

# Judgment Day | Judges 2:1-5

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, the text that's before us is written somewhat as the conclusion to the first part of this introduction. Remember, we talked last night.

The author of Judges introduces, we're using musical terms. If you're thinking of a musical composition, in the structure of the book, there is an overture. Then there is the variations. That's the main body of the text. And then there is the coda at the end, where they kind of rehearse and bring things to a conclusion. This first part, this introduction or prologue or overture, however you want to think of it, is divided into two parts.

The first part really goes from verse 1 of chapter 1 through the passage that we just read. This first five verses are functioning as the conclusion to the series of narratives that he delivers to us in the first chapter.

And in the first chapter, he tells us that what's happening with Israel, very straightforwardly, what's happening regarding Israel's attempt to settle the land. And in the second chapter, he interprets those events in light of Israel's unfaithfulness to God.

[ 1 : 10 ] So chapter 1, here's what happened. Chapter 2, he interprets what happened based on the fact that they disobeyed. They were unfaithful. And this section of verses that I just read, these first five verses, is really kind of functioning as a bridge between those two parts.

It's linking together. It's bringing it together as a whole complete introduction to what's going to come later in the book as we continue in our study. Now, let's just briefly rehearse what happened in chapter 1.

The narrative is arranged to emphasize what we call the downward spiral of disobedience. Things actually started out, if you remember quite well, the people gathered probably in Shiloh where the tabernacle was at that point, and they seek for God's direction on how to progress forward.

The conquest with Joshua is now really at a conclusion, and now it's just left for the tribes to possess the land. And they start off on the right foot. They go to the Lord.

They seek his wisdom. And the Lord chooses the tribe of Benjamin, or not Benjamin, excuse me, Judah, to lead the nation forward. And then as we read through the first chapter, we find that he blesses Judah in all of their exploits as they go through and they begin to conquer the land, or at least their allotment of land.

[ 2 : 32 ] But then we see some clues that not all is actually right with Judah. They seem to have adopted a Canaanite ethic in their treatment of Adani Bezek in chapter 1 and verse 6.

And then it's even worse when we get to verse 19. And we find that they actually lack the faith to drive out the inhabitants of the plain. So even the best of the Israelites from the very beginning have already failed to do what God had commanded them to do and to live in the way that God had commanded them to live.

Then things just continually spiral out of control, spiraling downward as the narrator then describes the other tribes that are involved at this point.

All of them, all of them broke God's command not to make covenants with the people of the land. Every single one of these tribes broke that commandment.

And by the time we get to the end of the chapter, we find that at least one of those tribes has experienced a complete reversal of the conquest. So we start in verse 1 of chapter 1.

[ 3 : 47 ] Things are great. They're doing what they're supposed to do. Then they start to subtly slip in their disobedience. And by the time you get to the end, they've become so unfaithful to God that they've lost elements of the conquest.

The tribe of Dan is not even going to receive their allotment at this point. They're completely forced out of their allotment of the land up to the northern part of Canaan. So huge problems.

Huge problems are presented for us in chapter 1. But here's the thing. Israel could have viewed their settlement of the land as largely successful.

And pragmatically speaking, it was successful. Things didn't turn out exactly like maybe they had anticipated them to turn out. But they hadn't expelled all of the Canaanite people.

They hadn't destroyed the altars of Baal. They haven't destroyed the Astaroth, which was the female version of the Baal god that the Canaanites worshipped.

[ 4 : 50 ] But they had undoubtedly become the dominant people group in the land. And it seems that the people of Israel were content with that. No, they hadn't done everything they were supposed to do.

No, it didn't turn out exactly as they hoped it would turn out. But they were content with the way things were. For the most part, the remaining nations were either forced into labor or were just simply content to dwell peaceably with the Israelites.

And by most human estimations, the campaign was a success. But what we learned at the end last week is that what we consider to be successful in this life does not always seem successful in the eyes of God.

Sometimes we get a much more happy look at the way that things are going for us and the way that we're living. And then the truth is that God sees us as failing, failing in disobedience, failing in what he's called us to do.

Then enters the angel of the Lord in verse 1 of chapter 2. Look at the verse with me again, verse 1. Now the angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Baqim.

[ 6 : 07 ] It's judgment day in Israel now. And how the people estimated their success was irrelevant at this point. Because now it's God's time to evaluate his people and to declare his judgments on what they had done.

So he sends his messenger to proclaim what judgment he had, this angel of the Lord. Now all kinds of suggestions have been made about what the identity of this individual might be.

Some consider it to be an angel from heaven that has actually come and been sent by God. Some people think that this very well could have just been a prophet in the nation that was known at that point but is unnamed to us in the text.

Others believe that this was actually a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus. But the fact is that the text gives us no further explanation about his identity.

We don't know who this is really. But what is certain is that he speaks the words of God on behalf of God. And perhaps represents a manifestation of the very presence of God.

[ 7 : 25 ] You'll notice even as we get into the message that he delivers, he doesn't speak in the second person. He speaks in the first person. I brought you out of Egypt. I did these things.

Whether it's a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus or not. Whoever this is, this angel of the Lord is speaking the words of God on behalf of God. So it's judgment day.

God has sent his message. God is delivering his message to his people. And the author is particularly concerned with telling us that the angel of the Lord came from Gilgal to this place, Baqim, which was Bethel.

And it became known as Baqim, which means weeping after this event unfolded. So really, this is the city of Bethel where all of this is unfolding. Now, Gilgal was outside of the city of Jericho.

You'll remember that from the conquest of Joshua chapter 5. You remember the story of the city of Jericho and how the Israelites marched around the wall and God delivered this amazing supernatural victory.

[ 8 : 30 ] Just outside of Jericho is where Gilgal was. And Gilgal is where Joshua set up his headquarters for the conquest of the land. In fact, just flip back there with me real quick.

Just go back one book to Joshua chapter 5, would you? Joshua chapter 5. And I want to show you something that took place here with Joshua.

Joshua chapter 5, verse 13. When Joshua was by Jericho, meaning he was at Gilgal. He's near Jericho, but Gilgal is where his headquarters are.

He lifted up his eyes and looked. And behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went to him and said to him, Are you for us or for our adversaries?

And he said, No. Which is a weird answer, isn't it? This wasn't a yes or no answer from Joshua. It was, Are you with us or are you with them?

[ 9 : 41 ] And this man says, No. In other words, I'm not like any of you. I'm not like any of you. I'm not one of you. Notice what he continues to go on and says.

But I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come. And Joshua fell on his faith to the earth and worshiped and said to him, What does my Lord say to his servant?

And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy. And so Joshua did so.

This is an amazing moment in Joshua's experience, isn't it? This angel of the Lord, this commander of the Lord's army, speaks the words of God on behalf of God, comes to the leader of Israel at this point, and says, This is what I want you to do.

And he gives very clear instructions for Joshua. Here's what you are to do. It seems to me that the author of Judges wants to make a connection for us from the angel of the Lord in chapter 2 back to this angel of the Lord or this commander of the Lord's army in Joshua chapter 5.

[ 10 : 47 ] And the reason he makes that connection is this movement from Gilgal to Bethel or to Baacum. In other words, this is what Barry Webb had to say about it.

To encounter him, that is the angel of the Lord, is to encounter God. The one who appeared to Joshua at the beginning of Israel's campaign to occupy Canaan now appears again to review how things have gone and to give his verdict on whether or not his orders have been followed.

It's a tense moment for Israel, he says. This is what's happening here. This angel of the Lord, this messenger, comes to Joshua and says, Here's what you must do. Now he returns and he says, Now let's consider how have you done.

What have you done? The text really should remind us of our own impending judgment. That's really what this is about. Of course, we consider our final judgment at the end of this life when we stand before our maker, we all will give an account to whether or not we received Christ now that we look back from a New Testament perspective.

Of course, we want to keep that in mind as well. But I think there's something more to it than that. I think we need to remember and acknowledge that we face many judgment days throughout our lives, many of them.

[ 12 : 11 ] We are accountable to God every moment of every day and he is actively speaking to us by his spirit through his word.

And whether or not we view our choices as successful ultimately is irrelevant when it comes to the pure and righteous evaluation of the Lord God.

And what we need to do as we come to this text and any other text of scripture is we need to hear God's message and then we need to consider the true nature of our response.

In fact, that's the two dynamics that I want to think about as we structure this passage in our sermon today. We want to look at the divine message and then we want to look at the human response.

So first, let's look at the divine message. Look with me again at verse one. The angel of the Lord said, I brought you up from Egypt. I brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers.

[ 13 : 11 ] I said, I will never break my covenant with you and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land. You shall break down their altars, but you have not obeyed my voice.

What is this that you have done? So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides. Their God shall be a snare to you.

Before we get into the details of this message, I want you to carefully note here on what basis God makes these statements, what basis he makes his judgment.

His reaction to Israel is not impulsive, nor is it arbitrary. It reflects his own faithfulness to what he's already told his people.

In other words, God's perfect judgments are rooted in his perfect word. God's perfect judgments are rooted in his perfect word, in what he has said.

[ 14 : 16 ] God's perfect word. Says Daniel Block, the Israelites were never left guessing the will of their God. In his grace, Yahweh had entered into covenant relationship with them, and in his grace, he had revealed his will through the law.

They had the law of Moses. They had the very desires of their God. They had the story of how they had come to be in a nation in and of themselves. They had the stories of the patriarchs.

They had the covenants of the patriarchs. They had the law of God given at Sinai. They had everything that they needed in terms of knowing what God wanted for them and what God had promised for them, and it was all right there in his word.

He hid nothing from them that they needed in that moment. It's there, and it reminds us that we must be careful to consult the scriptures because it's in the scriptures that we find God's true desires for us, and it is based on his revealed word in the Bible that God will ultimately deliver his evaluation of us.

He doesn't evaluate Israel in this message based on some new information that they did not have. No, he comes and he makes his judgment based on what he's already told them to do and what he's already revealed to them about his will.

[ 15 : 42 ] When wrestling with questions about what to do or what to believe, we should constantly be asking this, what does the Bible say?

What does the text say? In the end, God will not judge our lives based on what we thought was best, or based on what we wished were true of him, but on what he has plainly revealed in the Bible.

What he's plainly revealed about himself, what he's plainly revealed to us about his desires. And it's with that understanding as our foundation that I want us to look at this message that he gives to Israel.

I want to look at three specific statements here. The first one is this. God says, I will. I will. Look with me again at verse one. I brought you out of Egypt.

I brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers. And I said, this is coming from God. He's reminding Israel. I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

[ 16 : 52 ] I will never break my covenant with you. His message begins with what he had promised to do and how he had actually already fulfilled that promise.

The particular covenant in view here is the covenant made with the patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. As you read through Genesis, you see what this covenant was.

It was a covenant that God would make of their lineage a great nation. That in making them a great nation, he would give them the land of Canaan that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob wondered in.

And that through that lineage, he would ultimately provide a savior to redeem them and to restore perfect fellowship with them. God has promised that he would never break that covenant with the children of Abraham.

And he was true to his word. That's why he opens the way that he did. Look again at verse one. Before he even reminds them of the covenant, he says, I brought you up from Egypt.

[ 17 : 57 ] I brought you into the land that I swore to your fathers. I said I would never break the covenant and look at what has happened. I was true to my word. I brought you from Egypt.

I brought you to the land. I gave it into your hands. Here's the thing. God's faithfulness is not contingent upon ours.

His faithfulness is never contingent upon ours. He fulfilled his promise, even though the people rebelled time and time again.

Despite their many failures, God was always faithful to his word. And some of us, we struggle with this sometimes. We struggle with this idea of spiritual insecurity.

And I think that perhaps sometimes we have this spiritual insecurity because we have actually a very low view of God's character. We think that God will only be faithful to us and to the promise that he's made to us through the gospel so long as we are faithful first to him.

[ 19 : 06 ] But that's not what his faithfulness is contingent on. Some of us act as if God will only be faithful when we're faithful. And then you fight through this spiritual depression when you step back and you evaluate your own life.

And you just look at how many times you fail. And you look at all the sins that you've amounted, that have begun to pile up in your life. And you look at maybe how you've failed as a parent or how you've failed as a spouse or how you've failed to follow this law and to do this thing.

And you just think, God can't be faithful to me because I've been so unfaithful to him. And then we get here to a passage like this and we find Israel's faithfulness was irrelevant.

God was gonna fulfill his promise. He was gonna bring them to the land. He was going to deliver them. He was gonna be faithful no matter what they did because his faithfulness is not contingent upon our faithfulness.

His faithfulness is rooted in his perfect character. So rejoice, Christian. Rejoice.

[ 20 : 15 ] God's faithfulness to you is not based on who you are or what you've done. His faithfulness is based on who he is. And he will fulfill his gospel promise to you just like he fulfilled

this promise to Israel.

So he begins with that. This is who I am. This is what I've done. This is what I've promised. And I fulfilled that promise. So I will. Second statement. You shall.

You shall. This is in verse two. Look at it with me. And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land. You shall break down their altars.

But you have not obeyed my voice. What is this that you have done? So in verse one, God says, I will. And he did. Verse two, God says, you shall.

But they didn't. Israel was to make no covenant with the people. They were to eradicate Canaanite religion from the land.

[ 21 : 18 ] And every tribe failed miserably on both accounts. That's what we learn in chapter one. That's what this message is in reference to.

They've broken the covenant. They did not obey the voice of the Lord. And despite their apparent successes, in God's eyes, they had failed.

And becoming covenant makers with the people of the land, they became covenant breakers with God, who had been faithful to them, who had fulfilled every promise he had ever made to them.

And the last phrase here, I think, is noteworthy. God asked this simple question. What is this you have done? What have you done? You ever said that to your kids?

You've told them a hundred times not to do a particular thing, and then they do it, and they just make a mess of something. And you say something to the effect of, what have you done? What did you do?

[ 22 : 22 ] Why? Why? Except this isn't the first time God has said this. This is actually repeated in the Old Testament. It's a common phrase.

God often uses it when he's confronting his people in their sin. He says, what is this that you have done? And I think there's something for us to see in that. The first place we see it is Genesis chapter three.

God had told Adam and Eve, he gave them clear instructions about what to do and what not to do. And in response to Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden, God asked her in Genesis three, what is this that you have done?

And it's a connection point, I think, here in Judges chapter one. We see it often in the Old Testament, these connections back to the patriarchs, back to the beginning. That's for a purpose. It reminds us of the nature of sin.

God plainly tells Adam and Eve, this is what my will is for you. Do this. Don't do this. And they disobeyed. And just as did Adam and Eve, the people of Israel rebelled against God's clear command.

[ 23 : 35 ] He said, do this. Don't do this. And they disobeyed. We could draw all kinds of other parallels to here, but I think what we are meant to see is a new kind of fall.

The promised land was supposed to be like for Israel, a new type of Garden of Eden. And just like Adam and Eve, God gives his word. He gives us clear message. They fall short of that message. They sin against God. And he comes and he says, what have you done? This is what sin is. God tells us clearly what to do and what not to do. And we disobey. And that's what's happening here. And he's confronting his people in their sin. Now, the order of these statements, I think is important. It's essential that we recognize God's faithfulness as preceding our obedience here.

Notice the order that he gives this message. Here's who I am. Here's what I've done. And it's only after he deals with his own person, his own character, his own will, his own faithfulness, that he then deals with their unfaithfulness and their obedience.

[ 24 : 52 ] And I think there's something for us here. We do not love and obey God to provoke his faithfulness to us.

We are to love and obey God because we have recognized his perfect faithfulness already at work in us. And we see it clearly again, just in the way that he speaks to his people.

This has always been the case. It will always be the case. He is faithful. Therefore, be faithful. And as we get into the application of the gospel in this, we find it's the same as we come to Christ.

We do not provoke Christ's love for us. We do not provoke his faithfulness to the gospel covenant, the new covenant in his blood, by doing something. We don't come and say, God, look, we did, Jesus, we did the thing.

We did the baptism thing, and we took the bread and the juice, and we went to the church, even when it was in an elementary school cafeteria with all kinds of weird noises and lots of echoes.  
[ 26 : 02 ] We did all this stuff, God. Jesus, hopefully we've made ourselves acceptable to you. No, you've got it backwards. We got it backwards. We don't come to Jesus to provoke his faithfulness.

We come to Jesus because we already recognize it. God says, I was faithful. I was faithful. He deals with who he is first. They were to love and obey because of that faithfulness, but they rejected it.

They turned their back on it. They ignored it, which is exactly what we do when we continually pursue sinful behaviors and sinful beliefs in our lives. We turn our eyes away from the faithfulness of God.

We ignore his perfect character. We ignore the fact of his infinite love for us, and we choose to do what we want instead. He said, I will, and he did.

He said, you shall, but they didn't, and now they're in a mess. Third statement, verse three. So now is the third one. So now. Look at verse three.

[ 27 : 02 ] So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their God shall be a snare to you.

This is as much a reminder of what God had already said as it was an announcement of further judgment. Let me read to you from Joshua 23.

Actually, it's just a page over in your Bible probably. Go to Joshua 23. Joshua 23. Look at verse 12. God says through Joshua, if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them so that you associate with them and they with you, know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes until you perish from off this good ground that the Lord your God has given you.

Again, God is speaking them based on what he's already said, right? That's how he makes his judgment here. Now, don't mistake this as God acting vindictively.

[ 28 : 28 ] It's better to understand this as the natural consequences of sin. That's what's happening. God told them, if you make a covenant with the people of the land, here's what will happen.

You will not be able to drive them out. They will become a thorn to you. And this statement of judgment is just a rehearsal of that. They were to look back on the events of chapter one themselves and realize that their failures were the immediate product of their own sinfulness. Because they would have been tempted at this moment to say, God has been unfaithful to us. He was supposed to give all the people into our hands, but he hasn't done it. God's been unfaithful. No, he says, I've been faithful. I told you, if you didn't do it my way, this is what would happen. And now they're reaping the natural consequences of their sin.

And so long as they continued in that sin, they would not experience the blessing of the land. Now, I want you to notice how everything about this message reveals God's perfect faithfulness.

[ 29 : 44 ] Everything about it. He is faithful in both his blessing and he is faithful to judge. He's not like the authority figures that we've had in our lives where we could mess up, but we know they're going to let us slide if we just say the right thing or we just act the right way, right?

If you were one of the teacher's pets in school, you know what that's like. God can't do that. He's too perfect for that. He's too righteous and holy to do that.

He's faithful to fulfill his promises. He's faithful to deliver his justice. And you see, this is a problem for us. It's a huge problem because the reality puts us in an utterly hopeless position.

God's perfect faithfulness to his promise gives us hope for blessing, but God's perfect faithfulness in his justice keeps us from ever receiving that faithfulness and that blessing.

Do you see the trend? Because we're sinful, we'll never get to experience the blessing. He's faithful to bless, but he's faithful to judge, and we're faithful to sin.

[ 31 : 07 ] Therefore, we routinely face his judgment. But it's only hopeless until you look at the cross.

It's only hopeless until you look at the cross. God's perfect justice and God's perfect mercy meet together on the cross of Jesus.

God's perfect son. And in doing that, he provides eternal salvation that cannot be lost. God judges his perfect son in our place.

He pours out his wrath on him, the sinless one, on behalf of our sins. And he does that so that he may still judge sin.

But yet he may provide now perfect mercy to you and to me. Do you see? When God forgives our sins, I say this all the time and I think it's so helpful to remember.

[ 32 : 11 ] When God forgives our sins, it's not as if he's pretending that they never happened. That's often how we think about forgiveness, right? We think, well, if I'm going to forgive somebody, I've just got to pretend that they never wronged me.

Or if I'm receiving forgiveness from Jesus for the sins I've committed, it's just because he's come to a point where I said the prayer and I did the thing and now he's just saying, okay, I'm just going to pretend like that never happened and we're just going to move on from here.

That is not what happens for our salvation. That's not at all what happens. Can't happen that way. God must judge sin. What God does is he sends his perfectly sinless son.

He himself becomes flesh. That's what we learn in John 1. And he goes to the cross. He lives the life that we were supposed to live and he dies the death that we deserve to die in order that God might judge sin finally at the cross.

And for those who come to Christ to receive that atonement by faith, he then gives us life. Not because we said the prayer and we did the thing.

[ 33 : 15 ] He gives us life because of what Jesus did, because of what he did. Perfect justice, perfect mercy, coming together for the eternal salvation of God's people.

God is faithful and his faithfulness is our only hope. Indeed, Christ is our only hope.

2 Corinthians 5. 2 Corinthians 5.21. For our sake, God made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

He is our hope. Look to Jesus today. That's the divine message. Let's quickly look at the human response, okay? The human response. Verse 4.

As soon as the angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the people of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. And they called the name of that place, Baquem. And they sacrificed there to the Lord.

[ 34 : 21 ] Now here's where the rubber meets the road, so to speak. A message from God always demands a response. Always.

Whether it's in your personal Bible study at home, whether it's through a Sunday sermon that you may hear here at our church or another church, or whether it's just the conviction of God's spirit through his word as you're going about your daily life in a given moment.

There will always be a response on our part. There has to be. Even indifference to that word spoken or that word read or that conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Indifference is itself a response that conveys that the message of God is unimportant to you. So after examining God's word, you must now evaluate your response to that word.

And Israel's response in this text is both positive and negative. On the one hand, they demonstrated genuine sorrow over their circumstances even reflected that sorrow in corporate worship.

[ 35 : 29 ] They wept. And they wept bitterly so much so that some people began to call Bethel Baquem, the word for weeping as a result of this event. That's a good thing.

It's a good thing to weep over sin. Says Dale Ralph Davis, it's usually a good sign when God's people can still weep, when we can be moved to tears.

Would that it would happen more often. But we are either too sophisticated, too refined, too hard-hearted, or what's worse, all of these, to cry over our sins.

But while Israel mourned their circumstances, their grief never seems to make its way all the way to repentance. They wept.

They went through the motions of corporate worship. They sacrificed there to the Lord. But as we read in the rest of this chapter, they did not turn away from their sin.

[ 36 : 30 ] They actually continued deeper and deeper and deeper in it. Says Matthew Henry, they wept, but we do not find that they reformed, that they went home and destroyed all the remains of idolatry and idolaters among them.

Many are melted under the word, he says, that harden again before they're cast into a new mold. That's the difference here. They weep over their sin, but they never turn away from their sin.

Still fall short of repentance. Martin Lloyd-Jones once said, you can very easily make a Welshman cry, but it takes an earthquake to make him change his mind.

How many of you feel that way about your husbands? It's good to be brought to tears over your sin, but it only matters if it leads to repentance.

The only proper response to God's word is to turn away from whatever it is that you're guilty of and turn instead to him.

[ 37 : 44 ] Turn in faith. Turn in love. Turn in obedience. This is the only truly Christian response. You can cry your eyes out and it won't matter if you don't turn.

You can never miss another service in your life and it won't matter if you don't turn. That was Israel's problem. They wouldn't turn. They wouldn't repent.

We need to remember Joel chapter 2. I think I have this on the screen for you. God says, Yet even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting and with weeping and with mourning.

Rend your hearts, not your garments, which was a sign of mourning in their culture. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

And he relents over disaster. You see, God isn't interested in mere displays of grief over our sin. That's why Joel says, rend not your garments.

[ 38 : 50 ] What he desires is that in response to his faithfulness, in response to his gospel through his son, we then turn away from sin and love him.

that's why he says, rend your hearts. And the promise is that in turning, we will always find him to be gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Let's bring it to a close. since we've just heard from God's word, that makes today another judgment day. It's another judgment day.

We've heard the divine message. Now we must consider the human response. Perhaps there's some areas of your life that seem successful, though you know you haven't been totally faithful. Remember, you can't escape the consequences of your sin any more than Israel could escape the consequences of their sin. In fact, you may already be dealing with some of those consequences even now.

[ 40 : 03 ] What you need to do is fix your eyes afresh on the faithfulness of God. Look to the cross. Look to the love of Christ. Consider his love. Consider his mercy.

Consider his grace. And let that provoke you to obedience and love and faithfulness. Any other response than that is just going to take you deeper into your sin, which means it's going to take you deeper into the consequences of your sin.

But I want to address as well and challenge those of you who still maybe seem to think that God will only be faithful in salvation once you've got your life together and you've got it all sorted out and you've got it figured out so that you might present yourself acceptable to him.

Too many people think this way and if you think that way you've completely missed the gospel. You've completely missed the point. The good news is that God has demonstrated his perfect faithfulness in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

That's the good news. You don't need to make yourself acceptable. You couldn't do it if you tried. You'll never be able to meet God's perfect standard.

[ 41 : 22 ] You're already a sinner. But the good news is you don't have to. All you need to do is recognize the faithfulness of God.

Turn from sin and receive Christ by faith. Don't trust in what you can do. Believe on what he has already done.

And just like the prophet Joel said, you will find him exclusively to be gracious and merciful, slow to anger, beyond your wildest dreams.

And you better believe on Jesus before that final judgment day. Because we're all moving to that end and we'll all be accountable to him in that moment.