

Gideon: Part 1 — Fix My Mess

We will spend three weeks studying the life of Gideon and his family. There are innumerable lessons for us in these chapters, and by God's grace, we will grow through studying them. The story begins with Israel again crying out to God. Through this part of Gideon's story, we can learn about our prayer life, our heart condition, and God's expectations for both.

Stop and Pray - I thank You for Your Word, Lord. It is so full of wisdom and truth. From this story of Gideon, I pray that You would show me the desire of Your heart for my life.

1. What is a fond memory you have?

Read Judges, chapters 6, 7, and 8 to get the whole picture before we start looking at the details. Reread Judges 6:1-32, and mark the text, found on pages 6-8 of this lesson, as instructed. Reread Judges 6:1-6 one more time.

Midian was the fourth son of Abraham by Keturah, his concubine (Genesis 25:1-6). Midian was sent away like Ishmael because of Sarah's desire to protect Isaac. It seems the brothers' clans intermarried because in Genesis 37 and Judges 8:24, the Ishmaelites and the Midianites are mentioned as if they were the same tribe. They were a nomadic tribe of herdsmen that roamed with their flocks. (Ungers Bible Dictionary)

2. a. Read Numbers 25 and Numbers 31:1-20. Two hundred years earlier, Israel had interacted with Midian. What had happened?
 - b. Just like weeds that are not removed to the very tips of their roots, two hundred years later in Judges, the remnants of the Midianites had so multiplied that God was able to use them to oppress Israel. What did this oppression look like? How would you describe their raids?
 - c. What lesson do you learn from the above scenario?

3. a. How do you think the Israelites felt under this type of an enemy?
 - b. Is something making you feel the same way? If so, can you identify what?

Picture the scene: Israel was supposed to possess the whole land that others had planted (Joshua 24:12-13). Instead, their land was being dispossessed by a nation as numerous as Israel should have been (Genesis 13:14-17). The reversal of fortunes between the Midianites and Israel emphasizes the severity of the chastening discipline of Yahweh.

Reread Judges 6:7-24.

4. Why did Israel cry out to God?

5. a. How did God respond to the cries of Israel in:
Judges 3:9? Othniel -

Judges 3:15? Ehud -

Judges 4:3-6? Deborah and Barak -
 - b. How did God respond this time? What was done and what was said?

6. Israel's response to the prophet's indictment reveals the people's motivation for calling on God.
 - a. What is missing between verses 6:10 and 6:11 that you would expect to occur following such a severe reprimand from the prophet? What did Israel do instead?

 - b. Based on the rest of the story, did they want a right relationship with God? To what extent did they want God involved in their lives?

 - c. What motivates you to cry out to God?

7. What is remarkable about God in light of Israel's response to the prophet's rebuke?

8. Gideon was in a winepress threshing wheat when the Angel of the Lord came to him. What does this activity, being done in this place, reveal to us about Gideon and his situation?

9.
 - a. How does the Lord address Gideon?

 - b. How do you explain the difference between Gideon's character you just observed and the name God used?

10. What was the tone of Gideon's response to the Angel, and what did it reveal about Israel's mistaken understanding of the root cause of their oppression?

11. The Angel of the Lord did not criticize or correct Gideon's misinterpretation of the situation, but rather turned to Gideon in patient understanding and gave Gideon a commission in Judges 6:12, 14 and 16 that would humble him and help him see that God definitely had not abandoned Israel.
 - a. Write out each phrase of this commission. Then, in your own words, write what each would have communicated to Gideon.

- b. We have been given a commission and a similar promise in Matthew 28:18-20. Write out each phrase of God's commission to us. Then write out in your own words what it means for your life.
12. In light of God's commission in verses 12, 14, and 16, what do you think Gideon was trying to accomplish by his responses in verses 15, 17-19?
13. From Judges 6:19-24, what could Gideon have learned about God and himself when God gave Gideon the sign he requested?
14. The LORD spoke to Gideon again that same evening. What specifically did God call him to do (Judges 6:25-26)?
15. Why was it necessary for Baal to be dealt with before Midian?
16. What was the impact of Gideon's obedience on Gideon, his family, and his community?
17. What principles about our own calling by God can we take from this story in Judges 6:24-32?

18. What parallels do you see between our world today and the scene described in Judges 6:1-32? List all your thoughts.

Final Thoughts: We began this lesson by saying there were innumerable lessons to be learned. Review your lesson. What lessons have you learned? How with God's help will you apply what you've learned?

Pray - Lord, meet me in my weakness and make me a mighty warrior for You. Be my strength and give me a thrilled anticipation to see how You will fight my battles through me.

"And Jesus said, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the ends of the age.'" (Matthew 28:20)

Kyna Ritchie (original 2002; revised 2013)

Lesson 12 — Gideon: Part I — Judges 6:1-32

Examine your text. You will be asked to read chapters 6, 7, & 8. However, we will only mark the text on the section that we are studying this week.

Mark your text. Put a box around time words. Put a circle around conditional words (e.g. but, so, therefore, however). Underline all references, including pronouns (e.g. he, they, them):

- God in red
- Midian in black
- Gideon in green
- Israel in blue
- Gideon's father in purple

Judges 6:1-24 — Gideon's Call

1 Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD gave them into the hands of Midian seven years. 2 The power of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of Midian the sons of Israel made for themselves the dens which were in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. 3 For it was when Israel had sown, that the Midianites would come up with the Amalekites and the sons of the east and go against them. 4 So they would camp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey. 5 For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, they would come in like locusts for number, both they and their camels were innumerable; and they came into the land to devastate it. 6 So Israel was brought very low because of Midian, and the sons of Israel cried to the LORD. 7 Now it came about when the sons of Israel cried to the LORD on account of Midian, 8 that the LORD sent a prophet to the sons of Israel, and he said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'It was I who brought you up from Egypt and brought you out from the house of slavery. 9 'I delivered you from the hands of the Egyptians and from the hands of all your oppressors, and dispossessed them before you and gave you their land, 10 and I said to you, "I am the LORD your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But you have not obeyed Me.'"

11 Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites. 12 The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior." 13 Then Gideon said to him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." 14 The LORD looked at him and said, "Go

in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?" 15 He said to Him, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house." 16 But the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man." 17 So Gideon said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me. 18 "Please do not depart from here, until I come back to You, and bring out my offering and lay it before You." And He said, "I will remain until you return." 19 Then Gideon went in and prepared a young goat and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour; he put the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, and brought them out to him under the oak and presented them. 20 The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. 21 Then the angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. 22 When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the LORD, he said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." 23 The LORD said to him, "Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die." 24 Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. 25 Now on the same night the LORD said to him, "Take your father's bull and a second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it; 26 and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of this stronghold in an orderly manner, and take a second bull and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down." 27 Then Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had spoken to him; and because he was too afraid of his father's household and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it by night. 28 When the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was torn down, and the Asherah which was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar which had been built. 29 They said to one another, "Who did this thing?" And when they searched about and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash did this thing." 30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it." 31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you contend for Baal, or will you deliver him? Whoever will plead for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself,

because someone has torn down his altar." 32 Therefore on that day he named him Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he had torn down his altar.
(Judges 6:1-32, NASB95)