

“Dealing With A Spiritual Identity Crisis! (What Believers Go Through pt. 2)”

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hashtags:

#guidinglight #pastorjim
#givingthanks #identitycrisis
#waiting #promisesofGod
#love #showinglove
#loveofGod #loveofChrist
#whatdoesGodsay
#forgiveness #Godworks
#savedtoserve #healer
#protector #Godforgives
#worry #NewYear
#deliverance #fear

{All scriptures are NIV84 unless stated}

Judges 6:1

Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites.

We discussed last time what Israel had a bad habit of doing.

They were associated with the wrong people.

THROUGH that association...Israel let their personal morals slip.

THEY would begin to serve other Gods.

They would begin to disrespect their own God by even forgetting him.

Judges showed us a cycle of what his people went through.

(The Repeated Cycle)

- 1. The Sin: - putting something before God**
- 2. The Punishment: - what comes as a result**
- 3. The Distress: - the punishment will be heavy**
- 4. The Prayer: - the call and return to God**
- 5. The Deliverance: - the way he delivers us**

This would happen MULTIPLE times during Judges.

But not just then...

Even with us today.

But the cycle showed that every time Israel went through something,
deliverance was just a call away.

Judges 6 talks about how Israel is going through the process again.

Judges 6:1-2

Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. 2 Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds.

Israel did the sin.

They were ruled by Midian for 7 years.

Midian was BRUTAL.

Israel had to prepare shelters for themselves because their lives were in danger.

mountain clefts...caves...strongholds.

They had to do their best to hide from Midian!

Judges 6:3-5

3 Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. 4 They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. 5 They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count the men and their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it.

So not just the Midianites.

the Amalekites...and other eastern people invaded.

This means other nations were now teaming up on Israel.

They were afraid for their safety...for their lives.

for their women and children.

They were afraid for their food...

because their crops would be ruined.

not stolen...ruined.

they wouldn't even take them for food...

just to be oppressive.

they would take or kill the livestock.

It was impossible to count them.

meaning Israel was afraid to fight back.

if they did, they were killed.

For SEVEN years they had to endure this.

Judges 6:6

6 Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.

Israel finally cries out to the Lord for help.

Verse 7-10

7 When the Israelites cried to the Lord because of Midian, 8 he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 9 I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. 10 I said to you, 'I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live. 'But you have not listened to me.'"

The Lord is speaking through this prophet.

He is reminding them who God is.

He is telling them why all this is happening.

He said they were not listening to him.

Judges 6:11-15

11 The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. 12 When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." 13 "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt? 'But now the Lord has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.'" 14 The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" 15 "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."

The angel of the Lord tells Gideon that the Lord is with him.

Gideon responds saying if God is with us, then why have all these things happened to their people?

Have You Ever Wondered Why God’s People Go Through Things?

Gideon was questioning if God really was concerned about their suffering.

“where are all his wonders??”

Gideon has lost his faith.

The prophet told the people they stopped listening to God.

The previous chapters mentioned that when the people began to stop listening to God...

...things happened.

Cycle: The sin -> The punishment

But even through the punishment stage...

God is concerned about his people.

Look at the convo Gideon is talking about.

Exodus 3:7-8

7 The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and *I am concerned about their suffering*. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

God is concerned about their suffering...

Psalm 22:24

24 For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.

God doesn’t hide his face from his people.

Psalm 145:19-20

19 He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. 20 The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

God Won’t Hide Himself From Our Calls!

He won’t hide himself from you.

God cares about the things that concern you.

And when you call and acknowledge him...

He will respond.

Gideon also stated that the Lord "abandoned" them.

they had been dealing with Midian for 7 years.

Because Gideon BELIEVED that God wasn't with them...

he CARRIED himself that way.

Gideon was doing two things:

1. Gideon was hiding HIS WORK from the Midianites.
 - (v.4) they ruined the crops and didn't spare anything for Israel.
 - If they found what he was doing...they'd steal or destroy it.
2. Gideon was hiding HIMSELF from the Midianites.
 - (v.2) they had to make shelters in the mountains, caves and strongholds.
 - they had to hide from raiders for their own protection.

To be clear, because of the current circumstances, Gideon was hiding:

His Presence And His Abilities

How do we know this?

{one scripture says it all}

Judges 6:11

11 The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.

You don't "thresh wheat" in a winepress.

You were supposed to thresh wheat in a threshing floor.

a threshing floor was an open space.

it was open because it needed the wind to work.

the wind would separate the grain from the chaff

The best place to do this would be outside.

- the wind would do some of the work for you.

Why not a winepress?

A winepress was a pit.

Usually underground.

Used for PRESSING WINE

Gideon Was Making His Job Harder Trying To Stay Hidden

Where did the Angel of the Lord show up?

He showed up outside.

He sat down in a place where Gideon might have seen him if he weren't in hiding.

The Angel of the Lord tells him that the Lord is with him.

Gideon responds with all this doubt and lack of faith about God.

...talking about their current struggles.

The Angel responds:

Judges 6:14-15

14 The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" 15 "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."

The Angel of the Lord (The LORD himself)

tells Gideon to go save Israel.

Gideon responds with how?

His clan is the weakest in the area.

HE is the least in his family?

So Gideon's people are being persecuted.

THEY are broken.

THEY are defeated mentally.

The Lord asks Gideon to change his situation.

Not only has Gideon lost faith in God...

He has lost faith in HIMSELF.

How many of us feel the same way?

When God asks us to do something for him?

How often do we remind God of our struggles?

We doubt him because we doubt ourselves.

When God calls us for something.

How Many Of Us Doubt Ourselves?

How Many Of Us Believe No One Will Listen To Us?

How Many Of Us Think We Won't Be Any Good?

How Many Of Us Don't Want To Be The Leader?

How Many Of Us Are Straight Scared?

Gideon felt that way.

Gideon is having an:

Spiritual Identity Crisis:

How God Sees Us

-VS-

How We See Ourselves

Gideon wanted to run off "the truth" as he saw it.

But God already addressed that at the VERY beginning.

Judges 6:12

12 When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."

He told him the Lord was with him.

He also called him a mighty warrior.

no matter how low Gideon felt...

God called him mighty.

This shows us how to control our identity crisis when God calls us.

How To Control Your Spiritual Identity Crisis: - Remember Who God Says We Are

Gideon was going through all types of stuff...

His situation affected him mentally.

He lost faith in God AND in himself.

Don't Let The Things You Go Through Cause You To Doubt Yourself AND God's Plan For You!

Who does God say you are?

God Calls You His Child!

John 1:12-13

12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

God Says You Are A NEW Creation!

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

You can doubt your old self...but your NEW self is created in God's image.

God Says You Are CREATED To Produce!

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Created to work!

You are created in God to do good works!

God had a work for Gideon to do.

Yet Gideon would rather hide...

Gideon would rather not be seen.

God has a work for you!

Who Are You Supposed To Be Talking To?

Who Are You Supposed To Be Praying For?

Who Are You Supposed To Be Interacting With?

Who Are You Supposed To Be Leading?

Don't hide!

The Lord told Joshua to be Bold and Courageous...

Don't stay in hiding!

Life And Circumstances Make You Second Guess Your Gifts. God Is With You! It's Time To Come Out Of Hiding!

God knows what's going on with you.

But it doesn't stop the fact that he qualified you.

You are his child.

He responds when you call.

He will help you through your trials.

But he also has a work for you do to.

There are others who need you.

Israel needed Gideon.

Who is waiting on you to step up?

This Week:

1. Review This Message

2. Make An Effort To Remind Yourself Of How God Sees You

3. Pray That God Strengthens You So You Can Be A Blessing To Someone Else