and he died and when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead he departed to his own place thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech which he had done to his father in killing his 70 brothers also God returned all the wickedness of the men of Shechem on their heads and the curse of Jotham the son of Drobbaal came upon them September 1934 Nuremberg the Nazi party was celebrating a man by the name of William L. Shirer he was there and he said this about Adolf Hitler quote the words he uttered the thoughts he expressed often seemed to me ridiculous but that week in Nuremberg

I began to comprehend that it did not matter so much what he said but how he said it Hitler's communication with his audiences was uncanny he established a rapport almost immediately and deepened and intensified it as he went on speaking holding them completely in his spell in such a state he continues it seemed to me they easily believed anything he said even the most foolish nonsense over the years as I listened to scores of Hitler's major speeches I would pause in my own mind to exclaim what utter rubbish what brazen lies then I would look around at the audience his German listeners were lapping up every word as the utter truth end quote scary and yet it happens a leader like this that can come and if people are whimsical and foolish they'll follow and that's what you see with Abimelech one commentator titled this chapter

Bramble Man the Destroyer of Israel he has a big B on the cape and yet God would use this crazed power hungry tyrant to sovereignly judge and discipline remember what's the driving theme of the book of Genesis the theme is God's overwhelming never ending relentless love for his people and get this from this chapter his love sovereignly judges and disciplines sovereignly judges and his love disciplines should be an S after that his love sovereignly judges and disciplines as you're going to see today in this chapter a little bit of chapter eight end of chapter eight let me put it to you in a statement his love sovereignly judges and disciplines

[13:23] God loves us as his people so much he will judge those who come against us as his people but will also discipline us to love him chiefly remember he wants you to want him that's a subtitle the sub theme of the book of Judges he wants you to want him solely chiefly first foremost primarily and will do whatever it takes to get you to get there that's how much he loves his people so much if anyone comes against his people he'll judge them but as he's judging people who are coming against his people in the same time he will discipline us as his people so we will love him don't underestimate what God is doing in your life

Christian don't underestimate what he's doing in your life another way to put it longer statement our just loving God will right all wrongs in his time none when you want it but he will also do his work of disciplining us so that we would love him chiefly and solely he'll do what it takes for us to love him are you ready for that I'm not I'm preaching this and I don't want to you want to say that I don't want to say I don't want to be a part of that do you he'll do whatever it takes he'll do what it takes for us to love him that's why James says consider all joy when you face trials that's how much he loves you bramble man the destroyer of Israel he's not called a judge he was certainly not raised up by Yahweh to rescue Israel oh no he simply saw an opportunity to further himself he took advantage of the situation Israel was invaded by foreign invaders ravaging them pillaging them right we saw them in previous chapters today we see the ravaging and pillaging from within from one of their own very intriguing story a true story true intriguing but also sad and we see Israel sin in spades forgetting Yahweh once again picking a bad leader and then God's judgment upon them and his discipline upon his people did you notice something did you notice how no one asked

Yahweh for his direction you notice that remember chapter 6 you know God comes right and then you know asking what I should do Gideon he's doing this right no one's asking God anything do you notice that no one asked Yahweh what he should do which rings true for the book of Judges remember another sub theme is everyone did what was right in his own eyes that's what you see here I have two points which I think you saw it his love judges his love disciplines the first I should take the second be the first and the first be the second right yeah so first point God takes seriously if our love for him is rivaled we looked at this I think it's chapter three we this gospel truth God takes seriously if our love for him is rivaled you see that chapter 8 33 or 35 so he'll discipline us so that we love him chiefly solely because what do you see here soon as

Gideon was dead there they go again the sons of Israel again played the harlot Israel being stupid once again the wife went after another man again she Israel played the harlot with Baal once again notice it says even here the end of verse 33 and made Baal their god Baal is the Hebrew word for covenant so they made some kind of covenant Samuel doesn't tell us give us the specifics here but there was some covenant that they're making what are you what are you thinking they went even farther than they've gone before it's like they could give all the right answers but you know they gave all the right answers with their fingers crossed behind their back we love you Lord their hearts were far from the

[18:56] Lord their hearts were far from Yahweh remember when Jesus said this about the Pharisees in Matthew chapter 15 verse 7 and 8 you give all the right answers but your hearts are far from me Israel forgot Yahweh again but they also forgot someone else Gideon nor did they show verse 35 kindness to the household of Jeber Baal that is Gideon remember Jeber means let Baal contend and all the good that he had done wait a minute I thought Gideon did some stupid things well yeah one of them was naming his son my dad's king that's what Abimelech means my dad's king nice Gideon way to go great father's day thing to do right they did not treasure

Yahweh nor did they treasure Gideon and all the good he done to Israel in spite of his dumb flaws like naming his kid my dad's king and you see Samuel place great emphasis on their lack of gratitude for Gideon here the middle part of chapter 9 with Jotham with his his like his parable prophecy towards the end of chapter 9 I mean it's in the beginning in the middle at the end I mean Samuel's really trying to tell you something here they'd forgotten it's sad thanks should be given to good leaders especially those who do good to God's people sadly Christians don't respect their good leaders matter of fact they pick poor leaders bad leaders Christians do really good at that Christians have little discernment they think businessmen are make good leaders that's foolish forgetting

Yahweh and ingratitude toward Gideon went hand in hand and then you see what unfolds for you what unfolds for us as the readers in this next section this would be God's discipline upon his people for forgetting him and forgetting a good leader along with the judgment of Bemaillac you're going to see the judgment of Bemaillac for what he'd done his sin yes but this was God's judgment upon them God takes seriously when our love for someone or something else rivals our love for him rivals your devotion to him I mean we sing that song oh Lord we cast down our idols give us clean hands and this is the thing it could be a good thing you can have a desire to have a good thing a desire for something that's good it's not bad in and of itself but that good thing is becoming a bad thing or becomes a

God thing and that's a bad thing right because your desire for that thing or for that person goes far above your desire for God God takes seriously when our love for him is rivaled is there something that's a rival in your love for Christ so that's the first point point number two God takes seriously those who oppress his people so he'll judge all wrongs vindicating himself and his people he takes seriously those who oppress his people and that's what we see here in chapter 9 Abimelech he's going to get away with it but he doesn't God's going to judge he'll judge all wrongs God will vindicate himself and his people I mean that's a theme a metanarrative theme throughout the whole Bible and of course what is the the climax of that theme of the fact that God vindicates himself and his people it's climax the epitome of that principle is seen in Christ because

Jesus faced suffering Jesus faced that upon himself and yet God vindicated himself and vindicated his son which is why you know God will vindicate himself and he'll vindicate you he will right all wrongs I mean you see the emphasis upon his judgment here in chapter 8 verse 33 or 35 even you see it here chapter 9 16 to 18 verse 24 56 to 57 his judgment now mind you though when and how he judges is up to him he's unpredictable and he likes to use obscure circumstances for his own glory so God's creative unpredictable unpredictable when he judges and how he judges it's not up to you it's up to him you know he's going to judge us for what the why he's going to vindicate himself and his people you know that but you don't know when you don't know how and that's exactly how he wants it to be because he's unpredictable he likes to use obscure circumstances oops

[24:59] I dropped my millstone off the tower oops it landed on his head a woman remember chapter 9 she pushed that over just so happens to hit him in the head that's obscure unexpected did God loves to do things like that because that's how he works let's go through this chapter 9 Abimelech remember his name means my dad's king thank you Gideon name my son my dad's king his mom was a female slave Abimelech we're going to call him Abbey for short here and there

he was treacherous ambitious deceitful striving very persuasive guy his rule would be brief it wouldn't be beyond Manasseh the tribe of Manasseh he was a tyrant not a king but he was crowned the first king of

Israel notice what he does chapter 9 and verse 1 he spoke to his brothers mother's brothers the whole clan verse 2 speak in the hearing of the leaders of Shechem which is better 70 men to rule over you or one man second was filled with Israelites mainly but there were some Canaanites this was central Canaan though so the son of Gideon got his bros to put a good word about him to the city leaders you don't want these sissies to rule you you want the man to rule you you want me you wanted me to rule you he says so verse 3 and his mother's brothers they spoke all these words on behalf of the hearing of the leaders they were inclined to follow Bamelech they were fickle notice they said he's our brother and they gave him 70 pieces of silver from the house of Baal Berit this is how prevalent and this is the extent of Baal worship this sheds light on the thinking of Abbey and the Shechemites they give a thumbs up for Baal these men of Shechem were going to have somebody rule over them these men of Shechem they wanted somebody to rule over them or at least they want someone to rule them so with his persuasive personality he convinced them to choose him they had forgotten God was to rule over Israel and he would fulfill that in his Messiah but with his persuasive personality he convinced them choose him not these 70 bums so he convinced them they did it he got the money notice he went to his father's oh excuse me first verse four he hired worthless and reckless fellows and they followed him he hired a bunch of worthless losers and then here in verse five they committed something very atrocious and unbelievable act they slaughtered his brothers on one stone and then verse six they installed him as king ironically notice it says by the oak of the pillar which was in Shechem you know where that is that was the place where

Jacob and Joshua affirmed their trust and fidelity to Yahweh isn't that ironic where they affirm their trust and their love for Yahweh they're doing the very opposite typical political ploy that we see even our own government right one writer said this people do quote strange and terrible things end quote for their lust for power but notice somebody escaped Jotham it says here he escaped end of middle of verse five and into verse six it was told Jotham he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim he escaped and he spoke a parable and then a prophetic word he gave a prophecy a curse really and into this parable come reign over us come reign over us come reign over us but then they said to the bramble the trees come reign over us and notice how he describes how they treated his father verse 17 or excuse me verse 16 into verse 17 you have dealt with him as he deserved for my father fought for you he risked his life he delivered you from the hand of Midian verse 18 but you've risen against my father's house they have killed the sons they should have listened to

Jotham they were like what Jesus said to the Jews in John chapter 5 Jesus says I come in my father's name and yet you don't accept me some guy comes in his own name and yet you accept him that's what these guys did with Abimelech Jotham's point you fools picked an idiot bramble a loser he was useless he brings out his true character he was useless worthless and guess what you guys are going to get what you pay for they foolishly accepted unqualified leadership one writer says brambles makes good fuel but poor kings yeah you don't follow bramble you burn it that's a warning to us all don't follow bad leaders know your leaders well look at verse 20 if you've not dealt with him in the way you should in truth and sincerity if not let fire come out from Abimelech and consume the men of

[31:16] Shechem and Beth Milo and let fire come out from the men of Shechem and from Beth Milo and consume Abimelech what's he talking about Abbey would be the source of fire that would consume them but they would also end up consuming Abimelech this is where he's prophesying a curse God wants his people to choose solid leaders to lead his people not idiots or fools he takes seriously those who lead his people and those who oppress his people even if it's from within he takes it seriously notice what happens verse 22 now Abimelech ruled over Israel three years did you see that three years three years of this tyrant the time for God's judgment will come when he wants it to come and notice it comes verse 23 then God sent an evil spirit between

Abimelech and the men of Shechem it was time for him to act and to judge Abimelech and the men of Shechem so he began the process by bringing an evil spirit to create distrust hatred and disloyalty between them and his judgment it's going to unfold first you see this discontent then opposition a rival leader civil war atrocious horrors the tyrant dies the band of men disperses you can see God uses creative and unexpected ways to accomplish his plan he does and he's going to

bring it back on them notice verse 24 in order that the violence done to the 70 sons of Jeroboel might come and their blood might be laid on Abimelech their brother who killed them and on the men of Shechem who strengthened his hands to kill his brothers God will judge you can be sure of that so what do they do how do they begin verse 25 the men of

Shechem sent an ambush against him they installed a gang of men to ambush travelers who passed by on the main road why do they do this it would give Abimelech as one writer says a political black eye they would discredit him we can't even travel safely somebody's going to take and steal our stuff who's this Abimelech guy see they're trying to create this distrust in Abimelech that's what they're doing the men of Shechem they're so fickle and then verse 26 now this guy shows up possibly a Canaanite he saw an opportunity alright he's going to challenge Abimelech cross over to Shechem and the men of Shechem what did they do they put their trust in him they have this excessive drinking party Canaanite worshipping of their gods they were known for excessive drinking and immorality this drinking take a blaze he's probably plastered he rallied the men of Shechem absolutely opposed

Abimelech who's going to rule us let me rule over you trust me he says would therefore that these people were under my authority then I would remove Abimelech was that the wine drinking or was that him and notice Zebul he was there it looked like he was for Gaal but he was really for Abimelech he went to Abimelech he told him set an ambush at night and strike at dawn notice what happens in verse 34 he rose by night he was lying in wait against Shechem he went out Gaal he was looking and he says to Zebul look people are coming down hey there's people out there on those mountains and Zebul nah dude you just got to get your eyes checked man put your glasses on it's just shadows it's not really people

Gaal says no no no really people coming down and then Zebul says where's your mouth now jerk that's Jim's translation where's your mouth now where you said who is Abimelech that we should serve him so what happens Gaal he goes out to face Abimelech Abimelech defeats him and then Zebul ran he ran off Gaal and his whole company they didn't even return to Shechem now they're gone but notice Abimelech was still angry he was still ticked off he treat the people who crowned him even worse than he treated his own brothers because notice what happens look at verse 42 next day people went out to the field normal day to farm we're gonna go out do what we gotta do we're good what does

[36 : 39] Abimelech do he comes out he strikes them down while they're in the field then he destroyed their city and notice the end of verse 45 he killed the people in it and he raised the city and sowed it with salt they go out Aaron's on top of that thanks Aaron man what a jerk notice what happens in verse 46 all the leaders of the all the leaders of the tower of Shechem they heard of it they enter the inner chamber of the temple this was a temple tower so what did Abimelech do verse 48 he took an axe in his hand he cut down a branch from the trees he lifted it up laid it on his shoulder he told his guys what you see me do you guys go do it too and then they set the tower on fire so they burned alive people in there or they choked on the smoke or both look at another atrocity this guy was crazed by his love for power it gets better

Thabez verse 50 he went there oh they revolted against you I'll show them captures it there's a tower what the people do they all go to the tower again so what does he do I'm gonna do the same thing I did before I'm gonna burn it a millstone grinding wheat was the work of women and a millstone it was like maybe 10 to 20 pounds something like that thanks Aaron about 10 to 20 pounds so it says verse 53 a certain woman just happened to throw a millstone on the Bernalik's head crushing his skull God's sovereignty a woman remember he likes to use obscurities and it would be disgraceful in this time period to be killed by a woman so that's why he asked the armor bearer strike me down so it's not said that I was killed by a woman and yet guess what we're reading that he was killed by what a woman sorry buddy verse 55 when the men of Israel saw that Abamek was dead oh okay he all went to their own place they all went home oh I guess we're done here okay

Abamek the Shechemites they were guilty of huge atrocities extortion murder deceit the abuse of power they were judged again an intriguing story isn't it and you would think that Hollywood would get a hold of this story and do something with it right I mean this is like something you watch on the movie theaters this is unbelievable some of the stuff you're reading about but what was really happening verse 56 and 57 look at it thus God repaid the wickedness of Abamelech which he had done to his father in killing his 70 brothers remember he said this Samuel said this earlier in chapter

chapter 9 verse 57 also God returned all the wickedness of the men of Shechem on their heads and the curse of Jotham earlier in chapter 9 the son of Robo came upon them the fire from Abime destroyed the men of Shechem and yet fire came from the men of Shechem and consumed Abime God instigated his judgment on both of these groups God's judgment works silently and unobserved in ways we don't expect or even want Jotham prophesied what would happen it happened God many times allows evil to destroy itself evil has no lasting fellowship evil doesn't care for people it just uses people but listen God always judges and he always wins in the end vindicating himself and his people and again the epitome of this principle is seen in Christ is seen in Messiah is seen in Jesus God always wins what looks like defeat what looks like horrible horrible atrocity and absolute losing it's actually victory

God wins in the end he will right the wrongs he'll vindicate himself and he'll vindicate his people because he did that with Jesus one thing is for sure God takes seriously those who oppress his people even those from within he will eventually judge just probably not when you want it or even how you want it you know the what you know the why but you won't know the when and you won't necessarily know the how but that's how much he loves his people and that's how much he wants them to chiefly and solely love him God takes it seriously he takes seriously his people not loving him or worshipping him as they've been created he takes seriously people in general not loving him or worshipping him the way they've been created so what about you are you worshipping and loving him do you know

[42:41] Jesus Christ have you trusted Christ to be your own have you turned from your sin and put your hope in Jesus God will judge you or you can face his mercy and his compassion because that judgment was placed upon Jesus in the place of sinners and you can be free and have grace and have his love come trust Jesus he'll save you so you look at this chapter 9 why would God allow this great evil to happen I don't know I'm not God I mean what we mean for and others mean for evil he means for good right his good and the good of his people it went out again well I guess you gotta stay back there well how was it good for these people to be slaughtered how was it good for these sons to be slaughtered

I don't know but God did vindicate himself didn't he he vindicated himself and them through judgment he writes all wrongs but why would he even let this happen God again God uses creative obscure unexpected ways to display his glory he's God we're called to trust him I have it up there oh you got it up there thanks Aaron God loves us so much God loves us so much he will judge those who come against us as his people but will also discipline us to love him chiefly he will are you ready for that let's thank him and yet it's hard for us to thank you for that father because sometimes when we face your discipline it doesn't it doesn't feel good we don't we don't feel the love but help us to not be driven by feelings but be driven by truth direct us to love you and all of us here there's so many things different things we're dealing with in our lives and you're working out all these issues all these situations as our shepherd shepherding us loving us as your people and directing us to love you chiefly solely first and foremost primarily and we pray give us your grace to not only embrace this shepherding in our lives but also to display this same love towards each other within this body amongst us as your church church thank you that you're faithful thank you that you're good help us to trust you in that in spite of what we see

I want to encourage you as we do each week that you would take just a few moments to spend some time between you and the Lord you and the Lord letting your mind be filled with truth maybe reading back through some notes you took maybe reading through parts of the passage whichever maybe it's time for just prayer let your mind be filled with truth just a few moments we'll take and we'll do a song and we'll pray which we do that in these next few moments about a couple minutes take some time between you and the Lord let your mind be filled with him and we knew once again your love and your devotion to him would you please do that now thank you thank you for fcs how long do you thank you for