

“Stop Killing Your Faith!”

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Sunday Morning, 9:30am Stream

03/05/23 (1st 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.

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**

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.

Not in the open.

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 6:12

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

The Lord appears to Gideon and calls him a mighty warrior.

No one is fighting anything.

Gideon is working...hiding.

- in a hole in the ground
- doing something that should be done in the open.

And the Lord calls him a mighty warrior.

Gideon for sure thinks the Lord is confused.

Judges 6:13

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 is easily telling the Lord...

"you don't know me."

He had lack of faith in God.

He had lack of faith in himself.

We talked about this last month about a "Spiritual Identity Crisis"...but there's more.

Let's look at the identity crisis again.

The Lord had saw something NO ONE else did.

Hebrews 11:1-2

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for.

Being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Having Faith Means To Believe Something Even When It Doesn't Look Like It Should - Especially If God Said It!

Faith is how we operate!

Psalm 33:6

6 By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

By the WORD of the Lord.

What the LORD said.

He said it...so we believe it. {Genesis}

We weren't there...

neither were you.

you believe what you want...

- your belief requires explanation..."why?"

but WE believe because God said it.

- that's our "why"

Psalm 33:9

9 For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

We believe it because God said it!

God's voice is powerful!

We Have To Stop Doubting Ourselves When God Has Spoken Over You!

Many times God is trying to push our potential...

God's words said "LET THERE BE!"

everything responded...except us today.

But we keep telling ourselves we can't do it.

...that's not who we are!

We Have To Start Trusting The Voice Of God Over The Voice Of Others!

Even if that voice is our own.

Say What You Heard Until You See What You Said

That saying is what we've got to start doing.

Especially if God is talking!

But right now Gideon is not in that "place."

Right now his own voice is louder than the Lords.

Gideon can't lead anyone because he doesn't believe in himself.

His faith was dead.

{Spoiler Alert:}

Watch How Everything That Happens Next Is God Working To Build The Faith Of A Broken Man

You'll see it shortly.

God is going to build his faith.

Judges 6:16

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

{shortening the story}

Verse 19-24

Gideon wants to offer a sacrifice for the Lord.

He brings a goat and loaves of bread from an "ephah" of flour.

35 pounds of flour.

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 father’s 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!

{Shortening the story}

Verses 26-32

During the night Gideon tore down the altar as the Lord told him.

He put up an altar to the correct God.

The next morning...people found out what happened.

“Who did this?”

They found out it was Gideon and wanted to kill him.

Gideon’s father stood up for him and defended him...and the people left him alone.

Judges 6:33-35

33 Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. 34 Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. 35 He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them.

2 Things Happened Here:

- The Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern people joined forces.

what was one enemy became much bigger.

The threat had now tripled.

This was a problem because Midian allowed these other nations to invade but had not JOINED with them.

Many of us have people who don't like us.

they'll come for us at different times.

seems like everywhere you go you're fighting a losing battle to someone.

- but NOW all those folks formed an alliance and are coming after you TOGETHER.

- The Spirit of the Lord came on Gideon and he gained the support of others.

This sounds VERY minor and random till you put it in context.

Gideon...the NOBODY.

now had people following him.

Gideon was able to get men to rally behind him.

People were JUST trying to kill him about the altar.

But others were inspired by him standing up for God.

He does this...next thing...

The Spirit of the Lord comes on him.

he blows a trumpet.

people start following him.

HE sends messengers.

other people start following also.

It also showed that the "least of the least" was showing himself as a leader.

This tells a few things:

1. The Things You Do For God Will Have A Positive Impact On Others!

Gideon's attitude about himself was clear.

He doubted himself...

Yet tearing the altar down started something.

- No matter how you feel about yourself...
- You are not the worst of the worst...

and even if you are...

The things you do for God will inspire others!

When You Start Getting Your Own House In Order, You'll Be Able To Inspire Others!

How could Gideon rally the people when sin was on his own front door?

Matthew 7:3 (NCV)

3 “Why do you notice the little piece of dust in your friend’s eye, but you don’t notice the big piece of wood in your own eye?”

Gideon...get your house straight first.

Tear down and put up the right altar...

And when he did.

News got out about who did that.

Who is THIS God?

Who did this??

“Gideon went viral.”

It wasn't even a challenge...

Word got out what he did.

Gideon listened...

And it had an impact.

Sometimes all it may take is for you to say something.

“God is so good to me.”

“God is awesome.”

“My God is bigger.”

And you could be inspiring others to turn back to God!

{1. The Things You Do For God Will Have A Positive Impact On Others!}

2. God Is Constantly Working To Build You Up

Isaiah 41:10

10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

God says he will STRENGTHEN.

God will build you up!

You might think that you are nothing now...

especially when it comes to what God has for you.

but God will STRENGTHEN you if you let him.

2 Timothy 1:7 - God didn't give us a spirit of fear...but of POWER.

Gideon had to overcome his fear and doubts about himself.

Judges 6:33

So the different nations combined into one force.

Verse 36-38

36 Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised— 37 look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.” 38 And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.

Gideon is still learning to trust God.

His faith is still lacking.

His faith is BETTER but still weak.

He is a reminder to us of how our faith is in trusting God.

We'll talk more about how God changes Gideon as a man next week.

He says God if you do what you said...

I'll put a wool fleece out...

IF there is dew on the fleece and the ground is dry.

Then I know you'll do what you said.

How Often Do We Ask God To Prove To Us What He Already Said?

God you told me to reach out to this person...

well let them call me...and I'll know it was you.

God you spoke this over me...

but you gotta prove it.

But God had already told him he was going to deliver Israel.

And God granted his request.

That's enough to prove it right?

Gideon needed more strengthening!

Judges 6:39-40

39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew." 40 That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

God is attempting to show Gideon that he's serious.

If anything it shows God's patience and love with us.

How Long Has God Been Working With Us?

How Many Times Has God "Proven" His Words To Us?

How Many Of Us Still Doubt Ourselves When God Called Us To Do More?

God is calling YOU a mighty warrior...

and has big things for you to do.

But we doubt our own selves.

Proverbs 3:5 (AMP)

5 Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding.

Our insight can't see into tomorrow...

But God has already planned our steps.

He knows our end from our beginning.

He knows who we TRULY are.

Psalm 9:10

10 Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.

Whatever The Problem, Put Your Trust In God - He'll Handle The Details!

2 Corinthians 5:7

7 We live by faith, not by sight.

It doesn't matter what it looks like...

We live by our trust in God.

{Jeremiah 17:7-8 {FOR NEXT WEEK}}

7 "But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. 8 He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."}

This Week:

1. Review This Message

2. Ask That God Make His Voice Clearer To You

{Work to listen to hear what God is calling you to}

{Pay attention to the details...many times what he wants for us is something we WON'T want to do.}

3. Write Down The Things God Is Calling You To

{We tend to have a short memory when it comes to what God wants for us}

{When you write it down...work to SEE yourself doing those things}

4. Spend Time In Prayer Asking God To Increase Your Faith

{A big call requires big faith...ask God to prepare you for that call.}

5. Starting With The Small Things, Start Trusting God More

{start listening to the voice of God.}

{start working to turn more over to him.}

{we aren't in control anyway...let's start doing more for him.}