

## JOY in the JOURNEY IX



### **“But We’re Right!” - Judges 12:1-7; Phil. 2:1-5**

**Sermon Idea:** *Christ-followers experience joy on the journey when our focus is unity in Christ not disunity in our perspectives no matter how right we think they are.*

**Intro:** Conclusion to the 2020 election is hours away...we hope! Often heard – “*The most important election in our lifetime.*” “*America is doomed if the other side wins!*” “*How can someone possibly vote for \_\_\_\_\_?!*” Have you had any lively discussions about the election or other divisive issues lately? Today’s OT text tells how NOT to stay unified. Jesus shows another way. What are Christians supposed to do about seeking unity in the midst of division.?

### **Read and discuss Judges 6:33-35; 8:1-3; 12:1-7**

1. Thank God our politics isn’t as bloody (hopefully) as in the time of the judges in the OT! The tribe of Ephraim had their feuds with their Jewish cousins. Catch up on the background reading Judges 6:33-35; 8:1-3; and 12:1-7. What was the Ephraimite habit? Compare how judges Gideon and Jephthah handled the cranky Ephraimites?
2. “*Will the real Ephraimite stand up!*” How did Jephthah’s soldiers test for positive Ephraimites? Was that a good test?
3. Is there anything at all parallel in Christian history of “litmus tests” of who’s in and who’s out -- doctrinal beliefs, conduct, even ethnic, linguistic restrictions? Start with NT times...and trace up to the present where possible. Currently, what are the things that divide us as brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ?
4. If the OT gives us a bad example, the NT gives us much advice on Christian unity: Romans 12:3,9-10; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 2:11-16; Philippians 2:1-4. Do we do a good job of following these admonitions? Why not?
5. The ULTIMATE EXAMPLE of how to break down the barriers is Christ Jesus, himself. Philippians 2:5-11. How did Jesus treat his enemies? Luke 23:34. Discuss how we can be like him. Is it on our own or by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ in us? How do we avail ourselves of that power?
6. What did Jesus pray for us, his followers? John 17:20-23. Are people in the world impressed by our disunity today? What are the essentials of our unity?
7. Now the rubber meets the road – whether it is Christian behavior, decisions in community or church, or even political/cultural differences – how can we as Christians go forward in love and unity into the future? Be brutally honest and practical!!

**Jesus says:** “*You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor<sup>[u]</sup> and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matthew 5:43-45*