

“Tear It Down And Start Over! (What Believers Go Through pt. 3)”

Pastor Jim Lowe III

Sunday Morning, 9:30am Stream

02/19/23 (3rd Sunday Message)

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 do things they wouldn't normally do.

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.

The Lord shows up to Gideon in verse 11.

*Gideon was in hiding because he had been **CONDITIONED** to do so.*

Judges 6:2

2 Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds.

They feared for their lives.

They had to make shelters.

in mountain clefts.

in caves.

in strongholds.

Their homes were caves now.

They lived in the areas hidden in-between mountains.

Imagine the mental stress of always having to look over your shoulder.

if the wrong persons sees you...you probably will be killed.

Even your food is taken.

Judges 6:3-4

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.

You HAVE to eat.

Imagine the people starving.

This is what Israel is currently going through.

So when the Lord shows up...

Gideon has lost all faith.

Judges 6:12

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

The angel of the Lord appears...

'You know God is with you right?'

Verse 13-15

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."

Gideon doesn't hide how he feels about himself.

When It Comes To Following God, Our Outlook Can Be Our Biggest Ally Or Our Biggest Enemy!

Maybe you can handle the small things.

What about the big things?

Gideon was asked to save his own people from their captors.

Judges 6:16

16 The Lord answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."

{shortening the story}

Gideon asks the Lord to give him a sign.

He asks him to stay until he comes back.

Verse 19

19 Gideon went in, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak.

Gideon wanted to honor the Lord and give an offering to him.

What did he prepare?

a young goat

bread

The scripture doesn't talk much about this offering other than saying "from an ephah"

Doing a quick search on "ephah," it comes out to 36 quarts of flour.

converting this turns it into about 35 lbs of flour.

Gideon is preparing a young goat.

and using 35 pounds of flour to make bread.

One man...gets 35 pounds of flour in their bread.

Verses 20-24

Gideon takes this meal to the Lord, who places it on a rock.

The Lord causes a fire that burns up the offering...proving who he is.

The Lord also tells him to start making a difference.

Judges 6:25

25 That same night the Lord said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. 26 Then build a proper kind of altar to the Lord your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering."

The Lord is training Gideon.

The first thing he told him to do.

Tear down your fathers altar to Baal.

Israel was in ALL this because for years they were serving other Gods.

Make Sure Your Own House Is In Order!

- Get The Things Blocking God OUT Of The Way!

How could God move on Gideon's behalf with an altar to something else RIGHT there!?

Exodus 20:2-3

2 “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 3 “You shall have no other gods before me.”

When the prophet spoke on behalf of the cry out to God:

Judges 6:7

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.”

Just like Israel - we might have allowed things to get in the way of our relationship with God.

What Altar Do You Have Up At Your House?

Not your “home” but your house.

YOU...YOUR life.

YOUR temple.

What we have up in our lives matters.

Many of us have the wrong altar up.

Maybe because we are with the wrong people way too much.

Maybe because we WATCH the wrong shows way too often.

Maybe because we LISTEN to the wrong music way too much.

Maybe because we DO the wrong things...

And don't do ENOUGH God...

God was ready to deliver Israel...

But not while they were still comfortable serving other Gods.

God is ready to deliver us out of things also.

We Can't Expect God To Deliver Us From Things If We Aren't Ready To Give Them Up!

God isn't going to deliver us from that relationship:

if we're going to go right back.

or we go looking for someone just like them.

God isn't going to give us a financial blessing:

if we're going to just waste the money.

God isn't going to answer our prayers:

if we're going to take the credit for it.

God Is Telling Us We Have To Tear Down The Old Altars!

Matthew 6:24

24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

We have to get to the root of the problem.

Israel was praying for deliverance from Midian.

all the while having altars to other Gods in their camp.

What was the REAL problem?

What they were serving...

We Have To Make Sure We're Focusing On The Root Of A Problem, Not The Symptom!

If you fix the root...the symptoms will go away.

How Do You Find Out If Something Comes Before God In Your Life?

As believers already it's difficult to see the small things.

But the small things can become big if YOU aren't careful.

{How To Find Out If God Is First:}

1. What Do You Promote In Your Daily Life?

- What's The First Thing You'll Talk About?

- Is It God First?
 - or the mess going on at work/school?
 - that new song out by so/so?
 - that new movie with "xyz" in it?

{What altar do you have up at your house?}

{How To Find Out If God Is First:}

2. Look Hard At Anything That Disrupts Your Current Routine With God:

- **Changes Your Prayer Life**
 - don't pray like you used to?
 - what changed?
 - too tired?
 - what are you doing that makes you too tired?
- **Changes Your Church Attendance**
 - don't go like you used to?
 - what changed?
- **Changes Your Christian Walk**
 - living for God turn more into a guideline than a rule now?
 - do we tolerate anything now?
 - for the sake of pleasure?
 - for the sake of entertainment?
- **Do You Add The Equivalent Time With God For The Other Stuff?**
 - do you balance these other things out with more time in the word?
 - do you balance with prayer?
 - do you balance with spending time with God?

If not...these things will change you.

And God will NOT tolerate it.

Joshua told the people

Joshua 24:14-15

14 "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. 15 But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Decide what you will do.

Don't let other things get in the way of you and God.

Make Sure The Things You Are Doing Don't Come Before Your Relationship With The Lord!

There may be some things in our lives we need to tear down and start over.

Joshua told the people to do 2 things.

Fear the Lord

Serve Him with Faithfulness

Whatever you do...

Whatever you get into...

Never be too big to admit when you're wrong...

Do NOT let anything come between you and God.

Before God can truly make a difference in your life.

You've got to tear down some altars.

This Week:

- 1. Review What Believers Go Through (pt. 1-3)**
- 2. Ask God To Show You The Root Cause To Things You May Be Dealing With**
- 3. Make Sure To Remove Those Things And Put God Back As The Focus (More Praying, More Studying, More Church)**
- 4. Remember To Keep Your House In Order By Keeping God First**

(The Repeated Cycle)

- 1. The Sin:**
- 2. The Punishment:**
- 3. The Distress:**
- 4. The Prayer:**
- 5. The Deliverance:**