

**Sermon Guide April 19, 2020**  
"A People, a Prophet, and a Judge"  
Genesis 18:16-33

**Sermon Notes:**

- 1) In this text we learn about:
  - a) A rebellious people
    - i) God hears the outcry against the wicked
    - ii) Things are worse than we want them to be
  - b) A praying prophet
    - i) Persistent prayer based on the character of God. Passion and earnestness pleading for people.
  - c) A gracious and righteous judge
    - i) He judges justly, but the idea of God as a judge is not popular today.
    - ii) We approach this idea as if judging is opposed to love, but the Bible helps us understand both the justice and the grace of God.
    - iii) Sometimes God gives more time and delays judgment for the sake of a few righteous

**Reflect:**

- 1) When we think about rebellion against God, we have a tendency either to minimize it, or to be too strong as if we ourselves are the judges. Which do you tend toward? How can you keep your perspective biblical and Gospel-based?
- 2) What is hardest for you about God's justice? Is it too slow? Too sudden? Too harsh? Too merciful? Something else? What scriptures encourage you in the midst of this struggle?
- 3) God chooses to love undeserving people through no merit of their own. Is this hard for you to accept? Why or why not?
- 4) Do you actively desire the salvation of the lost? Do you tend instead to wish they would "get theirs"? Somewhere in-between? Or perhaps think of it this way: if you found out Hitler (or some other famous "bad" person) became a Christian before he died, would that be exciting? What do your answers reveal about your heart? How can you continue pursuing the Gospel in this regard?

**Study:**

- 1) Read Jonah 3:10-4:4
  - a) Did Jonah know the character of God? How can you tell?
  - b) Did Jonah reflect the character of God? How can you tell?
  - c) How would you describe Jonah's attitude toward the lost?
- 2) Then read Matthew 18:21-35
  - a) How does this passage add perspective on how you thought about Jonah's situation and response?
- 3) Finally, read Romans 12:14-21
  - a) How does this passage inform our thoughts and behavior toward the lost?
  - b) How does the call to "never avenge yourselves but leave it to the wrath of God" strike you? Is it hard? Easy? Why?

**Pray:**

- 1) **Scripture:** Pray through 2 Peter 3:8-13
- 2) **Identity:** Remember that we are ministers of reconciliation, given this ministry by Jesus.
- 3) **Redemption:** As you pray, remember that “now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2)