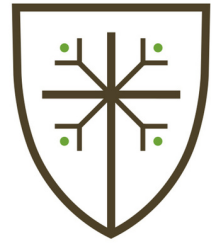


SERMON NOTES



March 12, 2023

RIGHT IN THEIR OWN EYES

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Sermons for Lent

SERMON INFO

TITLE

Right in their Own Eyes: Gideon

PREACHER

Rev. Adam Radcliff

TEXTS

Judges 6

Romans 8:31, 35, 37

Matthew 12:38-41

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What altars do you need to tear down today in response to God's Word? What idolatry grips your life?
2. What might God be calling you to do that you feel fearful or inadequate to accomplish?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Adam Radcliff continued our Lent sermon series on Judges with a look at the character of Gideon. The story in chapter 6 surrounding Gideon pulls in familiar themes that we've seen over the last 5 chapters – first of all, the pattern of Israel's sin, God giving them into the hands of their enemies, the people crying out to God, God sending a savior. And the second repeated theme is God using what is weak in the world, seemingly insignificant, to work out salvation for his people.

The chapter begins with the nation of Israel experiencing the most significant oppression that we've seen thus far. They are being decimated by the Midianites. And there is a very clear line drawn straight from their idolatry to their oppression. Their physical suffering was preaching a sermon to them about the costs of their sin. It is a picture for us of what sin does; it leaves us broken and completely destroyed.

The Israelites once again call out to God. But instead of a savior, this time, God sends a prophet to preach a sermon. He reminds them of who their God is, what he has done for them. He tells them that Midian is not their greatest problem. Midian is not their greatest oppressor – idolatry and unrepentant sin is. And yet, the Lord continues to be faithful. The story of Israel – and our story – is grace from start to finish. The gospel is meant to show us the immensity of our sin in the light of God's grace. The Lord was with them, and it was because he was with them that he sent a prophet.

God, in his abundant grace, does send a savior. But not the Savior the people may have expected. Gideon himself is caught in the middle of the Midian oppression, living in fear of the future and believing God has forsaken his people. And yet, God comes to him, this ordinary, fear-filled man, in a theophany – a manifestation of God incarnate and promises to him that he would do the impossible and he would do it through Gideon. His first and last words to Gideon, and the words he wants etched on our hearts are "I will be with you."

Gideon's story, like many of the stories we've seen in Judges, is a call to action. We are meant to ask ourselves, as Adam asked in his sermon, "How serious are we about our sin after getting a glimpse of our savior?" Once we have heard the gospel, we are meant to respond. Gideon responds in faith. He tears down and burns the Ashera and altars to false gods, those of his own father. Gideon obeyed just as the Lord told him.

So What?

The story of Gideon, as Adam pointed out, follows the shape of our worship service. God calls us to worship by his word. We are confronted by our sin, reminded and compelled by his word to repent and return to him. We remember that we've already been delivered by a savior who condescended to us. God graciously confirms his presence with a physical sign in the body and blood of his Son, just as he so graciously confirms his presence to Gideon by the dew on the fleece. And he sends us out into the world, clothed in his power and love, to fight the battles he has already won.

The story of Gideon does not hide the fact that he felt weak, fearful, inadequate to the task God placed upon him. And thus the power of God is manifested all the more. If you feel weak, and fearful, and inadequate, the God of Gideon is your God. And this God is the one who tells us that we are his beloved. That nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ.