

Small Group Guide: Jehovah Shalom - The Lord Our Peace

Overview

This week's sermon explored the name of God revealed in Judges 6: Jehovah Shalom, meaning "The Lord is Peace." Through the story of Gideon, we examined what true shalom is, how strongholds fracture it, and how God meets us in our brokenness to call us back toward wholeness. This guide is designed to help your group go deeper into those themes together.

Key Takeaways

- **Shalom is God's design for wholeness.** It is not simply the absence of conflict or chaos but the state in which every part of life functions according to God's design and order.
 - **Strongholds fracture our shalom.** A stronghold is not merely an outward sin or addiction. At its root, it is a thought pattern, a value system, or an argument held firmly in the mind that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and keeps us from functioning in our full potential in Christ.
 - **God meets us in our brokenness.** He does not wait for us to fix ourselves before He shows up. He comes to us while we are hiding in the winepress, functioning in dysfunction, and calls us toward something greater.
 - **God's peace is found in His presence, not in perfect circumstances.** The shalom God gives is not the elimination of the battle. It is the assurance of His presence in the middle of it, giving us the courage to take the next step.
 - **Jesus is our peace.** He bore the punishment that brings us shalom. Through His death and resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit, we have access to a peace the world cannot give or take away.
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Discussion Questions

Opening

1. When you hear the word "peace," what image or feeling comes to mind? How does that compare to the idea of shalom as wholeness and everything functioning according to God's design?
 2. Can you think of a moment in your life when things were genuinely in a state of shalom, when everything seemed to be working together the way it was supposed to? What did that feel like?
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Digging In

3. The sermon described shalom as God's original design for creation and said that pain, tears, and discomfort are actually signals that alert us to a fracture in that shalom. How does that reframe the way you think about struggle or difficulty in your life?
 4. Read Judges 6:1-6. The Israelites ended up hiding in dens, caves, and strongholds because of the consequences of their rebellion. In what ways do people today hide in metaphorical strongholds rather than stepping out into what God has called them to?
 5. The sermon drew a distinction between the outward fruit of a stronghold (such as addiction, immorality, or anger) and the root, which is a thought pattern or deeply held belief. Why do you think it is easier to focus on the outward behavior than to deal with the underlying beliefs driving it?
 6. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 10 that the weapons of our warfare have divine power to destroy strongholds, and that we are to take every thought captive to obey Christ. What does it practically look like to take a thought captive? What makes that difficult?
 7. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and called him a mighty man of valor, Gideon's first response was doubt and complaint. Why do you think it is so hard to receive what God says about who we are, even when we hear it clearly?
 8. The sermon suggested that Gideon's response to God was actually healthy in one way because he vented his unbelief honestly rather than stuffing it down. What is the difference between venting unbelief to God and simply wallowing in doubt? Why does it matter that we bring our honest struggles before Him?
 9. God told Gideon to tear down his father's altar to Baal before sending him to battle the Midianites. What do you think it means for us today to tear down inherited strongholds, thought patterns, or false altars that were passed down to us through family, culture, or past experiences?
 10. The sermon ended with the observation that even after his encounter with Jehovah Shalom, Gideon still struggled with anxiety, still laid out fleeces, and still needed reassurance. What does that tell us about how God works with us over time? How does it encourage or challenge you?
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Practical Applications

The following are personal exercises to work through individually during the week and bring back to the group.

1. Identify an Emotion and Trace It to a Belief

Pick one recurring emotion you have noticed in yourself lately, whether it is anxiety, discouragement, anger, shame, or something else. Ask yourself:

- What automatic thought tends to come with this emotion?
- What does that thought reveal about what I believe about God?
- What does it reveal about what I believe about myself?
- Is that belief in agreement with what God's Word says?

Write your answers down and bring them to the group if you feel comfortable sharing.

2. Name a Stronghold

Prayerfully consider whether there is a thought pattern, a habitual behavior, or a deeply held belief in your life that functions as a stronghold. It does not have to be dramatic. It may be something like a pattern of people-pleasing rooted in fear of rejection, or a tendency toward control rooted in anxiety. Name it honestly before God in prayer and ask Him to begin dismantling it.

3. Replace the Lie with Truth

Once you have identified a lie or false belief, find one or two passages of Scripture that speak directly to that area. Write them out. Pray them over yourself. Return to them when the stronghold tries to reassert itself.

4. Practice Casting Your Anxiety

Based on 1 Peter 5:7, spend time this week intentionally bringing your anxieties to God in prayer rather than carrying them internally. Be specific. Name each anxiety out loud to Him. Notice what happens in your heart when you do.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together over these areas:

- That God would reveal hidden strongholds and give each person the courage to face them honestly
- That each group member would experience a fresh encounter with Jehovah Shalom, the Lord who is peace

- That the Holy Spirit would bring transformation, not just information, as the group applies these truths throughout the week
 - That God would clothe Himself with each person, just as the Spirit of the Lord clothed Himself with Gideon, and use them for His glory
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Scriptures

Here is a list of scripture references mentioned or alluded to in the sermon:

- Proverbs 29:18 - the verse about vision and people perishing
- Romans 15:13 - God of hope, joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope through the Holy Spirit
- Judges 2:1-3 - God's command to make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land and tear down their altars
- Judges 2:10 - the generation that arose after and did not know the Lord
- Judges 6:1-6 - Israel's evil, Midianite oppression, hiding in dens and strongholds
- Judges 6:7-10 - the prophet sent to remind Israel of God's deliverance from Egypt
- Judges 6:11-24 - the angel of the Lord appearing to Gideon, the altar named Jehovah Shalom
- Judges 6:25-27 - God's command to tear down the altar of Baal
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 - weapons of warfare, destroying strongholds, taking thoughts captive
- John 14:26-27 - the Holy Spirit as teacher and comforter, Jesus giving His peace
- 1 Peter 5:7 - casting all anxieties on God because He cares
- Philippians 4:19 - God supplying all needs according to His riches in glory
- Isaiah 53:5 - by His stripes we are healed
- 1 Corinthians 1:27 - God choosing the foolish and weak things of the world
- Luke 22:42-44 - Jesus in Gethsemane, sweating drops of blood, yielding to the Father's will
- Revelation 21:1-4 - the new Jerusalem, no more tears, pain, or death
- Romans 12:2 - renewing of the mind
- Ephesians 6:10-12 - spiritual warfare not against flesh and blood
- Ephesians 4:27 - giving the devil a foothold
- 1 John 1:7-9 - walking in the light, confessing sins, being cleansed by the blood of Christ
- Matthew 4:1-11 - the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness
- Hebrews 4:15 - Jesus tempted in every way as we are
- Judges 7 - Gideon's army reduced to 300, the battle against Midian
- Revelation 21:2 - the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven