**Right In His Own Eyes (Judges 21:25)**]

 The foundation for our decisions guides the path of our life. Greetings dear brothers and sisters as we get ready today for the season of Great Lent. Today we have an important yet deep topic to bring up. In the book of Judges, we see two different places where the same words are written: “Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.” (Judges 17:6 and 21:25) What a great and yet revealing word. Sometimes, the Bible speaks to us by describing human failures or mistakes. Other times, it gives direct teaching, or we feed from its direct commands. The book of Judges presents the history of the Israelites before the era of their kingdoms. Unfortunately, though we see many successes during that time period, parallel to that we see a string of unbelievably immoral situations and anti-theistic decisions made. For this reason, today, we’re going to speak about decisions and the instructions of the Scriptures regarding them. The foundation for our decisions guides the path of our life. Let speak, then, about this multifaceted topic…

 When God is your True King, you grow and mature as a Christian in your spiritual life. The Israelites were going through some tough times during and after the days of Joshua. From the first chapter of Judges, we already see that at least 6 tribes were not successful in their given task to drive away the pagan peoples out or away from their allotted territories. We see that after Joshua, there was barely one generation that walked in the ways of the Lord, after which, we read that the following generation already was completely unaware of the Lord’s history with their people and were doing evil in the sight of the Lord.

After seeing this, God brought judges forth to rule over the people. As soon as a judge would become ruler, there would be a temporary repentance by the people toward the worship of the true God. When the judge would die, people would return to their false gods and idols. In two separate portions of the book which we quoted above, it was as if the author was apologizing, saying, “Please forgive us, but this is the situation… the people have no king, and each person does what they suppose is right for themselves.” But did they truly have no king? If that was the case, then who was it that brought them through the desert, and just to whom did they go to receive instruction regarding their battles? No, it was not that they had no king, it was that they did not recognize their Heavenly King. Go ahead and read their horrible works (in this time period): They sometimes solved their issues by resorting to theft. They were busy with polygamy and otherwise immoral lifestyles. Sometimes someone would hire a personal priest and build his own temple in his house. It was either that, or, one clan or tribe would rise up and go to war with another tribe, and thousands of people would die because of the abominable behavior of a few sinful men; sometimes people died because of the stubbornness and prideful unrepentant attitude of an entire tribe. There was no justice, no mercy, but rather, a free-for-all, chaotic state of affairs ruled over their lives. Even their greatest heroes of the time period could not rein in the people. Samson himself could not control himself and wound up marrying a woman who was part of a neighbor enemy people group and also anti-God. Gideon, who was extremely obedient in his walk with the Lord, would similarly mess up later in his life and make a golden ephod, which would have a terrible effect on the people’s spiritual lives (they nearly worshipped it rather than God). Again, when God is your true king, you grow in mature in your spiritual life.

A famous British statesman Edmund Burke argued, "men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains on their own appetites. Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there is without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

“In those days, there was no king in Israel. Every man did what was right in his own eyes.” And you, my dear brother and sister – what do you base your decision on?

In today’s society, there is a huge lie that rules the atmosphere: “do whatever causes you pleasure, as long as you don’t hurt anybody else.” In other words, “You be your own king.” According to the Word of God, our independent and irresponsible deeds have their effect our churches, our ethnic group, our neighborhoods, not to say our cities and even on our country as a whole.

Dearly beloved, **true freedom comes from living under the rule and influence of God’s Kingdom.**

Today we have a culture that surrounds us that does not recognize a king. Each one has become his or her own monarch. Rulers decide what freedom should look like. They seem to decide when a lie is a lie and when a lie does not count as one. However, when God is your True King, your spiritual life grows and you mature. It is up to us in this confused world to recognize our King and to spread the Good News of His salvation everywhere.

If you have forgotten your King’s vision for your life, it is simple: Love your God and know your Savior. Second, love your neighbor, your friend, the one next to you, and spread the Good News of Jesus to them. If you have surrendered your life to The King, then you have no reason to consider making decisions based on your own desires. If you belong to the Body of Christ, His Church, then there is no need to think about how to participate in that faith-life. Just as God has given you His All, you also, make your decisions (in life) in response to His Giving as acts of gratitude and thanks. He loves you directly and clearly; you enjoy His Salvation, His forgiveness, His blessings every day. So, give of your time, your energy, and your wallet. Show your allegiance to your King, who asks you to obey Him and to show others the same generosity that He showed by giving us Jesus. Know your King Jesus today; give your life to Him, to His Church, for His Glory. Do not live like those who have no king, who are bound by their limited human thoughts…

I ask: You, my dear brother and sister: how do you make decisions, and why? It is up to us in this confused world to recognize our King and to spread the Good News of His salvation everywhere. Love your God and know your Savior. Second, love your neighbor, your friend, the one next to you, and spread the Good News of Jesus to them. The foundation for our decisions guides the path of our life. When God is your true king, you grow and mature in your spiritual life.

May what God has given, Salvation through Jesus, be a reason for us to devote our all, to do our very best so that He would be glorified and His Church, which represents Him in this world, would grow and spread everywhere. Amen.