

Great Stories of the Bible - 03/06/22

Gideon – Help in Troubled Times

TEXT- Judges 6:1-6

INTRO –In the history of Judges we find a recurring cycle:

Rebellion—they knew what God said, but they didn't do it—followed by:

Retribution—God brings judgment upon them—followed by:

Repentance- followed by:

God's intervention—in the form of a judge, and restoration.

The people know what God says, but they refuse to do it

God comes and intervenes and they finally repent of their sins and then

finally God rescues them.

That is the recurring cycle throughout the whole book.

I. God Uses Difficult times to Get Our Attention (6:1-6)

A. Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. The LORD handed them over to Midian for seven years.

- The nation of Israel coming off a time of relative ease and Israel forgot God.
- They became self-sufficient.
- They didn't need God.
- They worshipped Baal and Asherah

B. Every year around harvest time, the nomadic Midianites would invade Israel.

- The Midianites came in like locusts, ravaging the land.
- Many of the Israelites left their homes to live in caves

Do we consider what God is planning for us in similar circumstances?

Every trial in the lives of God's people is tailored to draw us closer to God.

Proverbs 3:11-12 *My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.*

C.S. Lewis said it like this, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains. It's His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

II. God Sees The Big Picture (6:7-12)

A. God sends a prophet to call them back to full devotion.

B. His plan also included a most unlikely man named Gideon.

We meet Gideon in v. 11 where he is threshing some wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.

Judges 6:12 *And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto*

him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

- God saw what He was about to make of Gideon.

One of the biggest lies we tell ourselves is that God only uses special people. If you are a born-again believer, you are God's child (John 1:12), His friend (John 15:15), and His masterpiece (Eph. 2:10). You have been justified (Rom. 5:1), freed forever from condemnation from God (Rom. 8:1). You are adopted into His family (Eph. 1:5) and your citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). You belong to God (I Cor. 6:20), never to be separated from Him! And you have everything from Him you need for life and godliness!

III. God Came Down to Gideon (6:13-24)

After being called a mighty warrior, Gideon questions God:

Why has all this happened to us?

- A. **Gideon's objections** - Where are all His wonders that our fathers told us about?" (v. 13)

Judges 6:15 *And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.*

- B. **Gideon's conclusion** - the Lord has abandoned them.

C. **God's command - Judges 6:14** *And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?*

D. **God's commitment** - Judges 6:16 I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

E. **God's confirmation** - Judges 6:22 And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

IV. Gideon is Tested (6:25-32)

- ✦ **His first test** - take his father's special seven-year-old bull, tear down the idols and sacrifice that bull using the wood from the destroyed idol.

If you want to learn how to trust God, you must first set your own house in order.

Private worship prepares us for public power from God.

- Is there anything you've been holding on to?
- Is there any sin that you're clinging to?
- Remove your idols. Confess your sin.

Verse 30 reports that the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die." But Gideon's act was already affecting change. His father,

Joash, awoke to the truth and stood up to the men, asking in v. 31, "Would you plead Baal's case for him? . . . If he is a god, let him plead his own case."

✚ **Gideon's second test (6:33-40)**

But instead of cringing in a cave, v. 34 says the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon **Judges 6:34** *But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.*

God's Spirit was drawing people from far and wide.

Thirty-two thousand men show up, ready to fight!

Gideon's fleece and God's confirmation - Judges 6:37 *Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.*

Judges 6:39 *And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.*

God graciously confirmed His power to Gideon.

✚ **Gideon's third test (7:1-8)**

Judges 7:2 *And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.*

God proceeds to give Gideon a couple of tests to whittle the number down.

The first test culled 22,000 men out of the army, leaving 10,000.

v. 4 God tells Gideon to take his men down to the water and let them drink.

Weed out any men who stick their face down into the water to drink; keep the ones who ladle the water to their mouths with their hands.

9700 were disqualified leaving only 300 men.

Chapter 8 tells us that the Midianite army numbered 135,000 men.

God created an impossible situation of human weakness to exalt His own strength. **Luke 18:27** *And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.*

D. L Moody: "Give me ten men who fear nothing but sin and love nothing but God, and I shall change the world."

It happened in Israel. In one of the strangest battle strategies in history, the 300 went out with trumpets, torches, and jars to meet the Midianites.

God sent confusion into the ranks of the enemy so that they began attacking each other. When it was over, 120,000 Midianites had killed one another and the other 15,000 fled.

CONCL – Success is determined by God's power, not ours.