

Fasting Part 2

“1 And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah. 2 And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Bethlehemjudah, and was there four whole months. 3 And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. 4 And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there. 5 And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son in law, Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way. 6 And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry. 7 And when the man rose up to depart, his father in law urged him: therefore he lodged there again. 8 And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart; and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried until afternoon, and they did eat both of them. 9 And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father in law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day draweth toward evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home. 10 But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, which is Jerusalem; and there were with him two asses saddled, his concubine also was with him. 11 And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. 12 And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that is not of the children of Israel; we will pass over to Gibeah. 13 And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah. 14 And they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down upon them when they were by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin. 15 And they turned aside thither, to go in and to lodge in Gibeah: and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city: for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging. 16 And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which was also of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place were Benjamites. 17 And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? 18 And he said unto him, We are passing from Bethlehemjudah toward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence am I: and I went to Bethlehemjudah, but I am now going to the house of the LORD; and there is no man that receiveth me to house. 19 Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man which is with thy servants: there is no want of any thing. 20 And the old man said, Peace be with thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street. 21 So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink. 22 Now as they were making their

hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him. 23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly. 24 Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing. 25 But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go. 26 Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was, till it was light. 27 And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold. 28 And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered. Then the man took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place. 29 And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel. 30 And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.” (Judges 19:1-30)

That was a true story that had happened in Israel and the Israelites had to face and deal with such crime and discipline those who did that. When there is sin and such violation against God's commands we as church should take the courage from the Lord and stand up to face it. Let us read the following that tells us what they did and what we need to do to face such crisis that rise up because of sin and transgression:-

1. They inquired of what had happened: “1 Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beersheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD in Mizpeh. 2 And the chief of all the people, even of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword. 3 (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh.) Then said the children of Israel, Tell us, how was this wickedness? 4 And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, I came into Gibeah that belongeth to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. 5 And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, and thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they forced, that she is dead. 6 And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. 7 Behold, ye are all children of Israel; give here your advice and counsel.” (Judges 20:1-7 KJV) They heard the story of what had happened and they heard the request of the Levites who was asking their advice and decision. We as church should be attentive to listen to such situation and such sin and need to interfere to deal with sin and those who committed, and do the things that God wants us to do.

2. They decided to deal with the evil doers and face them with their sins: “8 And all the people arose as one man, saying, We will not any of us go to his tent, neither will we any of us turn into his house. 9 But now this shall be the thing which we will do to Gibeah; we will go up by lot against it; 10 And we will take ten men of an hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and an hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for the people, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel. 11 So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man. 12 And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness is this that is done among you? 13 Now therefore deliver us the men, the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel. 14 But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel. 15 And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men. 16 Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss. 17 And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these were men of war.” (Judges 20:8-17 KJV) As we read here, the Israelites sent to deal with those who did the crime but the tribe of Benjamin protected them and were willing to fight for them. That add more evil to the sin that they did. But that did not change the mind of the Israelites to deal with the sin. We as church should be firm to deal with the sin that take place inside the church. God’s anger and wrath will fall on the evil doers and if the church will condone sin, the wrath of God will fall on the whole church, that is why we need to deal with sin.

3. They decided to seek the counsel of God: “18 And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up first.” (Judges 20:18 KJV) We as church before we do anything we need to ask the counsel of God. When the children of Benjamin decided to defend the evil doers and announced war against the church that was unexpected and the church faced such evil stand and dealt with it. But before the church goes ahead with such a situation the church should ask advice from the Lord. The Lord approved them that they will go and face the children of Benjamin, and the instruction of God was that **Judah shall go up first.**

4. They needed to follow the instructions of God: “19 And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah. 20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah. 21 And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men. 22 And the people the men of Israel encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day.” (Judges 20:19-22 KJV) God told them Judah will go up first, but now the whole Israelites went up to attack, and that is contradict to what God instructed them to do. That is probably why they lost the battle in the first day. Therefore, they came again to inquire of the Lord, “23 (And the

children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until even, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him.) 24 And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second day. 25 And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword.” (Judges 20:19-25) God again allowed the Israelites to go on the second day for war against the children of Benjamin, but the Israelites were not able to deal with the Benjamites and apply the discipline of God on them. Certain times in dealing with sin and evil, we might face resistance and difficulties from the evil one, the devil, who is using people to do evil and to destroy the work of God in His church and to disturb holiness in order to force us to surrender to compromises, to surrender to the fear of man and to accept something wrong. We as church when we face sin, the devil also will try to fight back against us to cause us to be discouraged in order to daunt us in order to make us give up holiness and force the church to accept sin.

Therefore they resorted to do the following:

5. They pray and fasted: “26 Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 27 And the children of Israel enquired of the LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, 28 And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.” (Judges 20:26-29) Here we can see clearly how the church came together in prayer and fasting; all of them in one accord, with the leadership of the high priest, Phinehas, the leader of the church, to inquire from God and to ask him petition of what they need to do and if He would allowed them to go out and fight the Benjamites. Truly the Lord answered their prayer and fasting and answered the question of high priest, Phinehas: **Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease?** God’s answer was the following: **Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.** So we can see clearly when the Israelites went back to the Lord, humbled themselves, prayed, fast and inquire of the Lord, He gave them the assurance of victory. Let us read how God aided them to have victory to deal with the wicked evil doers and those who cover them up:

“29 And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah. 30 And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times. 31 And the children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city; and they began to smite of the people, and kill, as at other times, in the highways, of which one goeth up to the house of God, and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Israel. 32 And the children of Benjamin said, They are smitten down before us, as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways. 33 And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and put themselves in array at Baaltamar: and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of their places, even out of the meadows of Gibeah. 34 And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle was sore: but they knew not that evil was near them. 35 And the LORD smote Benjamin before Israel: and the

children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the sword. 36 So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten: for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjamites, because they trusted unto the liers in wait which they had set beside Gibeah. 37 And the liers in wait hasted, and rushed upon Gibeah; and the liers in wait drew themselves along, and smote all the city with the edge of the sword. 38 Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait, that they should make a great flame with smoke rise up out of the city. 39 And when the men of Israel retired in the battle, Benjamin began to smite and kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons: for they said, Surely they are smitten down before us, as in the first battle. 40 But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven. 41 And when the men of Israel turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed: for they saw that evil was come upon them. 42 Therefore they turned their backs before the men of Israel unto the way of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them; and them which came out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them. 43 Thus they inclosed the Benjamites round about, and chased them, and trode them down with ease over against Gibeah toward the sunrising. 44 And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men; all these were men of valour. 45 And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them. 46 So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that drew the sword; all these were men of valour. 47 But six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months. 48 And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of every city, as the beast, and all that came to hand: also they set on fire all the cities that they came to.” (Judges 20:29-48)

My dear and Beloved: In the New Testament we deal with sin not as above bloody way, but as a church when we face an offence against the church or against one of the members of the church, before we take any action we need to do the following:-

1. We need to inquire well of what had happened:
2. We need to decide to deal with the evil doers and face them with their sins
3. We need to seek the counsel of God:
4. We need to follow carefully the instructions of God:
5. We need to pray and fast asking God to confirm to us His will and go before us in the things that He wants us to do:

The essence of the story in Judges 19 and 20 is that before we move forward and take any action against sin we need to pray and fast, trusting God that He will lead us to take the right step according to His Word, and Himself will go before us to deal with the situation and to correct it.

As well as, we have the Word of God that will instruct us of what we need to do in order to apply the right disciplinary action that is suitable for what had happened from wrong doing to be dealt with and to be corrected.

Let us learn from that event a lesson and apply it in our lives to be spared troubles and to be effective in what we do in dealing with sin and with those who trespass against God and against His ordinances.

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your Word that enlighten me about my responsibility and what could take place ahead of me in life while I live for you and serving you.

Confess your sins now to the Lord and ask Him forgiveness for your lack of commitment, your compromises, your fear of men and your disobedience to obey fully the commands of God.

Lord forgive me the following sins _____.

Lord I humble myself before you asking you to lead me and guide me as I pray and fast of how to face the following situation _____. Lord go before me and deal with the situation properly and according to your will. Lord give me the instruction that I need to apply and implement to combat sin and to discipline sinners who trespassed against your ordinances.

Lord thank you for my brethren who committed their lives to follow your Word and the instructions that we received from you to do faithfully the work of yours. Lord protect each and everyone of them from the evil doers and from the work of the devil. Lord provide all their needs so they will continue to go on and serve you. Lord fill them with the Holy Spirit as they pray and fast, and give them the power of the Holy Spirit to go on and evangelize and spread your Word and combat the evil forces of the evil doers.

Lord I pray for us as a church to go before us and level mountains, and that you will help us to go on serving you reaching new areas with the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Word of God. Lord help us to evangelize and to plant new Bible studies and new congregation for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us, and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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