

Pueblo Christian Center
4 Part Bible Study - Deliverance from Chaos – Pastor Steve

Part 2– Crying out to God brings an Answer

Book of Judges - Chapter 6:6-24

Introduction:

Last week we studied **Part 1 – “Opening the Door to Chaos.”** The writer of the book of Judges declared that the Israelites did ‘evil’ in the eyes of the Lord. The evil they were engaged in was idol worship of the ‘gods’ of the Amorites. The Israelites worshiped Baal and Asherah, which involved offering unjust and immoral sacrifices. It led to a degrading lifestyle which affected their worship of God, their families and their culture. Because the Israelites worshiped these false gods and were living contrary to the commands and ways of the Lord, He gave them for seven years into the hands of their hostile neighbors, the Midianites (Strife).

The Midianites came into the land at harvest time, camped on the land, looted the crops, bringing fear, intimidation and chaos. They impoverished the Israelites so severely that the Israelites’ economy was in shambles and the people were starving.

After seven years of this, the Israelites began to cry out to the Lord for help. When people genuinely cry out to the Lord, He heard and answered.

In this session, we want to look at how God answered them and learn the ways of the Lord. In our Nation today, we desperately need God to intervene in the lives of His people and our culture.

Judges 6:10-24

I. The Israelites’ economy was destroyed by the Midianites - (Strife)

Vs 3-5 “Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other Eastern peoples invaded the country. 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. They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count the men and their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it.”

Israel was experiencing the **Curse of the Law – Deuteronomy 28:15, 25, 34**

God had warned through Moses that if they turned away from God, they would:

- *Be defeated by their enemies
- *Foreign Nations would invade their land and ravage their crops
- *Be oppressed and endure harsh treatment by foreign nations
- *They would experience emotional turmoil and chaos.

II. The Chaos went on for 7 years

This abnormal and chaotic environment went on for a long time. Each year it got progressively worse until it became unbearable and life threatening.

Why did it take 7 years for the Israelites to cry out to God? Did the Israelites want to cling to their idols and what they thought would bring them help and hope instead of God?

***Axiom of truth:** Often, people **will not change** until the **PAIN of staying the same** is **GREATER than the pain of changing.**

Too often, even Christians live too long with the pain of dysfunction, compromise and unbelief before they get serious enough with God to cry out to Him for change.

III. When the Israelites finally cried out to the Lord, He sent them a Prophet

Vs 7, 8 *“When the Israelites cried out to the Lord because of Midian, 8 He sent them a prophet...”*

***God sent them an unnamed prophet.** The scripture doesn’t highlight anything else about this prophet except that he was truly sent by the Lord Himself! God hears the cries of His people and He is faithful to answer them and send a messenger when they truly cry out to him!

A true prophet is one who speaks for God:

*A true prophet speaks the Word of God without fear or favor

*A true prophet points people back to God

*A true prophet tells the truth about the issues at hand

*A true prophet seeks to advance God’s Kingdom purposes for God’s Glory

*A true prophet never seeks his own glory or personal gain in speaking for God

***God was speaking in first person** through this prophet!

He reminded them of their **Foundation** and their **FALL into idolatry.**

Vs 8 *“...it was **I who brought you up from Egypt and brought you out from the house of slavery.**”*

Vs 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...**”*

Vs 10 *“**I said...you shall not fear (worship) the gods of the Amorites...But you have not obeyed Me.**”*

The Prophet did not offer them a solution. He gave them clarity and a diagnosis of the problem and left.

*God was preparing the hearts of His people for change which was needed, before He could bring a solution.

*Many times, we want God to deal with the ‘external’ **FRUIT of the problem** and give us relief, but God desires to go to the **ROOT of the problem** for lasting healing.

*The root of their problem was **UNBELIEF** and **IDOLATRY**, which opened the door to demonic Chaos.

*Like John the Baptist, Luke 3:4 - God was using this prophet to prepare the people for coming deliverance.

*They needed to realize that God loved them and had always been faithful to them. They needed to abandon their idols and return to a true and pure faith in God.

*As God prepared their hearts, He was preparing to bring Deliverance through a **NOBODY** called **Gideon.**

IV. The Lord Himself shows up to call Gideon to be a Judge (Deliverer)

Vs *“The **Angel of the Lord (Pre-incarnate Christ) 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...”* Vs 12 *“...**the Lord appeared to Gideon and said, ‘The Lord is WITH YOU, mighty warrior.’**”*

***God answered the prayers of the Israelites: He sent them a Prophet to bring Clarity and He showed up personally to Call and Anoint Gideon to be a Deliverer!**

***God personally called and affirmed Gideon about his true calling: A Mighty Warrior**

***God personally commanded Gideon and sent Him on the Divine Mission of Deliverance**

***God promised victory over the Midianites**

***God confirmed to Gideon his divine encounter and call**

*Vs 14 "...Go in the strength you have and **save Israel** out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"*

*Vs 16 "...surely **I will be WITH YOU, and you SHALL DEFEAT MIDIAN** as one man."*

***God calls people personally and individually to follow and serve Him!**

***God promises to be WITH His people who follow Him!**

***God promises victory over the enemy!**

***God confirms His call and working in our lives by showing favor and fire to our faith and trust in Him.**

*Vs 19 "**Gideon went in, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour made bread without yeast...and offered them to him under the oak. Vs 21 "The angel of the Lord touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the Angel of the Lord disappeared."***

***Gideon responded to the Lord in Faith.** He asked for 'confirmation' that it was truly the Lord.

***When God speaks to us** through a 'messenger' He sends, **we should seek confirmation** from the Lord that it is truly from Him. God is faithful to confirm his message. Then we should respond in faith and obedience. As we obey the next step, God will reveal succeeding steps to take.

V. God reveals Himself as Jehovah Shalom – The God of Peace!

*Vs 23 "But **the Lord said to him, 'Peace to you, do not fear. You shall not die.'**"*

*Vs 24 "**Then Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it 'The Lord is Peace' (Jehovah Shalom)...**"*

***Chaos and fear was prevalent in the land.** The Midianites seemed to have control of everything. Starvation looked imminent. Hope was bleak! But, the people began to cry out to God and He answered them **by sending them a prophet and by showing up Himself to call Gideon to lead them** into victory over ALL of the Midianites.

***God revealed Himself to Gideon as the God of Peace!**

Peace – Shalom: Wholeness, preservation, soundness, secure, contented!

***God was preparing Gideon to go to WAR as a PEACEMAKER,** yet he would wage war with PEACE in his heart. **He would not fight personal battles, but only the battles of the Lord, for God's glory.**

***Jesus said, "Blessed are the PEACEMAKERS, for they shall be called sons of God" Matthew 5:9**

A Peacemaker is different than a Peacekeeper!

A **Peacekeeper** seeks to have 'Peace' at all costs, even at the expense of truth or tolerating evil or bad behavior.

A **Peacemaker** is one who is willing to endure conflict in order to bring true healing or reconciliation.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace, yet He is at war with evil.

Main Truths:

- *When **people abandon God**, He gives them over to their enemies
- *People don't often **make changes** until the **pain of staying the same** is **more than the pain of changing**
- *When people **cry out to God**, He Answers
- *When God answers, He desires to go to the **ROOT of the problem**, not just the **FRUIT of the problem**.
- *God **sends messengers** to **deliver His message** with **Clarity and Truth**
- ***God Himself will show up** to call people personally for His purposes
- *God **reveals Himself as the God of Peace**, despite the chaos that may be all around you
- *God **calls His people to be PEACEMAKERS** and **deliver people from evil choices, behaviors and spirits**

Discussion Questions:

- Q. Why did the people **endure 7 years** of oppression before they got serious to call on God?
- Q. Why did God need to **remind them** of His faithfulness and all that He had done for them?
- Q. Why do we **easily forget** what God has done for us in the past?
- Q. Have you ever had God **send you a 'messenger'** to speak truth into your life?
- Q. After the prophet left **without** giving them **any solution**, what were the **Israelites likely feeling**?
- Q. How does this study **impact the way you see problems**?
- Q. When you don't see **immediate relief** from the 'fruit' of your problem, do you still **believe God is at work** in your behalf?

***Preparing our hearts for change invites God, the 'God of Peace' into our lives to overcome the Chaos!**

Next week:

Part 3 – God instructs and anoints Gideon for Battle!