

# The Bramble King: Judges 9:1-15

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Preacher: Eric Morse

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Thank you, Pastor Josh, for leading us in worship and in that scripture reading. I'm really excited for this morning because we get to work through another Old Testament parable.
- And if you were not here last week, we started a new series in which we are going to work through just a short series, six parables from the Old Testament. And immediately you're thinking, wait a minute, he's got that wrong.
- Parables are a New Testament thing, right? And you would be correct. But also there are some parables in the Old Testament. And what is a parable? We talked about this last week. I want to just sort of recap this for us as we go into another one.
- A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Or, as we're calling it in this series, a parable is a portrait into the kingdom of God.
- That when Jesus taught in parables in the New Testament, he would teach stories about forgiveness and love and service and following a master. Things like that.
- [ 1 : 0 3 ] And each and every one of these parables had a lesson that was reflective of God's eternal divine kingdom. But even in the Old Testament, there are a number of different passages.
- There are stories, earthly stories that have heavenly meaning. Last week, we got to look quickly at what Isaiah says about God's vineyard.
- And this week, we get to look at the Bramble King. Now, I know right off the bat, as we jump into the book of Judges, some of you are thinking, Judges, this is an interesting jump for a story like a parable.
- And you would be right on that sort of gut reaction because the book of Judges is known for something in the biblical text. The book of Judges is known as the darkest book in Scripture.
- Darkest meaning it's a book of rebellion. It's a book about people who have turned their back on God and said, I will be my own God. We will do what is right.
- [ 2 : 0 8 ] But in our eyes, we don't need a king. And essentially, how Judges works is, it's a story that says, here's the premise again. We don't need God.
- We're good enough. We know what we're doing. Human heart. And then Judges is the book where that just plays out. And it's a devastating, devastating plot.
- But there are glimpses of hope throughout all of the Bible, even in the book of Judges, where redemption is promised, where God's grace and mercy is present. And we're going to see that in this parable. So in Judges 9, we're going to learn about this parable of the bramble king.
- But before we do that, I want to ask us a quick question. Is the human heart a trustworthy guide? Now, a few years back in youth ministry, I took a group of kids and a couple leaders out camping in the middle of northern Spokane.
- And it was a great, wonderful time driving out there, packing up. We're excited. And we get to this forest road. And the two drivers, me, one of them, the other driver, we were co-laborers in this foolishness, decided, you know what?

- [ 3 : 25 ] We thought we knew how to get to this remote lake where there's a campground with dry camping. But we struggled to really know which direction to go, even though we had printed off a map.
- And we're told it was hard to find. So my other driver had his phone, and somehow he had service, and he typed in the address, and it took us down this old forest road.
- And we drove up this forest road, and the more we drove, the more it narrowed, and the more the branches came out, and the more the road disappeared. And we just kept going, trusting Google Maps that we would make it through.
- And when we were 0.1 mile away from the lake, I've got youth that are sitting here who remember going on this trip, we were 0.1 mile away from the lake. You could almost see the campground.
- The road completely stopped, and there was nowhere to go. And there was no room to turn around. So somehow we destroyed those vehicles and drove all through the trees to turn those things around.
- [ 4 : 27 ] And I'll never forget walking away being so frustrated at Google Maps. How dare they lead us down a road that led to a dead end?
- And I think that's an appropriate illustration for this question. Because sometimes I feel like my human heart, when I give it my trust, I give it my allegiance, it leads me to a dead end.
- Or worse, it leads me to a cliff and drives me off. Maybe you're in here today, and you're asking the same question in your life. Is my heart really trustworthy? So we're going to see that this parable is actually going to give us an answer to this question, or at least I hope it will.
- Because I believe that the parable of the Bramble King is really about the human heart and the role it plays in our life. So what we're going to do is we're going to jump into a little bit of story here.
- We're going to read a story. We're going to tell a story. We're going to follow along together. And then hopefully by the end of this parable, this story, we'll have something to apply to our lives. But first I want to just start out with prayer.
- [ 5 : 36 ] So let's pray to the Lord. God, thank you for this parable. I pray, Lord, that as we look at this story together and we allow it to shape us, that we would learn, Lord, the right guide to follow.
- Help us see, Lord, the ways in which we, in our own hearts, are possibly not trustworthy. We love you, Lord, in your name we pray.
- Amen. So here's the context of the book of Judges. There are no kings. The Lord is sending these temporary deliverers, called Judges, into the nation of Israel and their sin.
- And there's a certain judge by the name of Gideon. And he was a good judge. He trusted the Lord. There's some moments of shakiness in his faith, like all of us, but he trusted the Lord and ultimately delivered Israel from a lot of different sources of evil and calamity.
- But at the end of Gideon's life, we're not going to read this, I'll just summarize. At the end of Gideon's life, we see at the end of chapter 8, that there's a few things that happened to Gideon. His faith wanes and his heart is overcome with some lesser desires than that of the desire of God.
- [ 6 : 51 ] And what he does is he, first he makes something called an ephod that the text says Israel lusted after. And it drove his own family into idolatry.
- But the second thing he did is he married many women and had many concubines, leading to having 70 sons. The end of Gideon's life, the desires of lust in the flesh and the desires for making something for his own name ended up being his downfall.

But then you jump into chapter 9. And this story we're about to read is actually the story of Gideon's lineage, specifically his sons. So what we're going to do is I'd love for us to read, let's just read verse 1 and 2, and then we'll set up another context and work through this story together.

It says this, Here's how the story begins.

Dad is dead. The nation is plunged back into their ways of idolatry and rebellion. We're right back where we started. And now one of Gideon's sons named Abimelech comes on the scene.

[ 8 : 23 ] And what does he do? He goes to a place called Shechem, which is a little town in Israel. And you might say, Well, where does this town come into play? Why is it being thrown in?

What's the background of Shechem? And the background is this, that Abimelech is one of the 70 sons of Gideon. And Gideon had a concubine.

A concubine was essentially someone that he was not married to, but had marital relations with on a regular basis. And this concubine is from the town of Shechem.

In other words, Gideon has fathered a son named Abimelech, who is living in Shechem, part of his mom's lineage and family.

Somebody says he's a hometown boy from this little town called Shechem. And he sees that the throne is vacant in Israel, that his dad was a great leader who's now dead.

[ 9 : 21 ] And what does Abimelech do? He conjures up something that exposes where his heart is at. Where is Abimelech's heart at? He wants power.

That's where his heart is leading him. To the point where he does something pretty drastic. He goes to his clan and he says to them, there are 70 sons of Gideon.

How many kings do you want over you? 70 or one? And he's appealing to this small town where he's from to rally them to hopefully inaugurate him as king.

He wants power. But here's what's amazing about this story. You might ask, who in the world is Jerubbabel? We know earlier in the text that Jerubbabel is actually another name for Gideon.

And where did Gideon get this name, Jerubbabel? Well, back in Judges chapter 6, this is important to understand this story. It says this, that on the day of this day, Gideon was called Jerubbabel.

[ 10 : 37 ] That is to say, let Baal contend against him because Gideon broke down Baal's altar. One of the great things that Gideon did is he was not afraid to go and to strike down an idolatrous altar to Baal.

And so he's given the name. If Baal's real and he's a real god out there, let him fight with the guy that took his altar down. In other words, it's a mocking name against Baal. You can't even stand against Gideon and it's supposed to be an honorable name to Gideon.

The reason why that's important is what we read in the next few verses come back to highlight this entire ordeal with Gideon being a conqueror of Baal.

Look at verse 3. His mother's relative spoke all these words in his behalf in the ears of all the leaders of Shechem. And their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech for they said, he is our brother. And they gave him 70 pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith, with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless fellows who followed him.

What's ironic is that through the ethnic lineage of Gideon, through his concubine's side, are worshipers of a god named Baal-berith, a false god like Baal.

[ 11 : 57 ] And this is the god of the people of Shechem. This is presumably the god of Abimelech. And these people give Abimelech 70 pieces of silver from the bounty box of their false god, with which Abimelech then hires mercenaries for a nefarious reason that we will see in a minute.

70 pieces of silver, 70 brothers. What is about to happen? The very man that struck the idolatrous altar of Baal down has a son who is now part of a cult that worships a false god, also named Baal-berith.

And at this point in the story, we have a really ominous setting. What's about to happen, in the words of pastor and theologian, I love this, Jared Wilson, the scene that we're about to see makes the godfather look like strawberry shortcake.

So let's read. What is going on here? What is Abimelech going to do with these mercenaries and this money? Verse 5. And he went to his father's house at Orah and killed his brothers, the sons of Derubaville, 70 men on one stone.

This is brutal. This is judges. But more accurately, this is a heart that does not consider God. A heart that is solely bent on satisfying its cravings and its desires.

[ 13 : 33 ] And for Abimelech, the desire of the heart was to obtain power at all cost and at great cost. 70 pieces of silver, 70 brothers.

One piece of silver per brother executed was the price of this execution. This man gives us a picture of brutality and violence that stems from when our heart goes astray.

So here's the story. Here's the parable. We've got a guy who's trying to be king and he eliminates all of his brothers in order to accomplish that goal. And we see in verse 7 that there's something miraculous that happens.

Excuse me, verse 5, something miraculous happens. The youngest son of Derubaville was left for he hid himself. And his name is Jotham. I come from a family of 7 with 4 boys.

I can't imagine 70 brothers. The youngest is the one that escapes. And most scholars think that Jotham was probably a young child.

[ 14 : 43 ] Possibly even 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, maybe a little older, but he's a young, young brother. And this is what God chooses to do. I'm going to teach my truth and my parable through a tiny little boy.

The back of the line that I spared. So let's read verse 7. Here's the parable of the Bramble King. When it was told to Jotham, he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim and cried aloud and said to them, Top of the mountain, can't kill me up here, I'm way above you.

Listen to me, you leaders of Shechem, that God may listen to you. Sounds a lot like what Jesus says when he teaches the parable. All who have ears to hear, right? The trees once went out to anoint a king over them and they said to the olive tree, Reign over us.

But the olive tree said to them, Shall I leave my abundance by which gods and men are honored and go hold sway over the trees? Second, verse 10, And the tree said, The fig tree, You come and reign over us.

But the fig tree said to them, The fig tree, excuse me, said to them, Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit and go hold sway over the trees? And the tree said to the vine, Number three, You come and reign over us.

[ 16 : 02 ] But the vine said to them, Shall I leave my wine that cheers God and men and go hold sway over the trees? Then, Number four, All the trees said to the bramble, You come and reign 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. But if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

What in the world is little brother saying? This parable has four illustrations, four pictures for us.

And they're all trees, vines, and the like. The first is the olive tree. And we're told at the end of this parable that the cedars of Lebanon, some of the tallest trees in this ancient world, are the trees that are asking for a king.

So these massive cedars of Lebanon are asking, First, we need a king to rule us as trees. We need a tree king. And here's the first one they go to. They go to the olive tree. And the olive tree, in biblical times, was a symbol of honor.

[ 17 : 18 ] Kings would be anointed with oil. Oil would be used to adorn kingdoms and palaces. It's a symbol of wealth, but mostly of honor.

And here's what the olive tree says. Excuse me, I know my place, and it's not ruling over other trees. My place is better than that. I will not be your king.

And the picture of this rejection by the olive tree is one of knowing the place by which God has given the olive tree.

My goal is to produce olives. Olives that bring honor. I will not be your king. I know my place. I know your heart.

The second one is the fig tree. And the fig tree, in the ancient days, is a symbol of provision. The fig, one of the most valuable resources in this time. You could go through a desert and have nothing but figs and water and you would live.

[ 18 : 23 ] Figs are known in this time and even today as an incredible source of nutrients, very good for your body, and one of the richest, sweetest foods in this time. Figs, extremely valuable, just like olives.

And here's essentially very simple repeating of the same sort of idea. The fig tree says, also, no, I'm not going to rule over you.

I'm going to leave my sweetness and my good fruit to the people that enjoy it. I know my place. Number three, the vine. Now we move out of trees and they're moving downward as you can tell.

The trees literally get shorter and smaller and now we're to a vine. And again, they ask the vine, you come and be king over us as trees. And the vine is a symbol of delight in the Bible.

The vine produces grapes which produces wine. And everywhere you look in Scripture and Psalms and Ecclesiastes and other places and narratives, when wine is brought out, it's a celebration, it's delight, it's joy.

[ 19 : 30 ] And the vine also says, no, I will not be your king. I know my place. I'm not going to leave the thing that God has given me to cheer other people with what God makes me produce.

I won't be your king. So what is going on here? We have three rejections. And essentially what we have here is three rejections of an invitation to be king because all three, the fig, the olive, and the vine have other purposes that they are committed to.

But also, here's what's also fascinating about this choice in this parable by Jotham. Wine, olives, and figs are also in the Bible conveyed as sources of blessing from God.

They're symbols of life and joy and bounty. So why are they used here? Perhaps this parable is suggesting that with God as king over Israel they would be blessed.

But instead, what the people of Shechem and Israel at this time are doing is saying, let's find something that we really want. Figs, olives, wine, honor, joy, delight, provision.

[ 20 : 52 ] And let's take that and wield it and use it to get what we want. Again, what we see is another picture of the people of Shechem giving into the desires of their hearts, allowing the heart to lead in what they do.

But here's the ultimate message. Israel wants the honor of the olive tree. They want the provision of the fig tree. They want the delight of the grapevine. But they want all those things apart from God, the very creator, caretaker, and giver of all those gifts.

And so, the blessings of God evade and reject them. No, we will not be your king. You have sought wrongly. Perhaps there's even an allusion here to Gideon who he himself rejected being king over Israel when they asked him because he knew his place.

I am not king. The people of Shechem and Israel are so enslaved to their desire to have a king and get what they want that they just continue to move on down to whoever or whatever will gratify their broken desire.

And in this case, we have the bramble king with Abimelech. So finally, let's read verse 14. Then all the trees said to the bramble, you come and reign over us. Just keep going down.

[ 22 : 15 ] And the bramble said to the trees, if in good faith you're anointing me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade. But if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

And thus the parable ends. But what do we know they do? They made Abimelech the ruler. They said yes to the bramble. Yep, you're our king.

You said yes, that's all we need. We have to ask the question, what is a bramble and what does it symbolize in this parable? This is perhaps the most important symbol. The bramble is a thorn bush.

In this day and age, most likely a buckthorn plant. You can go to the next slide there. This is taken in Israel. This is a picture in Israel of an actual buckthorn.

These still exist today. The exact same plant that is being referred to here. Now if you look at this plant, I want you to just look and say, that would make a great king.

[ 23 : 16 ] Yeah. It's shoddy. It looks absolutely horrible. It looks like a farmer went over it and trying to raise their land and rip all the weeds out and this one just somehow didn't get pulled out but got shredded up in the process.

That is your king. The bramble. Here's what I want us to see in this picture. Not to just see the bramble but also understand the image here of the parable why the bramble becomes the king.

Here in the PNW we have something called invasive blackberry. Now if you love blackberry and you've ever gone out and tried to pick them more power to you. But I'll tell you something.

The blackberry is an invasive species. It's not supposed to be here. And thus as an invasive species the PNW blackberry bush has completely overtaken the Pacific Northwest.

Maybe you have some in your backyard. Maybe you have some on your farm. Maybe you've seen it or you've watched it just grow across an entire plain. Where I grew up down in Medford, Oregon we had them all beyond our backyard fence.

[ 24 : 24 ] And my mom all summer during the months of July and August would send us go in the backyard here's your bucket go pick blackberries and come back. And we would go pick them and we would enjoy the fruit.

We'd come back with poked up hands and scratched arms because of all of the crazy thorns all over it. But we got our blackberries and my mom would make pies and crepes it was delicious.

But when I see bramble and I see thorn bush I think of blackberries picking as a kid. But what does a bramble offer?

More specifically what does a buckthorn offer? At least the blackberry bush gives you fruit. The buckthorn gives nothing.

In fact the buckthorn has about a third of the leaves of a normal blackberry bush. At least a blackberry bush has some shade and some leaves. So let's look back again what's going on?

[ 25 : 21 ] Let's look at verse 14. Is the bramble being honest and real or is it being deceptive? Verse 14 Then the trees said to the bramble come and rain over us. 15 And the bramble said to the trees that bush here's the parable If in good faith you are anointing me king over you then come and take refuge in my shade.

Okay let's look again. What shade are you getting from this? First of all Second of all in order to get shade from it you have to be sitting underneath it. Who would like to crawl in there and get shade?

This entire parable is speaking about the foolishness of the human heart to just give way to all of the things it wants. Even amidst an obvious situation of a bramble giving shade as the best it could offer.

The bramble symbolizes something very nefarious. It's not just Abimelech who would be the bramble king the one that does nothing for Shechem the one that gives no provision no wealth no fruit not even shade but the bramble also I think symbolizes something deeper here.

I think the bramble can even be a picture of our broken hearts. but the bramble can be a symbol of discomfort and hostility that comes when we make our own sinful broken hearts the king of our lives.

[ 27 : 01 ] In order to understand that and really believe that and see how that connects in this parable let's just look quickly how does the story end? So I'm actually going to read 16 through 21 read with me Now therefore if you acted in good faith and integrity when you made Abimelech king and if you have dealt well with Jerubbabel and his house and have done to him as he deserved for my father fought for you and risked his life and delivered you from the hand of Midian and you have risen up against my father's house to this day and have killed his sons 70 men on one stone and have made Abimelech the son of his female servant king over the leaders of Shechem because he is your relative if then you have acted in good faith and integrity with Jerubbabel and his house this day it's a massive list of ifs then rejoice in Abimelech and let him also rejoice in you but if not it doesn't seem like there's an open window here this is already settled if you haven't let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the leaders of Shechem and Bithmalo and let fire come out from the leaders of Shechem and from Bithmalo and devour Abimelech and Jotham ran away and fled and went to Beer and lived there because of Abimelech his brother

Jotham just saying if you're looking for a name for a boy that's a little different Jotham would be a good one because I like Jotham little brother steps in the mountain gives the parable prophesying in wisdom over this situation and then flees here's what happens in this story we're not going to read this I'll just summarize Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem end up very quickly becoming hostile towards one another huh almost like what Jotham said Abimelech then kills the leaders of Shechem with fire and raises the entire town literally this parable came true let fire come out and devour Abimelech kills all the leaders of Shechem with fire and then immediately after goes to the next town to raise it with his power that he wanted but doesn't really have and this is what I love Abimelech goes to the town he goes to there's a large tower in the town and he stands under the tower and a nameless woman takes a rock and throws it out the window and it smashes his head and he dies what type of story is this what is what is the Lord teaching us

I actually think it's more clear than perhaps we take for granted the story is about broken desires of broken hearts the whole book of Judges is about broken desires of broken hearts but specifically this parable is as well we see broken desires all through this text Gideon's desire for many wives and concubines ended up betraying him Israel's wayward idolatrous heart ended up betraying them Abimelech's desire to be king betrayed him the leaders of Shechem's desire for a king at any cost betrayed them this parable is about idolatry giving in to the broken desires of our fallen heart and settling for something that is so much worse than what God has for us the entire theme of Judges is Israel choosing what is right in their own eyes and in Judges 21-25 you have the key verse which couples these two things together it says this back to back in this verse everyone did what was right in their own eyes and in those days there was no king over

Israel that correlation should stand out to us there's no king God has been left behind and abandoned so of course everyone's going to do what right in their own eyes so what is the parable teaching let's sort of apply it here at the end let's revisit is the human heart a trustworthy guide the answer is a resounding no our hearts broken hearts betray us what is the heart well the heart is the headquarters of our worship St. Augustine used to call the heart the seat of our affections the place where conviction and desire and belief come together and from that flow and affection towards something we see in this story the affections of the heart are towards oneself towards power towards comfort towards wealth towards something that I see is good for me we have to ask the question where is the heart leading us where is your heart leading you when it goes unchecked if our hearts are unchecked they will blaze their own trail into the land of misery and pain and here's the reality of the world we live in the world glorifies unchecked blind faith and the unpredictable affections of the heart doesn't it

Disney movies billboard radio hits Oprah whoever else you see it if you open your eyes the messages are clear from the world your heart is good you are good just trust it and everything will work out great let me offer to us today from the parable from the story but also just from common sense that this is the devil's playbook if he can convince fallen broken people to trust their fallen broken hearts the rest will play out exactly as he wants the problem is that there's texts like Jeremiah 17 9 which talk about the wickedness of the human heart Genesis 6 5 which talk about the only evil continually condition of the human heart or Hebrews 3 12 which talks about the evil unbelieving heart ask any person in this room about a time that they followed their heart and ignored

[ 33 : 16 ] God's heart and they will tell you I guarantee you experiences of pain and misery the bramble king is a parable about a Bimelech yes but in our story the bramble king is our broken wayward heart don't coronate your heart as king it will not give you what you desire it will not give you what you hope but instead tether your heart to God's heart believe is the heart of this parable we see people after people in the story giving way to the desires they think will satisfy them don't trust your heart trust the heart of God and follow his specifically train your heart on Jesus heart but how do we practically do that how do I train my heart on Jesus heart well when I was in high school we were in chemistry lab and we had these things called Bunsen burners you know what I'm talking about okay you take the stick you dip it in the substance you put it over and the flame changes color



I'll never forget our first time using Bunsen burners they gave us a beaker and we were the whole point of the assignment was to take sulfur put it in and heat up the sulfur and watch it evaporate out let me tell you the teacher knew this was going to happen didn't warn us that was that was one of the most disgusting smells of my life sulfur is not something that smells good don't put it in your potpourri okay when that burned off every person simultaneously went oh don't add sulfur to the breaker unless you're ready for that smell okay but here's also what we did we had another assignment we took a stick and we dipped it in potassium we put it over the flame and the flame turned into a beautiful pink glorious pink purple beautiful flame we were just astounded I think the heart is like an ever-changing solution that is constantly being fired and churned it's the headquarters of our worship we add compounds and elements to the beaker of our heart and the heated solution continues to change and adapt what's in the beaker but when we add sulfur to the beaker pride trusting in ourselves horrible smell terrible byproducts occur but instead when we take joyous things and feed it beauty comes the question is what are we feeding our heart and how do we train our way we're broken hearts instead of on our desires on

Jesus desires I've got a few things for us here first I think this parable is teaching us to give our hearts to a greater desire don't give it over to the things that you want that you think your heart will give you but give them over to something greater so first we're going to train our heart on Jesus and here's how we're going to do it soak in God's truth and love daily is number one in training our affections we have to do things that require truth this is where scripture comes in to train our hearts we train our hearts early in the morning so that our hearts will give off a beautiful flame all day a big fan of morning devotions maybe some of you do night devotions that's also great allow your mind to ruminate and studies have been shown that when you read before bed whatever you were reading will ruminate in your subconscious so read before you go to bed but also read in the morning and here's some truths that we need to soak in that will train our hearts on Jesus Ephesians 3 17 tells us that through faith

Christ dwells in our hearts Psalm 51 tells us that God cleanses our hearts from sin by divine grace Romans 5 5 tells us get this that God's love was poured directly into our hearts through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that beaker we talked about of your heart through the gospel God pours his love into it what a great picture soak in God's truth and love daily step number one to training our hearts on Jesus step number two commit to serious introspection Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem and even Gideon all failed to do introspection the thing about the heart that's so tricky is our hearts are so deceptive there are times in our lives where we feel like no I've got a heart to do this it might even be a good thing it might even be a God thing but your heart can still trick you into thinking you're doing it for the right reason our hearts are so deceptive that we must commit to regular introspection daily hourly how to do that well here's one way ask this question what is my heart desperately wanting right now and again it may be a good or God thing that you're wanting we still have to do this work what is my heart desperately wanting right now

I'm going to call us to scrutinize interrogate and dissect your answers maybe you're in a relationship with somebody really special and you say my heart really really wants this person as a potential spouse dissect that don't assume that your heart is right in that maybe you're sitting here right now and you're saying I really want this career and I don't think this is what the Lord has for me interrogate that don't assume that your heart is leading you down a good path turn the magnifying glass onto the heart with Sherlock Holmes-esque intensity ask questions like this once you answer what does my heart want would this make me happy would this make God happy does this desire reflect the heart of God if we as Christians committed to interrogating our own hearts more we would make better God glorifying decisions throughout the days weeks and months number three invite the body in this is a big one again you see some isolation here with

[ 39 : 17 ] Gideon with Abimelech with the leaders of Shechem not really seeking counsel this is where the church comes in praise God for his body of equipped gifted people to help refine and sharpen us share the desires you came up with and the questions and the answers maybe to that previous one share those desires and those affections with your community group with your spouse with your fellow member grab coffee to talk with someone this is what I feel like the Lord is calling me to do this is what I really my heart really is screaming that I need give me guidance what do you think this is what it means to sharpen one another and build one another up as the body while on the journey of faith that God has called you to remember that behind you is a whole host of brothers and sisters who are on that same journey with you and who are ready to counsel and support you and then number four how do we train our affections on Jesus desire not a tree or a bramble but a divine shoot this parable seems at this front that it's about kingship but it's actually about the heart but even in that we know that the shoot of Jesse

Jesus Christ will one day come from David and he will be the true king over all the earth that feeds and satisfies the heart the true vine that gives life to the branches the kingdom tree that grows from the mustard seed and hosts all types of birds in its branches that's the shoot Jesus there's only one human heart in history that was not a broken heart one human heart in history that was fully committed to the ways of God one human heart in history that was pure unblemished and thus capable of blazing a path forward for other hearts to follow we do not blaze a trail with our heart instead we obediently lovingly and submissively follow the one that blazed the only trail worth following that's the heart of Jesus brothers and sisters train your heart on Jesus heart and watch the desires of your heart grow not to fit our form and function but to fit the kingdom of

God that's a heart that may just be worth following one that's already followed after Christ let's pray Lord thank you for this morning thank you for this parable which warns us Lord of seeking after the desires of a broken heart Lord I pray that as we Lord look introspectively even this week as we ask questions we're all going through things in life and pondering what the next step may be seeking wisdom but I pray that we would do so with introspective eyes and with a humble soft ready to follow heart Lord would you cause us to second guess anytime our heart screams at us to follow it that we would submit our heart unto yours Lord allow us to know these truths to believe them and maybe we'd be a church that's filled with redeemed hearts Lord that are sought after you we love you Lord and we thank you for today let me pray amen