

6-2-24 The Book of Judges

Text: Judges 6:1–40; 8:1–35

Big Idea of the Message: We must put our trust in God alone.

Application Point: Put your ultimate trust in God, not in human beings who are fallible and will often let you down.

Today we will look at one of the more famous judges, Gideon. The book of Judges isn't kid friendly. It isn't Bluey, or Paw Patrol. Gideon is a judge you may remember from Sunday school. He's famous for setting out a fleece, and God choosing three hundred men who lap up water. His story starts out in Judges 6, when Israel is being oppressed by the Midianites.

The angel of the Lord appears and informs Gideon that God has chosen him to deliver Israel. It is an interesting exchange (**Judges 6:14–15**). It would appear, at least at the start, that Gideon might have some positive traits: is he humble, and understands his own weaknesses and limitations? It also appears he struggles with self-doubt and trusting God. I can see myself in some of those adjectives.

But as the years and the battles go on, Gideon changes, he accepts some of the credit for what God has done. Maybe not directly, but indirectly through accepting extra fringe benefits. The people of Israel are quick to put their trust in MAN (any different than today?) rather than where it belongs, in God.

Judges chapter 6:1 starts off with a line that is repeated seven times in this book; **"...Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord."** I think that could be said of me on any given day. God corrected Israel through the Midianites and Amalekites. Pondering on this for a moment, pause, and ask yourself, where is God sending correction into my life? Is He trying to get my attention somewhere?

God still sends correction for disobedience and rebellion. The Holy Spirit is still giving feedback. Our ultimate penalty for our sins were taken care of on the cross by Jesus. But we are not given a sin at will free card because of the cross. God will correct His children, and He can use whatever means He deems necessary. I can speak for myself, I have been corrected physically, emotionally, and financially because of my disobedience, rebellion, and blatant sin. (share Peggy Thompson's testimony)

God's design for correction is to bring us to a place of confession and repentance. Look at **Judges 6:6-7**. A repeated thought must have been in their heads, one that we might have as well. With all that is going on in this world I have caught myself asking a question.

I. Does God care about us? (Verses 1-13)

- For seven years Israel was under the control of Midian and the Amalekites. They were so oppressed that they tried to find refuge in the mountains and live in caves. When their crops were ready to harvest it would be taken from them. Everything they had was taken from them or destroyed.
- **Verse 6 "So Israel was greatly impoverished..."**
- I can't imagine the carnage they were living in and looking out at on a daily basis. A mother and father with nothing to feed their children. I wonder how many orphans there were running around.

- **Read verses 7-10.**
- In verses 7-10 we read, God cares about them, but more importantly, they don't care about Him. They have lost their first love, priority; He alone was responsible for setting them free and giving them everything they had. And how did they reward Him? Through complete abandonment and rebellion.
- In the next verses we see a Theophany. Pronounced "thee-off-a-knee" (the-oph-a-ny) a visible manifestation to humankind of God. Theophanies are revealed in the Old Testament and foreshadow the coming of Christ. Gideon is having an exchange with Jesus.
- Look at Gideon's heart cry out to Jesus. **(Verses 11-13)**
- I often say that God has a sense of humor and one place we can see it is in His Word, (...**The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor.**) Where did Jesus find Gideon? Hiding...
- Gideon response, **"If, Why and where?"**
- How often have I found myself in that exact spot? Me standing there in total disobedience and rebellion, breaking the heart of the one who loved me first, asking why and where.
- Mankind chooses us based on what they see and know about us. What family we came from, what are resume shows, our past successes, mistakes, etc. God chooses us based on what He already knows about us. If we are humble, pliable, and teachable, there isn't anything He cannot do through us.
- God didn't see the cowardice of Gideon, or the run from his problems of Moses, or the lack of experience and age of David, or the murdering, slanderous, hatefulness of Paul. God cares enough to see what He can do through anyone that is FAT. (Faithful Available and Teachable)
- Does God really care about us? What does the cross say?

II. Does God know what He is doing?

- **Read verses 14-24.**
- Gideon is such a man of mighty valor that God must tell him four times, "...you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites..."
- Look at our mighty man's response back to God, "...how can I save Israel my clan is the weakest...I am the least (youngest) in my father's house."
- Just as with Gideon, God is building up His people. He meets us where we are at. He not only allows us to doubt Him, but He reassures us when we doubt. **"Surely I will be with you..." (verse 16)**
- First test, Will God enjoy his cooking?
- **Read verse 22.**
- Gideon know believes that this is in fact God and builds an alter to Him. Don't miss what God said in **verse 23. "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die."**
- There have been times in my life that I had doubt, fear, and confusion. I have even thought, God, do you know what you are doing? Then I am reminded that I have never been promised an easy life, nor a fair one. What I have been promised by God is that He loves me, redeemed me from my sinful transgressions and while I walk this life, He will never leave me, nor forsake me.

- And I will never spiritually die, one day my faith will be rewarded by seeing Jesus' face to face, and He will say, "Well done my good and faithful servant."
- God knows what He is doing, it's just my sight is skewed, I can't fully see what He is doing.
- Familia, one day we will see our savior face to face. One day we will fully understand and experience His peace. God knows what He is doing. We are asked to trust Him and follow Him, obediently.
- What does the cross say about God knowing what He is doing?

III. Will God take care of me?

- **Read verses 25-27.**
- God gives Gideon an assignment. Go and remove the false altar and destroy it.
- Where was the altar to Baal at?
- Did God tell him to take others to help him do it?
- Why did Gideon and these 10 men, one or more who would be a snitch destroy the altar at night? (**verse 27**)
- What did God tell Gideon in **verse 23**?
- **Read verses 28-32.**
- How did the men of the city respond to the altar being tore down? They were not happy and when they found out that it was Gideon they wanted him dead.
- Satan, and our flesh will not like it when we start tearing down and replacing the altar that we built and allowed to take priority over God.
- What are some altars that you have allowed to take priority over God? (Pause and be honest)
- God intervened through Joash, Gideon's father. Joash simply said if Baal is so powerful let him deal with Gideon. I am sure at some point during the blood thirsty cries for Gideon's head he probably doubted and wondered, will God take care of me.
- When you face those times and you will, remember **verse 34, "...But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon..."** That same Spirit is still here today and resides in the heart of every born-again believer.
- Jesus said He came to bring us life more abundant, also, we will face troubled times, and persecution. Homes and families will be divided over Him. He also said that if we build our lives on Him when the storms of life come, we will stand. Nothing can remove us from His love and wherever we are, so is He. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He will be there to welcome us into heaven.
- Will God take care of me? What does the cross say? (Stop! Save the rest for next week)

Conclusion

It takes courage to enlist in the Lord's army. It takes courage to live counter to the popular trends of this world today. But many are doing it!

What enemies are you facing? What has made you feel defeated & discouraged? Perhaps today is the time to take a stand. God is coming to you in this moment & saying, "The Lord is with you, Mighty Hero!"

"Who me?" you might answer. "If you are with me then why am I going through all this?"

But God is calling you to victory. He is calling you to trust in Him despite your doubt and walk in faith. He is calling you to be a doer, not a complainer.

We keep wanting God to do something without our help. We keep wanting somebody else to do it. But God wants to use you and me. He always works through people.

God called Gideon a mighty warrior, but that was not who he was at first. It was who he would become, with God's help. God looked at his potential rather than his weaknesses.

That is what God is doing now if you will walk in faith and do what He is calling you to do. The Lord challenges us, "Go with the strength you have...for I am sending you!".

Are we willing to come out of hiding, or move forward even though we might be full of fear, or misunderstanding?