

3 | Gideon [Begin At Home]

INTRO:

As we continue our journey through the book of Judges, we've already seen how God faithfully raises up deliverers for His people even in their darkest seasons. In our first message, we met Othniel — a Spirit-empowered warrior through whom God brought decisive victory and a season of peace. Last week, we saw the unexpected deliverer Ehud, whose courage and faith led to Israel's liberation from Moab after years of humiliation and oppression.

Between Ehud and the next judge we're studying today, Scripture records the account of Deborah and Barak — a powerful story of prophetic leadership, reluctant faith, and God's sovereign victory over Israel's enemies. Scholars note that roughly a generation or more likely passed between Ehud's deliverance and the rise of Gideon, reminding us that the cycle of sin, discipline, repentance, and rescue continued to repeat in Israel's history.

Today we come to [Judges 6](#) and the call of Gideon — a story that shows us how God meets fearful people with His presence, leads them into true worship and revelation, and then calls them to courageous obedience, beginning with tearing down the idols closest to home.

Judges 6:1–6 NIV

¹ The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. ² Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. 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. ⁵ They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. ⁶ Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.

1: THE SAME OLD STORY

ISRAEL REPEATS THE SIN CYCLE

- Israel sins—>
- God disciplines—>

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- Israel cries out—>
- God raises up a deliverer—>
- The land has rest—>
- Israel sins—>REPEAT

Until we deal with the root of the issue (idolatry in Israel's case), we're vulnerable to keep repeating the same mistakes and suffer the same consequences!

THE EXCEPTIONAL BRUTALITY OF THE MIDIANITES

- Notice: The power of Midian was so oppressive the people had to abandon normal settlements to live in caves, mountain clefts, and strongholds.
 - Sin and the consequences of sin will change how you live your life.
 - We end up living and dwelling in places NOT intended for us.
 - Further, living in hiding would never result in the changes necessary for freedom—it was a cope.
- Midian invaded the land TO ravage it & Midian SO IMPOVERISHED the Israelites
 - This is beyond fighting over and stealing resources
 - This is intentionally starving and tormenting the Israelites
 - This further kept Israel in bondage, fear, and hiding
- This IS how the enemy works still today (same old story)

John 10:10 ESV

¹⁰ **The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.** I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

- The Canaanite gods (Baal and Asherah) promised fertility and provision, but the consequences of their idolatry (sin) delivered them over to poverty, oppression and death instead.
- The enemy is great at striking deals that he doesn't follow through on—his motivation is to steal, kill, and destroy

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Judges 6:7–10 NIV

⁷ When the Israelites cried out 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 rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out 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.”

2: AN UNEXPECTED RESPONSE: TRUTH AND LOVE

- The people cry out (yet again) and God responds by sending a prophet.
- The prophet would inform this wayward generation of the ‘why’ behind their suffering.
- NOTE: Before God raises up a deliverer, he chooses to confront the ROOT OF THE ISSUE
 - Dealing with the symptom or consequence without correcting the root/source will only enable the cycle to continue (that would not be loving)
 - The Lord confronts his people BECAUSE he loves them!
 - Love requires us to confront sin!
- These people needed to “listen to God and obey!”
 - Not simply experience relief from their consequences and suffering

Judges 6:11–16 NIV

¹¹ The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹² When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.” ¹³ “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and given 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 “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” ¹⁶ The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.”

3: GIDEON'S CALL

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

- Gideon = 'the one who cuts to pieces' or 'cutter/feller'
- The LORD calls him: Mighty Warrior
- Notice the context:
 - He's hiding in a winepress from the Midianites
 - His home is full of idols (still standing)
- The IMPLICATION:
 - God calls us by a name that we haven't earned or a title that we haven't walked in YET
 - BUT the name and title reveal the PURPOSE that he has for us.
 - Gideon WILL CUT DOWN the idols and the MIGHTY WARRIOR will deliver his people
- Gideon's doubt and complaint:
 - The Lord's not with us
 - Where are all his wonders that we've heard about
 - The Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian

WHAT IS THE CALL?

- Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand.
- Notice that the Lord doesn't even bother to address his perspective and complaints.
 - It's either his grace OR his perspective that the Lord chooses to ignore Gideon's huffing
- Gideon continues to say 'why he can't'
 - But the Lord responds with 'why he will' (the promise)

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WHAT IS THE PROMISE?

- Am I not sending you? I will be with you and you will strike down all the Midianites (as one man).
- Promise of PRESENCE:
 - Notice that the Lord first says that ‘The Lord is WITH you’
 - Then:
 - I am sending you
 - I will be with you
 - This is the first mention of the angel of the Lord since [Judges 2](#) towards the end of Joshua’s day.
 - The angel of the Lord hadn’t been seen in 100-150 years
 - But he showed up that day, to the mighty warrior, one who breaks to pieces... who’s hiding from the enemy.
 - He shows up to strengthen him and call him into HIS PURPOSE
- Promise of POWER or ABILITY:
 - The strength he had wouldn’t be enough to do the job... but would be enough to get started in obedience.
 - BUT as he walked in obedience, the LORD would empower Gideon to do the job—fulfill the call.

Judges 6:17–24 NIV

¹⁷ Gideon replied, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. ¹⁸ Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you.” And the LORD said, “I will wait until you return.” ¹⁹ Gideon went inside, 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. ²⁰ The angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And Gideon did so. ²¹ Then the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread with the tip of the staff that was in his hand. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. ²² When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, “Alas, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!” ²³ But the LORD

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said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die." ²⁴ So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

4: GIDEON'S WORSHIP & REVELATION

Gideon is starting to show signs of understanding who he is talking to, but isn't quite convinced. So he offers up a test... an offering.

The offering (minha) is the same word used for Ehud's tribute to Eglon.

- Therefore this could be tribute to a mighty man or an offering worthy of a god.
- The amount of what Gideon offers borders the ridiculous if it was intended to be a meal for a single individual
- The offering indicates Gideon took this seriously to see what or who stood before him

The Lord graciously waits for the offering and doesn't refuse

- We see the Lord's grace and patience with Gideon
- He knows that Gideon has heard about him, but doesn't know him.

The Lord accepts Gideon's offering and through it reveals his identity

- When Gideon sees the offering consumed in the flame AND the disappearance of the angel of the Lord... he knows the identity of his guest
- His fear reveals that he didn't really believe it was the Lord, but only a possibility
- The LORD speaks, even though the angel of the Lord is gone... and the Lord speaks peace.
- NOTE: its fascinating to me that its through worship that he revealed himself plainly.
 - Although he had appeared to Gideon and spoke plainly with him, Gideon couldn't understand
 - But when Gideon gave an offering or worship, the Lord made himself known
 - **APPLICATION:**
 - *God can be moving and working in our lives AND we can fail to grasp it.*

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- *But the Lord can reveal himself as we choose to worship him*

Judges 6:25–32 NIV

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.” ²⁷ So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the townspeople, he did it at night rather than in the daytime. ²⁸ In the morning when the people of the town got up, there was Baal’s altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar! ²⁹ They asked each other, “Who did this?” When they carefully investigated, they were told, “Gideon son of Joash did it.” ³⁰ The people of the town demanded of Joash, “Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Baal’s altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it.” ³¹ But Joash replied to the hostile crowd around him, “Are you going to plead Baal’s cause? Are you trying to save him? Whoever fights for him shall be put to death by morning! If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar.” ³² So because Gideon broke down Baal’s altar, they gave him the name Jerub-Baal that day, saying, “Let Baal contend with him.”

5: GIDEON’S OBEDIENCE

BEFORE GIDEON COULD DEAL WITH THE SYMPTOM, HE HAD TO DEAL WITH THE ROOT CAUSE: IDOLATRY

- Israel’s problems weren’t merely the Midianites and their partners... it was Israel’s idolatry
- Israel had tolerated and then embraced the canaanite gods RATHER than being faithful to the LORD
- We often want relief from our suffering, but don’t want to change the behavior that causes the suffering.
- God had made this plain through the prophet and now commanded Gideon to start here at the heart of the matter

BEFORE GIDEON COULD LEAD THE NATION, HE HAD TO DEAL WITH HIS FAMILY

- How can one expect to lead true change, revival, and deliverance among the many, if you can’t bring it at home.
- Home was the hardest and riskiest battlefield

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- His father was THE Abiezrite (the leader of the clan and community)
- The Baal and Asherah were said to be his (Joash's - Gideon's father)
- BUT once Gideon won the battle at home, these very men would follow his call into battle later.
- Gideon's cleansing of Ophrah would demonstrate the power of Yahweh and impotence of Baal and Asherah.

BEFORE GIDEON COULD RECEIVE THE ANOINTING (V34), HE HAD TO CONSECRATE HIMSELF

- Just interesting that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon two verses later AFTER he cleansed his hometown/father's house of their idols
- We've got to dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly if we want to truly walk in God's presence and power

RESPONSE:

1: God's name and purpose for you MATTERS MORE than your context, experience, perspective, and understanding. BELIEVE what God says about you!

2: Worship is often the context for REVELATION. So offer the Lord your best.

3: Start in the strength you have. OBEY God in the things that are under your control. TRUST him to provide you with the necessary strength as you go.

4: Lasting change and transformation happens when we deal with the ROOT of the problems and not simply the fruit or symptoms.

5: Revival begins at home. Consecrate your heart and your home before turning outward.