

Faith Part 1 – Introduction (3-10-2019)

New Series: Faith – Seeing our way Home

Today: Introduction to the series

Key Verse:

2 Corinthians 5:7 (ESV)

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Context:

2 Corinthians 5:1-4 (ESV)

(1) For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, (3) if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. (4) For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Note: We long for a life we don't have yet, a life of meaning and purpose, that is of lasting significance.

2 Corinthians 5:5-7 (ESV)

(5) He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. (6) So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, (7) for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Note: That life of meaning is exactly what God designed us for! So – He gives us His Spirit, and invites us to walk that road home by Faith & not sight!

One of our key passages in this series is Hebrews chapter 11, which opens with this line . . .

Hebrews 11:1 (ESV)

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Today, we are going to explore this idea of walking by faith not by sight by looking at the life of Gideon . . .

Hebrews 11:32-34 (ESV)

(32) And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of **Gideon**, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— (33) **who through faith** conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, (34) quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, **were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.**

The Story of Gideon's Faith journey

Judges chapter 6 The story of Gideon: context . . . 7 years of slavery, army of Midian was like a swarm of locusts - huge in numbers & very destructive!

Judges 6:11-12 (ESV)

(11) Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was **beating out wheat in the winepress** 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, O mighty man of valor.**"

Notes: What Gideon is doing & what God sees are very different!

- Beating out wheat in the wine press – wrong location, lots of extra work!
- There because of fear
- God sees Him as a mighty man of valor – God sees for me long before I can see for myself
- **Faith** – trusting what God sees over what I can see!
- **Faith** – trusting that He is with me & for me!

Judges 6:13 (ESV)

And Gideon said to him, "Please, sir, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, '**Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? But now the LORD has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.**'"

Notes: Gideon – Oh you are with us? Then why are things so difficult?

Judges 6:14-15 (ESV)

(14) And the LORD turned to him and said, "**Go in this might of yours** and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?" (15) And he said to him, "Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

Notes:

- God's response to our broken world & situation – "I am sending you!"
- Gideon's reaction – How can I do that? I don't have what it takes

Judges 6:16 (ESV)

And the LORD said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man."

Notes: Gideon doesn't think he has what it takes, and God's answer is – "I'm with you!"

Judges 6:17 (ESV)

And he said to him, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me.

Verses 18-21: Gideon inquires of God – is it really you? Can I trust you?

- Gideon prepares meal
- Sets it before Angel of the Lord
- Sacrifice is consumed by fire
- The Lord immediately disappears

Alex's quote from last week: "We follow a God of mystery, in a culture that worships certainty"

Walking by Faith not Sight is Mysterious:

But, God works with Gideon through his weakness & questions – like the fleece later. In fact he does that throughout scripture, examples: Jacob wrestling, "doubting" Thomas, etc.

Because Gideon was willing to engage God in the midst of mystery and the unknown, He had an encounter

Judges 6:22-24 (ESV)

(22) Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." (23) But the LORD said to him, "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die." (24) Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD Is Peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.

Notes: By-product of an encounter with God - Awe, worship, peace with God!

Conclusion: The road we walk is difficult, and it comes with uncertainty. Faith isn't blind, but it helps us to walk where we cannot see clearly. What is certain is God's presence with us, and that He sees what we can't see!

Question – what obstacles might be keeping me from walking by faith, and not by sight right now?

Judges 6:25-27 (ESV)

(25) That night the LORD said to him, "Take your father's bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it (26) and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of the stronghold here, with stones laid in due order. Then take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you shall cut down." (27) So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

Application for us today: What Idol do we need to tear down that is holding back our journey of Faith?