

“Given Over to Sin”
Judges 10:6-14
(Preached at Trinity, May 10, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. By now the words of **Verse 6** are very familiar:
"Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD"
2. We've seen this pattern so often now perhaps we're growing weary of reading it. We've seen it so many times we now know what to expect.
Israel sins, God delivers them to an oppressor, Israel cries out, and God sends a deliverer.
3. We must understand, however, that sin left unchecked always increases. It always becomes more heinous and the consequences always become more dreadful.
In this passage instead of God immediately coming to their aid we find God delivering them over to the consequences of their idolatry.
Judges 10:13-14 NAU - "Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods; therefore I will no longer deliver you. ¹⁴ "Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress."
4. By now surely you've pondered the question, why would Israel continue to forsake God and follow after the idols of the pagan nations? God had been so good and gracious to them and idolatry is so foolish. The answer is simple. The human heart will always worship something. We were created as worshippers. Our greatest purpose and highest delight is in the worship of our Creator. But if we will not worship Him He will give us over to our corruption and we will turn our hearts elsewhere.
5. The problem of sin is the heart turning from the worship of God to the worship of idols.
Romans 1:21-23 NAU - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures."
Romans 1:25 NAU - " For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever."
6. For Israel their idolatry was characterized by their infatuation with the gods of the pagans. There were harvest gods and fertility gods. The worship of these gods enflamed every base element of the flesh.
Judges 10:6 NAU - "*they* served the Baals and the Ashtaroath, the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the sons of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; thus they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him."
 - A. They clearly understood God's demands
Exodus 20:3 NAU - "You shall have no other gods before Me"
Deuteronomy 6:4-5 NAU - "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

- B. But they were drawn irresistibly to the foreign gods.
7. Before we quickly condemn them we must not dismiss our own idolatry. We also know God's demands. God can only be approached through Christ and He will be worshipped alone.
Matthew 16:24-26 NAU - "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. ²⁵ "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"
- I. We are always in danger if idolatry. Idolatry is all around us. It raises up its ugly head in countless ways
- A. In our greed for material possessions
1. The Bible calls covetousness or greed idolatry
Colossians 3:5 NAU - "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry."
 2. We seldom consider the hold our possessions have upon our heart. We acquire something new and we can't imagine being without it - technology
- B. In our lust after pleasure
2 Timothy 3:1-4 NAU - "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God"
1. In our generation we have a craving for pleasure and excitement more than at any time in the history of our nation – few cultures in the history of the world can match us. And we will go to any expense
 2. Even those who call themselves Christians, profane the Lord's Day so they can satisfy this lust for pleasure – this is great idolatry
- C. By granting affection to our families that belongs to God alone
1. Many will use their family to excuse them from service to Christ
 2. Children are a wonderful gift from God but when they become our chief desire we have fallen into idolatry.
 3. Jesus warned of placing family before Him
Luke 14:26 NAU - "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."
 4. Thomas Watson – "Thus God is often provoked to take away our children. If we love the jewel more than him that gave it God will take away the jewel that our love may return to Him again."
- D. By allowing your career to draw your attention from God
1. Again work is honoring to God, but if our job keeps us from serving Christ it has become an idol.
 2. The man who says he will wait until he retires to serve Christ is a fool

- E. By allowing any pursuit to overshadow the pursuit of God and His holiness
 - 1. The Greeks worshipped knowledge
Thomas Watson – “Many a man makes an idol of his wit and parts; he deifies himself, but how often does God take the wise in their own craftiness!”
 - 2. Athletes often throw their entire lives into their sport
 - 3. Artists, musicians, poets, authors become engrossed in the labors of their particular craft and forget God
- F. We must be mindful of the danger of idolatry
 - 1. The sin of idolatry is so deceptive and is disguised in so many ways that we are scarcely aware of its presence even when we are fully in its grip
 - 2. Idolatry has the power to intoxicate and blind us from the fact that there is no profit in it. Idolatry always leads to enslavement. Like a drug, we want more and more to achieve more and more of the high

II. The ultimate danger of idolatry

In **Judges 10** we find the ultimate danger of idolatry. God will give us over to our idols.

- A. In **Verse 7** we read that God “sold” them into the hands of the very nations whose god’s they worshipped.

Judges 10:7 NAU - "The anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the sons of Ammon."

- 1. This is repeated several times in the Book of Judges
Judges 2:14 NAU - "The anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies "
- 2. The picture is God handing them over to oppressors; placing them under a new jurisdiction.
- 3. We can see this with the church discipline described in **1 Corinthians 5**
1 Corinthians 5:5 NAU - "deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh"
This is handing him over to the jurisdiction of Satan.
- 4. It describes God removing His hand of protection and His restraining grace to give a person over to the sinful inclinations of the heart.

- B. Perhaps the best description of this is in **Romans 1**
Romans 1:21-24 NAU - " For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them."

- 1. In other words God sold them to sin. He gave them over to their sinful passions.

2. When we will not worship God He will give us over to the lusts of our sinful heart.
Romans 1:28 NAU - "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,"
3. God gives men up as an expression of judgment. In other words, they increase in sin not by the mere permission of God but as an act of His divine judgment.
 - a. This explains why Israel returned to their idols over and over
 - b. Luther – “When God deals with transgressors according to His stern justice, He permits the perverse sinner to break His commandments all the more viciously in order that He might punish him the more severely.”

C. Sin always grows.

1. The Bible compares it to leaven or yeast. As men continue in their rejection of God God gives them over to reprobation.
2. It is usually a gradual progression. It is like the frog in the kettle.
3. Last week I preached on the danger of despising God’s grace. We must never diminish the blessing of God’s restraining grace. Human beings are capable of great and terrible perversion. History bears record of unimaginable wickedness. When men will not have God He gives them over to themselves.
4. There are degrees of how much God gives us over to our sinfulness. Every lost man should tremble. There is no end to how wicked we can become.
5. Matthew Henry – “What a vile creature is (man) when left to himself! How much are we beholden to the restraining grace of God for the preserving anything of the honour and decency of the human nature!

D. Sexual perversion is often evidence of a person being given over to their sin
Romans 1:26-27 NAU - " For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error."

1. Homosexuality is clearly indicated in this passage – **Verses 26-27**
2. Worldwide distribution of pornography is now estimated at over \$100 billion per year.
3. When we will not have God in our thoughts our minds are open vessels for every type of sin – this is God’s judgment. Lust fills our heart
Our hearts become more and more attracted to the idols.

III. The enslavement of idolatry

- A. As God gives us over to our sin we become enslaved by our idols
1. Even if we know the oppressing nature of our idolatry and the dreadful consequences we still pursue them with all our heart
 2. You would think that as Israel came under the oppression of their enemies they would hate their gods. Instead they served them all the more. Don't forget Israel suffered at their hands many years.
Judges 2:11-14 NAU - "Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals, ¹² and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from *among* the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger. ¹³ So they forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. ¹⁴ The anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around *them*, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies."
 3. Because Israel would not turn their hearts from their idols God gave them over to their idolatry which resulted in even more idolatry.
 God's judgment upon idolatry is more idolatry.
Judges 10:11-14 NAU - "The LORD said to the sons of Israel, "*Did I not deliver you* from the Egyptians, the Amorites, the sons of Ammon, and the Philistines? ¹² "Also when the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you, you cried out to Me, and I delivered you from their hands. ¹³ "Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods; therefore I will no longer deliver you. ¹⁴ "Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress."
 4. Israel kept returning to their idols over and over even though it brought them more and more oppression from their enemies.
 God told them, "OK you want your idols. Then your idols you shall have. Let them be your god. And let them deliver you."
Judges 10:13-14 NAU - "Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods; therefore I will no longer deliver you. ¹⁴ "Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress."
- B. Idolatry always leads to more idolatry--Greater oppression and greater slavery
1. God says if you insist on worshipping money then money will rule your life. It will rule your heart, your emotions. You will be enslaved by it.
 2. If you worship your family more than Christ then your family you shall serve. You will always choose your family over Christ.
 3. This is always the case – idolatry is enslavement. And it destroys.
 - a. Why would a pastor give up his marriage, his family, and his ministry for the sake of an affair?
 - b. Why does a man continue to return to pornography over and over? It is because while he may hate his idol he also loves it more than Christ.

Conclusion:

1. This is the nature of sin. It is at the heart of lost humanity. They love their idols. Jesus told the Rich Young Ruler:
Matthew 19:21-22 NAU - "Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." ²² But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property."
 While he wanted eternal life he wasn't willing to part with his idolatry.
2. The irony is that while human idols are a cruel slavery that will never satisfy no man will willingly forsake his idols. The truth is, lost human beings want God far from them – they want God to be out of their lives.
 - a. The tragedy is they do not understand what a curse it is to be given over to sin.
 - b. They actually believe they will be happier without God, without His Law. They doesn't understand what a curse it is to be without God.
Romans 1:22 – "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,"
 - c. It is a great punishment from God to be left to ourselves—to be allowed to commit the sins of our heart, to be given to our idols.
3. Salvation is more than just a desire to be freed from the misery and oppression of sin. It demands a desire to forsake our sin—to give up our idols and cast ourselves at the mercy of God.
Judges 10:15-16 NAU - "The sons of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned, do to us whatever seems good to You; only please deliver us this day." ¹⁶ So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD"
4. Christians also have their idols that they must flee from. Salvation is about God rescuing sinners—of redeeming them from the terrible bondage of sin.
 But our idols often have a powerful grip upon our hearts.
 Pray always, "O God, keep me from sin. Restrain my foolish heart." Or as our Lord taught us to pray, "And lead us not unto temptation, but deliver us from evil."
5. The solution to idolatry is always casting ourselves at the mercy of Christ.
 Notice Israel is saying, "Deliver us from our idols even if it means we still suffer, though we would rather not suffer. We want you above all else."
Judges 10:15 NAU - "We have sinned, do to us whatever seems good to You; only please deliver us this day."