

Reflection Wednesday Week 20 – 2023

A growing and very troubling feature of the world today is people beginning their thinking starting with the self!

Today's parable shows us that this is far from being a modern issue and, research would surely show that egotism lies at the route of very many problems in life. This would imply that it is even more important that, as followers of Christ, we hand over our lives to him. Every thought will then begin with Christ as the reference point not the individual self. Spending our lives comparing ourselves with others leads to a very miserable life in which joy has extreme difficulty in finding somewhere to rest.

A Jewish reflection on this story asks: *What was the purpose of this story in the book of Judges?*

Answer: To remind the people that good leadership comes with personal sacrifice; those who grab it for their own benefit, as Abimelech did, can bring down the whole of society. Three trees were unwilling to give up their fruitful lives to take on leadership, so the thorn assumed the title with a claim that it gave protective shade (*which it cannot*).

Once in power, if anyone went against the thorn, it could fuel the fires that would destroy them all.

Civil war descended on Israel and Abimelech died after a brief and bloody reign. Jotham's story is a story for us all.