



## STUDY GUIDE

SERMON TOPIC :

"If God is with us, then why have these things happened"

WEEK 3

### 1. READ

#### **Pastor's Selected Scripture: Judges 6 : 7 – 14 New King James Version (NKJV)**

7 And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the Lord because of the Midianites,  
8 that the Lord sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the Lord  
God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; 9 and I  
delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and  
drove them out before you and gave you their land. 10 Also I said to you, "I am the Lord your  
God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed  
My voice.' "

11 Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which  
belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order  
to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him,  
"The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!"

13 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 forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the  
Midianites."

14 Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel  
from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?"

#### **Further Reading: Psalm 89 : 46 – 52 New International Version (NIV)**

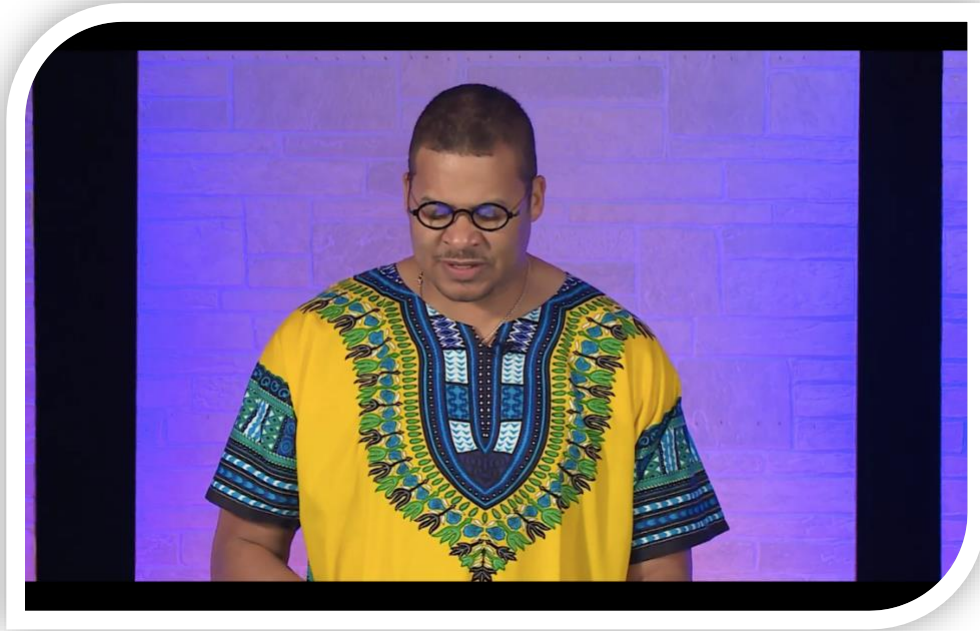
46 How long, Lord? Will you hide yourself forever?  
How long will your wrath burn like fire?  
47 Remember how fleeting is my life.  
For what futility you have created all humanity!  
48 Who can live and not see death,  
or who can escape the power of the grave?  
49 Lord, where is your former great love,  
which in your faithfulness you swore to David?  
50 Remember, Lord, how your servant has been mocked,  
how I bear in my heart the taunts of all the nations,  
51 the taunts with which your enemies, Lord, have mocked,  
with which they have mocked every step of your anointed one.  
52 Praise be to the Lord forever! Amen and Amen.



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### 2. REFLECT

[Make sure to review this week's sermon!]



This week our Senior Pastor Rev. Matthew L. Watley continued his sermon series entitled “Question Everything.” Throughout this series, we’ve explored many of the essential questions biblical characters asked in times of great uncertainty. Each lesson has brought us closer to the realization that questions are not only unavoidable, but they are central to our lives as believers.

In our lesson for week three entitled “If God Is With Us, Then Why Have These Things Happened,” Pastor Watley demonstrates that it is okay to question God. In fact, Pastor notes that “one of the greatest lies you will ever hear is that you cannot question God.” If we believe God is truly sovereign, then we can be assured that there is no question too difficult or too complex for God to handle. Even Jesus in his humanity asked, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Yet, time and time again, God’s word shows us that all of our questions are welcome.

However, as we ask God our difficult questions it is also important to be mindful that God’s responses will not always align with our opinions, desires, or expectations. As we’ve seen during this series, when we ask God a question, we are often surprised by the answer!

In our scripture for this week (Judges 6:7-14), we find the Israelites under tremendous systemic oppression at the hands of the Midianites. As they grow weary, the Israelites cry out for deliverance and by verse 13 Gideon’s question to God represents what most of them were likely



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feeling; “If the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?” But before Gideon even utters this collective question out loud, God sends the Israelites a response.

God first answers the cries of their hearts by reminding them that they’ve faced systemic oppression before. God sends them a message declaring, “I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land.” After seven years of Midianite oppression, it was almost as if they had forgotten that the Lord delivered them from over four hundred years of Egyptian bondage. In less than a fraction of the time, the Israelites had already started to question if God was still with them.

In addition, God’s consistent record of deliverance doesn’t stop the Israelites from being unfaithful to God. Throughout the book of Judges, the Israelites openly disobey God and cry out for deliverance after facing the consequences of their actions. And yet, Gideon doesn’t connect their shortcomings to their circumstances. He follows up his first question by adding, “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 forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.” Instead of holding themselves accountable for their wrongdoing, Gideon jumps to the conclusion that God has abandoned them.

However as Pastor Watley suggests, *could it be that we may have asked the right questions but jumped to the wrong conclusions?* Instead of assuming they were forsaken, perhaps Gideon’s question should have led them to reflect on the lesson God was trying to teach them through their situation. With proper self-reflection, they may have come to the realization that while they thought the problem was the Midianites, the real problem was with them! Perhaps God was using their current season to invite them into repentance for their sins while reminding them of the gift of God’s mercy.

Furthermore, *could it be that the fact that this passage exists, shows us that God is not passive; but even when it seems like he’s passive, it’s not permanent?* Being a believer does not mean we will be trouble-free, but it does mean that God will be with us in times of trouble. The Israelites witnessed this firsthand, as God sent a prophet to minister to them while they were still in the middle of a crisis. Not only did they receive reassurance of God’s faithfulness, but they were also challenged to work on their character while they faced this difficult situation.

While Gideon had to thresh wheat in the winepress to hide from the Midianites, God was calling him to work on his innovation. Gideon strategically prepared grain where no enemies would look so he could preserve their crops. Little did he know, God was developing his innovation in that season so he could creatively and strategically lead the Israelites to victory in the next season. When the time was right, God sends Gideon to “Go in this might of yours,” to save Israel. This leads us to our last important point, *could it be that we are waiting for God to do something for*



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*us, that God is planning to do through us?* Even though Gideon was the one that asked God the question, he didn't recognize that God wanted to use him to deliver the answer.

### 3. RESPOND

#### Introspective Questions

- What is God calling you to work on in this season to prepare you for your next season?
- What are some of the ways you've jumped to conclusions when asking God a question?

#### Discussion Questions

- Why do you think the Israelites continued to disobey God, even though they often end up regretting their decision?
- Even though the fact that the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon is a miracle, Gideon still asks the angel "where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about?" Why do you think this is?