

Costly Kingship

Scripture Reading — Judges 9:1-6; Matthew 27:35-44

They gave him seventy shekels of silver, and Abimelek used it to hire reckless scoundrels. . . . — Judges 9:4

The Israelites had asked Gideon to rule over them, but he had refused, saying, “The Lord will rule over you” (Judges 8:23).

But after Gideon died, his son Abimelek manipulated the people of Shechem to support him, and then he killed his seventy brothers and set himself up as king. Some people will do anything, pay any price, to achieve a position of leadership—also among God’s people.

The leaders of God’s people included some who lacked humility and self-control: for example, the judges Jephthah and Samson (Judges 10-16), the kings Saul and Rehoboam (1 Samuel 15; 1 Kings 12), and even the great King David, who committed adultery with the wife of a dedicated warrior—and then had the man killed in battle (2 Samuel 11; 23:29).

Truth is, none of us can bear the true cost of successfully leading God’s people. Bribery, smooth-talking, and manipulation may get us a position, but sooner or later our flaws and sin will find us out.

Unlike Abimelek, Christ was publicly declared king on a cross. There they mocked him: “If you are the King of Israel, come down from the cross.” He did not. He required no one’s life in exchange. His own Father did not deliver him from that horrible crucifixion. He surrendered himself to the grave to pay the price of all our sin. Then he rose again. Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Prayer

*For “your dying sorrow, your mercy without end,” Lord, “let me never, never outlive my love for you.”
In your name, Amen.*

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