

The Book of Judges

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Book

Entitled Shopethaim in Hebrew, the Book of Judges speaks of judges not in a judicial sense, but rather in a heroic sense. That is, Old Testament judges didn't wear black robes, sit on a high bench, or hold gavels. They were deliverers—which is what shopethaim means. The twelve men and one woman whose stories are told in this book were the instruments through which God judged those who had wandered away from Him, and through which He delivered those who were held captive, yet sought Him.

These thirteen judges lived between the time of Joshua and Samuel—during a span of four hundred years. The author of the Book of Judges is believed to be Samuel. Tradition seems to indicate that he indeed was the writer, although of this we cannot be absolutely sure.

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves:

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are enslaved by sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

If there's one message to be found in the Book of Judges, it's that sin doesn't pay. Sin will wipe you out and trip you up. The good news, however, in the Book of Judges is that, although the people of Israel stumbled into sin and became enslaved by sin, they were also delivered from sin when they called upon the Lord. And, praise God, that is true of us as well.

Judges 1:1 Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, "Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?"

Begins with Death

Book of Judges begins like the Book of Joshua, a new beginning begins with a new trust, a new way of seeking after the Lord. The Lord will continue to do this in our lives too. Israel after 40 years of following Moses (from Egypt's enslavement to the wilderness), would then follow the leading of Joshua. Moses would speak to God on their behalf, Moses would call upon God on their behalf and manna from heaven would come every morning, and water from a rock to sustain them. Forty years of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, until Moses died. Then under Joshua, he would seek the Lord on their behalf, and the Jordan River would part, walls would tumble, the sun would stand still, enemies would be defeated, inheritances would be received. All under the leading of Joshua, who sought the Lord on their behalf, and by faith they followed the word of God spoken from God to Joshua.

Joshua 1:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: ² "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. ³ Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.

No Superstars

But now Joshua is dead. If we read the life of Moses and Joshua we see they really were just common men, being used extraordinarily (supernaturally) by God. Really, when we look at Moses and Joshua they fall under that superstar category in our eyes, but in all reality they were just simple men being used by a God who wanted to do something. May I say this today, especially in our cultural we live in today, God doesn't need superstars, His Word is more than enough to accomplish all that He wants to do through anybody that is willing. We want superstars, we want people to point to and say look at them, but God proves he doesn't need superstars. His heart, His Son, that he gave is the only superstar the world needs to ever see to have a changed life. So if anyone in Israel looked to Joshua as a superstar, he is dead now, and they will have to call upon the Lord for themselves now, and we see here in chapter one verse one, that is how it begins.

Judges – Hero's

As we have said, "Judges" means "deliverer, as in a heroic". So we will read of 13 hero's in this Book of Judges, and what we will see is that they are just common people who all believed one thing, God is who He says He is, and will do all that He says He will do. They are hero's of the faith, which immediately reminds me of Hebrews chapter 11. Let's turn there and see some hero's, and what they did to make them hero's of the faith in God's eyes. What we find will be somewhat surprising.

Hebrews 11:1–10 (NKJV)

¹Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

²For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

³By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Do You Believe in Creation?

Do you believe that God spoke and the world was created? Do you believe the creation account? Then list yourself her in this Hall of Faith, a Hero of Faith.

Genesis 1:3 (NKJV) ³Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

⁴By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

Have You Brought the Lamb?

What was the difference between Abel's offering and Cain's? Cain came with the work of his flesh, the sweat of his brow, and he said here Lord see what I have done, see what I can do in my own power. Whereas what did Abel bring, what did Abel present to the Lord as a peace offering, Abel brought a lamb. All the way back in Genesis it has always been a lamb that brought oneness and fellowship with the Lord, all the way through to Jesus who was and would be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Have you brought the Lamb (Jesus the Lamb of God as your way to peace and oneness with the Lord), then list yourself her in this Hall of Faith, a Hero of Faith.

Genesis 4:2–5 (NKJV) ² Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ³ And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. ⁴ Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, ⁵ but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

John 1:29 (NKJV) ²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

⁵By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Are You Waiting for the Rapture?

Enoch taken off the earth before the flood would be poured out upon the sinful and rebellious earth. Enoch is the OT picture of the NT Rapture where God will take His children (those that please Him because they have received the Lamb of God) up to heaven before He pours His wrath out upon a sinful Christ rejecting world. Do you believe in the rapture? Then list yourself her in this Hall of Faith, a Hero of Faith.

Genesis 5:21–24 (NKJV) ²¹ Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. ²² After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. ²³ So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. ²⁴ And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

⁶But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

⁷By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Are You Preparing Your Family?

Are you preparing your family like Noah, are you investing and sharing Christ with your family so that they might be saved from this world and enter into the eternal Kingdom to come? Then list yourself here in this Hall of Faith, a Hero of Faith.

⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

⁹By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;

¹⁰for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Are You Looking for the City whose Builder and Maker is God?

Are you a sojourner, a pilgrim, a person who says this earth is not my home, I am merely passing through like Abraham, for I am living looking for the city whose builder and maker is God? Then list yourself here in this Hall of Faith, a Hero of Faith.

You are a Hero of Faith

Oh Beloved you are a member of this Hall of Faith, you are a Hero of the Faith, you are greater in the Lord than you probably realize, and God is proud of you, God is pleased with you, live strong and let's stay strong, His return is near.

Judges 1:2 And the LORD said, "Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand."

Send Judah (Praise) First

What does Judah mean? It means "praise", who does God send first into the battle, but "praise". Are you feeling scared, overwhelmed, unsure, outnumbered?; do you feel the enemy is too entrenched in your life? Then send praise in first. Offer God the sacrifice of praise first and watch the enemy tremble, watch the enemy weaken, watch your life strengthen as you lift up on your lips the "One" is above all, the King Victorious, the One who fights for you. I am reminded of the story from 2 Chronicles 20 where the enemies came against Israel and King Jehoshaphat. It says that Jehoshaphat was afraid and sought the Lord because they were greatly outnumbered. God replied and said do not be afraid, go out against them, but you will not have to fight, simply stand and watch the salvation of the Lord "who is with you". On the day of battle we read that Jehoshaphat sent his worship team in front of his army, and when they began to sing praise, the enemy turned on each other and started to fight each other, and utterly destroyed each other. Israel did not have to lift a sword, only their voices, and the enemy was defeated. See, three things happen in praise (at the minimum), Satan has to flee, he becomes disoriented and literally implodes as we have just read because he can't stand when God gets glory and praise ascends unto the heaven for Him and not Satan. Two, the world is put in right perspective, because we are lifted up from this world we are sojourning through, unto the heavenly city we are destined for whose builder and maker is God. Thirdly, our flesh is subdued and put at peace, for the peace of God flows upon us because our eyes are upon Jesus, not our problem or enemy. So when you are going up to battle, send Judah first, send praise first, put the enemy on his heels, and you on the balls of your feet as you enter into the confidence that your God fights for you.

2 Chronicles 20:1–24 (NKJV) ¹ It happened after this *that* the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and *others* with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. ² Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi). ³ And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. ⁴ So Judah gathered together to ask *help* from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD. ⁵ Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, ⁶ and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, *are* You not God in heaven, and do You *not* rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand *is there not* power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? ⁷ Are You not our God, *who* drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? ⁸ And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, ⁹ 'If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name *is* in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.' ¹⁰ And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab,

and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them—¹¹ here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. ¹² O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.” ¹³ Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD. ¹⁴ Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. ¹⁵ And he said, “Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle *is* not yours, but God’s.’ ¹⁶ Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷ You will not *need* to fight in this *battle*. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD *is* with you.” ¹⁸ And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. ¹⁹ Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high. ²⁰ So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.” ²¹ And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: “Praise the LORD, For His mercy *endures* forever.” ²² Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. ²³ For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy *them*. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. ²⁴ So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.

Judges 1:3 So Judah said to Simeon his brother, “Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory.” And Simeon went with him.

Beginning of the Cycle

Sounds like great comradery (you fight for us and we will fight for you) and strategy (double strength), but actually, it only took us to verse three to watch the beginning of the cycle of failure. God didn’t say Judah and Simeon, He said send Judah, notice “Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand”. So right from the beginning we see the people of Israel saying I hear your word, sounds good, well most of it, we are going to add to it here, and take away from it there, until it sounds and feels comfortable to us.

Judges 1:2 And the LORD said, “Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand.”

Enjoy the Land by Faithfulness to the Word

Here is the key to what we are going to read for the next 21 chapters.....in contrast to the Book of Joshua, which talks about entering into the Promised Land by faith, the Book of Judges deals with enjoying the Land by faithfulness, and that faithfulness is to the Word of God, exactly as written, not adding on to it, or taking anything away from it, but being faithful to every dotting of the “i” and crossing of the “t”.

Proverbs 30:5 (NKJV) ⁵ Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

Matthew 4:4 (NKJV) ⁴ But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

God’s Word not Enough – Need Help

So we say, like Judah, I need to take Simeon with me for I can’t do this alone, it is too hard. Yes I have heard the word of the Lord that He will deliver, He will provide, but it is too hard, I need man’s help, I am afraid to do this alone, to be alone. It’s too hard, they have walled cities, they have chariots of iron, they are too many. Sound familiar? I can’t beat this addiction just on God’s Word, it is too strong, I need something more. I can’t love my spouse, I am through with them, God’s Word isn’t enough to change my heart. I’m afraid to step out in faith into that ministry God is calling me to, I will go if/when God brings me someone else to help, or someone promises to finance the ministry, I need help from others, not just the Words of God.

Judges 1:4 Then Judah went up, and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they killed ten thousand men at Bezek.

God doesn’t Recognize the Work of the Flesh

Notice here in verse 4 God doesn’t include Simeon, even though we know he went. God doesn’t recognize the work of the flesh. God records for us who defeated the enemy and brought the victory, and it was Him. And it was a great victory at that, for 10,000 men is a major battle, even with all of our conventional weaponry today we don’t

see those totals in a battle on a single day. So God did what He said He would do, even despite Judah's and Israel's weakening of the Word.

God did Bring Victory – But Compromise builds into Destruction

So we can say, well see God is faithful and sovereign, He brought victory and He overcomes our failures, and that is true, but what we will see before the chapter is over is that Israel will suffer defeat and enter into bondage.

Compromise always builds off of itself, and compromise strengthens itself and weakens the spirit, and compromise leads to more compromise which builds into destruction.

Judges 1:5 And they found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and fought against him; and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

Judges 1:6 Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

Judges 1:7 And Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather scraps under my table; as I have done, so God has repaid me." Then they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.

Can't Fight

So by cutting off the thumb and the toe, the person can no longer fight because they can't plant their feet for a sure foundation, and they can't hold a sword or a bow.

Compromise – Did Not Utterly Destroy

So this king says literally, I am reaping what I have sown, as I have done to others now comes back on me. But I want you to see something here, as the spiral of Israel goes another step, and we should take a very careful note of it, and that is where did the Children of Israel learn to lop off toes and thumbs? They didn't learn it from Moses nor Joshua, that wasn't their methods of warfare. God told Joshua when you come into the Promised Land, utterly destroy them, take no prisons, for God knew eventually the people Canaan will pull the people of Israel into their wretchedness. So here we see one more step of compromise for the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 20:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ "But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, ¹⁷ but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, ¹⁸ lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God.

Ways of the World

And, take careful note of this, and that is what we are watching is Israel imitating the world around them, watching and applying the ways of the world into their "new culture", they are trying to mix and match, merge and morph the two cultures together. God never told them, Joshua never showed them, to cut toes and thumbs off, they are applying the ways of king Adoni-Bezek into their way of living. How about us? Could we be like the Children of Israel? How about your dressing and clothes? How about your social drinking? How about your speech? How about your eyes and where they look? Is there anything you have watched the world doing, and made it part of your ways of living? Have you ever asked the Lord, are you ok with this? Have you ever asked the Lord, are you ok with this or am I just doing it because I see the world doing it and I am just going along with the culture of the world.

Judges 1:8 Now the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it; they struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire.

Judges 1:9 And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who dwelt in the mountains, in the South, and in the lowland.

Judges 1:10 Then Judah went against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron. (Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kirjath Arba.) And they killed Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

Judges 1:11 From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. (The name of Debir was formerly Kirjath Sepher.)

The Intellectual Center of a Heathen People

Kirjath Sepher was named so because it means in its language, "the city of books". It was a cultural and educational city, it was the intellectual center. Whether it is Kirjath Sepher or the USA, great intelligence or higher education doesn't excuse or eliminate the fact that wickedness is wickedness. Look at all these books, look at our intelligence, we are such high thinkers, such critical thinkers, we are so smart and wise, therefore what we do is acceptable because we are so smart..... way smarter than God's word. Look at my suit, look at my degree, admire my education, but God sees the heart, looks past the mind, and will call sin, sin. God doesn't grade sin on a curve. Kirjath Sepher was the city of books and the great intellectual center, but literally just over the hill they wear sacrificing children on live fires, they were engaged in extreme sexual practices, drunkardness, occult practices, and pagan worship. God sees the heart, and will judge the heart on the day of judgment, and there will be no suits, no ties, no diplomas. Sin and judgment isn't reserved only for the guy in the crack house, or the drunkard in the gutter, but it will come to the person who makes 6 figures, with 6 diploma, it will come to all who have not had their sin washed away by the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. For there is none good, no not one, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Break one commandment, just as guilty as the guy who has broken all the commandments. God does not grade sin on a curve, it is simply a pass-fail test.

James 2:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

Romans 3:10–12 (NKJV) ¹⁰ As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. ¹² They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

Romans 3:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:23 (NKJV) ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Judges 1:12 Then Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife."

Judges 1:13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife.

Judges 1:14 Now it happened, when she came to him, that she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?"

Judges 1:15 So she said to him, "Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water." And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

Story Retold

So this story is an addendum to the Book of Judges, this story had happened back in Joshua 15 when Israel was taking the land. It is retold so to introduce the first judge Othniel, who we will read about in chapter 3. It is also told to us I believe to remind us about Caleb, who was a man who never wavered believing God is able to defeat the giants in the land, that God will bring victory to those who believe Hebrews 11:6, that is a rewarder of those faith, and that those who come by faith that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV) ⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Can't Miss (Brides Hand / A-S-K)

We won't expound the whole story again, but I can't miss making these two points, and that is that young girl, if he won't fight for you, he is not for you. And secondly, God gives us the picture of the Bride, coming to the Father, and saying ask whatever you desire, and I will give it you. So ask the Father You Brides of Christ, for He wants to give you living water:

John 4:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

John 7:38–39 (NKJV) ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

John 14:13–14 (NKJV)

¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

Caleb Dispels

By the way, Caleb dispels all this you are victim and you are the way you are because of:

- Childhood – Caleb’s childhood was in the slavery of Egypt
- Environment – Caleb’s environment was wilderness wandering because of other people’s failures not his.

Judges 1:16 Now the children of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up from the City of Palms with the children of Judah into the Wilderness of Judah, which lies in the South near Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people.

Why Kenites Follow Now

If you recall when the children of Israel were wandering the wilderness Moses asked his father-in-law to join him, to which he said no. But now we see them living among the children of Israel in the land. What changed? They saw miracles in the wilderness (manna, water, cloud, pillar) but that didn’t bring them along. Interestingly the miracles didn’t bring them, but faith did, as they watched Joshua and the children of Israel take the land by faith, now here we read they are with them and part of them. Christian, just keep walking in faith, don’t wait for miracles or superstars, just keep walking by faith and know this, people are watching you, and they may just change their minds and join you.

Numbers 10:29–30 (NKJV) ²⁹ Now Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law, “We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, ‘I will give it to you.’ Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the LORD has promised good things to Israel.” ³⁰ And he said to him, “I will not go, but I will depart to my own land and to my relatives.”

Judges 1:17 And Judah went with his brother Simeon, and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah.

Judges 1:18 Also Judah took Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory.

Judges 1:19 So the LORD was with Judah. And they drove out the mountaineers, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had chariots of iron.

No Credit to Simeon

So Simeon mentioned as going with Judah, but we read that God was with Judah.

But now the Effects of Compromise – Can’t take Lowlands

But now we are seeing the effects of the compromise of unbelief, that the people were too strong for them, I need help so I am asking Simeon to come, for they are afraid to go fight the inhabitants of the lowland because they had chariots of iron. We read in Joshua 11, led by Jabin, king of Hazor, a massive coalition was formed among the kings of the northern region. The historian Josephus tells us this coalition numbered 300,000 infantrymen, 10,000 cavalrymen, and 20,000 chariots. Chariots being like tanks in those days, this was a formidable army indeed. But Joshua and the children of Israel by faith believing God goes before them to fight the fight, indeed had the victory. So we see the beginning of compromise, not believing that God and His Word is enough to bring every victory, thus they go and get help from Simeon.

Joshua 11:4–5 (NKJV) ⁴ So they went out, they and all their armies with them, as many people as the sand that is on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots. ⁵ And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.

Lord Can’t take you Further than Willing to Go

The Lord can’t take you further than you're willing to go

Judges 1:20 And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had said. Then he expelled from there the three sons of Anak.

Sometimes have to Wait for Promise to Come to Pass

Just as Moses had promised Caleb he would have the land, Caleb does, it just took some 40 years to come to pass. Christian, sometimes we have to wait for God’s promises to come to pass, but they will, so don’t quit, just stay faithful knowing it will come.

Judges 1:21 But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

Enemies – Now Neighbors

No longer enemies but neighbors. You what enemies do, they fight, they war, they seek to destroy. You know what neighbors do? They wave to each other, they help shovel out each other's driveways after snow storms. Their kids go to school together; they play on the same sports team. Neighbors become friends, comfortable with one another, and become common to each other. God said to Israel no friendships, because any compromise with the flesh will eventually enslave you.

Deuteronomy 20:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ "But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, ¹⁷ but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, ¹⁸ lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God.

Indian Parable – 2 Wolves

An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy.

"It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego." He continued, "The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

Judges 1:22 And the house of Joseph also went up against Bethel, and the LORD was with them.

Judges 1:23 So the house of Joseph sent men to spy out Bethel. (The name of the city was formerly Luz.)

Judges 1:24 And when the spies saw a man coming out of the city, they said to him, "Please show us the entrance to the city, and we will show you mercy."

Judges 1:25 So he showed them the entrance to the city, and they struck the city with the edge of the sword; but they let the man and all his family go.

Judges 1:26 And the man went to the land of the Hittites, built a city, and called its name Luz, which is its name to this day.

Destroy One City – Create Another

Didn't destroy him so he goes and creates another city. So they destroyed one city but created another

Judges 1:27 However, Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land.

Canaanites Determination Greater than Israelites

The Canaanites determination was greater than the Israelites.

Judges 1:28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.

Comfort over Holiness

When strong enough to defeat them, they choose comfort and ease over holiness unto the Lord

Judges 1:29 Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

Enemies – Now Neighbors

No longer enemies but neighbors

Judges 1:30 Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute.

Comfort over Holiness

When strong enough to defeat them, they choose comfort and ease over holiness unto the Lord

Judges 1:31 Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob.

Judges 1:32 So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

Enemies – Now Neighbors

No longer enemies but neighbors

Judges 1:33 Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them.

Comfort over Holiness

When strong enough to defeat them, they choose comfort and ease over holiness unto the Lord

Judges 1:34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley;

Judges 1:35 and the Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim; yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute.

Amorites Determination Greater than Israelites

The Amorites determination was greater than the Israelites

Comfort over Holiness

When strong enough to defeat them, they choose comfort and ease over holiness unto the Lord

Judges 1:36 Now the boundary of the Amorites was from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela, and upward.

Sounds Like didn't Turn out So Bad / Why so Legalistic?

This sounds like what is the big deal, it wasn't so bad, there was no needs to get radical and destroy them. But it's only the end of the chapter, not the story, for before it is all over Israel will be the one in bondage and under tribute.

Choose this Day

They did not settle like Joshua, choose this day who you will serve. Let's settle that today Christian.

Joshua 24:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 2

Chapter 1 Recap

So chapter one we read how although God had given the Promised Land as an inheritance to the children of Israel, that the land was given to them (under the leadership of Joshua) by “faith”, they would maintain the land by “faithfulness”, being obedient to the word of God. God had told them to “utterly and completely drive out the inhabitants of the land, lest they would lead Israel astray”, we find that they did not do so:

Judges 1:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ So the LORD was with Judah. And they drove out the mountaineers, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had chariots of iron.

Judges 1:21 (NKJV) ²¹ But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

Judges 1:27 (NKJV) ²⁷ However, Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land.

Judges 1:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.

Judges 1:29 (NKJV) ²⁹ Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

Judges 1:30 (NKJV) ³⁰ Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute.

Judges 1:31 (NKJV) ³¹ Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob.

Judges 1:32 (NKJV) ³² So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

Judges 1:33 (NKJV) ³³ Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them.

Overview Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of Judges ties together the Book of Joshua and the Book of Judges. It is a looking back at the history of the conquering of the Promised Land and then the giving of the inheritance, and then chapter 2 gives a prologue (introduction overview) of all the stories we will be told in chapters 3-21, which will cover approximately 450 years of Israel’s history. Chapter 2 tells the consequences of what happens because they “don’t drive out the inhabitants”.

The Sin Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves:

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are enslaved by sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

Written for Our Example

The Book of Judges is not merely a historical book about the Nation of Israel, but as we are told in Romans 15, these stories and accounts in the Old Testament are written as an example for us, of what to do, and what not to do. The best life experiences (regarding failures and mistakes) are someone else’s.

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Somewhat Confusing

To be honest, this chapter 2 is a somewhat of a confusing chapter to me personally. Chapter 1 Joshua is dead, then we read here in chapter 2 Joshua dismissing the people back to their inheritances. Is the context about the generation that took the Promised Land, or is it the generations after (these generations throughout the Book of Judges)? I went and read commentaries written by experts in the original Hebrew language, and even they struggled. Some simply didn’t address it, so that is how they handled it. I believe I have it right, and the key was to remove the chapter break (which did not exist when this Book was written – man to help ease of studying the Bible put chapter breaks in around 500 years ago); so once you remove the chapter breaks and just keep reading from

the context of chapter one, the context is about the generations of Israel that came after the generation of Joshua. But see here Christian, what we read last chapter and this chapter is about sin and compromise; sin and compromise always produces confusion, and there is only one way for clarity, only one thing is clear, and that is to walk in obedience in accordance to the Word, and anything less will cause and bring confusion into your life.

What this Passage Means to You

What does this passage mean to you today? Life and that more abundant; the clear way, the sure way, the Promise of God to do great things in your life simply by saying “here I am Lord – lead me and guide me”.

Let’s jump in at verse one of chapter two:

Judges 2:1 Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: “I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you. Judges 2:2 And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this?”

Angel of the Lord

This Angel of the LORD is none other than Jesus Christ. Notice the Angel is saying “I led you”, I swore to your fathers”, “I will never break My covenant with you”. The “I’s” are things only God can do, and God did for Israel. So this is very clearly God Himself. We saw this before in Joshua 5.

Joshua 5:13–15 (NKJV) ¹³ And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?” ¹⁴ So He said, “No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?” ¹⁵ Then the Commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.” And Joshua did so.

Theophany

When we see these appearances in the Old Testament they are called “Theophany” (appearances of God), and/or when we see them clearly as Jesus they are called “Christophany” (appearance of Christ). So this is God, Jesus Himself coming up from Gilgal to this place called Bochim and speaking to the Children of Israel.

God always Speaks when You in Disobedience

Christian, see here, anytime we are in disobedience, not doing what we should be doing, not where we should be, God always comes and speaks to us. He will speak directly to us in our devotions, or as we read His Word, or through the pulpit ministry, or through another person; but God always comes and speaks to you and says “Why are you doing this”. God is always coming to His people, always initiating with them, always trying to lead them into His ways that are best for us. He always speaks to us for “His Glory and our Good”. I pray the Lord is coming to you today, however big, however minute, that He comes and speaks to you today.

Language of our Trade

Before moving on, may I say a word about words such as (Theophany and Christophany); it is good to study and learn words such as these, to grow in our understanding of doctrines and theology. Now if I said to you words like (accelerometer, pitot static tube, and Bernoulli’s Principal), most people here today would say what are you talking about? But in my aviation trade, this is part of our common language, it is part of our daily work, it is how we master our trade, and When people get on the airplane they have a safe flight. If we joined a conversation and words such as (aneurysm, bronchi, and cytosin) are being used, we might not understand it, but the doctors do, and thankful they do, for it is all part of their trade. So too it is for us, these words may seem uncommon and strange to the world around us for the most part, but for us as believers, they are part of our language of heaven, part of our Kingdom language. Now I for the largest part only talk these kingdom words among the citizens of the kingdom as to not confuse the people who have yet to come into the Kingdom as citizens, but also don’t let anyone discourage you from going deeper in your study of God, and learning and growing in your understanding of Him.

Judges 2:3 Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.' "

Judges 2:4 So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept.

Judges 2:5 Then they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the LORD.

Bochim

So the Angel of the Lord, God Himself comes up from Gilgal to Bochim and speaks to the children of Israel.

Significance of Gilgal

What was the significance of Gilgal as we studied in the Book of Joshua?

- Was where they camped the day they crossed over the Jordan River (as they entered the Promised Land)
- It was where Joshua built the memorial of the 12 stones that were taken out of the Jordan River (Joshua 4:19-24)
- It was where they were Circumcised (the cutting away of the flesh) (Joshua 5:1-9)
- It was where they had their first Passover Feast in 38 years (Joshua 10-12)
- It was where the Lord appeared to Joshua as the Captain of the Lord's Army (Joshua 13-15)
- It was there center of operations as they conquered the Promised Land (Joshua 10:6,15,43, etc)

Joshua 4:19–24 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. ²⁰ And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. ²¹ Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?' ²² then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land'; ²³ for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, ²⁴ that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

Gilgal – Place of Rest, Remembrance, Strategy

So Gilgal was a place of rest, a place of remembrance, and a place of strategy.

But Now – Place of Weeping / God Weeping Too

But they are not in Gilgal, not in a place of power but of weeping. I believe the people are not the only ones weeping, I believe the Lord is weeping, because God's heart is grieved when we are taken away by our sin.

John 11:35–36 (NKJV) ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

Where they are At – God is Not

Notice, where they are at, God is not. Where they are gathering, God had to come up to.

Where is Bochim / Nation Gathered at the 3 Feasts / God Comes – While they Playing Religion

Where is Bochim? Nobody is absolutely sure, for it wasn't a developed city that is recorded historically, it is only mentioned twice in the Bible, and it is here in chapter 2. Most historians and scholars believe it was near Shiloh. Shiloh is where the Tabernacle was set up during the time of Judges. All the people were together to hear this. There were three times a year where they were all together, and that was the 3 Feasts of Israel (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles). So piece this together, Jesus comes up from Gilgal, when they are all gathered together, which would be one of the Feasts of Israel. God comes to them, when they are playing religion. These Feasts, a time of remembrance, reverence, and celebration unto the Lord for all that He is and all that He has done, no doubt a time they are feeling very religious, very spiritual, and God says I know what you are doing, I know what is in your heart, you may be fooling others, even yourself, but you are not fooling me, I see through your religious activities and see right into your heart. Why are you doing this? He asks so they can ask, so they can look inside their own hearts and see I am not right with you Lord.

Judges 18:31 (NKJV) ³¹ So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

Judges 21:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Then they said, "In fact, there is a yearly feast of the LORD in Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah."

Leviticus 23:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.'

Watch out for Routine

I have a post-it note I keep on my computer monitor that reminds me when I am preparing a message to teach:

- Are you talking about a text, or the God of love whose heart beats for these people? Will the people leave with head knowledge, or will they leave saying “surely God was in this place”.

I continually in all that I do, and I am a pastor, have to check myself and say, am I going through some religious routine because I am now a Christian, or am I really seeking after Him, seeking personal intimacy with Him? Do I witness because that’s what I am supposed to do, or do I witness because my heart is moved knowing that this person is perishing? Do I serve others because that is what I am supposed to do, or do I serve others because they are precious in God’s sight and I want to bless them and draw them closer to Him?

Search Me Lord

May we all say, search me O’Lord like David did:

Psalm 139:23–24 (NKJV) ²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴ And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

Cried – But Didn’t Repent

The people cried, but didn’t repent as we will see as we read the rest of the chapter. Godly sorrow produces repentance, truly being sorrow, is always followed by an action.

2 Corinthians 7:8–11 (NKJV) ⁸ For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. ⁹ Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. ¹⁰ For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. ¹¹ For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Verses 6-9 (Look back Verses)

Now verses 6-9, are verses that tie back to Joshua’s generation, and creates comparison how this generation turned away from following the Lord. There is never a mention of Joshua’s generation following after the gods of the Canaanites, can although they didn’t utterly drive out the Canaanites, we read in the last verse that God left them so as to test the next generation of who they will serve:

Judges 2:20–23 (NKJV) ²⁰ Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, “Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, ²¹ I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, ²² so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept them, or not.” ²³ Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

Judges 2:6 And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land.

Judges 2:7 So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

Judges 2:8 Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died when he was one hundred and ten years old.

Very Confusing

Ok, maybe you are saying, I am very confused here; We started chapter one verse one with Joshua being dead, then we come into chapter 2 and he is alive and then he dies. God says you guys have broken my covenant, but now verse 7 says the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and you are saying I am very confused. Yes, it is confusing because you know what, sin always causes confusion. God Himself is saying “why are you doing this?”, I just don’t understand it, my mind can’t grasp what would make you want to turn away from this amazing and awesome covenant and life that I have for, all the blessings of the inheritance that I have for you in this Promised Land, I don’t understand! Sin always causes confusion. And, so will compromise, it always leaves us in a state of confusion. Sin and compromise leaves the world confused also, they look on and say, “wait a minute, I thought you said you were a Christian, if so why do you do those things that I thought you all say you not suppose to”. Sin

and compromise always produces confusion, and there is only one way for clarity, only one thing is clear, and that is to walk in obedience in accordance to the Word, and anything less will cause and bring confusion into your life.

Joshua's Generation Not Perfect

Now take note of this, and that is that Joshua's generation was not perfect, we read of them not utterly driving out the inhabitants, not seeking the Lord at Ai, making a covenant with the Gibeonites, but here we see God lays no charge against them, doesn't point out every fault and say you are all failures. This encourages me, and what it speaks here is the difference between the generations. Both generations have their failures, but one generation is not living in a "habitual" lifestyle of sin (Joshua's), but the other is (generations of Judges), and here we see God's grace and kindness that we can take comfort in today, that God forgives, God overlooks, he doesn't hold us to standards of perfection. Yes we will fail, but get up and move on, and continue pressing for the upward calling of God and know God is working and walking with us:

Philippians 3:12–14 (NKJV) ¹² Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Judges 2:9 And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.

God Knows Exactly Where You are At / Your Children Too (Wayward Ones)

Not a sparrow falls to the ground without God knowing it, and are you not of more value to Him than they? God knows exactly where Joshua is buried, to the very last detail of borders, mountain, and what side of the mountain. God knows exactly where Joshua is at, and He knows exactly where you are at, what city, what mountain, to which side of the mountain you are on. He formed you in your mother womb, He knows the number of hairs on your head, you are precious in His sight, you move His heart (YOU MOVE GOD'S HEART), You are the apple of His eye and He hides you under the shadow of His wing, He is not distant but near to you. And, He knows where your kids are, even your wayward child (like the Nation if Israel is being), and you can rest He is coming to them just like he came to the children of Israel here in this passage.

Matthew 10:29–31 (NKJV) ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. ³⁰ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Psalms 139:13–18 (NKJV) ¹³ For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. ¹⁷ How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! ¹⁸ If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

Psalms 116:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints.

Psalms 17:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,

Judges 2:10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.

Know Personally versus Know About

Now this generation knew about God, all His wondrous works that He did for Israel, we saw them celebrating the Feasts of Israel, but what we see is they did not know Him personally, they did not have a relationship with Him. They had a ritual without a relationship, they had religion without intimacy. As it has been said, if you don't stand for something, then you will fall for anything, and so will be their life cycle.

Judges 2:11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals;

Judges 2:12 and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger.

Judges 2:13 They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.

10&11 Go together – Because we all Serve Someone

Verses 10 and 11 go together because every person will serve something/someone.

Their Assessment vs God’s Assessment

In their mind they did what was right in their own sight, yea it was all ok; but in God’s perspective, they did evil in His sight.

Judges 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Baal

Baal was the rain god, the god of the intellect. Because the people of the region were dependent on rain, and because weather was a mystery to them, Baal was their explanation for everything they couldn’t understand. Later on, it would be the prophets of Baal Elijah would challenge to send forth rain upon a drought-stricken land (1 Kings 18).

Ashtaroth - Easter

Ashtaroth, also known as the Babylonian god, Ishtar, and in Rome as “Easter,” was the goddess of fertility, whose signs were, interestingly, the rabbit and the egg. Baal and Ashtaroth—the god of the intellect and the goddess of the senses—are two gods our own society still serves. Truly, behind every Penthouse and Playboy magazine looms the goddess Ashtaroth. And on every college campus where men flaunt their intellect and think themselves too wise to bow the knee to the God who reigns in heaven, there lurks Baal.

Philosophy behind False gods

There is way more to these false gods that Israel served than we think. We think they are burning some incense and making some chants, and the heading out to work. But far be it from that. History tells us what the philosophy was behind the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth. To find their favor (for a good crop, for a good business, for personal financial gain) a person would go down to the temple of Baal/Ashtoreth and pay money to the temple prostitute and have sexual relations. So the representation was becoming one with the god, and then the god would honor the person with their personal desires, because they had honored the god with their action. The whole false religion, shaped by man, fueled by the Devil, was to the person for their personal pleasure (sexual) and comfort (wealth).

Heavy Chapter

People can say wow this is a heavy chapter, lots of talk about sin and God being upset about it, this isn’t a feel-good Sunday by any means. To me, this is a pure joy chapter, this is a very comforting chapter, this is an exciting chapter to me, this chapter gives me strength for today. Why, because verse one says “I will never break My covenant with you”. I read about a God who moves on my behalf, a God who comes and speaks to me when I am going off the straight path, I read a God who knows my name, knows where I am, knows where my children are at, will come to my children like He comes to me, a God who is intimately involved in every detail of my life and theirs, a God whose word is always about (His Glory and for my Good). I read a chapter about a God, who happens to be my God, who goes to war against my enemies, and promises victory over them and all I have to do is follow Him in obedience; nope, this isn’t a heavy chapter for us, this is pure power!

Judges 2:1 (NKJV) ¹ Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: “I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you.

Judges 2:14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.

Life of Habitual Sin

Here we see a people who are not followers who fail, but a people who are living a life of unrepentant habitual sin.

Despoil

It says they were “despoiled”, meaning all the riches and goodness they had acquired when they took the land (vineyards they didn’t plant, homes they didn’t build, silver and gold) were all taken from them. Disobedience will always result in being despoiled. Oh all that we worked for, all that we labored for, the sacrifices we made, the reputation we established as followers of God, can all be wiped out, taken away, ruined by entering into compromise and then sin.

Anger Means Anger

The word here for anger, means anger. It means the forehead getting red, and the nostrils puffing in and out. It means what it says, God is angry. Yes God gets angry, and He hates sin, because He hates what sin does to His precious crowing jewel of His creation – Man!

How Angry with You?

How angry is the Lord with you? How angry is He with your sin and your failing? How angry is He with you that you make the same mistake over and over again? He is so angry with you that “He gave” His only Begotten Son for you! He loves you, and He is the same yesterday, today, and forever! That never changes regardless of your sin and your failing.

Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Judges 2:15 Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.

Judges 2:16 Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.

Judges 2:17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so.

Judges 2:18 And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them.

The Sin Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves:

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are enslaved by sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

What happened to This Generation? / Give Thanks / Camden Singing – 10,000 Reasons

Oh what happened to this generation? How did they fall so far from their parents’ generation? Notice there is no mentioning of their parents being to blame, as their parents lived it out real and publically before them in all their actions of faith.

- Did this generation get comfortable, chose comfort over ease?
- Did this generation feel they had an entitlement, they were to be given everything rather than fight for it?

Here is a key for all generations if either of the above is part of this issue, and that is become a worshipper of God, and in your daily worship give Him thanks for all He has done, else we too could soon forget all the blessings He has bestowed upon us, simply by His grace and love.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

This week as I was sitting with Camden right before bed he says daddy do you remember when Faithful (our dog) had that cut under his eye? Do you remember we sang "Bless the Lord Oh My Soul (10,000 Reasons), he said we should sing that again right now. And so we did, and to hear his sweet little 9 year old voice, oh my heart was moved. That day I had the usual weight of the world upon my shoulders, than night I only had praise and thanksgiving upon my heart. Christian take time to praise Him, take time to give Him thanks for all His goodness. He loves you.

No Word in Judges

Sometimes what is missing from the accounts is as important as what is recorded. What you will not find in the Book of Judges, is the Children of Israel coming to the Word of God. So we see a clear comparison and contrast with the Book of Joshua. We read on several occasions God speaking clearly to Israel and Joshua, do not depart from the Word of God, don't veer to the left or right of it. Joshua realizing and recognizing the reason for their first defeat (at Ai) was because they did not seek and heed the Word of God. After a second shot at Ai and a great victory, Joshua gathers all of Israel and recaps the Law of Moses, and he does so by chiseling the word of God into a rock for all to see and read and be reminded that God's word is perfect, and follow it and you will have an abundant and successful God life. Joshua's last words to Israel before he left for his eternal reward, he said keep all that is written in the law, follow wholly the Word of God; and he puts another stone as a reminder for them every time they pass it, the Word of God, it will give you success, follow it wholly, trust it fully. But you won't find the word of God spoken and reminded of us anywhere in the Book of Judges, and thus the heart of why they lived in the washing machine cycle of up and down.

Joshua 1:7-8 (NKJV) ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. ⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Joshua 8:32-34 (NKJV) ³² And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. ³³ Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. ³⁴ And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law.

Joshua 23:5-8 (NKJV) ⁵ And the LORD your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you. ⁶ Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, ⁷ and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them, ⁸ but you shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day.

Joshua 24:26-28 (NKJV) ²⁶ Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. ²⁷ And Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God." ²⁸ So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance.

Faith by the hearing of the Word / It is Holy Ground

Israel, ourselves, we take the land by faith, but we continue in the land by faithfulness. What do we base our faith on, God's Word, that He is all that He says He is, and will do all that He says he will do. And for our personal holiness, He speaks His word to us, and it is like a Holy Spirit scalpel, and He does spiritual surgery on us conforming (sometimes through cutting) into His image. When Moses came before God there at the burning bush, God said Moses take off thy sandal, for you are on Holy Ground. When God speaks His Word, where God's Word is, is Holy Ground. I often get asked, to be honest sometimes challenged, why we have such a tight policy about people coming in and out of the sanctuary while the teaching is going forth, and it is because we believe that when we open God's Word, we are on Holy ground. It is not man speaking about God, but God Himself speaking to man. Many people are living the Israel-Cycle (up and down spiritually), because they don't take off their sandals, and approach God when He speaks as Holy Ground. When you open your Word for morning devotion, when you come to youth group, ladies or men's study, the God of the universe is speaking to you. He wants to tell you something about His heart, He wants to tell you what He thinks of you, and He want to tell you what He wants you to do which is always for your own good. Regarding you being a possible distraction to someone during a study, realize you may distract them at the very moment God is trying to tell them something that will change their life, do you

feel it is worth it? But, what could you possibly be missing yourself. Beloved, take off thy sandals, God is calling you to Holy ground.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Hebrews 4:12–13 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Exodus 3:5–6 (NKJV) ⁵ Then He said, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” ⁶ Moreover He said, “I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

Study to Show Self Approved

And the Lord says when you come to this Word, study to show yourself approved. This word “approved – dokimos” as it was used at the time of Paul’s writing meant, “approved, tried, accepted”. It was a word that was used particularly of coins and money. In the ancient world there was no banking system as we know it today, and no paper money. All money was made from metal, heated until liquid, poured into moulds and allowed to cool. When the coins were cooled, it was necessary to smooth off the uneven edges. The coins were comparatively soft and of course many people shaved them closely. In one century, more than eighty laws were passed in Athens, to stop the practice of shaving down the coins then in circulation. But some money changers were men of integrity, who would accept no counterfeit money. They were men of honour who put only genuine full weighted money into circulation. Such men were called “dokimos” or “approved”. So we are to be a people who only put the full-weight of God’s Word into everything we do, every way that we live, we don’t shave the word down, but live it to its full weight and worth, regardless how much it may cost us.

2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV 1900) ¹⁵ Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Rightly Divide

To rightly divide means to cut right down the middle, to be centered (like a plumb bob). It is our NT version of what God spoke to Joshua, and that very Word that brought Joshua success will bring us success, to not deviate from the left or right of God’s Word:

Joshua 1:7–8 (NKJV) ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. ⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

My Prayer – Revival of the Word

I pray for a revival of the Word of God to sweep across this County, State, and Country.

Judges 2:19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

Judges 2:20 Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, “Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice,

Judges 2:21 I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died,

Judges 2:22 so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept them, or not.”

Judges 2:23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

Again – Habitual Sin

Here we see a people who are not followers who fail, but a people who are living a life of unrepentant habitual sin.

The Sin Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves:

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are enslaved by sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

Conclusion

Written as Example

The Book of Judges, written for our guidance, for God's glory and our good. He is showing us how to walk, and it is in accordance to His Word. He loves you!

How Do I Know I Am Forgiven – Because His Word

So we read of this sin-cycle, the washing machine life of up and down, turning and churning, because they had forgotten God, they did not know Him, even while playing religion, doing religious things, but never heeding to the voice of God, never writing the Word of God on their hearts. But we here today take these examples, and how daily we need to be reminded of them, and we allow the Word of God to be written on our hearts, placed on the forefront of our minds, and we can break that sin-cycle, and even when we do fall into sin, we can shorten that sin-cycle and get back to the solid rock of Jesus Christ and His Word. Today we stand on His Word, and we will leave victorious, because we know this Word is truth and life!

- How do we know we are forgiven? Because He said we are!
- How do I know I have eternal life? Because He said we do!
- How do I know He is conforming me into His image? Because He said He is!
- How do I know He will never leave me not forsake me? Because He said it!

There are times I can sense His presence, as if I could physically touch Him, but..... Remember this too, He is still right there next to me even when I don't feel it, because that is the part of faith that moves me beyond my feelings and emotions into faith and trust in His Words.

1 John 2:12 (NKJV) ¹² I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

1 John 2:25 (NKJV) ²⁵ And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

Philippians 1:6 (NKJV) ⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV) ⁵ Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

My Prayer – Revival of the Word

I pray for a revival of the Word of God to sweep across this County, State, and Country..... and may it start here today among us, within the very circle we stand in.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?

- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 3

3:1-7

Let's read our text for today's study and then we will come back and break it down, verse-by-verse:

Judges 3:1–11 (NKJV) ¹ Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, *that is*, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan ² (*this was* only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), ³ namely, five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. ⁴ And they were *left*, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. ⁵ Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁶ And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods. ⁷ So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs. ⁸ Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. ⁹ When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. ¹⁰ The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. ¹¹ So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

Refiners Fire

The word "testing" takes my mind to some other passages:

Psalms 66:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.

Malachi 3:3 (NKJV) ³ He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness.

Isaiah 1:25 (NKJV) ²⁵ I will turn My hand against you, And thoroughly purge away your dross, And take away all your alloy.

The Goldsmith

While reading Malachi chapter 3, a group of women in a Bible study came upon a remarkable expression in the third verse: "And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." One of the woman said she would visit a silversmith/goldsmith and report to the other women what he said on the subject. She went accordingly and, without telling the object of her errand, asked to know the process of refining silver, which the smith described to her. He said the process of the refining of gold (or silver) means putting the gold dust in a crucible and heating it until it melts. It is then that impurities begin to come up to the surface as a dirty film. The refiner then takes a ladle to scoop off these impurities and discards them. To which she said, "But, sir," she said, "do you sit while the work of refining is going on?" "Oh, yes, ma'am," replied the silversmith. "I must sit with my eye steadily fixed on the furnace, for if the time necessary for refining is exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver will be injured." The woman at once saw the beauty and comfort of the expression, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." She then asked, and when do you know the process is complete, to which he responded, "when he can see his own image reflected in the gold".

So Too – God is Purifying us / Steel Structures to Build Off Of

So too it is with God as He works in us. He puts us through these testing and these trials, and as we go through these testings' and these trials, He's working all the impurities out, because He wants to make this perfect steel, this hard steel that's able to withstand all that comes against it, because He wants to build Himself a strong building. He's got a work that He's putting together as he uses us in these steel structures. Leave yourself open for God to do his work and the testing as he creates this powerful ...

Are you in the Furnace of Testing?

Are you going through some fires, maybe by your own fault, maybe by no fault of your own, I pray this study reminds us that God is working, His hand is on the temperature gauge, He is sitting a watching closely, and He is working out pure gold in your life, refining you to be His reflection.

Judges 3:1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan

Judges 3:2 (this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it),

What Nations God Left Around You?

What nations has God left allowed to remain in your life that he might teach you?

We Come here to Learn War

We come here to learn war, and I make no apology for not being entertaining because we are here learning war. I like the United States Army training manual, for in it one of the principals they train is to train the way you will fight. and in the first page of the army training manual it says the way you train in peacetime is the way you will fight in wartime. Here we are. We're in our training so that we can go when the war comes, we'll be prepared and ready for battle.

Train as You Will Fight. "Train as you will fight" means training under an expected operational environment for the mission. This means establishing in training what the unit can expect during operations to include the culture of an operational environment. Commanders and other leaders replicate cultural settings as much as possible during training, using role players or actual mission partners.

- Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 7-0, Training Units and Developing Leaders

Because we are in a War

Because we are in a war:

Ephesians 6:10–13 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Judges 3:2 (this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it),

Parents – We can't Insulate our Children

Verse 2, parents we can't keep our kids insulated from all the hardship and discomforts. We have to let them face some of these trials so that they too can learn to grow, that they too will learn war and how to fight for their own, especially when we're gone. I'm reminded of the story of the butterfly. As a butterfly was trying to break through its cocoon, and the man was watching, and he just couldn't bear to watch the struggle anymore, so he went and got a pair of scissors, and he says, "I'm going to cut a little hole here. I'm going to open the hole that the butterfly is trying to break through from so that the butterfly can just ease out. I can't bear to watch this butterfly in its pain and struggle," and so he did, but he noticed that the butterfly, its body was bloated and its wings were not developed. He would later come to find out, as he would study what had happened, it's that little hole in the cocoon that as the butterfly pushes its body out of where all the fluid is, as he pushes himself through that little opening of the cocoon as God has designed it, the fluid from his body pushes out into the wings, and the wings develop and take its shape and hence why the butterfly can fly is because of its struggle through the cocoon. We as parents, we have to seek the Lord continually, that we don't try to shield our kids too much from discomforts and hardships of the world. Yes, as parents we want to love and protect them, we have to allow them also to face discomforts and take their turns of doing hard things in life, so that they too, like the butterfly, can develop into that beautiful butterfly and fly and fly.

You have never Surrendered Camden to Me!

You have never surrendered Camden to me – the Words the Lord spoke to me in a prayer meeting in April 2015. But I am a good father, I work hard to provide for him, I carry extra burdens to lighten the load in the home upon Renee so we can homeschool. These are good and noble things I say in my heart. To which the Lord answered me, you think that somehow you can protect Camden, but all your efforts will never be able to protect Him and provide for him, like I can and will. You will never save enough money, you can't protect him from all the ills of the world, someday you will die, someday you won't be there, you have to surrender him to me. To which I did right there on

the spot, it was hard yet at the same time so freeing, I know and heard directly from God, He sees Camden, and His hand is upon him. Probably a month later Camden comes and tells me, all 9 years old of him, he feels God wants him to go to Cambodia. I said how do you know, he said because I can feel it in my belly. To which I said well lets pray on it for a while. So we did, but it wasn't God confirming it to Camden, he never wavered all the way to departure day, it was the Lord waiting for me to confirm my surrender of Camden to Him, by saying into Thy hands I give You my Son. We must protect our children from the ills of this world, but we must surrender them into God's hands, and trust Him to in whatever He desires to do in them, and sometimes that may mean teaching them war, so they may come to know Him for all He is.

Judges 3:3 namely, five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath.

Names of 5 kings

Interesting to look at the meanings of these 5 kings of the Philistines, we know who they are from our study in Joshua 13. Know your enemy, know who is coming against you, and don't be surprised when they come.

1. Gazites - means "the strong". God says to destroy them while you are strong, before they become stronger than you.
2. Ashdodites - means "I will spoil". These compromises, these enemies in the flesh want to spoil the abundant Christian life God desires us to have.
3. Ashkelonites - means "the fire of infamy" and "I shall be weighed". Infamy is the state of being well known for some bad character or deed. An evil act or a wicked act. They may start off being friendly and kind, and hence why Israel made treaties and unions with them, but eventually the true nature of the flesh arises, and it is evil.
4. Gittites - means "belonging to Gath", and Gath means "the wine press". These sins we leave, eventually will press us and crush us and make our life empty.
5. Ekronites - means "immigration", and that's the act of leaving one's resident country with intent to settle elsewhere. Along with that thought then it also means to be torn up by the roots. So it is with any flesh we leave to hang around it, it wants to move in and establish a full time presence in our life.

Joshua 13:3 (NKJV) ³from Sihor, which is east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (which is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines—the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites;

The Other 3 Nations

And the other nations mentioned in this verse:

- Canaanites - mean "zealous" and we know Satan is zealous to enslave us and destroy us, but remember so is God.
- Sidonite - means "hunting", and the Evil One Satan is always on the hunt, like a roaring lion.
- Hivite - means "villages". And so it starts as enemies but we read how now they are neighbors, they are bowling together and they are having cook outs together

Notice – "Mount Baal Hermon"

And look at the names of the lands mentioned here, look at what the Promised land now has become to Israel.

- Mount Lebanon means "wilderness"
- Mount Baal Hermon means "lord of destruction"
- Hamath means "fortress"

Mount Baal Hermon

Notice it's called Baal Hermon. It's renamed from Mount Hermon, as Israel just stood by and allowed these Canaanites that they were supposed to utterly drive out, now they're becoming neighbors with them. Well, the neighborhood now is starting to call what the names of the cities ... They're starting to lay out how the cities are going to be run, and so they go and they change Mount Hermon to Baal Hermon after their false god Baal. All Israel now, at this point, was just standing by and allow it. Mount Hermon is in the northernmost part of the nation of Israel. It was Joshua's northernmost conquest as they were taking the land. It is the highest mount in Israel, over 9,000 square feet. You can see it from miles and miles away. It's beautiful, mountainous land there, especially

when you stand down in the valley, and you look up at the majesty and majestic of the mountain. Guess what these Canaanites would always do on the high mountains? They would go up there, and they would build altars, and they would sacrifice unto their false god Baal. Some of it was even children sacrificed.

As insulting as that may be, and to look ... Every time they would look around they would look up and see that mountain and they would know how far they had fallen, when they're come into their time of slavery, it would always be a reminder of what once was conquest now has been given over to the enemy.

Guess what, many of the scholars, J Lightfoot is one of them, in Matthew 17 believes that the mountain, the mount that is mentioned where Jesus's transfiguration was is none other than this mountain because it is the closest to the city of Caesarea Philippi, just as we had read prior chapter Matthew 16, verse 13. Mount Hermon was probably the very place that the transfiguration of Jesus took place, the glory of Jesus right there, the perfection of Jesus. Here, what we can see is God is always redeeming. God is always taking back what the enemy has stolen. It's interesting to note that Mount Herman has three peaks, and what a picture of the trinity. We see God's always at work. No matter how far we've fallen, we always see God on the move to redeem and make things his. He turns what was once idolatrous sacrificial worship, he turns it into a place of his glory and transfiguration for everyone to see.

Matthew 17:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; ² and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. ³ And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. ⁴ Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

What seems Set – Know Jesus comes to Redeem

We can look at Mount Herman and we can look whatever you're facing, whatever seems set, whatever seems renamed into something negative in your life, something you think will never change, just remember Jesus is always coming, and Jesus is always ready to bring things back.

Judges 3:4 And they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

Judges 3:5 Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Judges 3:6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods.

Judges 3:7 So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.

The Sin Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves:

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are enslaved by sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

Deuteronomy 20

It has happened exactly as God said it would. That is you don't utterly drive them out, they will teach you their abominations. God's Word always comes true, always!

Deuteronomy 20:16-18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ "But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, ¹⁷ but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, ¹⁸ lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God.

We In World – Not of It

Reminder for us today, we're in the world, but not of the world. Just because the world is all around us, doesn't mean we have to yield to the world in any way, regardless how big of small:

John 17:14–19 (NKJV) ¹⁴ I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

God's Testing – to Purify / 1st Corinthians 3

Because the Israelites continually disobeyed Him, the Lord said, “I’m going to allow their enemies to remain.” Thus, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. served as instruments whereby the Lord could test His people, for them to see what is really in your heart, what is it that you really believe, or do you really believe it at all?. First Corinthians talks about the testing we face. You see, many of the problems we go through are the results of our own foolishness. Many of the difficulties we encounter are the direct result of our own disobedience. Yet the Lord will use those very difficulties and problems in order to test us, to prove us, to show us where we stand. You will be tested, gang, and it is during the time of testing—when fire sweeps through your life, your marriage, your family—that you will discover whether you have been building with wood, hay, and stubble, or with gold, silver, and precious stones.

1 Corinthians 3:9–17 (NKJV) ⁹ For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. ¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. ¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Work

There will be times in the work place where the boss is being difficult, you may get overlooked because of favoritism, you just are not being treated right. We have the tendencies to say I am out of here, resume update, or we say I am just going to work like everyone else then, why work hard if I am not being recognized for it. To which I would say to you, let those fires burn for a while, for we are always so quick to react, but God has allowed “these nations” to remain so He might test us, to show us what is in us. Maybe He is showing us that we are putting too much focus into our work, that we associate our identity in our work, greater than our identity in Christ. It is where we seek our recognition, where we love to hear the praises of man of how great we are (because of our work), not our walk. Let those hard times at work burn for a while, recognize that God has allowed those nations to remain to test you, let the fire burn, and see what He is trying to burn away, what dross He is trying to remove, what precious gold He is seeking to produce in your life.

Marriage

There are times in your marriage, when it just is hard. There is tension, there is “strong fellowship – also known as fighting”. Maybe your spouse is pointing something out about you and you want to immediately defend yourself about, go on a counterattack. Let those hard times in the marriage burn for a while, recognize that God has allowed those nations to remain to test you, let the fire burn, and see what He is trying to burn away, what dross He is trying to remove, what precious gold He is seeking to produce in your life.

You who are married, going to be married, we owe our life to the person who said “I do” to us, there can be no taking for granted. Sometime, time, forgets the gift. Remember the beginning? Remember wondering at first sight, or first meeting, could I really be “get” this person, and they can be all mine for my whole life. But time has a way of forgetting those things, and we can say, there you are, every morning when I wake up, and every evening when I come home, and the gift becomes common. To each, I must say to all, you must be to that person that said “I do” to you, everything they thought you were and would be. At whatever the cost, and I am talking spiritually of the things of God.

A Friend

Maybe it is in your private devotion a word hits you, and it hurts you, you don’t want hear it because you don’t want to admit that maybe you are not as spiritual as you think you are. Maybe it is through a friend and that word offends you, and thus you feel the need to get the flamethrower out and burn them up. Let those hard words

burn for a while, recognize that God has allowed those nations to remain to test you, let the fire burn, and see what He is trying to burn away, what dross He is trying to remove, what precious gold He is seeking to produce in your life.

Other Person

You know there will always be other people in your life that “rub you the wrong way”, and yes the fact is they are difficult, they are hard to get along with. Let those difficult people burn for a while, recognize that God has allowed those nations to remain to test you, let the fire burn, and see what He is trying to burn away, what dross He is trying to remove, what precious gold He is seeking to produce in your life. Christian, we can't wish our problems away, we need to look and realize God has allowed them to remain so as to test us. Maybe God is teaching you about unconditional love, grace, mercy, maybe God is showing you something about yourself that you would never see if it wasn't for this person in your life rubbing you the wrong way. What if that person is a Christian? Reminds me of 1st Peter, we are living stones that God is “fitting” together to build His Body, and all the stones will need some chiseling on in order to make them fit together, and yes, once together we as living stones will be rubbing against each other.

John 1:3 (NKJV) ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

1 Peter 2:5–6 (NKJV) ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”

From the Pulpit

Maybe it is a word that comes from the pulpit, or a minister that says hey brother/sister, I need to talk to you about something that Lord has laid on my heart. Let those hard times at church burn for a while, recognize that God has allowed those nations to remain to test you, let the fire burn, and see what He is trying to burn away, what dross He is trying to remove, what precious gold He is seeking to produce in your life.

We have a tendency to say I am out of here, I don't like what he said, I agree with 90%, but not this. I am reminded of a story:

Two elderly excited women who were sitting together in the front pew of church with a fiery preacher.

- When this preacher condemned the sin of lust, these two ladies cried out at the top of their lungs... AMEN... BROTHER!
- When the preacher condemned the sin of stealing, they yelled again... PREACH IT REVEREND!
- And when the preacher condemned the sin of lying...they jumped to their feet and screamed. RIGHT ON BROTHER...TELL IT LIKE IT IS...AMEN!
- But when the preacher condemned the sin of gossip, the two got quiet and one turned to the other and said, "He's done quit preaching and now he's meddlin'."

Let it Burn

So let's not in all these things be so quick to defend, to counterattack, even when the other person (whether that be a spouse, workplace, friend, pulpit) be 100% wrong, but step back and say Lord, you have allowed this into my life, what is it that you may want to be showing me about myself, so you might purify some dross from my life, and refine me into the pure gold you desire, the reflection of You in my life.

Judges 3:7 So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.

Word about Generations

So we go from Joshua's generation of faith, to this generation that walks away from God. And regarding any generation being the generation that forgets the Lord in our lifetime. Here is what I say to each of us, as some here are younger generation, some here are middle-aged generation, let's just determine..... It won't be my

generation! I will live, I will fight, I will pray, I will proclaim, and I will not let it be my generation that forgets the Lord.

Jesus Revolution

For the past few weeks I have been reading about and looking at the Jesus movement of the late 1960's and early 1970's. The Calvary Chapel movement was birthed out of the movement. What is neat about the Jesus movement is that you don't just read about it, but you can actually watch it through videos from that time. And as I watch and as I read I just keep saying to the Lord, asking the Lord, why not now, just one more time, just one more time do a supernatural work of Your Spirit upon our Country. And here is what I continually see in revivals and movements of the Lord, first they were all preceded by prayers of the saints crying out to God for a revival, and then when it came, there was always repentance of sin (of course), and a revival of the Word of God. People were in love with God's Word, they were reading it, speaking it, and living it. I pray for a revival of the Word of God to sweep across this County, State, and Country. And to which I have been beseeching the Lord, oh Lord do it one more time, just one more time, in my generation, I don't want to hear about and read about past generations revivals, I want to live in one right now, so Lord do it again, and I pray that we all commit ourselves to that request every day until he does it.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 3:7-11

Let's read our text for today's study and then we will come back and break it down, verse-by-verse:

Judges 3:7–11 (NKJV) ⁷ So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs. ⁸ Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. ⁹ When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. ¹⁰ The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. ¹¹ So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

The Sin Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves; today will be the first of the seven. Today we will read of our first deliverer, his name is Othniel.

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are enslaved by sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

Question

The word for judge means (deliverer, rescuer). Do you need a rescuer today, is there something in your life that has enslaved you, something you are sick and tired of, then today in this message you can cry out to the Lord, and He will deliver you, rescue you today! And, maybe you are here today and you are sick and tired of seeing people enslaved, people in bondage, deceived by the lies of the world, living empty lives, then this message is for you in that God is always looking to raise up deliverers, rescuers, and I believe that today will be your calling from God to be raised up and do great and mighty things for the Lord and the people around you.

Ezekiel 22:30 (NKJV) ³⁰ So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.

Isaiah 6:8–9 (NKJV) ⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." ⁹ And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'"

Judges 3:7 So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.

Judges 3:8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years.

Stop for a Moment

Let's stop for just a moment, and let this ink on the page really sink in. People who were once free, living in a land flowing with milk and honey, homes they didn't build, vineyards they didn't plant, grapes the size of melons, lush green fields; and now they are enslaved by a cruel king and people. From freedom to slavery, from peace to agony, from abundance to meager existence. I don't have to go far to imagine this ink on the paper, I need only cross the street, hop in the car and go up to the park, or pick up the phone and call some people I call friends and family. Who are you thinking of right now? Who was once free and now lives enslaved? Some don't even realize it, some don't even know there is hope, because they don't know there is a rescuer dying (has died) to set them free. Lord break our heart of the things that break yours; have your way today of what You want to do through us, and we ask even right now, break their hearts that they will cry out to you.

Forgot – Means to Suppress / Not wanting to Respond to the Knowledge they Know

Forgot – the word sense means “to suppress”. So it’s not like you had planned last week that you were going to meet your friend for coffee before church today, and you got busy and forgot; but the word as used meant to suppress. A person knowing about God, but not wanting to respond to that knowledge of who He is, would suppress the knowledge of Him so they didn’t have to respond to Him. We read of the New Testament counterpart to this in Romans 1, as we read they knew the truth but they suppressed it so they didn’t have to honor it, and they could do what they wanted to do:

Romans 1:18–23 (NKJV) ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Sold means to Hand Over / Comes a Time – God Gives the Desires of the Heart

He sold them it means to hand over. It's not that He is selling because He receive nothing, there is no transaction. The word literally means “to hand over”. There comes a time when God gives a person or a nation what they want, to do what they want, again the word means He lifts His hand, He lifts His hand and releases them into their desire and it's called free will. He will not violate a person's free will.

He is Angry – for He Hates what Sin does to His Creation / Every Man Serves Someone

We see here he is angry about it because he knows what it means, he knows the outcome, he knows what the destruction beholds them because it's a picture to us, the picture of sin and the destruction it will bring to us. As we look at these things we see even though a man thinks that he is free and making his own decision, no man is free. We continually see through this chapter, how many times the word “serve” is found in this chapter (4 times) and through this whole book (17 times) because every man serves someone. A man thinks he is free but he is not and there is a battle going on for every person and we read it in Ephesian 6 where we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and power because there is a spiritual realm around us and there is a war going on for us between God and Satan for our very souls.

Cushan-Rishathaim – Doubly Wicked / Who is that Person you Were thinking of 5 Minutes Ago

Who do they serve, who are they enslaved to? Cushan-Rishathaim, whose name literally meant at that time, “twice wicked”. Not just wicked, but doubly wicked! If he was king today, and we spoke of him, we wouldn’t say the King of Mesopotamia, but King Doubly Wicked. It was the name the king gave himself to cast fear into the hearts of the people he came to conquer. He let it be known, that there would be no treaty or truces, I am coming to conquer you and enslave you. Who is that Person you Were thinking of 5 Minutes Ago; this is a spiritual picture of them, as doubly-wicked has them.

Where is Mesopotamia?

So just where is Mesopotamia? We would naturally just think they became slaves to one of the 5 lords of the Philistines, or the other surrounding nations that were left in the land that they had not driven out and were warned against by God. Mesopotamia is in the region of Iraq and Syria. Interesting as we read the paper today we continually see the atrocities of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Now Iraq is also what was known in the Bible as Babylon. Now check this out, who does the Bible say is the king of Babylon? In Isaiah 14 we read a parable/proverb about Satan, and in it he is called to as the King of Babylon. So I see a “type” here, and that is the king of Mesopotamia is none other than a spiritual allegory of being Satan himself. These children of Israel have turned themselves over to Satan. What they thought was their free-will to intermarry, burn a little incense at the altar of Baal, has now led them to be enslaved by the Devil himself. Every man will serve (worship – bow down) to either the Lord Jesus, or the Devil. Every man serves someone.

Isaiah 14:3 (NKJV) ³ It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve,

Isaiah 14:13 (NKJV) ¹³ For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;

The Fairytale of Egypt – Becomes Reality / Best Bad Experiences are Someone Else's

So now they are in slavery. This generation that had never heard of or got to witness the slavery of Egypt. What appeared to be some fairy tale, mythical stories that they heard and question whether they could possibly be true because they are living in this wonderful and glorious promise land flowing with milk and honey, living in beautiful houses and vineyards that are producing luscious fruit and crops that are bountiful and so they are in this land and they hear stories about the 400 years of slavery and they just think they are stories, here they are they get to experience it now. Not that they wanted to. The best bad experiences for us are someone else's. It's always better to read someone else's bad experiences than have to live them. So too today, as a person can hear the warnings about the dangers of sin, going against God's Word and Ways, and they say I don't believe it, I don't see what the big deal would be, sounds like legalism, sound like Bible-thumping, sounds like kill-joy, what's this little pleasure really going to do to me, it won't harm me! But at some point, the Devil comes and says, time to pay up.

Babylon – Idol worship

Israel will again later and are into 70 years of captivity in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar and the reason they would go in to that captivity is because they fail to heed God with giving the land rest, they wouldn't take his word. But we also see that they were to themselves a nation of idol worshipers, they weren't worshipping the true and living God Jehovah but they were worshipping the idols around them. But after their 70 years of judgement in Babylon, they would never enter into idol worship again, and it will actually be one of the tale tell signs to them that the anti-Christ is a not the Christ, because the Anti-Christ will require people to bow down and worship an image (idol) to which Israel will be triggered to say, no way, this can't be the Christ. Maybe you have fallen into sin, God will teach you in it, and strengthen so the next time you are the conqueror.

Revelation 12:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Revelation 13:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Judges 3:9 When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

The Sin Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves. The cycle continues and now they're into the sorrow part, but it took them 8 years.

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are enslaved by sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

8 Years before Cry – One More night with the Frogs

Eight years they would be enslaved before they cry out, 8 years under the King of Double-Wicked, 8 years – what took them so long to cry out! That just reminds me of the story in Exodus when the plagues of the frogs overran the land, and the stench of it, and how could you possibly even sleep with all the frogs croaking and Moses came to Pharaoh and Pharaoh says, "Take them away!" Moses said, "I will. When?" Pharaoh says, "Tomorrow." The Pharaoh literally was saying, "Give me one more night with the frogs." So it is with people. They know it's time to repent. They know there's something tugging on their heart, and its time to change. It's time to walk away from that addiction. It's time to walk away from that relationship that God has never destined for the person to be in, but they say "Give me one more night with the frogs. Not tonight, but tomorrow I'll come to repentance." To which I say, "You don't need to pray about repentance. Just repent."

Exodus 8:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ And Moses said to Pharaoh, "Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, that they may remain in the river only." ¹⁰ So he said, "Tomorrow." And he said, "Let it be according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God.

Enslaved 8 Years Before they Cry Out / 8 is Number of New Beginning

They were enslaved for 8 years, 8 in biblical numerology is the number of new beginnings. As an example 7 days in a week, and the next day (number 8) is the beginning of the new week. Beloved God is always ready to bring you into a new beginning.

Othniel – A Warrior – Fights for his Bride

So here we have our first deliver in the Book of Judges, Othniel. Let's go back and recap the heart of our first judge, what a warrior he was, a man who was willing to go fight for his bride.

Judges 1:12–13 (NKJV) ¹² Then Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife." ¹³ And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife.

Othniel – A Type of Christ in the Bible

Othniel is a type of Christ, and we see he had to take the land in order to get the treasure within it (the Bride).

Matthew 13:44 (NKJV) ⁴⁴ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Othniel – Means Lion of God

Othniel's name means "lion of God". Again a picture of Christ, Jesus who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. A God who fights for us as a lion, with a roar, with power and might!

Revelation 5:5 (NKJV) ⁵ But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

Fanciful Stories of Othniel / Israel longing for a Deliver like Othniel / He has Come – His name is Jesus

In his collection of rabbinical fables and traditions titled Legends of the Jews, Louis Ginzberg includes two fanciful additions to the story of Othniel and as we read them, they are just fanciful, but they indicate the heart and hope of the people of Israel, as they looked for a deliver with the heart and courage of Othniel. Oh hear O'Israel, and all people, there is a Greater-than-Othniel, and His name is Jesus Christ who will come and rescue all men and any man who will call upon His name.

- "Among the judges, Othniel represents the class of scholars. His acumen was so great that he was able, by dint of dialectic reasoning, to restore the seventeen hundred traditions which Moses had taught the people, and which had been forgotten in the time of mourning for Moses."
- "Othniel, however, was held so little answerable for the causes that had brought on the punishment of the people, that God granted him eternal life; he is one of the few who reached Paradise alive."

Romans 10:8–13 (NKJV) ⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

They First have to Cry Out – Before They can Be Delivered

But notice something in this cycle they lived, and the cycle every person lives in still today, and that is they are not rescued, they are not saved, they do not receive the judge/deliverer, until after they cry out. People often ask me, when will my son/daughter, my friend, walk away from their sin, to which I respond, "when they are sick of it". It is not until they are sick of it, that they will cry out for help, and be willing to walk away from it, because they are sick of it. We, must be a people who pray for them, that they will be sick of it.

She Rises – Call to Me and I will hear You (Jeremiah 33:3)

You can call out at any moment, and God will hear you, regardless of what is troubling you today, no matter how big or small, God hears and comes (below is March 1st Devotion from "She Rises"):

This morning is lovely. Winter seems to be evaporating; even if only temporarily. I only wish the things I'm mulling over in my head would melt away as well. The sunshine and fresh air were a cheerful respite. As I was walking I came to the spot of where an accident had obviously occurred. Someone hit a tree. There was broken glass. A bumper. And a license plate was attached. Every weekend you can count on it like clockwork; beer bottles, cans, and empty food containers litter the street. Remnants of the wreckage of alcohol. I wanted to call the police and make sure the person who hit the tree got their license plate back. It's not an emergency, but it is important. I dialed Eastern District. After three rings, a recording: "You have reached Anne Arundel County 911. Due to heavy call volume we are unable to take your call at this time." Are you serious? God spoke very softly to my heart, "I'm not too busy. I always have time for you. Remember those struggles you were trying to figure

out a few moments ago? I know they aren't emergencies, but they're important to you. If they're important to you, they're important to Me. You need help. You don't have to figure this out on your own." What a relief. The government, friends, and family may be too busy or unaware of our needs... God is never too busy. God is always there for us. He cares about the big things, but he also cares for the trivial. We can always go to Him. We don't have to carry these heavy burdens around all day long by ourselves. He wants to help. We just need to ask. Jeremiah 33: 3 "This is God's Message... 'Call to me and I will answer you. I'll tell you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own.' Bollas, Renee (2015-10-24). She Rises: Overcoming Every Dark Night (Kindle Locations 1343-1358). Renee Bollas. Kindle Edition.

Judges 3:10 The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim.

A Deliver – A Rescuer / You can be that Person / Ordinary Men/Woman / All 13 – Will Fight

A deliverer means a rescuer. You can be that person, you can rescue somebody from the enemy. It's a noble calling and we see God uses ordinary men and women but it doesn't come easy, it doesn't come without paying a price. But this ordinary men and women we read about them in Hebrew Chapter 11, the heroes of faith and they are just ordinary people who simply believe God is who he says that he is and he can do what he says he can do and therefore they rise up and they move on under that belief and that faith that God is and they are. Every hero will read about in this Book of Judges they all have one thing in common and they will go out to war and they will fight. Every last one of them, all 13.

Spirit came Upon Othniel

What was the strength of Othniel, it was the Spirit came upon him. Zechariah 4:6:

Zechariah 4:6 (NKJV) ⁶ So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

Same Spirit available to You Today

Same Spirit given and that came upon him, is the same Spirit given and promised to come upon us. And it is not "this" spirit, but "the" Spirit of God. Not a mystical force, but a Person of the Trinity, God Himself, in Person, to come and work with us to deliver and rescue a people. The greatest deliverer, rescuer is Jesus Christ. We go to rescue and deliver not alone but with Jesus, and He has proven Himself to be the great rescuer to all who want to be saved.

Let's Look at Zechariah 4

So let's look at Zechariah 4. But first the context of the whole Book of Zechariah first; The year was 520 B.C. The Jews had just returned from a seventy-year captivity where they were held hostage in Babylon. Zerubbabel, their political leader, and Joshua, their spiritual overseer, had led the first contingent of approximately 42,000 back from Babylon to Jerusalem. Upon their arrival, they set out to rebuild the temple. Yet, although they began well, after a year, they had given up on the project. So the Lord sent two prophets to spark their passion, to reignite their devotion, to jump-start their conviction. Haggai and Zechariah.

Zechariah 4:1 Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep.

Zechariah 4:2 And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps.

Zechariah 4:3 Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left."

Job of Priest – Keep Lamp Lite / Tapped Right to the Source

In this vision, Zechariah would understand what this lampstand, or candlestick, was all about because he was not only a prophet but also a priest. Part of the priest's job in the tabernacle and temple was to fill the lamps with oil and to trim the wicks of the lampstand that stood in the holy place. But this was different from any lampstand Zechariah had seen before, for on top of this lampstand was a reservoir filled with oil that would flow through pipes to each lamp. On each side of this lampstand stood an olive tree which produced the oil for the reservoir that emptied into pipes through which the oil for the reservoir was carried. From verse 12, we know that these trees were connected to the reservoir in such a way that oil was provided directly. In other words, there was no

need for harvesting and crushing the olives to make the oil for the lamps. Zechariah must have been rejoicing—no more chores!

Zechariah 4:4 So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, “What are these, my lord?”

Zechariah 4:5 Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.”

Zechariah is Perplexed what it Means

After being prepared for the vision and presented with it, now Zechariah is perplexed by it. Zechariah freely admitted he needed understanding, that he didn't have all the answers. So now he will be told the purpose of the vision...

Zechariah 4:6 So he answered and said to me: “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts.

Oil = Holy Spirit / Continual Source Available

Now in allegories, parables, dreams, visions, oil is always symbolic of the Holy Spirit, that is why the Lord said, "It's by My Spirit saith the Lord." That is, there is a constant source available, power for you through the Spirit.

Not Organization / Not Forcing to make Something Happen

Not by might, nor by power:

- The word might is the assembling of armies, the organizing of forces, or committees to organize forces.
- The word power is the word force itself.

Now, we see so many people trying to force the work of God, trying to force the gospel on their friends, trying to force the issues. I've often said to people who've asked me, concerning how can you know the leading of the Lord, and how can you know what God wants to do? I've said, "God so often leads us through open doors, and if God opens the door, go through it. But if He closes it, don't break it down." That's where we make our mistake. So often we think, "Oh, God wants me to do this." And a door will close, and we say, "All right, I'll bash that one down, and I'm gonna push it through. I'm gonna make it go." More energy, and effort, and money has been spent in trying to make a dead program go.

Simply being attached to the Olive Trees that provide a continual flow and source of Oil, the Holy Spirit. We see we can't do it in and of ourselves, but/and only God can!

How do we Receive this Power

So how do we receive this power? Jesus told them to “tarry” for it. Tarry, simply means to wait for.

Luke 24:46–49 (NKJV) ⁴⁶ Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

Acts 1:4–8 (NKJV) ⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” *He said*, “you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

YOU CAN'T HAVE INSTANT GOD! – Jim Cymbala

10 Days in Upper Room

Jesus walked among His followers for 40 days after the resurrection, then the day of Pentecost (means 50 – so 50 days from Feast of Firstfruits) came and the baptism of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon those in the upper room, so that means they tarried in the upper room for 10 days. What did they do while in the upper room for those 10 days? What did they do, they prayed! What would you be praying for, if Jesus told you to wait for the

receiving of power of the Holy Spirit coming upon you so you can be witnesses to Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth? Yes, you would be praying Lord send Your Holy Spirit

Acts 1:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ² until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, ³ to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Acts 1:12–14 (NKJV) ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Acts 2:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

While Tarrying – we see We can't do it, only God can!

We can't violate someone's free-will, but we sure can make their free-will uncomfortable.

1 - What Happens when Tarry? - Repentance

What will be happening while they tarry? Renunciation/repentance of sin, because as you spend time in the presence of the Lord, a person sees His holiness, and their sinfulness, and repentance will be a natural outcome of tarrying before the Lord. God will cleanse the vessel before he flows through the vessel. When I sense the Spirit "is not present" upon me "in power" I immediately seek the Lord asking is their unconfessed sin in my life that needs to be dealt with? Positional I know His grace is all that is needed for salvation, and that Spirit lives in me, but as for this empowerment promised, I know that unrepentant sin needs to be dealt with in order to be a vessel of honor prepared for every good work (2 Timothy 2:20-21). We will see in our study of Samson, as God uses him as an example for us, that he played with sin, and the power departed from him and he did not know it. Oh still saved, as he made it to the Hall of Faith as I doubt you make it to hall of Faith if not saved (Heb 11), but no power at that point in his life. He will later repent, and be empowered again

Acts 3:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

2 Timothy 2:20–21 (NKJV) ²⁰ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. ²¹ Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

Judges 16:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. ²⁰ And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.

Hebrews 11:32 (NKJV) ³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

Judges 16:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!"

2 - What Happens when Tarry? – Surrender

What will be happening while they tarry? A complete surrender. Know this, they saw Jesus Christ nailed to a cross and they knew that would be their fate. They knew the hostility towards Jesus will be a hostility towards his followers, yet they willingly gathered, surrendered themselves, made themselves vulnerable by all being in one place where they could all be found and killed by the Roman authorities incited by the Jewish religious authorities. Here they are, they fully surrender themselves at whatever the price for them that was worth the risk, at whatever the cost, however it would come to wait and tarry as Jesus said, so that they might have this power. How much more for us that same absolute surrender?

3 - What Happens when Tarry? – Deep Desire to be Empowered

What will be happening while they tarry? A deep desire to be empowered. Fervent prayer to be empowered, the recognition will come in the presence of Lord in prayer that they need help, they can't do it with Him, His Spirit. Question, where are the other 380 is significant to see? He revealed himself to some 500, we're told, but only 120 are in the upper room waiting, tarrying, desiring this baptism, this promise of power on high. For these 120, they were willing to enter in to prayer asking the Lord. It was worth it to them to spend those 10 days waiting upon it because they saw the need for it. They believed the word of the Lord. The other 380, it appears, it wasn't important enough for them to wait and to tarry. Prayer is not work, prayer is warfare. This is not a works-trip. We pray so God works. We pray that God works, not that we are working in prayer. Prayer is not work, prayer is not twisting God's arm. Prayer is aligning ourselves with the will of God. Prayer is our declaration of dependence. Prayerlessness is our declaration of independence, my organization skills, my forcing this to happen. Who needs prayer when I got great organization skills and I can manipulate and force people into doing my will? The Spirit, all I can do is surrender myself. Say, "Not my will, but your will be done." All that I can do in prayer is say, "Lord, I'm hopeless. This thing will never change. I'm powerless." When God shows up, things happen. Things get broken free. The word there for power is dynamite. That's what God's doing. He's blowing up things that are set, that seem immovable, things that seem impossible, mountains that can't be moved, by God's holy spirit overflowing us. That's when things are broken free, things are opened up, and his spirit moves and touches people, change hearts, and changes lives.

1 Corinthians 15:3–6 (NKJV) ³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

Acts 1:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said,

John 7:37–39 (NKJV) ³⁷ On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

4 - What Happens when Tarry? – Asking for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Believe You have Received)

What will be happening while they tarry? Fervent prayer to be empowered, the recognition will come in the presence of Lord in prayer that they need help, they can't do it with Him, His Spirit. They were asking, just as Jesus had told them to (Luke 11), and they were believing, for all of those ten days, that Jesus would give the power to them to do the work of the ministry, just as He promised.

Luke 11:11–13 (NKJV) ¹¹ If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

So How Long do you Tarry? / As Long as it takes – For He is Working in the Minister before the Ministry

How long do you wait for this power from on high? How long do you tarry for it? As long as it takes, put yourself on God's timetable, not your own. Don't rush it, for God is working in the vessel before He empowers the vessel. It is your desire to see Him do a work in that person or that ministry that draws you to come to Him to seek His power and help; and He then will use that time to speak to you, to refine you, to light a fire to burn away some dross. So it may take hours, days, weeks, and you simply tarry for it, for it will come, and God will do a great work in you along the way to doing a great work in that person or ministry. It isn't striving, it is fellowship with God Himself. How often? As often as you need it!

Judges 3:11 So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

You can be the Rescuer – Go to Them Today

You can be the rescuer, you can bring them rest. Go to them today immediately. Pray for the Spirit of the Lord to be upon you, and go fight and rescue them from their place that they're in.

Othniel – Already had Victory & Comfort

Othniel we read he had already driven out the enemies from his territory. He had beautiful upper land and lower land with a spring. He had a beautiful bride. He was comfortable and yet he was willing to go out and fight again, even after he had finished his fighting, taken his land. He was willing to go out and fight for those who hadn't driven out the enemy as God had commanded them ... those who now are compromising and not being faithful to what God had called him. Othniel was a what a picture of us, a man who was willing to leave his comfort, and leave a place that he could say I've done mine share. Here he is for the sake of others ... he's going to go out and he's going to fight, so that they might have an experience what he is currently and presently experienced ... even if it meant going to war. I'm praying for this congregation to be a congregation full of Othniel's who go out and fight for others to bring them in this blessed rest of Jesus Christ.

1 Man – 40 years of Rest

The land rested for 40 years through one man a whole nation enters into rest.

You are Unique – You leave an Imprint

You are God's unique gift to a lost and dying world, you are God's unique one of a kind gift to that family member who is hurting, that coworker who is broken, that friend who is empty. You are unique, you are one of a kind. Look and your fingerprint on your finger right now, and it is one of a kind, unique, no other like it in the world among 6+ billion people, because that is how God made you, unique and one of a kind. Therefore everything you touch, you leave your unique imprint on that person. You touch them, like no one else in the whole world can. Go – be the answer to their need. God is looking for a deliverer to raise up and deliver a people.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 3:12-31

Last Study – Covered Othniel

In our last study we looked at the first judge of Israel, Othniel. We saw that he was just a common man who believed God would use him, and God did, after God's Spirit came upon him. And as we studied, it is the same Spirit that came upon Othniel that is promised to us, and it is none other than God Himself coming upon us and doing a mighty work, for His Glory and our good. Did you "tarry" for it? God has made a Promise to you, and He will fulfill His Promise completely. For His Glory and Your Good.

Judges 3:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ *The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim.* ¹¹ *So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.*

Luke 24:46–49 (NKJV) ⁴⁶ *Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."*

Today Ehud & Shamgar

So today we will cover the next judges God raised up, Ehud and Shamgar.

God Just Tells it the Way it Is

In our story today we will read about the King of Eglon, and we will be told that he was a very fat man. God just tells it like it is. I like that. This Bible just reports things as they are, no political correctness to them. When His people fail, He just tells it like it is, we continually read about their cycle of failures. I'm glad God just tells it like it is, He doesn't hide it or cover it, else I would have no one to relate to, but I can pick up this Bible and read of truths, of people just like me having victories, people just like me having failures, people just like me, God-loving unconditionally. We have this book before us that is his heart and his truth, and we get to be blessed by it.

So let's jump in at verse 12

Judges 3:12 And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.

No Weapon Formed Against Shall Prosper / No Man – Government - Program

Verse 12, Eglon is not the true enemy of Israel, nor is Moab. The only enemy that Israel has is truly themselves and their disobedience to the Lord. We are told no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper and so we take that to heart and believe the word of God that there is nothing that can come against us that can defeat us, but what we see is ourselves can be our worst enemy. No man, no government, no program can stop the work of God in your life. Only you can by failure to yield and surrender yourself fully to Him, not having the faith to believe His word and letting His word lead you. That's the only enemy that will ever be able to defeat you because God is greater than any enemy that comes against you and enemies that do come against you,

Isaiah 54:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ *No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me," Says the LORD.*

He Allows these Testing – So You can See What is In You / And To Turn you Back to Himself

Verse 12 - So the LORD strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD - He's allowed it (these enemies) as we've studied so that He might test you not for His knowledge, but for your knowledge. That you might know what is in you and that you might see exactly where you're at with the Lord. There is no enemy that can defeat you. Only we ourselves can defeat ourselves, and once we turn from yielding to the Lord, forgetting Him which means suppressing the truth of what He has revealed to us, we'll have more enemies than we'll ever know what to do with because the enemy will press in like a flood and pour against us. Forget this not Christian, judgment begins in the house of the Lord, and maybe you are being tested and tried right now, it may very well be because God wants to correct something in your life, so yield to Him immediately, and allow Him to do His purifying work in your life to make you more like Him. For His glory, and your good.

Judges 3:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now these are the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan

1 Peter 4:12–19 (NKJV) ¹² Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴ If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. ¹⁷ For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ Now "if the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

Hebrews 12:3–11 (NKJV) ³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. ⁵ And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶ For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." ⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Judges 3:13 Then he gathered to himself the people of Ammon and Amalek, went and defeated Israel, and took possession of the City of Palms.

Jericho Eglons Resort Town / Place Victory now Defeat / BUT – Victory Just a Shout Away

King Eglon set his summer palace by Jericho (which is the City of Palms), but not in Jericho. Jericho will always be in the utter collapse. It will never be rebuilt just as God has prophesied through Joshua (Joshua 6:26). So King Eglon defeats Israel and builds a summer palace right there in Jericho. How sad it would be for all of Israel to see what once was a place of victory, a site of victory, now as a place where the enemy camps. But there's a picture of tumbled stones that always remind us that victory, even when the enemy camps, is only one shout away. It's every time they would see Jericho ... they could see the king of Moab with his summer palace and for them to just be reminded all that I must do is shout and God will bring victory, just like he did in Jericho. Here in our passage today, when they cried out, when they shouted, God raised up a deliverer. Christian, remember that, victory is always just a shout away, shout to the Lord for deliverance and He will deliver. And, as enemy after enemy come in, whether one a day week, month, or hour, victory is only a shout away.

Joshua 6:26 (NKJV) ²⁶ Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates."

Moab via Lot's Daughters / Save but Can't Provide / Cost of Drunkardness – Lifetime of Consequences

The pictures that are painted for us, last study we looked at Othniel and saw that the King of Mesopotamia was none other than Satan himself, "double wicked" we studied for the name there given for that king. Here, we see who comes against them in this period. It is Moab and Ammon who came via an incestuous relationship with Lot with his daughters after the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. Here again, the newspaper just telling the story the way it is. We see is the picture that God could save them from the destruction of Sodom, but can't provide for their future needs. So too how many times we as Christians fully assured of our salvation, we know only by His blood we are saved, but somehow we question and doubt he can and will take care of our future. So we begin to help Him, take things into our own hands, turn some cranks, throw some switches, to make things happen. If God can save you, God will provide for you, so you just wait upon the Lord even when it looks impossible, and He will see it through for you. Look also in that story, look at the price of drunkenness and that cost because now the nation of Moab is created and it will be thorn in the side of Israel for hundreds of years and so to decisions we make when we allow and think that the freedom, the Christian liberty of alcohol (marijuana) is no big thing. When all it takes is that one time of drunkenness and your life can be changed forever and generation after generation will feel the consequence of it. Not that they're being judged for it. It's just the consequences continue on.

Genesis 19:36–38 (NKJV) ³⁶ Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. ³⁷ The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. ³⁸ And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day.

Amalek – via Esau / Immediate Satisfaction – Not Wait for Heritage / Abraham – Isaac - Esau

The Amalekites, they join in this and who is the Amalekites? Amalek is the great-grandson of Esau (Genesis 36) and we know in the Bible Esau was a profane man, selling out his birth rite for a bowl of porridge which literally was just for the immediate satisfaction now. I'll give up my heritage because I don't want to wait for my heritage. I want immediate satisfaction. We continually, thousands, tens of thousands of times are saying Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but the lineage really should have been Abraham, Isaac and Esau and here in the life of Esau washed away his lineage, given up. He could have been that great Abraham, Isaac and Esau, but for one day for immediate satisfaction he gave it all away. Now truly it wasn't a one-time failure. It was his life of "I live for now" and immediately and not willing to look and settle for anything less than today. He gives up that spiritual heritage, gives up a lineage that would be glorified even to today. Oh the dangers of the immediate satisfaction. What it erases and what it foregoes. From Esau came the Edomites and the Amalekites and they would continually be a thorn in the flesh. In fact, an Amalekite will be the one who kills King Saul.

Genesis 25:29–34 (NKJV) ²⁹ Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. ³⁰ And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. ³¹ But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." ³² And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" ³³ Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Israel Wilderness Wandering – Moab & Balaam / Must have it Now! / Anything in Your Life today?

Look how this momentary desire for the immediate now satisfaction, look how it continues and propagates itself down from generation to generation, because as the children of Israel are wandering the wilderness (time of Moses) and God's bringing them great victory, when they come near that land of Moab, Moab knows this is not going to be good, we heard the power of their God they say so they call the prophet Balaam to curse Israel. Balaam said he can't curse them, as we studied three times, so what does he say? He goes, "You go get your young, virgin daughters and send them down there. The men of Israel will then bow themselves into the sexual immorality. They turn from their God and then their God will turn on them and bring his judgment upon them, because God has to bring correction upon and discipline his children." So it was exactly as Balaam said it would be. It did become. What we see once again is this Israel, the great nation, victory after victory, coming in the men for momentary satisfaction, saying, "I must have it now. I must have it here. I can't wait." They end up bringing this failing upon themselves and their whole family and their generation. So, too, it is with us, when we say, "I can't wait. I've got to have it now. I can't have a moment of my flesh being deprived. I want full satisfaction now." So, Christian, is there something you're saying I must have now and it is causing you to miss the future blessing and promises that God has for you? Is your work your here and now? I can wrestle with that. Is your home your here and now? Making your place comfortable. I can understand that. Are there fleshly things that are your here and now and you know it because God is speaking to you? They're robbing your future?

Revelation 2:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.

Numbers 25:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. ² They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. ³ So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.

Romans 15 – Examples / Only We can Defeat Ourselves / Satan – Same Strategy (Goes back to the Well)

Here God gives us this picture over and over, through the Old Testament, written for our example, as we're told in Romans 15. The good news, if you cry out, he'll send the deliverer and you can be made free. Once again, we see the picture of no weapon that's formed against you can defeat you, only you can, as we can become our worst enemy. As Balaam would say to King Balak, in this story oh you can't defeat them, but they can defeat themselves by entering into these illicit relationships and turning away from their God. Satan continues with that strategy today. Don't be deceived by it, don't think it's something strange that has come upon you or recognize it. Satan just goes back to the well. He doesn't have to make up anything new to defeat us, to bring us down, to keep us from having all that He would have for us. He just has to come with the same old tricks, in different colors, in different dressings, but underneath, all the same things.

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

How did Moses Defeat Amalek

Speaking of Amalek, do you remember how were they defeated in that great battle with Moses? Moses propped his hands up and Aaron and Joshua propped him up, to rest, then they rolled two rocks underneath his arm and as long as Moses' arms were lifted to the Lord, Israel prevailed. When his arms dropped, Amalek prevailed. The picture, the place of worship, left in Holy hands, puts the enemy on his heels. Worship and prayer, giving thanksgiving, like a child, lifting our arms, saying, "Papa, help me. I need you. Lift me up. All these things are snipping at me and closing in," and we lift our hands. The Lord lifts us up, holds us in his arm, brings his peace upon us, and victory soon follows.

Exodus 17:10–13 (NKJV) ¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³ So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Saul Killed by Amalekite – Because Left them Around

King Saul is killed by an Amalekite and the only reason that an Amalekite lives is because he didn't obey the Lord and utterly destroy them when he had the chance in the battle that was surely and clearly given to him. So it is for us, a continual picture. No treaties, no negotiations, utter destruction. As God would say, this is all to obey is better than to sacrifice. Don't do your religious exercise, obey my Word. That's what I am asking completely for my glory and your good. May we leave nothing lingering around us, whether it's that channel, whether it's that favorites on the toolbar, whether it's that music. Leave nothing lingering and deal with it completely because these are the pictures that are being shown to us, what happens when we leave them around and allow them to linger.

1 Samuel 15:9 (NKJV) But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all *that was good*, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

2 Samuel 1:6–9 (NKJV) ⁶ Then the young man who told him said, "As I happened by chance *to be* on Mount Gilboa, there was Saul, leaning on his spear; and indeed the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. ⁷ Now when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' ⁸ And he said to me, 'Who are you?' So I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' ⁹ He said to me again, 'Please stand over me and kill me, for anguish has come upon me, but my life still *remains* in me.'

If you don't destroy what corrupts, what corrupts will corrupt the pure

If you don't destroy what corrupts, what corrupts will corrupt the pure. Because Saul wouldn't destroy the flesh, the flesh destroyed him.

William Booth

William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, had a wife named Catherine Booth.

They had eight children together. William Booth loved God. There was no question in the hearts of his children about his dedication to the Lord. And he lived out a godly life in his home, and so did his wife. And those eight children, they grew up, and they just wanted to follow their father and their mother, so they scattered around the world as missionaries - preaching in some of the big cities around the world.

Well those eight children had forty-five grandchildren. And those forty-five grandchildren watched those eight children and their spouses and saw that they loved God, and that they were excited about the Lord, and that they had a real Christian life in them, and those forty-five grandchildren, every single one of them, rose up and said, "I'm going to follow the faith of my father and mother!" And those forty-five grandchildren all went out, scattered across the world on the mission field, to do the work of God.

On a mission trip to Africa, a man met a woman who had gone to Bible School with some of William Booth's great-grandchildren, and they're out on the mission field this day.

That's what God wants us to do! Pass on a vibrant, living Christianity to our children that will cause them to rise up and go out and do the work of God, which will cause their children to see that their parents are serious about God and they'll rise up and do the same thing, and it just keeps going on and on. The only thing that breaks the chain is cold-heartedness, and lukewarmness, and sin in the lives of God's people.

Hudson Taylor

James Taylor turned his heart over to the Lord after hearing John Wesley preach. He was late for his own wedding because he was on his knees praying, that God would bless his home. It took him about two weeks to win his wife to the Lord, and he became a Lay-Methodist preacher.

He had several sons, and they all rose up and the zeal of their father, and became Lay-Methodist preachers.

And then those sons, had several sons, who rose up and became Lay-Methodist preachers, and out of those sons was the father of Hudson Taylor. That father used to pray, every day, "Oh God, would you send missionaries to China. Oh God would you send missionaries to China."

And Hudson Taylor, when he was six years old, he got alone with God, and said, "God, I'll go to China."

And it doesn't stop there. The generations of preachers keeps right on going up to this generation, right now there's nine generations of preachers in the Taylor heritage! I recently got a poster advertising the 2010 Chinese Mission Convention, and there listed among the plenary speakers is Jamie Taylor – Hudson Taylor's Great-grandson!

Jonathan Edwards

God used Jonathan Edwards in a great revival 150 years ago. Jonathan Edwards had a wife. They were dedicated to the Lord. God gave them 10 children. They had a godly home. They raised those children for God. George Whitefield came to their home and saw that godly home, and those 10 children and went back to England and said, "I'm going to find me a wife, that's the most beautiful picture I've seen in a long time of a godly home." The State of New York did a study on five generations of the Edwards family, and here's what they found: Out of 729 descendants,

- 300 of them became preachers,
- 65 of them became college professors (Back in his day, the schools were made for one reason and that was to raise up preachers.)
- 13 of his descendants were university presidents.
- 3 were congressman, and one was a Vice-president.

All from one man who loved God, and set himself with his wife, to raise his children for God. And now we can see how the generations flow out from that.

And that can be our heritage moms and dads, so let's purpose that to be our lives.

Judges 3:14 So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years.

Judges 3:15 But when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab.

Last time 8 Years – Now Double / We Wait Because we Think – We Blew it Again (even after promised)

Last time they served a tyrant king for 8 years, this time 18. So often that seems to be the way that once we submit to sin, we jump out quick, but the next round it seems easier to stay in it longer because we aren't as sensitive to it as we were the time before. If you noticed when the King of Babylon suppressed, oppressed them, they were under his bondage for eight years and now here comes the King of Moab and they're under his bondage for eighteen and I think we see something there. I think we see a people who now hear this story, hear of God's deliverance, but then they go, "Oh, is He really going to come and deliver us? Have we blown it? Have we gone too far? Is He going to be mad because we entered back into something that He set us free?" I think very much so that this generation didn't cry out for twice as long because they wrestled with is He really that gracious that He'll come and deliver us. What we see here, He is. Every time we need, when they cry out, God will raise up a deliverer, a rescuer and set them free and that is His promise to you today.

Judges 3:7-8 (NKJV) ⁷ So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs. ⁸ Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years.

Cried Out – God Delivered / You Fear God will not Hear You – But He Does / Cry Out Today - Now

Verse 15, it says, "As soon as they cried out, the Lord raised up the deliverer, our rescuer." And how quick God is who when we call to Him anything that you need to call to Him today, something maybe that you've been withholding. You fear that you can't come to Him. You fear that He's not going to hear because you've said and you've promised so many times that you weren't going to do that again or enter into that unbelief, you let yourself have a hardness of heart, but here you are again and you can sit there and think that He's not going to hear, but we see in this passage of scripture before us, as soon as they cried out, as soon as they cried out, God raised up a deliverer to come and to set them free. Oh Christian, cry out to Him and enjoy the beauty of His freedom that comes because He will deliver you. It's a promise.

The Sin Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves; today will be the first of the seven. Today we will read of our first deliverer, his name is Othniel.

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are enslaved by sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

Might Say this is Repetitious – God says Right (It is that Simple – Just Cry Out)

And we might say this is a repetition. We're saying the same thing now week after week and chapter after chapter because God wants to scream it out to you as often and as long as you need to hear it. I'll set you free. Just cry out to me and you have freedom. You can have the power and the love that you've been seeking and longing for. The lies that you've fallen for, I can come and I can overcome them in your life so that you might have this new life that I promise you.

Judges 3:16 Now Ehud made himself a dagger (it was double-edged and a cubit in length) and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh.

Judges 3:17 So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (Now Eglon was a very fat man.)

Judges 3:18 And when he had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute.

Judges 3:19 But he himself turned back from the stone images that were at Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king." He said, "Keep silence!" And all who attended him went out from him.

Significance of Gilgal

What was the significance of Gilgal as we studied in the Book of Joshua?

- Was where they camped the day they crossed over the Jordan River (as they entered the Promised Land)
- It was where Joshua built the memorial of the 12 stones that were taken out of the Jordan River (Joshua 4:19-24)
- It was where they were Circumcised (the cutting away of the flesh) (Joshua 5:1-9)
- It was where they had their first Passover Feast in 38 years (Joshua 10-12)
- It was where the Lord appeared to Joshua as the Captain of the Lord's Army (Joshua 13-15)
- It was there center of operations as they conquered the Promised Land (Joshua 10:6,15,43, etc)

It's All Ehud Could Stand

It's all Ehud could stand. He couldn't stand anymore. When he saw Gilgal and Jericho, what it once was, and everything that it meant, the place of victory, he turned back. It was time to claim that victory.

God is Looking for the Ehud's

God is still looking for the Ehud's of His Kingdom, those that are tired of see people enslaved. Those that are tired of remembering days of people being free, of God's great work, of a once great nation, a once great move of God, and they say "enough" I am going to do something about it.

Othniel – Already had Victory & Comfort

Othniel we read he had already driven out the enemies from his territory. He had beautiful upper land and lower land with a spring. He had a beautiful bride. He was comfortable and yet he was willing to go out and fight again, even after he had finished his fighting, taken his land. He was willing to go out and fight for those who hadn't driven out the enemy as God had commanded them ... those who now are compromising and not being faithful to what God had called him. Othniel was a what a picture of us, a man who was willing to leave his comfort, and leave a place that he could say I've done mine share. Here he is for the sake of others ... he's going to go out and he's going to fight, so that they might have an experience what he is currently and presently experienced ... even if it meant going to war. I'm praying for this congregation to be a congregation full of Othniel's who go out and fight for others to bring them in this blessed rest of Jesus Christ.

Judges 3:20 So Ehud came to him (now he was sitting upstairs in his cool private chamber). Then Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." So he arose from his seat.

Judges 3:21 Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly.

Judges 3:22 Even the hilt went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the dagger out of his belly; and his entrails came out.

Don't want to See the Movie

Ehud sticks the dagger in and we read the graphic description that Eglon's intestines pour out and God's just a news reporter. He doesn't try to hide anything. He doesn't try to cover anything up. He just tells it like it is and this is a very graphic description of what happens here and just the thought of it. You really don't want to see the movie. It's disgusting.

Interesting

Interesting, though, Ehud tells him, "I have a message to you from God," and he believes it. And, Ehud did have a very "pointed" message for the king.

Judges 3:23 Then Ehud went out through the porch and shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.

Judges 3:24 When he had gone out, Eglon's servants came to look, and to their surprise, the doors of the upper room were locked. So they said, "He is probably attending to his needs in the cool chamber."

Judges 3:25 So they waited till they were embarrassed, and still he had not opened the doors of the upper room. Therefore they took the key and opened them. And there was their master, fallen dead on the floor.

Judges 3:26 But Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the stone images and escaped to Seirah.

Judges 3:27 And it happened, when he arrived, that he blew the trumpet in the mountains of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mountains; and he led them.

Judges 3:28 Then he said to them, "Follow me, for the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand." So they went down after him, seized the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over.

Judges 3:29 And at that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab, all stout men of valor; not a man escaped.

Judges 3:30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

Sword – Drawn Across the Body

The sword was always drawn from across the body. So the bodyguards would have checked his left side for a knife, figuring he was righty, and thus didn't check his right side.

God Designed Ehud Uniquely – from Mother’s Womb

So he’s left-handed by birth, God’s design. While he was in his mother’s womb, and so he designs us in our uniqueness, just like our fingerprint. Everything that we touch has a unique touch because no one has the same touch, because no one has the same fingerprint. Here is this man. He had ... with being left-handed reminds me of the young girl who was very upset with the Lord. She wanted blue eyes. Her whole life she just wanted blue eyes. She was born with brown eyes. She was very upset about that. Years later, she wouldn’t commit her life to the Lord, find herself becoming a missionary, and then she found herself in this unique situation of receiving orphaned babies there in India. In the India, women wear the veil. All she sees is their eyes. People would come to this wall to hand their babies over, and they would knock, and she would open this little window. They would hand the baby through, saying, “Please take care of my baby.” After hundreds of babies, she came to this realization that if she had blue eyes like she had prayed ...

Psalm 139:14–16 (NKJV) ¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.

Amy Carmichael

January 18 - Amy Carmichael, Missionary, Intricately Designed by God

Every night before she went to bed, little Amy Carmichael prayed ardently and enthusiastically for God to turn her brown eyes blue as she slept. Like many brown-eyed Irish girls in the 19th century, she adored the typical image of feminine Irish beauty that included blue eyes and white skin. So, she prayed fervently--prayed with a hope that it seems only children can muster--for God to change the part of her that seemed to be designed wrong. She desperately hoped for God's intervention--but it never came. Amy had brown eyes from the day she was born to the day she died. Regardless of how much she begged, God was not moved to effect a change in the design of Amy. However, Amy's faith was not weakened or lessened by God's refusal. Amy still trusted God even if she didn't receive everything she wanted.

As she grew older, she began teaching a Sunday morning class at a local church for a group of women who were in need of spiritual direction and guidance. This class eventually became a congregation called the Welcome Evangelical Church in Belfast, Ireland. She helped lead in and prepare for worship and people began to seek her out more and more frequently with the hope that her dependable and seemingly unrelenting faith might prove contagious. She continued there until she had the opportunity to hear Hudson Taylor preach about mission work in China. Though she suffered from various nerve conditions that ill fitted her for international mission work but she answered the call all the same.

After some preparatory time in Japan, she moved to southernmost India to serve as a Christian missionary among the people of the country. The missionaries she worked with did everything they could to fit into the culture of which they were becoming a part. Amy reflected once that she now understood why she had brown eyes--a blue-eyed missionary would have been an oddity that never could have truly fit in with the people--and was thankful that God had persisted in God's intricate and elegant design instead of catering to the wishes of a girl who had not yet met her calling. She even darkened her skin with coffee to further aid in her integration and assimilation into Indian culture. She did all of this, largely, for the children she ministered to in India.

It was not uncommon in India at the time for young girls to be given to the local Hindu temple. This saved the family of the girl money because they did not have to take care of the young one who was considered a drain on finances--unlike a son--and made money for the priests who often sold the young girls as prostitutes to help cover the expenses of the girl and the priest who controlled her. Amy couldn't bear to let this happen and so she devoted herself to rescuing these young girls and housing them in whatever way she could. Soon, she had founded the Dohnavur Fellowship and provided a safe haven for over one thousand children who might otherwise die or be forced into prostitution and/or slavery. Given her devotion to pursuing and rescuing the abandoned children of India, it was no surprise that Amy insisted: "One can give without loving, but one cannot love without giving." Amy gave much and loved much because she had been intricately and elegantly designed to share God's love with people who needed it desperately.

Amy died in 1951 due in part to complications from an earlier injury obtained in her pursuit of ministry. In accordance with her wishes, she was buried in India near the Dohnavur Fellowship without a gravestone. The children she had loved and cared for in India had to do something for the woman they loved and remembered. They put up a fountain for birds over her grave and inscribed the hindi word "Amma" upon it. This word perfectly condensed God's intricate design into one word: "mother."

When I was in Elementary School – Handicap / What’s Your Handicap

You know, when I was in elementary school, the kids who were left-handed, the teachers were trying to teach them write with their right hand. Being left-handed was almost considered a handicap. Isn’t that interesting how long man has considered something like that to be a handicap? Many times people, ourselves included, we can look and think that what we have handicaps us in a way from serving the Lord, whereas the Lord looks at it as it’s the perfect instrument for me because of the uniqueness of the instrument, and also it’s how I designed you from your birth, for your moment, for your time, as God has a time and season for every one of you that he’s going to

do something great. I believe your time and your season is today. He will use you for all of your uniqueness. May we never look at ourselves and think that we are stunted in some way, unqualified in some way, that we are handicapped from fulfilling what we could be as servants of the Lord.

DL Moody

D.L. Moody ... he has very little education and the educated people said that when he preached, it was painful to listen to him because of how bad he butchered the English language ... that they couldn't even listen to him. There were tens, maybe even hundreds, of thousands of people who it wasn't too painful to listen to because they gave their life to Jesus Christ through his preaching. Charles Spurgeon, speaking of D.L. Moody, says, "Mr. Moody teaches the Bible, but is so uneducated that I would never let him speak in my church." Here's the great Spurgeon saying he wouldn't allow Moody to speak in his church because he was so painful to listen, but tens of thousands, maybe even hundreds of thousands of people, will be in the kingdom of God for eternity because of his preaching. We see it was because of the baptism of the Holy Spirit for power to do the work of the ministry.

DL Moody had the Power

Speaking of DL Moody, I am reminded of Othniel and the Spirit:

D.L. Moody's baptism with the Holy Spirit testifies to Jesus' ability to empower people for greater service.

The year 1871 saw Dwight L. Moody apparently a great success as an evangelist. His tabernacle drew the largest congregations in Chicago. But according to Moody's own estimate of those years, he was "a great hustler" and this work was being done largely in the energy of the flesh.

Two humble Free Methodist women, Auntie Cook and Mrs. Snow, used to attend these meetings and sit on the front row. Moody could not help seeing that they were praying during most of his services. Finally he spoke to the women about it.

"Yes," they admitted, "we have been praying for you."

"Why me? Why not for the unsaved?" the evangelist retorted, a bit nettled.

"Because you need the power of the Spirit," was their answer.

After some weeks of this Mr. Moody invited the women to his office to talk about it. "You spoke of power for service" [that results from the baptism with the Spirit] he prodded them. "I thought I had it. I wish you would tell me what you mean."

So Mrs. Snow and Auntie Cook told Moody what they knew about the baptism of the Holy Spirit [i.e., the Spirit coming 'upon' a person to empower him or her for greater service]. Then the three Christians prayed together – and the women left.

From that hour "there came a great hunger in my soul," Moody was to say later. "I really felt that I did not want to live if I could not have this power for service."

One late autumn day in 1871, D.L. Moody was in New York (on his way to England) walking up Wall Street. Suddenly, in the midst of the bustling crowds, his prayer was answered: the power of God fell on him so overwhelmingly that he knew he must get off the street.

Spotting a house he recognized, Moody knocked on the door and asked if he might have a room by himself for a few hours. Alone there, such joy came upon him that "at last he had to ask God to withhold His hand, lest he die on the spot from very joy."

From that hour Moody's ministry was never the same.

He went on to England for what was to be the first of many evangelistic campaigns there. People thronged to North London to hear him.

"The sermons were not different," Moody summarized. "I did not present any new truths, and yet hundreds were converted." ...

The evangelist went on to live another 28 years, and "to reduce the population of hell by a million souls."

Judges 3:31 After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.

Shamgar was a Farmer - God Used what was at his Resource

An ox goad was eight feet long. It had a metal point on its tip, very sharp and pointy to goad the ox while plowing. The back end had a shovel on the back, and so the shovel was used to scrape the mud off the plow when it got

clogged up. Shamgar is a farmer. And interestingly ... God used the resource that Shamgar had in his hand. Often we're looking for new methods and ways where God says, "What's that in your hand?"

Be Encouraged / God Uses what in Hand / Moses – David – Peter & James -Matthew

This encourages me, cause I see the Lord will use whatever is in our hands presently to do His work in the ministry. Whatever your thing is, that's what he will use.

- As God called Moses in the wilderness, He said, Moses what's that in your hand...a rod...great I'll use that.....lets go talk to pharaoh.
- David what's that in your hand...a rock and a sling...great I'll use that...lets go kill a giant
- Peter, James, John what's that in your...a net...great I'll use that...lets go catch some men
- Matthew what's that in your hand....a pen...great I'll use that...write this down

Not Methods – But the Message / We are Just Newspaper Boys/Girls

It's never the methods, but it's the message. God will use various methods, but it's always the message. May we not get wrapped up in looking for new methods and trying to make ... hit a new message. May we always keep ... It's all about the message. May we just be newspaper boys and women and deliver the message.

Joseph Parker Commentary – Feeble Instruments

Joseph Parker in his commentary says, "What is a feeble instrument in one man's hand is a mighty instrument in the hand of another simply because the spirit of the other burns with holy determination to accomplish the work that has been given to him to do". Christian, do you have a fire burning in you for something, for God, that God has called you to do?"

Life in One Verse

Shamgar, what a man, and yet his life is summed up in one verse. What would your one verse be if you were to sum up your life today?

Othniel – Ehud - Shamgar

So, in closing, look at the three judges (rescuers)

- Othniel the Spirit of the Lord empowered him (Zechariah 4:6).
- Ehud, used the two-edged sword, which is a picture of the Word of God. It divides. The word cuts down the enemy of the flesh, it cleanses and removes all the dirt, as the word works internally as we see here. Hebrews 4:12.
- Look at Shamgar. It's not a Hebrew name. He probably was one of the intermarriages because his name is a Canaanite name, but he ends up coming to see the true and living God, and he has a heart after his God. He uses what's in his hand also to bring great victory. If God has the person's heart who's holding that thing in his hand and fills that person with his Holy Spirit, that's all that needs to be done for victory and lives to be changed.

Zechariah 4:6 (NKJV) ⁶ So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?

- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 4

Introduction

Picking up here in chapter 4, the fourth judge (means deliverer/rescuer) and her name is Deborah. Another rich story that is more than just a recounting of history, but stories of real people who lived real lives just like we do, and the trials and struggles they faced, and the how they had personal victories in their life in the midst of living real life. So lots of personal application for our lives personally today, just as we are told in Romans 15, that these things were written (speaking OT stories) for our learning. So let's jump in and let the Lord do His work in our hearts and upon our lives.

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Judges 4:1 When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD.

Chp 3:30 / There's a Danger in Rest / Don't take a Retreat

Verse one. We need to go back to Verse 30 in Chapter Three and see that they had 80 years of rest. There's a danger in rest. I say rest is not the time for us to relax, rest not the time to retreat. But in the spiritual war that we are engaged in at rest is the time for us to take more ground and to claim more spiritual promises and the strength in ourselves, while the enemy is the one who is on the retreat.

Judges 3:30 (NKJV) ³⁰ So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

"The sedentary life is most subject to diseases: standing waters soon putrify. It is hard and happy not to grow worse with liberty." (Trapp)

Need to be in Daily Battle / Reason to be in Word & Prayer / Everything is Big – Until I sit with God

Everything in life seems like it's a big deal to me until I sit down and open God's word. Hence, the point that I make is we need to be daily in the word of God, and sometimes when things are oh so well it seems like we've entered into this place of rest that the enemy isn't pressing in hard against us. It's the time that we start to rest that we can find ourselves weakening ourselves rather than taking the opportunity to be strengthening ourselves. People ask me if I want to take Sundays off to get a rest and my answer is no because the continual routine keeps me strong. Yes, being in the ministry keeps a continual war coming against me but that keeps me sharp also. I need that daily routine to stay plugged in. It forces me to stay in the word, it forces me to stay in prayer. I can't encourage you enough, find yourself a ministry that you need to be involved in that requires you to be in the word daily and be on your knees daily seeking the Lord for his blessing, provision, empowering, and ability to continue on in that ministry.

Judges 4:2 So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim.

Jabin – a Title

Jabin is a title, just like Pharaoh is a title.

First Time Battling Enemy Already Defeated

Verse Two. This is will be the first time they will battle Canaanites. The other battles that we have read here in Chapter Three where nations that were outside the land of the promised land. Well, now they're battling an enemy that they have already defeated through the time of Joshua.

Sold means to Hand Over / Suppressed the Truth

The word, "sold" means to hand over, so God has to hand them over because it's their free will and this is what their free will has brought them to and lead them to. That they suppressed the truth of God and then they found themselves being under the bondage of these cruel kings that they had once defeated but never utterly drove out of the land, and so here they are now being oppressed by them. All through scripture we see a web woven through

that is the breaking of the heart of God every time his children handed over into sin, into the hands of an enemy and the evil one. We know it does because it gives us a picture in the scriptures, and we read it all the through this Book of Judges, that every time they cried out, as soon as they cried out God would send a deliverer to rescue them.

Judges 3:7 (NKJV) ⁷ So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.

Sin Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves:

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are enslaved by sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

Prodigal Son

We see the New Testament picture where in the book of Luke with the prodigal son, we see as soon as he returned home we see the father running to him. To minute the son turn towards the father, we see the father turning and running towards him. The picture we don't know and see so clear in our culture, but at the time of this New Testament writing it would be oh so clear, and that is that men of that culture, they didn't run. Secondly, men of that culture, not only didn't they run, they would not hike up their robe and show bare leg as they would be running (because you can't run in a robe without hiking it up). What we see here, we see a father casting aside all humility, willing to even be laughed at and mocked and put to shame but not caring because anything that's on his heart is running to embrace his and, in that case also for anyone here today the prodigal son and the prodigal daughter, and we see the heart of God doing it. Running, getting to them to let them know, "I receive you back. All the things have been put away, no guilt, no shame left on your name, come back in to the family."

Luke 15:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

Are you a Prodigal Today – Come Home

Are you a prodigal today? Then come home tonight. Soon as you turn towards God, God will turn to you and be running to you with open arms. He doesn't care what anybody thinks of you, what anyone has ever said about you, where you've been and what you've done. He's coming because you're his love, and we see it in that story of the prodigal and we see it here in our passage of scripture today. Soon as we turn and cry out to him, He comes and He sends a rescuer, and He is a rescuer, and He sent a rescuer, Jesus Christ, to bring us home. God loves you.

John 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Judges 4:3 And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.

20 Years

No one ever thinks that one little sin, that one little act of rebellion will turn into years of bondage and regret, but it does, sin is a cruel taskmaster, and when sin gets a foothold, it builds a foundation, and then a house, and then starts to furnish the rooms, and then starts to invite company to come and stay for a while. Say no today before the foundation is laid.

How Many Chariots Built on Taxes

I wonder how many chariots they built with Israel tribute money? Same can be true about us as we pay tribute to the things of the flesh, it makes the flesh stronger, and harder to break free of.

Chariots were like tanks

Chariots were like tanks of that day. They would have one or two horses pulling them, and they would have one driver and two swordsmen on each side of the rear of the chariot. They were mighty weapons of destruction and death.

Joshua 11 / Josephus (300K – 10K – 20K) / Fear Not

In Verse Three, we've this read this town before, Hazor. It is the town that Joshua defeated in Joshua, Chapter 11, we can tell. I know from archaeological evidence this city was huge, some 200 acres, fortified, but Joshua and the children of Israel, they would take it and defeat it. We had studied, when we looked at the Book of Joshua, what the historian, Josephus, records. That Hazor and his alliance of kings, they came against the nation of Israel, 300,000 infantrymen, 10,000 cavalry men on horses, and 20,000 chariots. He would say to Joshua still, "Fear not." Amazing. "Fear not."

Joshua 11:6 (NKJV) ⁶ But the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire."

They have Forgotten the Victory of Joshua 11 / Worried of 900 Chariots – Thought it Impossible

Now here we are, this period of time later, they've forgotten the victory, they suppressed the truth and all that God is. They've allowed themselves to serve idols and false Gods and now they've been turned over to this kind here on this area, and he only has 900 chariots we read. Where we read that the children of Israel are terrorized by it and we'll see that they'll continually be fearful as that them through Chapter Four keeps bringing back, they had 900 chariots. They had 900 chariots and hence why Israel felt victory was impossible.

For Us – When we Forget past Victories – Our Hearts Melt at Little Things

Everything in life seems like it's a big deal to me until I sit down and open God's word. Just for our application today, when we forget all that the Lord has done, when we forget the power, when we forget his past victories, when we forget his past promises fulfilled to us our hearts will constantly melt and the little things will seem impossible to defeat, to us. I know 900 chariots is huge if you have no chariots and only swords, but when you rewind the tape and remember that God whipped them when they had 300,000 soldiers with swords and 10,000 soldiers and horses and 20 times more chariots when they had 20,000 chariots, and yet God beat them. When we forget the Lord, his promises and his power and his heart for us, then the little things always seem impossible to defeat. When we remember the Lord we remember big battles, big victories, big power of our God is for us and the one who says he fights for us.

Judges 4:4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

Deborah

Verse 4. In here, the introduction to the Prophetess Deborah. Her name means "bee" as in the buzzing bee insect. Hang on to that, as that will come back into play here in a minute. We see some things about her, three things, as described here in this verse 4,

1. she's a prophetess, which means she spoke the word of God on behalf of God. That gift is still available today, for all the gifts of God have not passed away. We see this example of a prophetess in Phillip's daughter there in the Book of Acts 21:8-9. We see an Old Testament picture and a New Testament picture. We'll talk more about this prophetess in a minute.
2. she was a wife. I like that. I'm glad that's called out here because what we see is you can have a family and a ministry. I know there's the thought that my family is my ministry, and that is oh so true, but there's such a power of serving in a ministry that has absolutely no payback, nothing in it for ourselves except the giving and pouring out onto others. It's a great example for us as we teach our children to be serving others and to serve outside of just the family realm, but to serve those who have no family, to serve those who are out there all alone and by themselves. This is where it is real, is they truly have no leaders and here rises this judge, Deborah.
3. she is a judge, as we know judge means a rescuer, a deliverer. How does she rescue and deliver? She sits under this tree and she's giving people the word of God as a prophetess who speaks the word of God. I know there's many people who say, "I'm not gifted. I don't have any gifting and talent." If you have that

Bible in your hand then you have a gift and you can be a modern day prophet and prophetess because you can give God's word out to a person and they will have the most powerful gift that can be given to anyone: the very voice of God. Not ink on a paper, but God himself speaking to a man and a woman, "Here's my heart," and the three things we say that you can always find in the scriptures and what we teach here at Calvary Chapel.:

- a. Who is God?
- b. What does he think of me?
- c. What does he want me to do?

3 Things in the Word (Who – What – What)

You'll always find that through the scriptures because this book is the heart of God.

- Who is God? He's the all eternal, all powerful, great being who can speak the world into existence, yet in a gentleness hold a child in his arms.
- What does he think of you? He thinks enough about you that he would send his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to come and die for your sins, to take your guilt and shame so that you can have the righteousness. That means right standing before the Holy God, and a sinful man can come and walk into his presence and be a son and a daughter.
- What does He want me to do? You read this word and he will guide you because this word, as we're told, is a lamp unto our feet and it will guide you. You know what? Trust that word for yourself and trust that word that you can give it out to somebody and it can change a life.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV) ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Billy Graham

A funny story. Billy Graham, the first time he preached, he preached four sermons in eight minutes. He would be considered a failure, but God used those four sermons in eight minutes to develop him and to begin his career as the great evangelist. You start somewhere. Even if it feels like it didn't go well, God's in control.

Rev. John Minder, the college dean, was a big man, ginger-haired and concerned for his students. But he had his hands full with William. On the day William arrived, he took out a big scout knife, played around with it, and took off running all over the adjacent golf course like an overgrown schoolboy. Shortly thereafter he and his roommate went canoeing in their best clothes on a Sunday afternoon. William stood up in the canoe, raised his oar, and said, "I see an Indian—bang!" He leaned backward and both boys fell into the river. William wrestled under the beds, knocked down bullies, wore bright bow ties, and charmed the girls.

But Dean Minder had endless patience, sparkling eyes, and he knew potential when he saw it. On Easter Sunday, March 28, 1937, he took William with him to evening services at a small Baptist church in a nearby town. Minder was to fill in for the church's part-time pastor, who doubled as an interior decorator. But Minder had no intention of preaching that evening. On the way there he informed William, "You're preaching tonight."

"No, sir!" said the horrified young man. "I've never preached before."

"Well," replied Dean Minder, "you are preaching tonight. When you run out, I'll take over."

As it happened, William had secretly been practicing four messages taken from a book of sermons by the Baptist preacher, Lee Scarborough. Now he frantically tried to remember them. The men arrived at the small, clapboard church, finding it surrounded by men with hunting dogs. The hunters and ranchers and their families went inside for worship, making an audience of 25 or 30. The song leader led the group in a series of fast-paced hymns, pausing occasionally to spit tobacco juice into the boiler.

When time came for the sermon, William rose, looked at the crowd, and grew so nervous that his knees knocked and his face glistened with perspiration. He preached all four sermons in eight minutes, then collapsed back into his seat.

Such was the beginning of the preaching ministry of William Franklin Graham—better known as Billy.

Morgan, R. J. (1997). On this day: 365 amazing and inspiring stories about saints, martyrs & heroes (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Judges 4:5 And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

Tree of Deborah

Verse 5. We find Deborah sitting under a tree. I think there's a significance about this as we see the trees called the Tree of Deborah. I don't think it's a place of arrogance that she had named herself, called people to bow down and kiss the ring, but she was in the same tree at the same place at the same time that all the people knew. "Oh, you want to find Deborah for Godly counsel? She's under the Tree of Deborah," and everybody would know that it was a place that was well known.

What we see there was Deborah being in the same place at the same time, that same tree, that the people knew three things:

1. she was available,
2. she was approachable,
3. and, no doubt, she was relatable.

We see ministry principles for ourselves.

- We need to make ourselves available. People need to know that there's a time and a place that if they need us, they can call us, that they don't feel that they're encroaching and treading into our space, but they know that we're available for them because we're here for them.
- Secondly, we need to be approachable, that people don't fear us, that people feel welcomed and warmed by us, and there's a place that we can put ourselves that people are fearful to approach us because of the way that we project ourselves. The way we want to project ourselves is just like Jesus. He was humble that people would constantly come to him and not feel threatened. The children would come to him, the religious people would come to him, the sinners could come to him. They knew that they could come to him because of just the way he projected himself.
- Thirdly, Deborah's relatable. I think part of it is because people could just relate to her because she was a woman. The women could relate to her. The men could relate to her because the wisdom of the word that she has. Anybody that's married could easily relate to her because she's a wife, and so she knows what marriage is like.

You are Unique – Use that Uniqueness

I don't think we give ourselves enough credit of how relatable we are to people. You are a unique Christian, and you have something that's unique that can be relatable to certain people. You can find yourself being that one who people will approach and relate to because you've been where I've been or you understand what I'm going through or you know what it's like to be in my place. We all have a uniqueness. May no one here think that they don't have something to offer because every one of us is unique. Therefore, because of our uniqueness, we are relatable to people just like us. Above all, we are relatable to anyone and everyone who is hurting and who needs help, who needs a savior because we know this word of God and we can offer the word of God to them. We're all relatable to the whole world in that sense.

She was Fearless / Jabin would want to Silence Her

This woman, you don't see it, but she was fearless. If I am King Jabin and I am going to control a land and keep it underfoot, I'm going to silence her. I'm not going to give anyone hope, and the hope that they had that defeated the past Hazor. I'm not going to give them any power, and that power that they have was that they had a God who brought them victory. Here, this woman preaches the same God and tells the same stories that brought victory. I would be silencing her because I knew her word would be strengthening the people, that she's fearless.

She Sits out in the Open / Under the Same Tree

She sits under the same tree, the same time, the same place every day, so much so everybody knows where to find her because the tree became known for her. She didn't travel and hide herself in a cave or put smoking mirrors up. She went right out where everybody knew they could find her, even the enemy and the king who was trying and was oppressing the land. She sat under that tree and gave counsel. She was fearless because she knew who held her in his hand and whose she was, and so too we can be fearless regardless of what man brings against us. We

have the power of the living God available to us and the power of the living God fighting for us and the power of the living God who is for us.

Under the Palm Tree – One Cool Chick / She knows Who Controls her Life

I love it as she sat under the palm tree. This is one cool chick. There was no sweat. She wasn't worried. She sat under the cool of the day, giving the word of God right in the face of the enemy. She had no fears about doing it. She knew who controlled her life.

You will Live in power -When Believe this Word / Study it Daily / Word = Power (Power flowing through Us)

You will speak power, you will live in power when you believe this word of God that we study every week, verse by verse, chapter by chapter. The word of God is flowing through her as a prophetess. She has power because the word of God is God. As we speak the word of God, God is flowing through us. If God is flowing through us, that means the power of God is flowing through us. What could we ever find that could bring us fear when we look at the greatness and the broadness and the mightiness of our God.

Charles Spurgeon – Bleed Bible Verses

It was quoted of Charles Spurgeon, they said if you cut him, what would he bleed? The answer was he would bleed bible verses because he was so filled with God's word. I'd like to be the testimony of my life, that I just live and know this word so much that I'm literally breathing the word of God in and out.

She Sat – People Knew Where to Comfort Help / You give Word – People will Come

She sat and people came. Somehow it started and the people knew. You've got a problem? You want help? You want to know what God's heart is? You want the word of God that can bring you solution, peace, power into your life? There's this woman. Her name is Deborah. She sits under a tree up there, yonder on the hill. People were talking, and the more they talk, the more people came. She didn't need to make and bang a drum about her ministry. She just sat under the palm tree, no sweat, no struggling, and just gave out the word of God, and God brought the people. You who are interested in joining the ministry and being used by God, you don't need to do fancy branding and marketing, you don't need to throw people under the bus to build your name up, you don't need to strive. All that you need to do is breathe this word, believe this word, let this word flow through you, and have the boldness and the fearlessness like Deborah to go out and give this word, and people will come and God will use you and bless you.

Judges 4:6 Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, “Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, ‘Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun;

Judges 4:7 and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand?’”

How Many Chariots Built on Taxes

I wonder how many chariots they built with Israel tribute money? Same can be true about us as we pay tribute to the things of the flesh, it makes the flesh stronger, and harder to break free of.

Two Wolves - A Cherokee Parable

An old Cherokee chief was teaching his grandson about life...

"A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy.

"It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves.

"One is evil - he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, self-doubt, and ego.

"The other is good - he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.

"This same fight is going on inside you - and inside every other person, too."

*The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather,
"Which wolf will win?"*

*The old chief simply replied,
"The one you feed."*

Deborah Means Bee – Sweet with a Sting

Verse six. Deborah's name means bee and we see some sweetness about her, but like any bee she brings a sting. She has a sting here and she rebukes Barak saying what are you doing? God has spoken and you're still sitting around. She has the sweetness of a bee but she has the sting of a bee and now here in verse six, she begins to prophesize, speaking literally the word of God.

BTW – Look at Genius of Lord (Chariots don't do Well on Hills and Water)

Look at genius of the Lord - position yourself on the hill and along the waters - minimizing the advantage of the chariots, if not making the chariots a disadvantage. These chariots fighters wouldn't know how to fight toe to toe, they are actually handicapping themselves, like bringing a knife to a gun fight. Hey Christian God knows how to defeat your enemies, those things that keep defeating you and keeping you from the great victorious Christian life, come to Him, say Lord join me in this battle and He will give you a battle plan that will bring you victory. But sometimes His battle plan may sound too simple for you, as He will say don't go there, don't buy that, don't date that person, sometime the battle plan is simpler than we think – but it is still a genius battle plan, and it will bring you victory.

Judges 4:8 And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!"

Judges 4:9 So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.

Judges 4:10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command, and Deborah went up with him.

Deborah confirms Word already God has Spoken to Barak

Verse eight. She's going to confirm what God had already spoken to Barak, so this isn't a new prophesy, a new prophetic word. She's confirming what God had already spoken to him.

Look at Weakness of Barak

Now, it's interesting that we can look at Barak and see as we read through the rest of the story, that he'll say he ain't going to go to battle without Deborah coming with him. We see that he's been gently as least, been rebuked by Deborah for not rising up and doing what God had called him to do and go into this battle.

Rethink – What Faith Is

Here's what I want to point out to you, Barak is listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews chapter 11 and I think that should make us change the way we look at faith. We think faith is this perfection, the perfect God spoke and I went and did it. God spoke and I immediately went and did it. God spoke and I went in pure power and I did it and I think we see here that faith isn't that. We see that faith goes even in the midst of fear. Barak is fearful. I won't go unless you come with me but the key is, he still went.

Hebrews 11:32 (NKJV) ³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

How Many Times Did Barak not Heed Voice of God

Deborah repeats to Barak, "God spoke, you didn't go". How many times did God speak? How many times did God lay this on Barak's heart and he didn't go. Deborah speaks and he goes and so what we see is God's patience in faith as he's waiting for us. He may have to say it several times but the faith part comes and the faith part is granted and the faith part is considered when we go.

Faith isn't without Fear

Lack of faith is not going as in never going, but God considers it faith that He might have to call us a dozen times or a hundred times but we went and that's what needs to be pointed out here with Barak. He went. He went against insurmountable odds, he went against an impossible situation but he went in after having to repeatedly be called by God so we know that God gets the glory. God didn't raise up some mighty man and we'll read the same when we come and study Gideon here in chapter six but for now looking at Barak, he and Gideon, fearful. And yet God considers them mighty men of valor. God would consider you a leader and so it's true for us.

Don't Quit on Yourself because You Haven't Gone / God will Wait

Don't put yourself in a place that you'll always be paralyzed and afraid to step out and do something because you think because you think your faith isn't strong enough because you're fearful. Barak's fearful and yet he's still listed in the Hall of Faith. Don't say "Well God's called me five and I said no all five times. I'm not a man of faith, I should just quit right now". We don't know how many times God called Barak but eventually he goes, and that's what God will say to you. "I'm still waiting on you and I'll wait as long as it takes because I'm going to develop you into a mighty man, a mighty woman of faith".

Judges 4:11 Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which is beside Kedesh.

Judges 4:12 And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor.

Heber – Crosses over to Canaanites Side

Verse 11. Heber the Kenite: These were distant descendants of Israel, through Jethro, the priest of Midian and the father-in-law of Moses, back to Abraham and his second wife Keturah (Genesis 25:1–4). This man Heber, he defected from Israel to the other side onto the Canaanite side and his name literally means crossing over. We see him literally crossing over from once being aligned with the children of Israel to now crossing over and joining the enemy of Israel. We can see the heart and the cowardliness of this man as he would betray those who brought great victory into his life but now he's going to go where a better deal can be found.

Judges 4:13 So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.

Reiterate 900 Chariots – the Impossibility of the Battle

Verse 13. It is again reiterated 900 chariots so to confirm the impossibility of the battle.

Judges 4:14 Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.

Up – Don't Overcomplicate the Simplicity of God

Verse 14. She says "up" - We so often complicate the simplicity of what God is telling us to do, here verse 14 she says "up", and in verse 6 she says "go".

Up = Rise Up in Power

This word "up" means to rise up in power!

Each Call to Battle – Comes with Guarantee of Victory

Each battle God calls for someone to fight in the Bible came with the promise to victory and triumph. So it is still true for us today as all the battles we are called to fight, each battle comes with the guarantee of triumph.

Deborah Exhorts / You Can be an Exhorter Too

Deborah the prophetess exhorts Barak, rise up in power, this is your day, this is your time, this is your place for greatness. Tell people, based on the Word of God, rise up in power, claim what God has called you to have and be, live the life that God has called and destined for you.

Notice Sovereignty of God – Man’s Responsibility

Notice, Deborah says God has delivered Sisera into your hands, but notice she also says, “Up” arise in power, go take it. So we see the incomprehensible understanding of God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility.

Judges 4:15 And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot.

Judges 4:16 But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

When Enemy on Run – Deal the Death Blow /

Verse 16. As we had said early in our study, don't rest. Don't take a retreat. We you've got the enemy on the run, finish the enemy off. When you have the up, power over the enemy, go for the death blow. Put the choke hold on, choke em out. When you have this power flowing through you, when you are doing strong, don't just stop it. "I made it through a day, I feel good", go and bring the death blow onto the enemy.

- Go and pour it out.
- Go and shred it.
- Go and flush it.
- Go and throw it away.
- Go and sent the obituary notice that the old man is dead and the new one has risen in Christ. Don't call me no more,

When you have the enemy on the run, finish em off. Finish em off, Christian.

Judges 4:17 However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

Judges 4:18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, “Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear.” And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket.

Judges 4:19 Then he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him.

Judges 4:20 And he said to her, “Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, ‘Is there any man here?’ you shall say, ‘No.’”

Judges 4:21 Then Jael, Heber’s wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.

Last Thing went through his Mind

So here is this great military leader of a ruthless and evil army coming to his end, all his battles and all his victories, and defeated by a woman. I wonder what was the last thing that went through his mind before he died – that would be the tent peg (hahaha)

Pagan Temple

Verse 21. This brings you a new definition of a Pagan temple as the woman drives this tent pig through this evil king's temple. New term, new definition of being a Pagan temple.

God turns Satan’s Allies – Into His Allies

I love this in that this woman Jael, she's Heber's wife. She's considered to be in alliance with this King Jabin and the Canaanites. He thinks he has an ally for life. He thinks that he can command her around to do what he wants. He thinks this is his asset. I love it when I watch God take assets, strong holds and turn the table and switch it and

what was once what Satan thinks is his great asset, God turns and uses it for his glory. That's what we see here. Satan though he had an ally and that ally turns and becomes God's ally and brings victory to many of people.

Street Witnessing Philadelphia

I'm reminded oh back 15 years ago, Harvest Crusade was up in Philadelphia and a handful of us went up to share Christ on the street and invite people to come to the festival and it was a glorious time. I'll never forget we work up one, it was a Sunday morning, it was 8am and we went out in the neighborhood that we were staying. Now this neighborhood that we were staying was the drug block of Philadelphia. People drove from three states to come and buy drugs there and the police didn't even try to shut it down because I guess they just considered it a lost cause. I'll never forget starting, all day and increasing through the evening hours were just a row of cars coming off the interstate ramp, coming down the block lining a whole block. Make a left, that whole block. Make another left, that whole block. Make another left and that whole block. Literally car bumper to bumper with dozens of drug dealers coming out and selling drugs to them, all night. I think we came in at three in the morning and the cars were still pouring in. Me and my buddy Kevin woke up early in the morning on Sunday and at 8am we went outside and we were just amazed. Cars were still coming and drug dealers were still out dealing. It was only a handful of cars sporadically and it was only a handful of drug dealers but 8am they were still coming in to buy drugs. Me and Kevin went out and we started to share Christ. Here we are, on a street corner with a drug dealer sharing Christ and he prays to receive Jesus Christ right there. Eight am on a Sunday morning, on a street corner in Philadelphia, the heroin capital of the world and right there he gave his life to Christ. If you can picture the scene of our hands on his shoulder. Our heads down, his head down praying the sinner's prayer with these other handful of drug dealers just looking on. Wondering what just happened. It was a powerful moment. It's definitely one of the most memorable moments of street ministry I can ever remember in my life.

Satan's Allies – now his Tent Peg

I look back on that today and I see it's a picture of what we just read. The tent peg through the temple of Satan thought he had an ally for life. He though he had somebody who would fight for his cause and continue to lead people down into their bondage and their oppression and God can break through and change a heart and change a life just like that and then just like that, that person goes and started delivering other people. Starts bringing victory to other people because you know the day that drug dealer walked off that street, you know there was drug dealers going "How could anybody walk away". When I talked to that drug dealer, he was just a kid. He had 2000 dollars in this pocket. Imagine walking away from that type of money. Two thousand dollars a day and he walked away. God is mighty, God is amazing. Moving on.

Jael – Had enough of Jabin / Another Fearless Woman

I just want to show you before we close. This woman Jael, she was under the oppression of this King or so the King thought he had her and I want to see for each of us a picture of how we nailed the old man, that old king, the one who would keep us down and how we can bring an end to that one and we see it here in the picture of this woman Jael:

1. first she called King Sisera to come on over. She picks a fight, here we see another fearless woman. She picks the fight and there comes a time you want to nail the old man you've got to be ready to go to fight at whatever the cost.
2. Secondly, we see that she covered him with a blanket and there we see a picture of prayer. We cover our situations, these things that we think we can never defeat. Ones that seem to have power over us and we cover it with prayer continually and then watch what God does when we do.
3. Thirdly, she brought out the milk. What is the picture of milk? It's the word of God. You come and you bring that word of God and you apply that word of God and you start claiming the promises of God and the power of God will come over you and into you and upon you in your life and you will have the victory over that old man and you will be able to do a Jael and nail the old man, right through the temple. Bring a death blow to that thing or that character, that nature within you. That you'll be able to have the victory and you'll have to do what she does.
4. Fourthly we see that she drives the peg with the hammer and what we have here is a hammer and a nail and it's the picture of communion. The same elements that killed the old man and the same elements that killed Jesus Christ and killed our sin and killed and brought death and the end of death and victory

over death. It's the nail and the hammer and for us, it's the picture of communion. Jesus Christ there upon a cross, my body and my blood given for you. We come back and we continually go back to the cross remember what Christ has done. We continually do these things and we will not just kill the old man, we'll keep the old man nailed to floor, nailed to the ground when we come and when he starts rising up, we pick a fight with him. We don't retreat, we go on the offensive.

1 Peter 2:2 (NKJV) ² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,

Cover It – Milk of Word - Communion

We cover it and blanket it with prayer and we bring out the word and we bring out the milk and we claim the word of God for our life and claim the word against that thing that's coming, the weapon that's formed against us shall prosper. We claim my Jesus is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that I could ever think. We bring that word and we use it against that old man, that thing and then we continually come to the communion table. Remembering what Christ has done. Remembering that he gave his only begotten son and one drop of the precious blood of Jesus is able to cleanse us past, present and future. Those are the four keys to the victory over the old man and the four keys to continually living in that victory over that old nature that always wants to raise its ugly head. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Judges 4:22 And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, I will show you the man whom you seek." And when he went into her tent, there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple.

Jael gets Credit – Just as Prophesied

Verse 22. Jael will get credit and so we see prophecy fulfilled all the way back from verse 9 when Deborah says the victory would go to a woman and she would get the credit. I don't think she was meaning herself Deborah. I think she was prophesizing about this woman Jael.

Judges 4:23 So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel.

Judges 4:24 And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

Stronger

Stronger and stronger – Do the things we have studied in our passage today, and we too will grow strong and stronger! One victory, will lead to another, and to another, as we gain confidence in our God who fights for us.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 5

Judges 5:1-7

Finished Chapter 4 – Great Victory

So we finished our study in chapter 4 last time as we saw the great victory of Israel over King Jabin of Canaan who had been oppressing them for 20 years. Deborah the prophetess and Barak rallied men of Israel to fight, and God delivered them a great victory totally routing the Canaan Army, and the victory was capped off we read with a never been heard of before woman named Jael, driving a tent stake through the head of the General of the Canaan Army, talk about a splitting headache.

Chp 5 – Breaks out in Song / In a History Book

So here before us in chapter 5 is the only chapter of its kind in the Book of Judges, as the whole chapter is a song. The Book of Judges is a history book, but here chapter 5 is a song. To me it seems like a spontaneous song, they just begin to sing after their great victory, they were outgunned, outmatched, but God said go for I have already brought you the victory, and by faith they go, and just as God had said, victory was already waiting for them. Who couldn't break out in song after witnessing and experience such a great work of God in their lives.

Songs in the Bible

We have seen this before and will see it again in the Bible. Other songs of victory are Moses Exodus 15 after the drowning of the Egyptian Army in the Red Sea, David in 2 Samuel 22 after victory over his enemies, and The Lamb in Revelation 15:3-4. All these songs, are songs of victory won by God for His children.

Exodus 15:1 (NKJV) ¹ Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!

2 Samuel 22:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this song, on the day when the LORD had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. ² And he said: "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; ³ The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence. ⁴ I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies.

Revelation 15:3-4 (NKJV) ³ They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! ⁴ Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."

We should Continually have a Song on Our Lips

We more than anyone should always have a song on our hearts, as the Lamb of God who takes away our sin, has won the victory for us, we are saved, forgiven, promised new life today, and eternal life tomorrow. Oh great and marvelous are the works of our God for us.

The Worship Songs we Sing

Verse 1, "Worship songs are our songs of victory because the Lord has won." Remember, we fight from victory, not to victory. God delivered as we seen in Chapter 4, and we take what he has already delivered to us.

Judges 5:1 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying:

Abinoam means "Father of Delight"

Barak's father Abinoam, his name means, "father of delight". Now, I know nothing that delights a father more than his children. And we can pretty much sure that this father is proud, is delighted, in his son Barak for his faith and courage to go fight an army that from man's viewpoint was impossible to defeat. Imagine when Israel would sing this song, every time Abinoam would be that is right, that is my son, I am so proud of him. No doubt, Barak is the man that he is, because of his mother and father upbringing. God always has a remnant, and here this family was a remnant, even when the rest of the nation was doing what was right in their own sight.

Judges 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Barak a Son / Dad's Build Your Kids Up – May they Never Wonder where they Stand with You

Verse 1: Barak is a son, and no doubt, by his willingness and courage to enter into the battle and stand in the gap, he has a proud father. Dads, remember to build your kids up, to build them up daily. Let them not wonder what you think of them and where they stand with you, but build them up. Do more building than correcting because that's the environment they will thrive in when a father lifts their sons up just as God, the Father, lifts us up.

Judges 5:2 "When leaders lead in Israel, When the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the LORD!

Barak

Barak's name means, "bolts of lightning", and the word was often used in connection with weaponry, such as swords, arrows, and spears. Barak therefore can mean, 'sword of lightning'. Barak had a gift, and God called upon him to use his gift for God's glory and his countryman's good, and so too does God do today with each and every one of you in this room.

Deborah

And Deborah was a prophetess (spoke forth the words of God). A gift that God used greatly for His glory and her countryman's good.

Calling all Leaders

Verse 2, "The outcome will always be mighty when we rise to our calling as leaders."

God is calling all leaders, be that mothers and fathers, or pastors and teachers, or big brothers and sisters, or Sunday school workers, or youth group leaders, or ministry leaders. When leaders lead, great things will happen because we have a great God.

We're not only called to stand in the gap; we're called to walk and fight while in that gap.

Need to be Reminded Daily of my Calling

I need to be reminded as a calling as a leader daily because I can easily forget what's at stake, and what's at stake is others. Leading others on to victories and to greatness in the Lord. That is what leaders do. We see in Verse 24 of a prior chapter that as leaders lead, the nation got stronger and stronger. God is looking for leaders.

Judges 4:24 (NKJV) ²⁴ And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

The Jesus Example of Leading

The greatest leader is Jesus, and He's our example of how to lead. If you want to know how to lead in any situation if you're put into the leadership, whether it's in the workplace, or home, or ministry, on the football field, whatever it might be, you want to know how to lead and how to be a great leader, and how to act and carry yourself as a leader, look to Jesus for He is the greatest example and the greatest leader that ever walked the earth.

Here's an acronym for lead that you can remember as you think every day, because you've got to be prepared every day to lead because you will be called upon to lead every day if you are a leader.

- L, leaders love as Christ loved all the way to the end (John 13:1). The greatest calling of a leader is to love people as Christ did. God puts you in the place of leadership to display the love of Christ to the people you follow. That doesn't just go for ministry, or family, but workplace, school, ballfield, etc. When people look up to us as leaders, God has designed that and intended that, so that they can see and experience the heart and love of God. When people know you love them, they will follow you anywhere. Will we not follow our Jesus anywhere amen!
- E, leaders are examples of Christ as we see he was the servant of all (Philippians 2:7). God's leaders, love the people and serve them, and serve them so that their lives are made better. In our culture today most leaders look to the people under them as their servants to make their lives better, but the Jesus example

we see, He was servant of all. God's leaders serve the people to make their life better, to lead them closer to God, to lead them into victory, to have prosperous lives.

- A, leaders always does the will of the father (John 5:30). Sometimes leaders have to make hard decisions, even when sometimes it is not the popular opinion of the people (or Country). But leaders seek the will of God, make all decisions based on the Word of God, and that is the direction they lead the people. Sometimes God's leading of the leader won't be the best for them personally, but the leader always leads the people in the direction of the will of the God. Parents sometimes you will have to say no to you children, sometimes in ministry leaders will have to call it sin, even if the person will get offended. Not our will, but His will. But, if you have established 1&2 first, then 3 won't be so difficult most of the time because the people will know, although I don't like what is being said right now, I know he/she loves me, and serves me, and says these things because they truly and genuinely care for me.
- D, leaders die to themselves just as Christ died to Himself (Philippians 2:8 and Hebrews 12:2). Leaders are first and last, first to get up to pray and prepare to lead, and last to go to bed as they serve and give themselves for the people God has called them to serve. The leader dies to self, so others may be lead to God, and they do it for the final crown they will cast at His feet in heaven, they do it for the joy that is set before them.

John 13:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

Philippians 2:7 (NKJV) ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

John 5:30 (NKJV) ³⁰ I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

Philippians 2:8 (NKJV) ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV) ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Does this Describe Your Leading? / Good to Run through Mind as LEAD

Does this describe your leading? When you are leading, this acronym is good to run before your mind and ask, how am I doing on these 4 as I am leading at this moment. It could cause you to make some corrections in the midst of your leading at the moment or on that day.

I Can't Lead in My Own Power – Every Morning Call to Lord to Help (Remind Myself)

I can't lead in my own intellect and power. Every morning I pray a daily commitment, not just asking God for help, but as much as a reminder to myself I need help, and I don't have to do and figure all this out on my own. I have the Lord to call upon, and just as he says in Jeremiah 33:3, "Call to me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things which you do not know." We must daily be seeking the Lord, because daily we will be leading and you never know what your day may bring.

Jeremiah 33:3 (NKJV) ³ 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

Never Know what Day will Bring

Just this week, a normal day, so it appeared, started for me, but I get a phone call and respond to meet a family who's eight month-old daughter had just died in the crib. A situation was the worst situation you would ever want to walk into. Death is always so heartbreaking and hard, but something just reaches and grips our heart even more so when it's a child, just an innocent, sweet, precious child, so vulnerable, and so unable to help themselves. Then, we have to face this and face a mother and father who has lost the child. It's grievous situations, and I have absolutely nothing in and of myself that I could ever give them. There is nothing that I could ever bring into the situation that would be of any comfort in and of myself, but when I bring the presence of the Lord in, and I bring Jesus Christ, and I say, "Christ is here. God knows what it is to lose a child as He gave his only begotten Son." I know have something to give, but when leaders lead, you never know what your days going to bring. That's why we must always be ready to lead and make it a part of our life that every day I'm called to lead; and therefore, every day I must be ready to lead.

5 S's

I, therefore, pray every morning. I set myself apart in my prayer time,

- and I offer myself as a living sacrifice to the Lord.
- I then seek to sanctify myself and set myself apart as I literally am asking the Lord to keep me on guard for the wiles of the devil, and that my flesh will not fall to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, because there is no way that if I am engaged in any of those things, in bondage or chained to them in any way, there is no way that I can lead effectively, whether it's my marriage, my children, my ministry, or in the workplace.
- Then I pray to the Lord to give me the heart to serve so as to serve as He did
- Then I call out to the Lord that I need His strength because there is no way that I can do these things in and of my own strength, and I need His Spirit and power to be upon me.
- Then I pray my 5th S. If you notice it was sacrifice, and sanctify, and then serve, and then strength, and my last one that I pray, and I put these Ss' so I can remember them if I don't have time to sit down in front of my computer. It's Solomon, which means wisdom. I call out to the Lord every morning saying, "I have no means in and of my own intellect of the wisdom of how to handle anything that's going to be put before me. I need your wisdom, Lord. Because when leaders lead, great and mighty things happen, but here we see a calling, leaders be ready to lead.

1 John 2:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Calling all Leaders

Verse 2, "The outcome will always be mighty when we rise to our calling as leaders."

God is calling all leaders, be that mothers and fathers, or pastors and teachers, or big brothers and sisters, or Sunday school workers, or youth group leaders, or ministry leaders. When leaders lead, great things will happen because we have a great God.

We're not only called to stand in the gap; we're called to walk and fight while in that gap.

Judges 5:3 "Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes! I, even I, will sing to the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.

Make a Joyful Noise

Verse 3, "Even I will sing." I like that because I think what she's saying is, "Horrible as my voice is, even I will sing. I'm not the most gifted singer, but I'm going to sing because that's what God is worthy of receiving right now because of this great victory, and the great work that He's done in our life as we study Judges 4.

Now, Chris, our worship leader has told me that my voice is so strong that I don't need a microphone, so I take that as such a vote of confidence from him. "Even I will sing," she says. Make a joyful noise for sure regardless of what it sounds like. If you have a terrible singing voice, then this is your verse, mark it, etch it in stone and say, "But God still calls me to make that joyful noise."

Psalm 66:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth! ² Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise glorious. ³ Say to God, "How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You.

Judges 5:4 "LORD, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth trembled and the heavens poured, The clouds also poured water;

Judges 5:5 The mountains gushed before the LORD, This Sinai, before the LORD God of Israel.

History verifies God sent a Rainstorm

Here we see what happened in the battle with Sisera. History verifies that the Lord sent a rainstorm and all of Sisera's nine hundred chariots got stuck in the mud. In other words, the highest technology of the day was rendered useless by rain.

Imagery of Sinai

Deborah recalled the Lord's triumphant march when the Israelites left the borders of Edom to move toward the Promised Land. All opposition melted before the majesty of the LORD God of Israel. Using imagery of the Sinai theophany (cf. Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:8; Hab. 3:3), emphasis is now placed upon the fact that God's presence has brought victory rather than either Israel's own capabilities or Deborah's personal leadership skills [Theophany; Violence and War in Judges]. In addition, such imagery anticipates the actual storm that plays so important a role in the battle itself (5:20–21). By linking the Sinai experience to the present events, Israel testifies that the Lord marches out on their behalf not merely in a recollection of the past, but also as a remarkable ongoing occurrence.

**Brensinger, T. L. (1999). Judges (p. 70). Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.*

Deborah ties Past History to Present Victory

Deborah is tying the past history of Israel under leaders such as Moses and Joshua, to their present victory they are experiencing right now. She is saying, the God who fought for them, is the God who fought for us. They can look back, read past stories and say yes that is what God has done for them in the past but they were special, they were a unique situation, He doesn't do that anymore, things are different for me, for us. Christian, Hebrews 13:8 says Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (all your tomorrows). The same God that fought for Moses, fought for Joshua, and fought for Deborah and Barack, fights for you today! Their victories are proofs and pictures of victories awaiting you. Romans 15 tells us all the things written in the Old Testament are examples for us.

Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Judges 5:6 "In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, In the days of Jael, The highways were deserted, And the travelers walked along the byways.

Highways were Scary Place during this Time

Verse six. The highways were a scary place in the days when these Canaanites ruled the land. They were ruthless people, they were very carnal people. We see the type of people they are as we look down and read verses 28 through 30. If we take a look at that just looking to here's Sisera's mother waiting for him to come home going, "Where's my son? Oh I know where he's at, he's taking the spoils of the victory like he's done all the other time. He's going to go out there he's going to grab a couple of women that he can use and take to his own advantage."

"He's going to plunder the people and leave them desperate and hungry. He's going to take their garments and bring them home to me and enrich me." What we see here just a people who would use other people for their own self-satisfaction and cast them away. What a scary place we read that Israel was during this day that people wouldn't even walk the main roads. If they were going to go somewhere they would walk the backroads. They would walk in side trails because they didn't want to encounter these Canaanites and these people who were oppressing them. They couldn't do business and couldn't do trade.

We read that their houses would be ransacked and taken and used for whatever. If you can imagine that what it would be like to be a husband, you never know when somebody would come and defile your daughter or your wife. What it would be like as a mother never knowing how you're going to provide for your children because when you planted crop they would come and steal the crop after you labored on it for months. There was just no future and there was no rest. This was the day that the Children of Israel lived like for these years and all these years that the Canaanites oppressed them. For 20 years, imagine living like that for 20 years.

Judges 5:28–30 (NKJV) ²⁸ "The mother of Sisera looked through the window, And cried out through the lattice, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarries the clatter of his chariots?' ²⁹ Her wisest ladies answered her, Yes, she answered herself, ³⁰ 'Are they not finding and dividing the spoil: To every man a girl or two; For Sisera, plunder of dyed garments, Plunder of garments embroidered and dyed, Two pieces of dyed embroidery for the neck of the looter?'

Deborah had Enough

But Deborah had enough, got involved, got engaged, stirred up others, and did something about it. How about you? You tired of watching people being oppressed and abused by the bondage of sin, the strongholds of the world, the wiles of the Devil? We have the answer, we have the God who is looking for people who willingly offer themselves to Him and for others to do something about it. I think it is time, and I think God is ready to do something here in this Country, and today we decide, are we going to be part of that. Are you sick of what you see like Deborah was? Then tell the Lord that you are, and offer yourself to Him, and let's all see what God will do!

Of Course they Sing

For 20 years, imagine living like that for 20 years, so of course they sing a new song, a song of victory and praise unto the Lord. So too do we, and so too will the people that we snatch from the grips of Satan.

Judges 5:7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, Until I, Deborah, arose, Arose a mother in Israel.

She "Arose"

Verse seven. Deborah says, "I arose." The book of Judges is about God reigning but God using a person. God raising up one person, a woman or man who He will use for His glory and for their good, and no one is excluded.

- Othneil was 80 years old and God used him. You later golden years God still has a plan that He can use you in a great and mighty way in the day and age that we live.
- Deborah was a woman and a mother, there's no exclusion on who God would use from a gender standpoint or a family situation.
- Gideon he was a nobody we'll read next week in chapter six, but God used him. Gideon wasn't a fiercely-trained warrior from the academy or a military strategist, he was a nobody hiding in the shadows but God called him a mighty man, a warrior. God does and says to us because He doesn't see for who we are at this moment; He sees us for what He can do through us as vessels when He flows through us.
- Can one person make a difference? Jael did. Nobody of significance but willing to step out and take risks, and God used her greatly, and God will use you greatly.

God is Looking for a Person to Arise in Power

God is looking for a person, verse 7 says, "She arose." We saw on our past study up, rise up in power and God is just looking for anyone and the willingness, and we see that theme woven through this, continually in this chapter 5 of this song. Someone with a willing heart who was willing to stand and God will use them. God is calling today who will stand in the gap. Ezekiel 22:30, He's looking for a man or woman who will stand in the gap, and we don't just stand in the gap, we walk in the gap and we fight in the gap. God isn't looking for a government program or a church program, but He's looking for men, and He's looking for women who will stand in the gap and let it be leaders who lead. In Isaiah 6, we read of Isaiah saying, "Here I am, send me," as he heard the Lord speaking in his council on the plight of man and the need for someone to get involved and engage and Isaiah says, "Here I am, send me." Christian, will you say that to Him today? Will you recommit that to Him today if you've said it before, say, "Here I am Lord, send me?" What you'll find God is not looking for ability, don't use that as an excuse but He's looking for availability as we look at Deborah. She just made herself available. She sat under a tree and people came to her. She just made herself available and she was a woman of the word and she just let the word flow through her. We can all have that same ability.

Ezekiel 22:30 (NKJV) ³⁰ So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?

- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 5: 8-31

Recap Last Study

We made it up to verse 7 last week in our verse-by-verse study of the Book of Judges. In chapter 4 last time as we saw the great victory of Israel over King Jabin of Canaan who had been oppressing them for 20 years. Deborah the prophetess and Barak rallied men of Israel to fight, and God delivered them a great victory totally routing the Canaan Army, and the victory was capped off we read with a never been heard of before woman named Jael, driving a tent stake through the head of the General of the Canaan Army.

Chp 5 – Breaks out in Song / In a History Book

So here before us in chapter 5 is the only chapter of its kind in the Book of Judges, as the whole chapter is a song. The Book of Judges is a history book, but here chapter 5 is a song. To me it seems like a spontaneous song, they just begin to sing after their great victory, they were outgunned, outmatched, but God said go for I have already brought you the victory, and by faith they go, and just as God had said, victory was already waiting for them. Who couldn't break out in song after witnessing and experience such a great work of God in their lives.

Judges 5:1 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying:

Judges 5:2 “When leaders lead in Israel, When the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the LORD!

Verse 2 – Bless the Lord

This is a spontaneous outbreak into praise when she says “oh when leaders lead, when people willingly offer themselves up, oh praise the Lord (bless the Lord) for the outcome is amazing, for amazing things happen.

How do we Offer Ourselves? (Romans 12:1-2)

How do we offer ourselves to the Lord? I think it is as simple as “here I am Lord – do with me as You will”. If you want to add a little more detail to it, I think Romans 12:1-2 gives us another layer, but still yet keeps it real simple.

- Present – means to “offer”
- Living sacrifice – not a dead sacrifice, but one that is alive, has some kick to hit, one that is alive for Christ, and if you are alive that means the living sacrifice is a daily thing, because life and living is daily.
- Holy – means pure. The living sacrifice keeps themselves pure and undefiled
- Acceptable – means well pleasing to God, doing the things that please Him, and if that means dying to self.
- Reasonable service (work) – all the above is to be expected, living daily for Christ, keeping ourselves pure, being well pleasing to the Lord isn't some over-and-above service, but..... to be expected, it is the expectation for those who are His. This statement lends itself that the Lord doesn't think He is asking for something extraordinary or unattainable, but just your reasonable service (work)
- Do not be conformed to this world – conformed means “to be assimilated, absorbed into, follow the pattern, to fit into the mold, to model like, to be like.
- But be transformed by the renewing of your mind – but transform, the word is metamorphous, like a caterpillar changing into a butterfly, the word here literally means to change into another form.

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Am I Being Conformed or Transformed

The question we are to ask ourselves, and ask ourselves daily, am I being conformed or transformed?

Have you Blessed the Lord Today – have you Gave Yourself to Him Today?

Christian, have you blessed the Lord today, have you willingly gave yourself to Him?

Judges 5:3 “Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes! I, even I, will sing to the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.

Judges 5:4 “LORD, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth trembled and the heavens poured, The clouds also poured water;

Judges 5:5 The mountains gushed before the LORD, This Sinai, before the LORD God of Israel.

Judges 5:6 “In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, In the days of Jael, The highways were deserted, And the travelers walked along the byways.

Judges 5:7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, Until I, Deborah, arose, Arose a mother in Israel.

Israel Scary Place to be

As we studied last week that due to the ruthlessness and depravity of the Canaanite oppressors, Israel was a scary place to live during this period we study here in chapter 4-5.

Deborah is a Mother Too – She takes Pride in being a Mother / No Higher Calling

Notice it does not say Deborah is the mother of Israel. It says she is a mother in Israel. Here was a woman who was a poet, a prophetess, a judge, a genuine hero in the history of God’s people—and yet what does she take pride in? The fact that she’s a mother. There is no higher calling than motherhood because mothers have the unique opportunity to shape lives and affect the future.

*******Roosevelt**

The mother is the one supreme asset of the national life. She is more important, by far, than the successful statesman, or businessman, or artist, or scientist. —Theodore Roosevelt

*******Classroom**

It’s been said, “The mother’s heart is the child’s schoolroom.”

*******A Mother Loves to the End / Whether Verbalized or Not**

What can be said about a Mothers Love: To sum up a mothers love, – she loves to the end. Through the days and through the years, she loved you. There is something in a mothers very being that screams to her child, I love you. I loved you yesterday, I love you today, and I will love you tomorrow, I will love you forever. A mother’s love is not in word, but it is love in action.

*******Even When Words not There – 9 months in the Womb**

Even if you feel you didn’t hear those words enough, the love was there, that is how God created mothers. Something happens in those 9 months in the womb, it is more than the forming of the child, but it is also the bonding of the mother of child for life. Something we fathers will never fully comprehend, but so beautiful to watch and see.

*******Love as a Child – Place always could Go / Sorrows - Rejoicing**

Love that always told you that there was a place they go no matter what, and be received. That there will always be someone to comfort them in sorrow, and rejoice with them in joyous times. To walk with them through the Valleys, and stand with them on the mountain top.

*******How many Times – (Faith – Down – Hope)**

When you had little or no faith – she had enough for both of you
When you were too down to dream, she carried your dreams for you.
When you felt hopeless, she served you a helping right from her heart.

****Behind the Scenes / Sleepless Nights

Behind the scenes never in the headlines were the eyes that watched for your safety. The hands that served you a meal, bathed you in the kitchen sink, and held you when you cried. A mind that constantly thought about you, often in sleeplessness worrying if you were alright.

****Roosevelt

The mother is the one supreme asset of the national life. She is more important, by far, than the successful statesman, or businessman, or artist, or scientist. —Theodore Roosevelt

Judges 5:8 They chose new gods; Then there was war in the gates; Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.

Judges 5:9 My heart is with the rulers of Israel Who offered themselves willingly with the people. Bless the LORD!

It was a Choice – Still is Today

They choose new gods. It was a choice, and so today it is a choice, a free-will choice that God allows each person to make.

Their gods – have Philosophy behind Them

All the gods of the Canaanites, were made into wood, clay, or metal images, and the people would bow down to them, and most times burn incense before them, but know this and that is each god had a whole philosophy behind them. (Baal was god of intellect, Ashtoreth was the god of sensuality, and Mammon was the god of money), and people choose them and worshipped them, followed them, celebrated them, because it was what was in their hearts, what was most important to them, what they desired and lived to fulfill. So way more than burning some incense, it was a whole lifestyle and culture to them. In 1 Corinthians 10:20, Paul says that idols were not simply stone carvings or brass objects, but that demons were actually linked to them. And the same is still true.

1 Corinthians 10:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

God of Bible Didn't Do it for Them

Verse 8, "As they chose new gods," the God of the Bible didn't do it for them. The God of Joshua didn't do it for them. Joshua would say to them, "As for me and my house, we chose to serve the Lord," but for some reason after all the generations people got tired of the God of Joshua. It didn't work for them. The God who fought and cleared and cleansed the land of the vicious people who had lived there and who kept them from the Promised Land, the God who gave victory over them, not to lose a battle that God led them. They said, "This god doesn't work for me." *Joshua 24:14–15 (NKJV) ¹⁴ "Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! ¹⁵ And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

Spiritual Analogy – Satan not Only Oppress – But Disarm

By spiritual analogy, we can say that Satan doesn't only want to oppress the Christian; he also wants to disarm the believer. He wants the believer to lay down the full armor of God that belongs to you in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 6:12–18).

Resultant – No Army / Men not Willing to Fight

The God who gave them homes that they didn't build and vineyards that they didn't plant. A God who brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey didn't work for them anymore and they went and they chose new gods, and we see that the result of that is enslavement. Also, what you'll see is there was no men willing to fight. Nobody had a heart to fight anymore because they didn't follow the true and living God. They had no fight left in them and we see that. There was no spear and shield. You couldn't even find an army of 40,000 in all of Israel because all the men put their weapons of war down and said, "I'm just going to go live and follow these other gods." The results of new god, no men will fight. A Nation that chooses new gods, who chooses not Jesus Christ, will become weakened militarily, this isn't just a historical passage, but it is also a prophetic passage.

America is in Trouble / America needs a Church who will 2 Chronicles 7:14

Church, it's time, America is in trouble. We live in a nation now that has to pass laws and laws that come with fights and resistance of who can use the bathroom, who can use the woman's room, and who can use the men's room. Sexual predators can now dress in disguise, go prowling, and no law enforcement can stop them because they need only to say this is my sexual identity, all the while they are only using the foolish and extremely ignorant law to carry out their perversion. The innocent are now made vulnerable, for the sake of what? This is the state of the nation that we live in and we're living now in a nation where the companies with the money are the ones who are pushing and trying to influence people and governments of what bills to pass and what bills not to pass. As we watched that this week with PayPal, the National Football League, NBA, Disney World, and Universal, Bruce Springsteen, all using their riches and influence to try to shape and conform other people into their will and against their personal will. God is looking for a man, a woman, - and can one person make a difference? Yes, back in verse 2 when people willingly offered themselves. They are the ones who are saying, "Here I am, send me, Lord, because I am available." Verse 9, we again see the willingness, the availability. 2nd Chronicles 7:14, He said, "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray, seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear them from heaven, and I will forgive their sin, and I will heal their land." We live in a country that has come to a place of such a day that we see America is in trouble and needs God to intervene and God says, "And I choose to do that and I will do that through my people who will humble themselves." That means to turn away from their self-desires and become leaders, and when leaders lead God does a mighty thing and they become people of prayer and they call out on behalf of the nation, "Heal our land."

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV)¹⁴ if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

God Loves the Prodigal / America is a Prodigal Nation

God loves the prodigal. We studied that last week. Luke 15, when the prodigal turns, God is already running towards and to that prodigal to wrap them up into their arms, into his arms. To receive them back, clothe them in righteousness again. If God loves a prodigal son and a prodigal's daughter, then I know he loves a prodigal nation also. The United States is a prodigal nation. The minute the United States turns back to Him, they'll find He's already running to receive her back into His arms. I believe God, His heart breaks for the prodigal nation because He loves our kids and our grandkids and our great-grandkids. He knows what a future would hold in a prodigal nation for them. Oh, we might be fine in our generation of our age sitting here in this room, but what is left to the future of our children, a nation on this decline? I tremble the thought. Apart from a revival.

Luke 15:20 (NKJV)²⁰ "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

Judges 5:10 "Speak, you who ride on white donkeys, Who sit in judges' attire, And who walk along the road.

Judges 5:11 Far from the noise of the archers, among the watering places, There they shall recount the righteous acts of the LORD, The righteous acts for His villagers in Israel; Then the people of the LORD shall go down to the gates.

Rulers Called to Tell the World

Verse 10, white donkeys and judges' attire speak of the leaders in Israel. The call was for them to go back to their towns and tell all the people what great things the Lord has just done for Israel, to tell the people that when you cry out to the Lord, when you are sick and tired of being sick and tired, when you cry out, God hears and responds in a great and mighty way – and victory will come. Christian, anytime you get a chance to tell someone about the great things God has done in your life, the great victories he has won for you, tell them, so they know that God is alive and living, and they can meet Him and know Him too, and they can live the victorious abundant life just as you do.

Retaking the Cities / The Years the Locust had Eaten

And when leaders lead, and people fight, victory comes, and notice that they are going back and retaking the city gates that they had abandoned for the last 20 years because they choose other gods. So too will you retake the things that are yours, and tell the world God extends the offer to them

Judges 5:8 (NKJV)⁸ They chose new gods; Then there was war in the gates; Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.

Joel 2:25 (NKJV) ²⁵ "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust, The consuming locust, And the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you.

Judges 5:12 "Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, sing a song! Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away, O son of Abinoam!

Judges 5:13 "Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles; The LORD came down for me against the mighty.

The Lord Fights for You

What battle are you in today? Call upon the Lord, and He will come down and fight for you. He will fight against what and who are too mighty for you to overcome, but will be nothing to Him to overcome. Literally, ask Him right now to fight for you, to come alongside of you to wage war against that thing that you feel is impossible to defeat.

Judges 5:14 From Ephraim were those whose roots were in Amalek. After you, Benjamin, with your peoples, From Machir rulers came down, And from Zebulun those who bear the recruiter's staff.

Judges 5:15 And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; As Issachar, so was Barak Sent into the valley under his command; Among the divisions of Reuben There were great resolves of heart.

Judges 5:16 Why did you sit among the sheepfolds, To hear the pipings for the flocks? The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart.

Judges 5:17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan, And why did Dan remain on ships? Asher continued at the seashore, And stayed by his inlets.

Judges 5:18 Zebulun is a people who jeopardized their lives to the point of death, Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield.

Commendation for Those willing to Fight

Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh, Zebulun, and Issachar were commended as those who entered the battle against Sisera and Jabin. God sees who gets involved in the battle, But Deborah and Barak's song as it continued, and we see that God sees who doesn't, who is not willing to get involved in the battle.

4 Tribes won't get Involved

So God calls out publically four tribes who refused to get involved, Reuben, Gilead (speaks of the tribe of Manasseh who stayed on the East side of the Jordan and did not dwell in the Promised Land), Dan, and Asher. So we see four tribes who refused to enter into the battle, and we can learn a lot from them as we look at them.

4 Hearts

Here we see 4 hearts.

1. Reuben, he had an **emotional heart**. He pondered these things and thought them through. They even had a meeting and discussion. Maybe they had a prayer meeting, but in the end all that we see was no response. They got excited about it, but they never followed up and engaged. So often, that can be us. We can hear a plight, or a cry. We can hear some ministry that's going on that needs help and we can get excited and say we're going to support it, or we're going to join it and be a part of it. We're excited for a little while, but then we come to this place that we just don't respond because we just fall back and get busy with life again. I think there's many times we can be just like that where we can say, "I've got all of my work to take care of. I've got to invest in my livelihood. I've got to take care of things here at the home front. I can't get involved." In the end, we don't. We don't go for the greater cause. We don't speak up about the injustice. We don't get involved in other people's plight. We don't go to war for those who are under battle and oppressed. We just watch on, searching our heart, sometimes looking for a reason to justify why we don't.
2. Gilead. They lived on the other side of the Jordan. They never did enter into the Promised Land because they liked it over on the other side better. Here we see a **heart that has no fellowship**. A heart that has no fellowship with the people of God will lose enthusiasm very quickly. They will lose the love of the things of the Lord if they are disengaged from the fellowship of the brethren. That's what we see Gilead, living on

the other side, hearing what's going on, but they had no enthusiasm, no linking, or relating to that was God's land and that was God's people. They just stayed and they did not engage. So too, can we, in our hearts once we lose fellowship, once we find reasons and excuses not to attend, we get busy, or we just get lazy, or whatever it might be. We make these media ministries to further the Gospel for when people are stuck and they can't make church. It's by no means our intent to replace church. We're told not to forsake the assembly of the brethren because we come here. This is where we encourage one another and build each other up. I'll tell you this, anyone, I've seen it, 3, 4 weeks out of the fellowship and the person just grows cold to the things of the Lord. They're no longer excited about those things. I'll say this, though. I've never seen a leader, a spiritual leader, one who makes impact on the world around them in the spiritual things whether that be their home, or ministry, or workplace; they make no spiritual impact who are not plugged into a local church. You just lose the vision. You lose the heart. You lose the enthusiasm of what God is doing.

3. Dan. It's a **heart with no growth**. All the way back in Chapter 1 we saw them forced from their land because they were unwilling to fight and go to the battle. It's because of their lack of faith we see they just don't have the heart to engage in this battle. They've already been beaten once. They see this as another beat down coming. They're not willing to engage. They just stay back and watch. We see a heart, but no growth. There's no faith, no faith. The heart will never grow stronger because there's nothing to strengthen it like lifting weights and entering into the weight room. No pain, no gain is the word that's said in training. So too it is in the ministry as reading the word, as in the war of going into the prayer room, of waking up early, or staying up late, whatever it takes to grow in the faith. Dan wouldn't grow in the faith because he lacked faith. He wouldn't engage in the battle and just chose to watch.
4. Asher. It was a **heart with no vision**; no vision of the things of God. They were only focused on the vision of the things of themselves. They were just, "We need to take care of our ships and our commerce here. We need to keep the income coming." They had no vision for anything other than themselves. They didn't see God's vision of Him wanting to bring a victory and to deliver them from the oppression of Jabin. What we see is they only had a vision for themselves. They could never see the vision of God.

Sounds like Good Reasons – But in End they all Just Excuses

They sound like good reasons, but in the end when you really just look at it, they're all just excuses of why they wouldn't engage. We, too, need to examine ourselves and be careful and look at our own hearts and see if we have this same place of no emotion, no growth, no vision.

Zebulon & Naphtali – didn't Engage (for Prosperity) – But Because it was the Right thing to Do

These four stood by and watched, but Zebulon and Naphtali, they engaged. We read they didn't engage for prosperity. They didn't engage for wealth; they came because it was the right thing to do. It was a just cause that needed to be faced and battled. Here God has given them the credit for having willing hearts. The theme continually through this song is the blessing to God's heart when man comes with a willing heart, and says, "Here I am, Lord. Send me."

Judges 5:19 "The kings came and fought, Then the kings of Canaan fought In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; They took no spoils of silver.

Judges 5:20 They fought from the heavens; The stars from their courses fought against Sisera.

Judges 5:21 The torrent of Kishon swept them away, That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon. O my soul, march on in strength!

Judges 5:22 Then the horses' hooves pounded, The galloping, galloping of his steeds.

The Lord fought for Them from Heaven

Of all those who entered the battle, it was the Lord of hosts who secured the victory. They fought from heaven, getting into Hebrew poetry, to give a picture of the fight that went on. This was an intense fight. This was a very aggressive fight. All of heaven was involved, as this Psalmist here is writing to say that this battle was fierce. Thus amplifying again the fierceness of the heart that was willing to go and fight. Then it speaks of the plunging of the water as God entered the battle, heaven came down and joined the battle, and hence the water rushed up to

make these chariots, instead of a mighty weapon, turned them into their hamstring, their Achilles' heel, that would put them dead in the water, literally, and then to be taken out by the warriors of Israel.

High Technology of the Day – God Rendered Useless / Same True for USA

Here we see what happened in the battle with Sisera. History verifies that the Lord sent a rainstorm and all of Sisera's nine hundred chariots got stuck in the mud. In other words, the highest technology of the day was rendered useless by rain. All the high tech is useless if God's not our homeland defense and we as a nation need to be crying out and calling for God to be our homeland defense.

God is a Genius / Do You have Decision Today

Do you have a decision to make? Separate yourself unto the Lord and seek His wisdom and guidance for He is a genius. We notice here He sets out this army coming against Israel to fight on a mountain and then He comes and He brings a flood from the heavens and then the stream that is next to that mountain. Their chariots which were the modern-day tanks of that day become useless and they literally become trapped in a death trap as they are on this chariot. God's a genius, He knows the schemes of the enemy and He knows how to defeat and so when you have a decision to make, separate yourself and trust, "Lord you have the wisdom in this matter so I trust it to you." When in doubt, wait. Don't run off without a plan and say, "It has to be done today." Don't run off and make that decision whatever it might be until you feel you've heard from the Lord. You will know when the Lord speaks because you'll have a peace about it. Then after you have a peace about it that's when you go. When the Word "go" comes, as Deborah said to Barak in chapter four, and when the Word "Up (and it means "rise up in power")" comes, when God gives you that word of what to do in that decision, then take that word and rise up in power and go in the confidence of the Lord that He has given you a plan and that He has given you the power to have victory in that plan. Don't wait any longer when it's time to go, go. When it's time to get up and rise in power, get up and rise in power because the battle and the victory belongs to you because God has given you the battle plan and He is a genius and He will lead you into victory.

Judges 4:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun;

Judges 4:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.

Judges 5:23 'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of the LORD, 'Curse its inhabitants bitterly, Because they did not come to the help of the LORD, To the help of the LORD against the mighty.'

Meroz – Fades away into Oblivion / The Mediocre Christian Life – that Leaves no Legacy of Greatness for God

We read this curse of Meroz. The curse is coming against them for not coming to aid in the battle for the Lord and with the Lord (notice, not with joining Barak or Deborah, they didn't not join the battle that the Lord was engaged in). Application for us. God calls us into the battle with him. Who is Meroz? We don't know because that tribe was cursed, and there's no mention of them again. They just get mentioned in a curse and fade away into oblivion. So it is when any Christian refuses to get into the battle that they know God has call them to engage in. They just drift away into a mediocre life that has no great legacy. No great witness about them. They just fade away off the scene.

Judges 5:24 "Most blessed among women is Jael, The wife of Heber the Kenite; Blessed is she among women in tents.

Judges 5:25 He asked for water, she gave milk; She brought out cream in a lordly bowl.

Judges 5:26 She stretched her hand to the tent peg, Her right hand to the workmen's hammer; She pounded Sisera, she pierced his head, She split and struck through his temple.

Judges 5:27 At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still; At her feet he sank, he fell; Where he sank, there he fell dead.

Sisera – Just say I am Not Here / Nail the Flesh / Christian Lay Aside Every Snare & Weight

No one was more fully engaged in the battle than Jael. She was one tough lady! Verse twenty-four, we're reading Hebrew poetry again. He didn't literally get up and fall down. As Hebrew poetry, he's dead and he's there on the ground. Jael lived in a tent. We see a picture here of our temporary bodies. They will one day fold up themselves,

but we have a building whose maker is God. As a picture of our home, we're always going to have these Siseras wanting to come in and stay. The Siseras want to say, "If anyone asks if I'm in here, you say no. You keep it a secret. Don't let anybody know that I'm here." We must nail down everything and anything in our homes that tries to lay a snare to us. You will never have victory over anything you are trying to hide, and say it doesn't exist, and isn't in my life. You must be honest with yourself, you must say this "thing" is in my life, and it must be dealt with, nailed, crushed and killed. Sisera, means to bind with chains, as we're told in Hebrew chapter twelve. To lay aside every wait and snare so that we might run with endurance. We are in the final lap, and we will soon be out of these tents. Even if the Lord should tarry for your whole lifetime, your lifetime still is a vapor. We need to run the race, to gain the crown, to live for Christ, to die as gain. Oh, the calling of this passage to greater heights, to greater victories. The Lord is speaking to those with a willing heart.

Judges 4:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ And he said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, 'Is there any man here?' you shall say, 'No.' "

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (NKJV) ²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Judges 5:28 "The mother of Sisera looked through the window, And cried out through the lattice, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarries the clatter of his chariots?'

Judges 5:29 Her wisest ladies answered her, Yes, she answered herself,

Judges 5:30 'Are they not finding and dividing the spoil: To every man a girl or two; For Sisera, plunder of dyed garments, Plunder of garments embroidered and dyed, Two pieces of dyed embroidery for the neck of the looter?'

These Canaanites were Depraved

To every man a girl or two: Cundall on the ancient Hebrew word translated girl: "Elsewhere in the Old Testament it means 'womb', and in the Moabite Stone it has the meaning 'girl-slaves.' The nearest English equivalent is 'wench,' and it is clear that these unfortunate captives would be used to gratify the lusts of their captors."

Judges 5:31 "Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD! But let those who love Him be like the sun When it comes out in full strength." So the land had rest for forty years.

Every Generation God offers a Deliverance – A Revival / May we see Revival in our Generation

Over and over throughout Judges, we read that the land had rest for forty years. Forty years is a generation. It seems as though every generation has its own deliverance, its own revival, its own encounter with the Lord. How I thank the Lord that we are seeing the outpouring of His Spirit in this generation, but only a dripping I believe of what God truly wants to do in our lives personally and as a Nation.

Will you be that Deliverer?

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 6

Judges 6:1-12

It's Been 47 Years since Chapter 5

It's been 47 years approximately since Deborah and Barack were used of God to deliver Israel out of the oppression of the Canaanites.

Judges 5:31 (NKJV) ³¹ "Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD! But let those who love Him be like the sun When it comes out in full strength." So the land had rest for forty years.

Judges 6:1–10 (NKJV) ¹ Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, ² and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which *are* in the mountains. ³ So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. ⁴ Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. ⁵ For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. ⁶ So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. ⁷ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, ⁸ that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; ⁹ and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. ¹⁰ Also I said to you, "I *am* the LORD your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My voice.' "

Living in Caves / John 10:10 / NT Principal – OT Picture

The children of Israel are living in dens, caves, up on clefts in the mountains of Israel. Literally the whole nation. Can you imagine a whole nation driven to the caves and the mountains? The word there for den literally means "dugout holes". And this we read, they considered their strongholds, their safe place. What type of life is that? Jesus said in John 10:10, that enemy comes to kill and destroy, but that He has come so that we may have life, and that more abundant. He has come so that we may life an abundant Spirit filled life, the God life, the life of spiritual victory. For every New Testament principal, there is an Old Testament Picture, and here in our passage today, we see that picture of the enemy bringing spiritual starvation, but God coming to bring the abundant spirit filled life.

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

Judges 6:1 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years,

THEN – How does Your Then Go

Verse 1 begins with the word "then", and the question "then" becomes what is your "then", how do the sentences of your life continue on? What do the sentences of your life say about your life? Here is Israel, and their "then" went on to say disappointing things that the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. How about for us, and our life and our today, what does our "then" continue to say in the sentences of life? May we be a people whose "then" goes on to read and say great things for God. Purpose that in your heart today. Regardless of what is before you today, what pressures, what challenges, what is coming against you, even if you feel it is time to quit and give up, may this one word today, "then", be the word that commits you to remaining steadfast to your Lord.

Job 13:15 (KJV 1900) ¹⁵ *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: But I will maintain mine own ways before him.*

Handed Over – Free-will must Honor the Consequences of Reaping and Sowing

It says the Lord "delivered them" which literally means "to hand over", and here we have the law of reaping and sowing. Freewill must be honored in order for it to be freewill. God is handing them over to their desires. The word is delivered and it literally means to hand over God is saying here you go, I have to hand you over to the

consequences of your choice. Here they are being handed over to the Midianites which they're very name means strife. Here Israel is full of strife in their life.

Galatians 6:7 (NKJV)⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

Sin Fun for a Season

Sin is fun for a season and then it becomes a cruel task master,

Hebrews 11:24–26 (NKJV)²⁴ By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

Cruel King and the Blacksmith

And so the story is told of a cruel king, of a cruel empire, of a cruel kingdom. He calls the blacksmith to his thrown and says I want you to make me a chain, the strongest chain in all of the world, let it be like none other on the planet. I want it to be fashioned and formed to be unbreakable. The blacksmith goes, and he forms this chain, pours his whole life into it, and he comes back and he presents it to the cruel king. The cruel king says, "I like it, but it's too long. Go and cut it down and bring it back to me." He brings it back as he cut it down from a great length to a shorter length. The cruel king looks at it and feels it, and grips it, and tugs on it, and says, "I like it. It's still too long. Now go and make it even shorter." He does this back and forth several times until the blacksmith returns and the chain is only a couple of links long. The cruel king says, "I like it. Now attach that end to my throne." To which the blacksmith does and then the cruel evil king says, "And now, attach that other end to your ankle."

So it is with Sin – Seems like Free Reign until will become Chained & Bound

So it is the way sin goes in our life. It seems like we've got freedom, we got a free reign. We're not bound by anything so we think. We can move and go where we want. But slowly over time, the more we enter, and engage, and entertain sin, a specific sin in our life, it draws us closer, and closer, and closer until we are totally bound and we're right there at the throne of the evil task master and we can't get ourselves free, and we are under his oppression. We are under his strife.

If You Playing with Sin – Consequences will Come

It starts off as fun for a season, but then sin becomes a cruel task master. Let that be known to anyone hearing. If you're playing with sin or entertaining sin in your life, it will come back and require of you what it demands. For the law of reaping and sowing is a law and it must be honored because freewill must be honored in order for it to be freewill.

Sin is a big deal, don't believe anything less..... you put Jesus on the cross.

Judges 6:2 and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which are in the mountains.

Midian Comes with 140,000 - Camels

Verse 2: Midian comes down, with what we will read in Chapter 8, with close to a 140,000 soldiers and they come with camels (verse 5). Camels can go long distance without water 300 miles. The speed of the camels allowed the Midianites to conduct guerilla warfare because they could ride into an area and attack quickly. Here, they're in a strong position. Logistically, they don't have to haul water they can really outmaneuver and outflank Israel all day. Your recon could never be good enough to protect you because the Midianites could outmaneuver the recon team before they had to report in. so here, Israel they're trapped up on the mountain. We'll read there's no place for them to go.

Judges 8:10 (NKJV)¹⁰ Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen.

Israel living in Caves

Israel is living in caves, and dens, and up on the mountain. They're no longer living down in the Promised Land. They're no longer living in the beautiful homes. They're no longer eating and partaking of the fruit of the vine of vineyards that they didn't plant and homes they didn't build. Here they are, they have to go up and live in caves

and dens (dug holes) to escape the Midianites. They're people living in fear, afraid to come out, afraid to leave. They build what they consider strongholds, that nobody can reach them. What they don't realize is, they've imprisoned themselves as they locked themselves away from the Promised Land, the good land that God would have for them. They put up these walls thinking they're safe within these walls because nobody can reach me here, and nobody can touch me, and nobody can harm me.

Are You Living in a Cave – Darkness - Fear

Truly what they are, they're living in a cave, they're living in darkness. They're walled in and their life has become a mere existence. Are you living in fear today? Walls up because you hope no one gets in? You put walls up because you don't want anyone to get in? You don't want to get close to anybody because you're afraid to get hurt. This is not the life God has for you. He wants you life the abundant life. John 10:10, "I've come that they may have life, and that more abundance."

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Pastor – How do I Walk out of My Cave

You may say, "Well Pastor, how do I walk out of my cave? All that I know is my cave. I've been living in this cave for 6 months, 6 years, 60 years, my whole life. I've locked myself away because I'm afraid to go out and get hurt. I'm afraid to expose myself and I put these walls up to protect myself. How do I walk out of my cave, my den, Pastor? The answer, as all answers, look on to Jesus Christ and He will always show us the answer, and the answer is "roll away the stone and live". Look to Jesus. He overcame the grave. He overcame that tomb. He overcame that cave that He was placed in. He says to you, "I did it for you," and when we read John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," the life he is not just talking, is about eternal life when we take our last breath and that our sins are forgiven and that we enter into his presence. He's talking about life right now. That zoe life, the abundant life, the God life, the life that Jesus Christ lived, the life that we read that the believers lived in the first century church as they seized it, and gleamed it, and made it their own. It wasn't something they read, but it was something that they lived.

Mark 16:3-4 (NKJV) ³ And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" ⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large.

John 14:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Simply Walk Out / Believe in the "I God"

Christian, what do you do? Roll away the stone and live. Walk out of that tomb. Simply walk out as Jesus did and showed us the resurrection life, the spirit filled life. Ephesians 1 says and tells us that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is available for us today – it is ours for the taking – so go take it Christian. You roll away the stone, and you walk out, and you face whatever is out there. Literally, one step, walk out.....today! Not 12, not 6, not 2, just one step of getting up and walking out into the light. Not stages where today I will walk to the door of the cave and look out, then maybe tomorrow I will step out but then hurry about and step back in, and then I will build up to eventually I will walk out of my walled in life that I have made, always protecting myself from others so I don't get hurt, for you will never get there if you try to build yourself up to it because what the key word is – is "I" – and there will always be the problem, when you put yourself in to having to be the victor. How do you do that? You do it by faith. Believing the God who is the "I" God. One step, to the One God!

Ephesians 1:19-21 (NKJV) ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

The "I God" – Verses 7-10 / I Am Becoming One

The I God, verse 7,

- "I brought you up from Egypt
- I brought you out of the house of bondage
- I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians who oppressed you
- I drove them out before you and gave you their land
- I am the Lord, your God. Do not fear the Gods of the Amorites and who's land you dwell.

I am," is what he says, and it takes us all the way back to Exodus 3. "I am the becoming one." I am means the becoming one. "I will become to you all that you need to walk out of that cave, to walk out of that tomb, to walk out of those walls that envelop you. I am, and I am the becoming one." He is beloved, the I God. He is the I God that works and brings victory for us. We are the "you" people and too many times we try to take these things and solve these things by being the "I" person whereas we're just the person who looks to the God who says, "I brought you up, I brought you out, I delivered you, I am the Lord, your God. Do not fear."

Judges 6:7–10 (NKJV) ⁷ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, ⁸ that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; ⁹ and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. ¹⁰ Also I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell.' But you have not obeyed My voice.' "

Exodus 3:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

As Follow "I God" – Gives Spirit of Power, Love, Sound Mind / You can't Fail Him / Don't be Tortured

As we follow the "I God", we are simply recipients of what He does, what He desires to do, and what his power can do. Our only action is, we read in verse 10, after He gives the list of the I's that He has done, we're not to fear. "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but a power, love, and sound mind," II Timothy 1:7. God gave you power to overcome. To live the victorious Christian life. God gave you love, an unconditional love. You need not worry of failure before him because he loves you unconditionally and he's a God who gave you the sound mind, the strong mind. That he doesn't want your mind to be tortured by these things of the world. Tortured by the things that you fear. Tortured by the fear of being hurt. Tortured by that you will not match up and live up to someone's standard. God doesn't give you a human standard, he gives you a god standard and he sets the god standard by becoming man, dying for us, and trading places with us so that we can simply receive his standard by faith, by receiving His son, Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV) ⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Won't Cave In

I am not saying that won't be hurt again, that you won't be let down by someone again But won't I am saying is don't let someone else put you in a cave, put you in the darkness, take your life, take your light, regardless of what someone does to you, you won't cave-in..... You won't be put in the corner, afraid to get out of bed, but you say regardless of what happens, I am walking out of this tomb and I am going to live my life, the life God has purposes for me, the abundant spirit-filled Christian life.

God Lives to Make Intercession for You – By Name

And you know what, you can have it, if you will allow it, because God makes intercession for you, Jesus Christ makes intercession for you by name before the throne of God. That's mind boggling to me how that works but all I know is that the word is true and that I know that he lives to make intercession for me by name. Therefore, my name daily is on the lips of the son of God, because he lives to make intercession for me daily and there his using my name daily. He's not a distant far away God, he's a here and now God. I'm not some no name number to him, I am specific to him, so specific that he knows my name and he has to know my name if he's going to live to make intercession for me. He has to know every detail of my life if he's going to live to make intercession for me. Your God knows every detail of your life and he has your name on his heart, on his lips, as he lifts it before the heavenly Father in intercession for you so your God knows you uniquely and every detail of you.

Hebrews 7:23–25 (NKJV) ²³ Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. ²⁴ But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Romans 8:34–35 (NKJV) ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Roll Away the Stone and Live

The stone has been rolled away, choose to walk out. How to do that practically? Let's take a look at verses 3 through 6 again.

Judges 6:3 So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them.

Judges 6:4 Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey.

Judges 6:5 For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it.

Judges 6:6 So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.

Midianites not Problem – Merely Symptoms of heart Issue

Verse 3: The Midianites are not the problem they're just the symptom that shows what the problem is and it's a hard problem with Israel. They won't have faith in the God of Israel and they won't obey His word.

No Stronger Place – Then Obedience to Christ

They think they have built strongholds, but there is no stronger place, no greater stronghold, then living in obedience to Christ.

Midianites don't Take Goods – Just Destroy – Leave Weakened

Notice that the Midianites didn't even take the goods for spoil. They just destroyed it to keep Israel weak. No food means no strength, no power means no ability to fight and to overcome. What is the Christians food?

- It's the word of God.
- It's prayer.
- It's to do his will because Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of the Father.
- The great, great power is in obedience of taking God's word, the manna from heaven," and as James tells us, "Be doers of the word and not hearers only."
- The other strength, the other food, and what Satan wants to keep us from, no fellowship. There's no fellowship in the caves. there's no fellowship alone up on the mountain. there's no fellowship in the dens and the crooks and the crannies.

That's what Satan wants to try to diminish us so we have to come, and what we have to feed on and not let Satan want to starve us of. That's what he's trying to do here. I'm going to starve them out.

Acts 2:42 (NKJV)⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

John 5:30 (NKJV)³⁰ I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

James 1:22 (NKJV)²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Hebrews 10:25 (NKJV)²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Satan

That's what he wants to do to us. He wants to starve us out of the word. He wants to starve us from prayer, fellowship with the Lord, fellowship among his brethren, and starve us from doing God's will in obedience. Be on the look for his ways, and you will stay out of the dens, the caves, and rock clefts.

Judges 6:7 And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites,

Judges 6:8 that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage;

Judges 6:9 and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land.

Judges 6:10 Also I said to you, "I am the LORD your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My voice.' "

Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves:

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are slaves to sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

Sin Cycle – But God Always Leaves a Remnant / Will you be the Remnant

Verses 7-10, we read that sin cycle again and here they are, they finally cry out and notice here though that God has left the prophet, an unnamed prophet, a judge. We don't know who he is or she, but they come and they gave, proclaim the word of the Lord to these people. You know, God always leaves a remnant for every generation, you read that through the history of Israel and you will read it through the history of the United States.

- God always leaves a remnant that someone has a voice who point and calls the way back to the Lord,
- reminds of what God has done.
- Speaks to the people of what they have failed to do,

this prophet, as the modern day prophet who will speak the word of God. This prophet says to the nation of Israel clearly established you are in this predicament because of your disobedience to take the steps of faith and so God leaves them and puts them in that place. God always has a remnant, always leaves a remnant for every generation and so my question for myself and my question to you church, will you be today's remnant in your workplace where there is no one who speaks and stands for the word of God. Will you be the remnant in your home, will you be the remnant in your community, will we as a church be the remnant here in this nation. Because God always leaves a remnant and he's looking for someone as he studied in chapter 4 and 5. The only requirement is somebody who willingly offers themselves.

God Does a Work in the Trials – One Way or Another

God does work in the trials and be that not confused, and so you may find yourself in a trial and let me share with you what God did when they were in the nation of Egypt enslaved.

Trial of Correcting or Conforming

If you find yourself in some trial, two things God does through the trials and you have to decide is a trial,

- a storm of correction
- or is it a storm of conforming.

Correction, God won't violate your free will but he sure can make your free will miserable as he shows you the vanity of the sin. Because it's only fun for a season and then it becomes a cruel task master or could it be what God was doing in Egypt which could seem like a trial but he was conforming them and shaping them, molding them into his image and so, in a trial correction or conforming. How do you tell the difference? As King David had said in his Psalm, search me and know me, find out in me if there's any wicked way. The quickest way out of a storm of correction is repentance, God has got your attention, he's spoken. You responded, you asked him, he told you what to do, do it. The quickest way out is repentance but I have to say, sometimes you have to play out the consequences because there's reaping and sowing and I can't guarantee you that repentance will relieve you of the consequences of sin.

Psalm 139:23–24 (NKJV)²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴ And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

Nothing to Confess – Trial of Conforming

If you have nothing to confess after a time of searching your heart rejoice. You're in a trial because God's trying to conform you and shape you into his image so Christians don't let it go to waste, embrace it and say, Lord, let me not miss a drop of what you are doing in me.

Philippians 1:6 (NKJV) ⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

BUT – Look What God still Does in the Fires / Forges the Nation of Israel in Egypt

Those who were in the slavery of Egypt, it was hard. Let it be seen and known even in the slavery what God did for the nation. They go in as a family of 70. Jacob brings his family of 70 down into Egypt during the time of a famine where Joseph, his son is the prime minister, but then there rose a pharaoh who did not know Joseph and as the nation of Israel was growing that pharaoh became fearful of them and put them under bondage of slavery. But for 400 years they are slaves but they are multiplying, they are growing and under the brutal taskmaster they are developing into a nation that knows burdens and knows pain and knows suffering and at the end of 400 years when it's time, when God says it's time to take them out of Egypt and bring them into the promise land. It's estimated now that 70 that went in is now anywhere from 2.5 million to 3 million and here they come into this land, into this wars but they are still as a nation, they are strong as a nation, they know hardship, they know how to live on leniency, they know how to live without and they know how to handle steel or they know how to handle stone because that's what they had been doing, they know how to march for long days, they know how to endure under the beating sun, they know how to live with little water, they know how to be strong even with little protein and when they come out of Egypt they come out still as a nation. What did God during this time of tribulation and persecution in their lives as slaves, he forged a nation, a might nation, he made them and sharpened them into an iron steel and when they came out they came out that no one would be able beat them and overrun them. God used the fires of Egypt as an incubator to grow this baby nation into the mighty nation that it became.

Rejoice you are Counted Worthy

Rejoice Christian, you are counted worthy and worth it to Him to invest in you to become great. Because I'll tell you what he wants to do, he has a remnant in every generation and you're that remnant. He could just take you home after salvation but he leaves you here because he wants to use you to be a light unto the world. He wants to put that lamp up on that hill that whole world can see and it's been said that adversity is the crucible of greatness and so, if you find yourself in that storm of conforming give the Lord praise.

Judges 6:11 Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites.

Judges 6:12 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!"

Winepress – not Place to Thresh

Verse 11: The wine press is an enclosed area and it's not your ideal place to thresh grain because you want to thresh grain out in the open or up on a high point. When you break the weak canal from inside the shell casing which is called the chaff. When you break those two apart the weak canal's heavier and the husk is like dust if you would. They would take a pitchfork and they would lift it and keep lifting a shovel full into the air. As they threw it in the air the wind would come and blow the chaff away and let the grain fall. Trying to do this in a wine press which was enclosed isn't the best way to do this.

Angel of Lord – is Jesus

Verse 11, so what we have here, the Angel of the Lord is none other than Jesus Christ himself, we see that it's none other than God as he uses the I statements. This is what we would call and Christophany, it's a physical appearance of Christ in the old testament. We'll talk more about that at another time. But what we see is, this Angel of the Lord, Jesus Christ, he's sitting under the terebinth tree, he's just sitting under the shade. He is not stressed out, He is not worried about the situation because none of these things can move him. Let's read Psalm 99 versus 1 through 3, as we look there, they're called the royal psalms, the kingly psalms because they speak of the kingship of God himself and in Psalms 99 it says, He shall not be moved, the earth quakes, the earth is moving but God isn't moved. His throne is stable and sure and the earth may be quaking but God isn't and so here see our God, he isn't stressed. He has everything under control and what he's going to do here, he heard the cry of the people and it's a picture of Hebrews 7, He coming to make intercession.

Psalm 99:1–5 (NKJV) ¹ The LORD reigns; Let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim; Let the earth be moved! ² The LORD is great in Zion, And He is high above all the peoples. ³ Let them praise Your great and awesome name— He is holy. ⁴ The King's strength also loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. ⁵ Exalt the LORD our God, And worship at His footstool— He is holy.

God Lives to Make Intercession for You – By Name

God makes intercession for you, Jesus Christ makes intercession for you by name before the throne of God. That's mind boggling to me how that works but all I know is that the word is true and that I know that he lives to make intercession for me by name. Therefore, my name daily is on the lips of the son of God, because he lives to make intercession for me daily and there his using my name daily. He's not a distant far away God, he's a here and now God. I'm not some no name number to him, I am specific to him, so specific that he knows my name and he has to know my name if he's going to live to make intercession for me. He has to know every detail of my life if he's going to live to make intercession for me. Your God knows every detail of your life and he has your name on his heart, on his lips, as he lifts it before the heavenly Father in intercession for you so your God knows you uniquely and every detail of you.

*Hebrews 7:23–25 (NKJV)*²³ Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. ²⁴ But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 6:11-16

Judges 6:1–12 (NKJV) ¹ Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, ² and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which *are* in the mountains. ³ So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. ⁴ Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. ⁵ For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. ⁶ So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. ⁷ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, ⁸ that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; ⁹ and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. ¹⁰ Also I said to you, “I *am* the LORD your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell.” But you have not obeyed My voice.’ ” ¹¹ Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which *was* in Ophrah, which *belonged* to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order 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, you mighty man of valor!”

Living in Caves / John 10:10 / NT Principal – OT Picture

The children of Israel are living in dens, caves, up on clefts in the mountains of Israel. Literally the whole nation. Can you imagine a whole nation driven to the caves and the mountains? The word there for den literally means “dugout holes”. And this we read, they considered their strongholds, their safe place. What type of life is that? Jesus said in John 10:10, that enemy comes to kill and destroy, but that He has come so that we may have life, and that more abundant. He has come so that we may life an abundant Spirit filled life, the God life, the life of spiritual victory. For every New Testament principal, there is an Old Testament Picture, and here in our passage today, we see that picture of the enemy bringing spiritual starvation, but God coming to bring the abundant spirit filled life. *John 10:10 (NKJV)* ¹⁰ *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

Great Man/Woman of God – Not Born in a Moment

Great men and women of God are not made in a moment. New Testament Principal, Philippians 1:6, and the Old Testament Picture is here watching Gideon grow in the Lord. He will do the same for you. *Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)* ⁶ *being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*

Judges 6:11 Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites.

The Winepress vs the Threshing Floor

In the threshing of wheat, the wheat kernel is encapsulated by its husk, by God's great design, and so to get to the wheat kernel you would take a, what they would call a threshing sled, which is nothing more than a big old block of wood tied to an oxen, and as you would drive that sled, that big block, over the wheat it would break the wheat kernel from the husk. Then, you would take your pitch fork and then, stab it into the pile and lift it up into the air, and then the wind would come and blow the husk away because it's like a feather, it's like dust. Then, the wheat kernel would fall back to the ground.

It's a noisy process when you consider oxen moving a sled, grinding over these things. Here's Gideon, he's in the quiet place. He's in a small place because a wine press was never a big area. A wine press was maybe 5 or 6 feet wide and what it was is, you would take your grapes and put your grapes into the wine press. It usually had 2 to 3 levels and the top level, you put your grapes in, and the person, literally, would have a tree limb over the wine

press or else they would build it by wood, and a rope would be hanging down, and the person hangs on the rope because it's going to get slippery in there, and they take off their shoes, they're in their bare feet, and they're standing in the wine press holding onto the rope and they start stomping on the grapes.

As they break and crush the grapes, the juices flow out and again, it's on a slope, usually 2 maybe even 3 levels, and so the first level has a little opening that is where the grape juice would flow down to the next level, now, you're separating the grape juice from the actual grape body. Then, they would clean out the top level and then throw it away, but then, as the grape juice settled down to the next level, they would skim it from there and pour it into their containers to make wine.

Here, Gideon is in this wine press, small area, hanging onto this rope. He's breaking the wheat kernel from the wheat husk, quietly, in fear the Midianites are going to come find him, destroy his food. Gideon is living in the shadows.

Theophany- Jesus

The Angel of the LORD appears to Gideon, and what we have here is a Christophany, a physical manifestation of God, Jesus Christ, in the Old Testament. And notice that Jesus is sitting under the shade of the tree, He isn't panicked, He isn't fretting, He is sitting..... He knows He has the power and strength to overcome and defeat anything, and so He is just waiting, as a gentleman, for someone to come to Him who is sick and tired of being sick and tired, who will say, Lord help!

Oak Tree – Symbol of Strength

Terebinth tree, is an oak tree. Where He sits is a symbol to Gideon, a symbol of strength. Gideon is continually going to be asking for confirmation from the Lord as we read this chapter, confirmation of who he is, is he really calling Gideon, and if He is will He deliver and defeat the enemy. Gideon is missing all these signs along the way, and here is the first of many, that His God is strong, and shall not be moved.

Psalm 99

Psalms 93-100 are called the Royal Psalms, the Kingly Psalms, because the theme of them are all about our God being King, our King Jesus. Great passages to read when you feel your world is trembling and being turned upside-down, read these Psalms and be reminded who reigns, who rules, who sits under the oak tree and is immovable by the things of the world, but has a heart that moves for you.

Psalm 99:1-5 (NKJV) ¹ The LORD reigns; Let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim; Let the earth be moved! ² The LORD is great in Zion, And He is high above all the peoples. ³ Let them praise Your great and awesome name— He is holy. ⁴ The King's strength also loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. ⁵ Exalt the LORD our God, And worship at His footstool— He is holy.

Symbol of Strength – Jesus Reigns from a Throne of Strength

Terebinth tree, is an oak tree. Where He sits is a symbol to Gideon, a symbol of strength. Today Jesus reigns from His throne in heaven, a symbol of strength, a place where victory is sure and secure.

Revelation 4:8-11 (NKJV) ⁸ The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" ⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ¹¹ "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

Book of Revelation – God Controls Every Page that Unfolds

God is a sure anchor, He is immovable, none of these things in this world or around us shall move Him. I am first and the last, and everything in-between! Oh the Book of Revelation has can be quite the Book to handle at times as we see a world in turmoil and upheaval, plagues and earthquakes, wars and disasters, but at the very beginning of the book (verse 11) Jesus says, write these things and send them to the churches, for every last word that is written, is exactly how it will unfold and the will not be one word that doesn't happen, for there will not be word (aka – one event) that will happen that I am totally not in control of.

Revelation 1:8 (NKJV) ⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 1:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

Janitor at Seminary

I am reminded of the story of several seminary students debating the Book of Revelation late into the evening one night, well past the normal school hours. The janitor had come in for his evening shift and was busy for those several hours cleaning (ever so quietly) the conference hall the students were debating in amongst themselves, when they finally concluded and were passing by the janitor one of the students said, well you got an earful tonight, what are your thoughts on all that is written in the Book of Revelation, fully expecting to hear the janitor say something along the lines of "it is way above my head", "too deep for me", "you guys are way smarter than me", but the janitor, a simple man of God responds and says, "I have read it – and simply put, God wins!"

God Wins – Then How can We Lose

Gang, God wins! If God is for us, who can be against us, what can separate us from the love of God?

Absolutely nothing!

Romans 8:31–39 (NKJV) ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

How Does Revelation End

How does the Book of Revelation end in chapter 22, with Jesus saying saying, "I win". I am the Alpha and the Omega, I told you at the beginning, and now I am telling you at the end, and I told you everything in-between, and from the beginning to the end, I win! Nobody defeats me

Revelation 22:12–15 (NKJV) ¹² "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." ¹⁴ Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

Is that God You Need Today – Because that is the God He Is / Call to Him

Is that God you need today in your life? A sure God, an immoveable God, a God that can't be beat? Is that God you need today - In your marriage? In your childrearing? In your ministry? In your personal life today? The God who come to Gideon is the same God that comes to you today, He is the same God who is sitting under the oak tree, not moved, not panicked by what is happening in your life, not fretting, because He is sure of one thing, HIMSELF, and therefore He is sure He can see you through, and he sure He wins, therefore you will too. Is that the God you need, then call to Him, say to Him Lord it feels like I've been living in a cave, in dark walls, my marriage seems entombed, my life feels like I am just hanging on and I have no victories and all tomorrow promises is more of today. Lord I seem to live either in constant fear, constant defeat, no joy, no celebration, no might, no power, then call out to Him and say show me the God who can't be moved, show me the God who doesn't and cant lose, reveal yourself to me today like you did to Gideon, and begin to grow in into the mighty man, mighty woman of God that you desire me to be.

He sits Waiting – Just Waiting for You

He sits with power, He has a plan, He has peace, and is waiting for you, and He says let's go fight this thing, lets go root this out of your land, your life, I am ready He says, I've just been waiting for you..... let's go do this.

Judges 6:12 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, “The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!”

When Mighty - When Lord with You

When do you become a mighty man/woman of valor, when the Lord is with you. I have to first be sure, ensured, that my God is immovable, seated on the throne, when I look to Him I need to see Him from where He sits (the throne of the universe), and then I too will become immovable, then I too will be mighty man of valor. It is all based on where He sits, not where I stand.

God sees you For Who you Will Be – He knows What you can Be

Verse 12, he calls Gideon who's hiding in the shadows a mighty man of God a mighty warrior. You know God always sees you for who you would be, not currently where you're at. He knows what's in you and he knows what you're capable of when you connect yourself to him and you willingly offer yourself to him. He knows what you can be and that's how he always views you, not who you are, not who you're failing. He looks at you and what you can be and will be. Philippians 1:6, he who began a good work will be faithful to complete it, and that's a promise to you Christian.

Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

Peter = Rock

God changes Peter's name from Simon to Peter, which is from shifting sand to solid rock, and that was before he would deny Jesus.

John 1:42 (NKJV)⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone).

God calls Gideon in Middle of Everyday Task

Verse 12: God calls him right in the middle of everyday activity, threshing wheat, menial task. Christian could He do that to you today? Could he do it tomorrow? Meaning, would you have ears to hear if He would come and speak to you right in the middle of your everyday task? Sometimes we think God's only going to speak to us in church or in our devotion and in a special time and at a retreat, some getaway. Here's what God says and here's what we see in these passages. God will meet you right in the middle of your everyday task but the key is we have to have the openness that He can break through to us in the ordinary. Stay tuned to Him Christian 24/7. Believe He can speak, will speak, at any time any given moment and be prepared because He will as we see in this picture.

Judges 6:13 Gideon said to Him, “O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.”

If – Why – Where – But - Forsaken

Gideon starts with Lord and small cases he doesn't know who's before him but here we can see his questioning and it's much like our questioning. There's the if, there's the why, there's the where is He challenging, what's going on and why hasn't God delivered us and worked in our life.

Just like Us Asking Why – But it is Us who Forsaken Him – Choose Evil

Verse 13, Gideon is so much like us, things go bad, we question where God is. How could he forsake us, how could he not intervene, why did he leave us and not change this situation while what we read here all along is us who has forsaken him by choosing to do wrong, evil to sin.

Tough to Taste Defeat After Prosperity / God ready for His “THEN”

Verse 13. How old is Gideon? Well, he's under 7 years of oppression. We know prior there was 40 years of rest in the land. I would think regardless of Gideon's age he knows what prosperity was like. He may be older than 47 so he would have known what oppression was like earlier than what he now experienced, but Gideon knows prosperity and he knows oppression. It's hard living in defeat once you have tasted that the Lord is good. Once you

have lived in the Promised Land in prosperity and spiritual abundance. It's hard to go and live into oppression again, but it happens. We can think it will never be good again because we failed the Lord, because we disobeyed him, because we went against what He had told us to do and we had promised Him that we would. We think it will never be good again, that this drought, this barrenness, this empty life is the way it will be always for the rest of our life because we have failed God or we think God has forsaken us. Know this, God is always ready for His "then", verse 14 (Then the Lord).

Judges 6:14 Then the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?"

Gideon is Empty – Now God can Fill him

Verse 14. Then, the Lord said, "Go in this might." Gideon is empty, now God can fill him and use him, and do His great work in him.

God is no man's Responder

Verse 14, notice God doesn't respond to him, his questions of where you've been, what you've been doing. God is not the respond-er, God is not on trial, God isn't on his heels trying to convince us that he's good. Nor does he have to give an account to any man today and that's the government, that's Washington DC, that's any governor, that's any politician, that's any big company with financial influence, or public celebrity with throngs of followers, or anybody who wants to make some of bills or laws that counter His word as if God doesn't know what he's doing and Gods made a mistake. God's not the one on trial, he does not need to defend himself. Even though man wants to put him on trial. If only people would sit back and realize who he is and how great He is and be reminded like when He was challenged by Job – "Where were you when I formed the universe? Where were you when I formed the deep sea creatures? You weren't even formed and I was forming the world" - God answers no man, God answers no man.

Job 38:4-6 (NKJV) ⁴ "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. ⁵ Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶ To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone,

College Professor

I'm reminded of the young man that I had met, he had just graduated college, we were on the same trip together in Israel and he tells the story of the professor. It was literally a God's not dead type of scenario, if you saw that movie and the professor mocked Christians, he would mock this student all semester for his belief that he could be foolish enough to believe that there's a being out there powerful enough to create and so. Then at the, literally, near the end of the year he got full of himself and came with a full frontal attack against this young man and mocked him and he challenged him, he pulled an egg out from his desk and he held the egg out in his hand. He says, so tell me John if your God's so powerful I'm going to drop this egg and if this egg doesn't break then we'll believe your God is real. But if the egg does break it will just prove that your God's weak and your God is a figment of your imagination. He goes, would you like to take that challenge right now John? John goes, I would. He goes, but if I may professor I'd like to pray first. Professor jokes, sure have at it. He stands up and he says, father I pray to you, I pray that when this egg drops it shatters into 100 pieces all over the floor and then Lord, I pray that you will bring your wrath down upon this mocker and you will strike him dead and leave him lay out on the floor in this heap of the egg yolk and let them both be crushed and broken into a thousand pieces. In your name I pray, amen. The teacher literally stared at him, took the egg, put it back in the drawer, closed the draw and says, class dismissed.

God Answers No Man – He Rules from the Throne of the Universe

God answers no man, God answers no man, He rules from the throne of heaven, let man tremble, let the earth tremble, but God does not tremble at no man, no challenges, no character attacks.

Judges 6:15 So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

God Loves to Use the Weak and Foolish Thing

Verse 15. God loves to use the weak and foolish things. I remember telling senior pastor as we were talking, I said, "You know, we really shouldn't feel all that good about ourselves and being called to be pastors." So many times pastors can think they're at some super spiritual level and I said, "But really when it comes down to what the Lord says in Corinthians there, He's saying, "Hmm, where can I find the weakest and most foolish thing that I can do something great that will glorify me and me only?" Then the Lord goes, "Oh there you are. There's Ray. Perfect. I found the weakest and most foolish thing I could ever find and I'm going to use him and everybody will say it's all the Lord." Weakness will always cry out to strength. Foolishness will always cry out to greatness. I hope everyone of you qualify. I hope everyone of you here humble yourself and say, "here I am, Lord, the weakest and most foolish thing, but ready and willingly offer myself to You.", and when you do, God will do His then statement.

1 Corinthians 1:26–29 (NKJV) ²⁶ For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Only Excluded

The only way you can get out of ministry here at CCAAC, if you really don't want to serve, is to tell me you are highly qualified and overly gifted, and then you can be sure I will never ask you to serve her at the ministry.

Returning from College

I remember when I felt a calling upon my life I went and talked to the pastor. He gave me a couple options of, "Well, you could go into the mission field or you could start a Bible study right there down the road and see what God would do.", and he goes, "But you know, one of the things that's exciting is what's happening at the Bible College right now. God's really doing a work out there." We chatted and it was almost immediate, soon as he said it, I felt my heart grip the, "That's what I want to do. I want to go to Bible College." Even though I've been studying the Word deeply, personally, and just devouring pastor study tapes from other pastors, but I knew that's what I felt, God gripping my heart.

Just for what it's worth, anyone, it was a year before I actually did it. God's calling doesn't always demand that it's an immediate next step. God had a timing and purpose, getting my house in order, but He brought it together and did what He did. I think God's going to use me in this great way. I think I'm going to be this special gifting. I go to Bible College and what you find, the more you know of the Lord, the less you'll think of yourself. The lesser and lesser I became of myself and I know I went from all these great plans and this great thoughts of how God would use me and what would I do to, I came to a place of, I have no idea what I'm going to do and how it's going to happen and what's going to happen, but I'm just yielding myself to You Lord.

I finished Bible College and I came back and I remember standing in the back of the sanctuary talking to the senior pastor, Pastor Malcolm, and he said, "So what are you going to do now, Ray?" I said, "I don't know." I said, "I have absolutely no idea what I'm going to do next because I have no idea of any greatness in myself." He says, "Perfect. Now, God's ready to use you.

Do You Qualify

God loves to use the weak and foolish things; do you qualify?

Judges 6:16 And the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."

Lord Said to Him

The Lord said to him – Christian give time in your prayer time, for the Lord to speak to you, give time to hear "and the Lord said to him". Do you give Him time, and open ears, to speak to you?

God doesn't Waste Time on Past Issue

Verses 16. God doesn't waste time on the past issue. How did we get to this point? Where did we go wrong? What is going on? Rather he says, here's how we're going to fix this, you're going to go do this. You know, Christian we spend too much time reflecting on the past, when God is here saying, here's your path to victory. Right now, here's your path to victory, go do it, go take it, it's yours to be had and yet so many times we sit and we want to engage God. Why, why did this happen in my past, why is this happening right now, why can't I move on? Where God says you can move on and here's how we're going to move on, today I'm giving you the word, let's go.

God Knows Your past – It is Tragic / But Modern Psychology Camps Past – God Goes for Victory Today

God knows you're hurt. It is tragic what's happened in your past. Your past hurts, your past relationships, your current relationships, people who have hurt you or poor decisions on your behalf. Poor decisions by other people, your parents or spouse, whoever it may be who we trusted and hurt us and failed us. Modern psychology today wants to go and dig up the past and dwell on it over and over again. God says, "Let's go and let's get moving today." In this case we read it was Israel's problem and fault. God doesn't dwell and beat them down over it rather He says, "Here we go, let's go." Christian don't dwell, don't beat yourself up, hear God right now saying to you, "Let's go, time for victory."

Why I cant' – Misses why God Can

Verse 15: Gideon is wrong and so too are we who we get the 'I' thing going in the equation. How can I save? My clan is the weakest. I am the least of my father's house. He's given all the reasons why he can't rather than all that God can.

Don't Miss God Who Can

Don't miss the God who can.

- Don't miss the God who can part the sea with a shepherd's staff.
- Don't miss the God who can slay a giant with a little boy's rock.
- Don't miss the God who can kill a thousand Philistines with a jawbone of an ass.
- Don't miss the God who can feed 5,000 with a few loaves with a few fish.

He's more than able to work in the least and the weakest!

Gideon in His Might

When was Gideon in his might?

- Gideon had the might of the humble, threshing wheat on the winepress floor
- Gideon had the might of the caring, because he cared about the low place of Israel
- Gideon had the might of knowledge, because he knew God did great things in the past
- Gideon had the might of the spiritually hungry because he wanted to see God to great works again
- Gideon had the might of the teachable, because he listened to what the Angel of the Lord said
- Gideon had the might of the weak, and God's strength is perfected in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

2 Corinthians 12:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

God is Currently Planning Something Great in Your Life

God is right now at this moment planning something great in your life, and He sees you as and for something yourself can't even currently see, but you continue on, you stay locked-on, and it will come, and you will be blown away by what He does in your life.

Philippians 1:6 (NKJV) ⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 6:16-24

Overview Verses 1-15

We are picking up in verse 16 where we had left off last week. The situation is grave for the people of Israel, after 40 years of peace and prosperity they are now being oppressed by the Midianites for the last 7 years. As soon as harvest time draws near the Midianites would come down like a swarm of locust and surround them, and then come and destroy the harvest fields and their animals. The Israelites are living up on the mountains, living in caves, and if there were no caves to be found they were digging holes for themselves and their families to live in to protect themselves against the Midianites who would not only destroy their food, but kill their bodies if they got hold of them. So Gideon is in the shadows of the night threshing what little grain he could manage to hide from the destruction of the Midianites, and the Angel of the Lord (none other than Jesus Christ) shows up to speak to him. Let's start in verse 12 for context, and then we will go verse-by-verse starting in verse 16.

Establishing

In our last study we saw that before the Lord send Gideon to war, He first establishes for Gideon that he needs to fix his eyes upon the immovable object (God Himself at His throne – symbolized by sitting under the oak tree), and now in this study God will establish for Gideon that all strength and victories will come by drawing near to God Himself.

Judges 6:12 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, “The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!”

Judges 6:13 Gideon said to Him, “O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.”

Judges 6:14 Then the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?”

Judges 6:15 So he said to Him, “O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.”

Judges 6:16 And the LORD said to him, “Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.”

Gideon Questioned where the Lord Was – V16 Here I am

Gideon questioned the Lord (not yet realizing it was the Lord) asking where God was, and here God answers Gideon in verse 16 saying, “here I am, right here, with you”.

Calling comes with Enablement

It has often been said that “God’s commandments are God’s enablement’s.” Once God has called and commissioned us, all we have to do is obey Him by faith, and He will do the rest. God cannot lie and God never fails.

What has God Called You to Do

What has God called you to do? With that calling comes His enabling.

Can 1 Person Make a Difference

Verse 16 – “as one man” - Can one person make a difference? Yes, and we see that all through this Book of Judges, and you know what? We have no idea what a difference just one of our conversations can have, one of our stories, one of our events that we lived and tell people about. You have no idea, just the impact in one of those stories.

Listen to his story:

If you want to talk about the foundations of this nation and what this republic is all about you have to go back to the year 1315 in North Africa, what we call Algeria today. “There was a European missionary there named Ramon Lull, a Franciscan Friar, an incredible saint of God. He was 80 years old then, and his superiors had begged him to return home and retire in comfort. He refused their request and instead set out on a missionary journey to North Africa to reach the Muslims with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Muslims would have nothing to do with the gospel and stoned him and left him to die in the town square of that port city. There were two merchants from Geneva in port that day trading with the Muslims and they got word of Ramón dying in the town square. They

rushed down to find him lying there, clinging to life by a thread, and they took him to the ship and set sail for home. But the winds of the Mediterranean blew them off course and they ended up off the small island of Majorca. This island just happened to be the birth place of Ramón Lull. When he heard this, he asked to be brought up on deck so that he may see his birthplace one last time.

From the deck of the ship they lifted him up so that he may see the island, and with the last strength in his body he pointed with his hand to the Western horizon and said, "Beyond this sea that washes this continent we know there lies another continent that we have never seen, and those natives are ignorant of the gospel of Christ, send men there", and then he died. Two merchants who were kneeling beside him heard these dying words. One of those two men went back to his home in Geneva and told this story over and over to his children and grandchildren, it passed down through his family from generation to generation.

That merchant's name was Stephano Columbo - Stephan Columbus, he was the ancestor of Christopher Columbus. Christopher Columbus grew up hearing this story of "Send men there

Impact Study – 300 people

There was a study that was done and quite interesting. In this study it says every person, that would be every person in this room, every person listening on the radio, that every person has a significant impact on 300 people over their lifetime. Whether that impact is good or bad, it is to be determined by the character of that person, but every person impacts in a significant way 300 people. Here what we have in this room then is every person is a leader because every person has an impact. When leaders lead God is glorified and when you lead you impact no less than 300 people through your lifetime. Think about that mom's and dad's.

Judges 6:17 Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me.

Judges 6:18 Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You." And He said, "I will wait until you come back."

V17 – Am I really Talking to God

Gideon is asking, is this for real, are you serious, am I really talking to God Himself. The answer is yes you are Gideon, the weakest and lowest in his clan, it is I who speaks to you. And so He is the same today, he speaks to you. The God of the universe talks to you, and not only that He hears what you are say to Him.

Right Now Today – What do You want to Say to Him

Right now today Christian, what is it that you want to say to Him, what is on your heart that you want Him to know, go ahead and tell Him, pour your heart out before Him, for the Creator of the universe is here right now wanting to talk to you, and to hear what you want to talk to Him about.

God Waits

The Lord waits for Gideon, isn't that amazing, not only does the God of the universe talk to Gideon but He also waits for Gideon. The God of the universe waits for Gideon to go do what he went to do. The God of the universe waits for you, He waits for you, as he desires to fellowship with you, have communion with you, and He will wait for you for when you're ready to communion with Him. When you leave, when you are distracted, when you are distant, he waits. And He will wait until you return, and He will be right where you left Him at, underneath the oak tree (terebinth tree – a picture and symbol of His throne and strength), immovable, not trembled by anything going on in the world, simply waiting for you, with His eyes fixed upon you the whole time you are gone, wherever you are at, His eyes are upon you.

Judges 6:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites.

Psalms 99:1 (NKJV) ¹ The LORD reigns; Let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim; Let the earth be moved!

But – We Should Wait for Him

It is amazing that He waits for us, with all our distractions and distance, yet truly what we miss is that we (everyday) should wait for Him. Oh not that He has left us, is busy and distract and distant, but that we wait for Him each morning and say I am not moving from here until I know we connected, we are one, you have my ear and I have your ear.

Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV) ³¹ But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

Psalm 25:5 (NKJV) ⁵ Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.

Psalm 59:9 (NKJV) ⁹ I will wait for You, O You his Strength; For God is my defense.

Micah 7:7 (NKJV) ⁷ Therefore I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; My God will hear me.

Judges 6:19 So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented them.

How Long since Tabernacle / Present = Draw near

How long since Gideon made sacrifice as tabernacle is folded up now I am sure for these 7 years of oppression by the Midianites. Now here Gideon is making sacrifice to the Tabernacle of God (in the flesh Himself). The word presented means to “draw near”, and Gideon and God have drawn near to each other.

Grain and Peace Offering

A grain offering is a type of sacrifice described in the Old Testament (Leviticus 2) that the Israelites offered to God. A grain offering would have most likely been one of wheat or barley, depending on what was available. It really isn't described as what type of offering it is (such as sin offering, peace offering, trespass offering, fellowship offering). Most believe it was meant as an offering of thanks for His great provision (Lev 2:14). We also see Gideon bringing a young goat, and we see that in Leviticus 3 as a Peace Offering.

Leviticus 2:1–6 (NKJV) ¹ 'When anyone offers a grain offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. ² He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. ³ The rest of the grain offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'. It is most holy of the offerings to the LORD made by fire. ⁴ 'And if you bring as an offering a grain offering baked in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. ⁵ But if your offering is a grain offering baked in a pan, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil. ⁶ You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering.

Leviticus 2:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ 'If you offer a grain offering of your firstfruits to the LORD, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits green heads of grain roasted on the fire, grain beaten from full heads.

Leviticus 3:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ 'When his offering is a sacrifice of a peace offering, if he offers it of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. ² And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar.

Leviticus 3:12–16 (NKJV) ¹² 'And if his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD. ¹³ He shall lay his hand on its head and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. ¹⁴ Then he shall offer from it his offering, as an offering made by fire to the LORD. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, ¹⁵ the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; ¹⁶ and the priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma; all the fat is the LORD's.

Leviticus 7:37–38 (NKJV) ³⁷ This is the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, the consecrations, and the sacrifice of the peace offering, ³⁸ which the LORD commanded Moses on Mount Sinai, on the day when He commanded the children of Israel to offer their offerings to the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai.

Notice How Lord Records Every Detail

Notice how the Lord recorded every detail of Gideon's offering.

- What Gideon sacrificed (a goat and bread and a savory broth)
- How Gideon involved himself in it (the effort to prepare the goat (which would require to it to be slain and then skinned) and unleavened bread (which would require the grain to be crushed into flour and then kneaded and then baked))
- How Gideon presented it (in a basket and a pot)

Now consider this, they are literally in 7 years of famine, meat and grain are lean as the Medians destroy as much as they can as soon as they can, yet Gideon comes with this lavish offering to the Lord at extremely lean times. A whole goat, wow how much would that feed, especially the hungry bellies that haven't eaten bountifully for 7 years. Get this, and ephah of flour is almost a bushel of wheat. According to the “Association of Wheat” that would make about 42 loaves of our bread today. Gideon is sparing no expense, and God recorded all the details of

Gideon's time, labor, and expense. God does the same for you, He knows the details of every last thing you have done out of love for Him from the cost of it, the time, and the effort it took. Because every last one of them was an act of worship, sweet fellowship to Him, and savory aroma of sacrifice and love. It never goes unnoticed. Man may not notice it, recognize it, appreciate it, maybe even complain, but God sees every detail of it, and He records it as sweet memory between you and Him. Also, we should do the same ourselves, and remember all the things He has done for us out of pure love and devotion to us.

Judges 6:20 The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so.

Judges 6:21 Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

Wet it Down / Elijah tears Page off Gideon – Oh Impact we Make

So the Lord says wet the bread and meat down with the broth, so when I consume it with fire, there will be no mistake it was a miracle. It is interesting to me that Elijah will tear a page off of this event and use it for his great moment as he goes toe-to-toe with the prophets of Baal hundreds of years later. I think Elijah remembered this story and copied it. You never know how your one action will impact and influence others. Each person, impacts no less than 300 people (good or bad) in their lifetime.

1 Kings 18:32–39 (NKJV) ³² Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. ³³ And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." ³⁴ Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. ³⁵ So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water. ³⁶ And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. ³⁷ Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." ³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!"

Miracle – Fire from Rock

Another part of this miracle is that the fire came from out of the rock, not the staff.

The Good Shepherd

Verses 17-21. I love the picture of the Great Shepherd here as we see staff in hand, keeping His sheep close to His side. Have you considered your Great Shepherd today? Keeping you near, by His side, loving you, knowing you by name. Gideon asked for a sign and I believe this is one of the signs that He gives him and it's the picture of being a shepherd as He holds this staff in His hand, becomes the shepherd his people who are the sheep of his pasture.

Beautiful Passages of the Good Shepherd

Oh the beautiful passages that speak of the shepherd of God that loves us and cares for us. Oh the heart of the shepherd, feeding and nurturing, caring and tending, carrying and keeping near, a heart of compassion, a heart that lays down His life for us, so that we may be the people of his pasture. He is such a good shepherd (John 10), in fact He is a great Shepherd (Hebrews 13), He is the chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5) for there is none like Him. Your Shepherd knows you by name and He loves

Isaiah 40:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.

Matthew 9:36–38 (NKJV) ³⁶ But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. ³⁷ Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. ³⁸ Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

John 10:1–18 (NKJV) ¹ "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. ⁷ Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I

am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. ¹¹ "I am the **good shepherd**. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹² But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. ¹⁵ As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

Psalm 23:1–6 (NKJV) ¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. ³ He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Hebrews 13:20–21 (NKJV) ²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that **great Shepherd** of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ²¹ make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 5:1–4 (NKJV) ¹ The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ² Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴ and when the **Chief Shepherd** appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

Psalm 100:1–5 (NKJV) A Psalm of Thanksgiving. ¹ Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands! ² Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. ³ Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. ⁴ Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. ⁵ For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.

Judges 6:22 Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face."

Judges 6:23 Then the LORD said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die."

Gideon Knows the Word – No Man Come into His Presence (Sinful Man – Holy god)

Gideon knows the Word of God, and He knows the holiness of God, that no man can just stroll into His presence without be properly prepared, for He is a Holy God. He has no doubt heard the story of Moses

Exodus 33:12–23 (NKJV) ¹² Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' ¹³ Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people." ¹⁴ And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." ¹⁵ Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. ¹⁶ For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth." ¹⁷ So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." ¹⁸ And he said, "Please, show me Your glory." ¹⁹ Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." ²⁰ But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." ²¹ And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. ²² So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. ²³ Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

We need to be Cleansed & Robed

Gideon is not seeing the Lord in His full glory (aka – as He is in heaven); God's full glory is veiled in however this physical manifestation is right now before Gideon. These things are beyond our full comprehension with these earthly bodies we dwell in. But what we do know clearly is that God is Holy, and no man can come freely into His sight without first being presentable to Him, and for us today that is through the finished works of Jesus Christ who washes us and cleanses us from all unrighteousness (that simply means not being right before Him), and after our cleansing He "robes us" in His righteousness (that simply means being right before Him).

1 John 1:9 (NKJV) ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV) ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Isaiah 61:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

PUT ON LORD JESUS CHRIST

We are told in the Book of Romans to “to put on the lord Jesus Christ”, as the imagery is to be robed, covered in Him. When the Holy God looks upon us He doesn’t see our filthy rags of sin, but He sees His only Begotten Son, and thus we become the righteousness of God because of what Jesus did on the cross.

Romans 13:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Gideon didn’t Fully Comprehend God’s Glory / May we be Like Moses – Show Me Your Glory

And here is something amazing for us today, for just as Gideon did not fully comprehend all the glory that was before Him. We stand in awe of Him, we have seen Him do glorious works in our lives personally, we experience His presence personally, but do you realize what we see and experience is still just a scratch of all that He is, because we are still limited by these fallen bodies we live in until we get our new perfect bodies in heaven. But here is the thing, just because we can’t see it, it doesn’t mean that it doesn’t exist. May we not limit ourselves in limiting our God, may we be a people who are continually seeking and saying Lord like Moses would you show us more of Your glory! Don’t allow your perception of God to limit you, don’t allow your past experiences to limit all that you think God is capable of doing, and don’t allow your current situation keep you from believing that He is able to break through and do great works in your life today. Don’t settle for what you see of Him today, continually, like Moses, be wanting to see more of Him, wait upon Him and say “show me your glory”.

1 Corinthians 13:12 (NKJV) ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

1 John 3:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Judges 6:23 Then the LORD said to him, “Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die.”

Judges 6:24 So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Lord’s Physical Presence Departed – But Still There

The word depart in verse 21 means to “remove from sight”. Although God’s physical presence has been removed, God is still there in Spirit. God is teaching Gideon now how to walk by faith and not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:7–8 (NKJV) ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

The Threshing Floor – Gideon in Fear now has Peace / God gives Gideon what he Needs (God the Becoming One)

In the threshing of wheat, the wheat kernel is encapsulated by its husk, by God's great design, and so to get to the wheat kernel you would take a, what they would call a threshing sled, which is nothing more than a big old block of wood tied to an oxen, and as you would drive that sled, that big block, over the wheat it would break the wheat kernel from the husk. Then, you would take your pitch fork and then, stab it into the pile and lift it up into the air, and then the wind would come and blow the husk away because it's like a feather, it's like dust. Then, the wheat kernel would fall back to the ground.

It's a noisy process when you consider oxen moving a sled, grinding over these things. Here's Gideon, he's in the quiet place. He's in a small place because a wine press was never a big area. A wine press was maybe 5 or 6 feet wide and what it was is, you would take your grapes and put your grapes into the wine press. It usually had 2 to 3 levels and the top level, you put your grapes in, and the person, literally, would have a tree limb over the wine press or else they would build it by wood, and a rope would be hanging down, and the person hangs on the rope because it's going to get slippery in there, and they take off their shoes, they're in their bare feet, and they're standing in the wine press holding onto the rope and they start stomping on the grapes.

As they break and crush the grapes, the juices flow out and again, it's on a slope, usually 2 maybe even 3 levels, and so the first level has a little opening that is where the grape juice would flow down to the next level, now, you're separating the grape juice from the actual grape body. Then, they would clean out the top level and then throw it away, but then, as the grape juice settled down to the next level, they would skim it from there and pour it into their containers to make wine.

Here, Gideon is in this wine press, small area, hanging onto this rope. He's breaking the wheat kernel from the wheat husk, quietly, in fear the Midianites are going to come find him, destroy his food, and then the Lord shows up and speaks to him. Basically, saying, "Fear not, for I am with you. Jehovah Shalom. God of peace is here to be with you." We see the Great Shepherd coming to comfort and one of the roles of your Great Shepherd is to bring you peace and when you enter into a presence with Him you will always find your peace because the presence of God always brings the peace of God. They are inseparable in your life. What is your need today because your Great Shepherd says, "I Am becoming one and I want to become to you all that you need today."

The Compound Names of God (The I AM – The Becoming One)

Versus 22-24. Jesus identifies Himself as Jehovah Shalom. The Lord God of Peace. We see these seven names of God in the Old Testament that all reflect His heart, His nature, His very being. Takes us all the way back to Exodus 3 when Moses asked, "Who shall I say sent me? What is His name?", and the Lord responded, "Tell them I Am has sent me." Jesus will use that I Am statement seven times in the New Testament to identify Himself as God, but in the Old Testament these, I Am, statements are reflecting His nature, His heart, His character, as well as when Jesus says them in the New Testament. I Am means becoming one. "I Am the becoming one and I will become to you all that you need" is what He says through these I Am statements.

Exodus 3:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

What do You Need Today

What is your need today? He's the God of peace, do you need peace here? The God who says Jehovah Shalom, Lord God of peace. He brings Gideon peace in his time of turmoil. In his time of anxiety. In his time of oppression from the enemies around him as we see him fearful in this wine press. No doubt, in the silence of the wine press, quietly trying to thresh this wheat.

Compound Names of God

- Jehovah Jireh - (Genesis 22:14) - The Lord God our Provider / The Lord that Sees
- Jehovah Raphah - (Exodus 15:26) - The Lord God our Healer
- Jehovah Nissi - (Exodus 17:15) - The Lord God our Banner
- Jehovah Shalom - (Judges 6:24) - The Lord God our Peace
- Jehovah Ra - (Psalm 23:1) - The Lord God our Shepherd
- Jehovah Tsidqenuw - (Jeremiah 23:6) - The Lord God our Righteousness
- Jehovah Shammah - (Ezekiel 48:35) - The Lord God our Ever Present One
- Jehovah Maccaddeshcem - (Leviticus 20:8) - The Lord thy Sanctifier
- Jehovah-Sabbaoth - (1 Samuel 1:3) - The Lord of Hosts/Army/Power

Genesis 22:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

Exodus 15:26 (NKJV) ²⁶ and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."

Exodus 17:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner;

Judges 6:24 (NKJV) ²⁴ So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Psalms 23:1 (NKJV) ¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Jeremiah 23:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Ezekiel 48:35 (NKJV) ³⁵ All the way around shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE.

Leviticus 20:8 (NKJV) ⁸ And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the LORD who sanctifies you.

1 Samuel 1:3 (NKJV) ³ This man went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. Also the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.

What do You Need Today

What is your need today?

His Banner over me Is Love

As I think of Jehovah Nissi, the Lord is our Banner, I think of Song of Solomon as the Lord has a banner over us, and it is love. God loves you, rest in that and enjoy that today.

Song of Solomon 2:4 (NKJV) ⁴ He brought me to the banqueting house, And his banner over me was love.

Gideon Associates Sacrifice & Altar w/ Oneness with God / Close with Communion

Gideon makes a sacrifice unto God, God has him build and instant altar right there on the rock, and Gideon finds and now knows experientially, that peace with God, communion with God, comes through the innocent sacrifice there upon the altar. So today I would like to close with communion, to be reminded of the peace that comes through the sacrifice, there upon the altar of the cross.

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NKJV) ²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 6:24-32

Peace – then War

We pick up here in verse 25 and we see an amazing dynamic of power, as God gives Gideon peace, and then the next statement sends him into war. There is a great spiritual principal coupled with an amazing scriptural picture.

Judges 6:24–40 (NKJV) ²⁴ So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. ²⁵ Now it came to pass the same night that the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it; ²⁶ and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down." ²⁷ So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the LORD had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night. ²⁸ And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar which had been built. ²⁹ So they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing." ³⁰ Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that was beside it." ³¹ But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he is a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!" ³² Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar." ³³ Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. ³⁴ But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. ³⁵ And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. ³⁶ So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said—³⁷ look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." ³⁸ And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. ³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." ⁴⁰ And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

Outline 6:25-40

So a lots of tearing up in this passage.

- Gideon tears down the altar of Baal (6:25-27)
- The men of the city want to tear Gideon up (6:28-30)
- Gideon's father says let Baal himself tear up who tore him up (6:31-32)
- The Midianites come down to tear up the Nation Israel (6:33)
- God prepares Gideon to tear up the Midianites (6:34-35)
- Then we see Gideon tearing up his doubts (6:36-40)

How About You Today?

So how about you today, do you have anything that needs torn down, is there anyone or anything trying to tear you up? I pray God's Word speaks to you today through this passage.

Gideon tears down the altar of Baal (6:24-27)

Judges 6:24 So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Gideon has Connected 2 Things (The Innocent Sacrifice & the Altar) / Confirming he Found Favor w/Lord

Gideon has connected 2 things that every Christian needs to connect, and that is an innocent sacrifice and an altar, but it's only through and by the innocent sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we can have peace with God. The Lord is peace, but there is an avenue to and through that peace and it's through the innocent sacrifice of Jesus Christ, a New Testament principle that has an Old Testament picture here in verse 24. That altar, it's not only that Gideon is putting this innocent sacrifice up there, but the altar is also, he's putting himself up there. He's surrendering himself to the Lord. He's giving himself completely unto the Lord, and he says, "If I found favor in your sight." He's bringing this confirmation that he has favor in the sight of the Lord because the Lord has received the sacrifice that he has put up there, and what we'll see is Gideon is literally putting himself up there upon that altar. He's surrendering his life to the Lord.

There is an altar of the cross of Jesus Christ. That's the avenue to the peace of God, and then there is an altar of every heart that has given their lives to Jesus Christ and it is through the altar of the sacrifice. Every time we say such a thing, can we not think of Romans chapter 12, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that presents your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given to me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, as God hath dealt to each one of us a measure of faith."

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV) ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Gideon gives Absolute Surrender – Have you Done that Today?

We see Gideon, he's literally submitting his life here to the Lord, and we'll see it as ties and plays through the rest of this chapter, surrendering himself fully to the Lord. Have you done that today? Have you presented yourself to your God as a living sacrifice, says, "Here I am Lord. I commit myself to you fully, to do with you as you will, as you wish, as you desire."?

When you Do – You will Find Peace

When you do, you will find peace. If you're kicking against the goads, you're not putting yourself on that sacrifice, that altar because there's something that you're still hanging on to, something that you still want to control, even if it's fear. I'd rather be hiding in the shadows than to step up into the light and go toe to toe with my enemy that's against me and whatever your enemy may be. Could it be fear is your comfort zone of hiding yourself and wrapping yourself up into a 4 walls that nobody can get themselves into, but, again, as we have said, but you can't get yourself out of. Is it something of the flesh that you just don't want to let go because it pleases you, or it's an old friend that you don't want to part with because at least you know that friend, so you think, inside and out even though that friend is a betrayer and robs you of life. Whatever it might be, Gideon is putting himself up on the altar. He's putting himself and he's surrendering his life, and then God is going to do something great, and we pick up here in verse 25.

Judges 6:25 Now it came to pass the same night that the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it;

Peace for War

When Gideon is fully at peace, what does he begin to do for God? If God loves you he will use you either for suffering or service; and if he has given you peace you must now prepare for war. Will you think me odd if I say that our Lord came to give us peace that he might send us out to war?" (Spurgeon)

Israel's Problem not Midianites – But Baal Worship

Israel's root problem was not the Midianites, but their addiction to evil, and in particular the worship of Baal. The Lord would not deliver them from the Midianites until they renounced that. There could be no having the Lord as their deliverer while they had Baal as their god. The problem for Gideon, and it was a big one, was that Baal-worship was enshrined in his own village and sanctioned by his own father has built an altar to the Lord (v. 24), but his father already has an altar to Baal. Gideon's new commitment to the Lord has set him at odds with his own family and only symbolic, but God has made it clear what he requires of him: to take a stand, and to do it now. If the Lord is to be his peace, he cannot put peace with his family above his commitment to God.

1st Place Manifests is in Home

The first place all this manifests itself is at home. All that Gideon experience from verses 1-24 now manifests itself at home first. Gideon is going to go tear down some altars, right there at home. Gideon becomes the mighty man of God that God said he was. Notice where he begins: he begins at home in his father's house, which is his house. Mighty men and mighty women of God, they begin at home. Their first acts need to be at home. They need to be

taking care of business at home. They need to be tearing down altars and idols that are in their home before they'll be able to go and overturn the altars of a world that's around them. So, Christian, you got any altars, any idols in your home that need to go, take time right now at this very moment in this time of this bible study. I know the Lord's speaking to you if it is; I know he's prompting your heart right now. He's been speaking to you about this, and you've been putting it aside. You've been letting it go thinking it was just yourself, thinking you were going overboard and becoming too zealous. I believe the Lord's speaking to you right now and he's telling you, "This is what needs to go. This is what needs to change." I pray that you will heed him today. So how about us, are there some false-altars that need to be torn down right in our homes first?

Judges 6:26 and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down."

Judges 6:27 So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the LORD had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night.

Gideon Coming into the Light

Verse 25-27. The mighty man of valor does it by night, but he comes into the light when he realizes God is with him. To his immense credit, however, he didn't let his fear paralyze him. What he couldn't do that day he did the following night, with the help of ten servants (v. 27).

Gideon is Growing - He who Began – Will Complete

He who began a good work will be faithful to complete it. Watch how the Lord is growing Gideon and taking him from weakness to strength, and then it's going to be from strength to strength. Amazing work. That's what God does. He who began a good work will be faithful to complete it. You just need to rest in that and know that, Christians.

Philippians 1:6 (NKJV) ⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

Great Men & Woman – Not Born Overnight / Ray you Just Immature

I can remember like it was yesterday. I can even remember the concert I went to. It was Jamie Owens-Collins. This is some nearly twenty-five years ago. The concert wasn't what the point was; there was nothing that happened in the concert, but I remember the moment because I remember where I was. I was at that concert. I remember God speaking to me explicitly and very clearly. There was no doubt it was the voice of the Lord who was speaking to me. I thought I was growing. I thought I was maturing. I found myself just in one of those places of being foolish, doing something that I thought I was too mature to do, and I would not be a person to fail and fall. But I did, and I remember just being devastated by it. What devastated me the most was that I thought I was still strong. I thought I was so "on my way;" after all, I'd been a Christian now for nearly two years. God did great things in those two years. I remember sitting there, actually I was standing, saying "I don't know how I got here. I don't know how I ended up in this place." The Lord broke through and spoke to me ever so clearly. He says, "Ray, it's because you're still immature."

He didn't say it in a heavy-handed way. He didn't say it in a condemning way. He didn't say it in a crushing way. He said in, actually, a very loving and gentle way but he was making a fact to me: "You're still immature, Ray. You're not going to be this great man and perfect man overnight." That's a statement for all of us: God's men and women are not made overnight. He's doing the work and he'll be faithful to complete it. I want to encourage you. Maybe you've fallen. Maybe you're asking yourself, "How did I do this again? How did I find myself? I thought I was so far beyond this?" Maybe you hear God speak to you. It's okay. You're just immature, but you're growing and I'll continue the good work. I think the key there is that we stay with the "He" who began the good work, that we take it off of ourselves that we are the doer of the good work. What we need to be are just the people who abide in him. As John 15, we just abide. As you keep abiding, God keeps growing

Fruit isn't Born Overnight

When you look that fruit that is born, it doesn't pop out. That orange doesn't pop out in a day. It's not like there was a leaf on Monday, and a big orange on Tuesday. There wasn't a leaf Wednesday and a big, bright-red apple on

Thursday. It takes time. As the fruit is attached to the branch, and the branch to the vine, the whole process comes. That's what God wants to speak to you, so be encouraged by that.

Same Bull to Sacrifice – Tears Down First

The very same bull that God tells Gideon to make sacrifice with, he first used that bull to tear down the altar, to bring an end to this idol, this thing that people looked up to, this thing that was their center of affection, their center of attention.

Firstborn Dedicated to Lord – 7 years Ago

All the firstborn cattle were the Lord's. So the firstborn was dedicated to the Lord already. Maybe that bull had already been sacrificed to the Lord right at the very end of the 40 years of rest, right before the beginning of this 7 years of Mediant oppression. In either case the Lord is saying take this second bull and sacrifice it. I believe this bull was set to be a sacrifice to Baal by Gideon's father, because is tying the two together (the altar of Baal and the bull). I love it when God starts something new. We are told in Exodus that every seven years the Hebrew slaves were to be set free (here we see – picture perfect). What does God want to start new in your life, it may take some sacrifice and difficult decisions before He can do it.

Exodus 13:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine."

Judges 5:31–6:1 (NKJV) ³¹ "Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD! But let those who love Him be like the sun When it comes out in full strength." So the land had rest for forty years. ¹ Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years,

Exodus 21:2 (NKJV) ² If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing.

On This Rock – Same

Gideon is told in verse 26 to build the altar to the Lord your God on top of this rock. It's literally the rock that they've just made his sacrifice, the rock that he made an altar to God with. The word literally for rock means stronghold, and I like that and I see an application there for us, and that the Lord can take the things that were once strongholds to us and build a new stronghold based on him. He has met Gideon in this place under this terebinth tree, under this oak tree, showed them that he's the unmovable God, that he can't be rumbled and tumbled by the world. He showed Gideon he's unmovable. He showed Gideon his eyes are always fixed upon Gideon. Before he could send Gideon there, he had to draw Gideon near to him, and he gives Gideon something that he could remember, and it was this rock. This is where you and I had this communion, this oneness as you made an offering to me, you committed yourself and you surrendered yourself to me on this rock. Now you're going to take this rock and you're going to go build a new altar right there where they once worshiped and are currently worshiping Baal. You're going to go there and you're going to tear that one down with this bull, then you're going to take this rock that you and I have had this communion with and this drawing near with and you're going to build a new altar there, and you're going to take this bull that just tore down the false gods, and you're going to sacrifice this bull on top of that rock, that stronghold, and you're making a new stronghold.

Things Torn Down – You Can Lead others to Believe God is Able

Men, we will see, and women will rally behind Gideon, and he is tearing down the false gods of Israel and he's building the new God of Israel, the true and living God. He's rising him back up and putting him in the forefront of everyone who the one true living God is and who has the power. I like that because I can see that, that the Lord, he takes the very things that we sacrifice to him, whatever that might be. He tears down the things that were keeping us in bondage, and then he builds up with those very same things.

There's things in your life that you've torn down, whatever they may be, whether it's an addiction or whether it's a greed, or whether it's an anger, or whether it's a pride, and we tear those things down, but then we offer them and sacrifice them to the Lord on the new rock, Jesus Christ, the stronghold, and God rallies the people and brings people into a new understanding of who God is through our life, through our sacrifice, that we can be a people who then go, "I know. I know what addiction is like. I know what it is to wrestle with my anger. I know what it is to struggle with a selfish marriage, because I was selfish in my marriage," or "I know what it is to have a prodigal, but I

took those things, I used those things to free me and set me into new way and a new life. I made a new covenant with my God, and now those things are places of victory for me, and they can be a place of victory for you."

Do you want that victory? Do you want to lead people in victory? God can do that for you. God will do that for you, if we're only allowing, we willingly offer ourselves, we surrender ourselves. My oh my, what God does with such things.

God's Laying a Foundation – A Stronghold

Here's Gideon, he's going to take these ten men and he's going to say, "Come with me." He's going to be carrying this rock. I don't know how big this rock is. Is it six inches by six inches? Is it ten pounds or is it two foot by two foot? I don't know what it is, but it's not a pebble. It's big enough to hold forty loaves of bread. That's what I believe based on what he sacrificed in our last study.

It was big enough to hold a young goat. I'm just doing the math and saying this rock is a couple feet by a couple feet. Here Gideon, he's going to take this rock with him. He's going to grab ten men and say, "Come with me." They're going to say, "Where?" He'll say, "You'll see." They're going to follow him and they're going to see him tear down the old, the old altar that the people and the nation were worshiping. He's going to tear it down with that bull.

He's going to build a new altar based on this rock, the center of it no doubt. He's going to take that bull, he's going to take the wood and he's going to put it on this new altar and he's sending the message, God's doing something new. This is our stronghold and it's Jesus Christ, all this is a picture of Jesus. For them, here's our new stronghold. We're not going to find ourselves wrapped up and following and worshiping useless gods. We're going to build ourselves off of this rock, the solid rock, Jehovah Shalom, the Lord God Our Peace. They'll be able to go back and all those other seven names that we've learned up to date, this is who's going to go and fight for us. This is our stronghold. Build off of this.

The men of the city want to tear Gideon up (6:28-30)

Judges 6:28 And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar which had been built.

Judges 6:29 So they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing."

Judges 6:30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that was beside it."

Objective was Idols – Not Confrontation

So Gideon tears down the altar at dark, and we point out that Gideon's afraid. He's in the shadows in the wine press and then when he goes to tear down the altar, it's in the dark. I'm not sure about that. I don't think Gideon thought he was doing it so much in secret, but I think it was more stealth. The objective was to tear down the altar; it wasn't to get into a fight with people. If he went in broad daylight, that would have been a clear fight. God didn't call, in what we see, to go do a fight. What God called him to do was go tear down the altar, and that's what he did.

Shows How Powerful Baal

This shows just how powerful Baal worship was in Israel at this time. "The heresy had become the main religion." So much so that they are willing to kill for it. We here in USA would never have to worry about this – right? If the churches of USA do not turn back to God and cry out to Him to heal this land, it will be a crime to worship Him.

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Gideon's father says let Baal himself tear up who tore him up (6:31-32)

Judges 6:31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he is a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!"

Judges 6:32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar."

New Name

Gideon's dad gives his son a new name, another name, "Jerubbaal", and it will be a name that will go with Gideon the rest of his life. His name means let Baal defend himself", and Baal can't, so Gideon's new name associates him as a giant killer, one who can take down the gods of this world. When people rally around Gideon, they will rally around a man who can defeat "gods of this world". And we know Gideon (Jerubbaal) can because where he has built his stronghold, and that is upon the one true and living God!

Gideon's Dad sees Weakness of Baal

I think Gideon's dad, as he sees the altar tumbled over, realizes at this point how stupid it is to serve Baal. You see? Gideon's dad, he would have known forty years of peace and rest. He'd have been like everybody else in Israel. As we read at the beginning of our chapter here: "And then Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and God delivered them to the Midianites." Gideon's father would have known what it was like to live in the peace and prosperity of the Lord. He would have been like everyone else after their last encounter in oppression. They would have been celebrating the Lord. He would have been exalting and worshiping the Lord. He would have enjoyed going to the tabernacle. He would have enjoyed all the feasts and the festivals that they would have. He would enjoy his time of sacrifices unto the Lord.

But then slowly something began to happen as things became routine, or they weren't exciting enough, or just what it always is, the flesh just rises up and man caves in to the flesh. Then here he finds himself, after all those years of the wonderful time with the Lord ... Forty years for sure, for him, because he's a father. We don't know how old Gideon is. Forty years and then he finds himself somehow slipping into this place of worshiping an idol that can be torn down, and burned, and used for the wood of an altar. I think he comes and he realized how stupid this was. That's why he says what he says here in verse 31.

Prodigal Parents – Lost Parents

You, youth. Maybe you're a grown adult; maybe it's your parent who's the prodigal. Maybe you have a mom and dad who once walked with the Lord, once professed Christ, once were your heroes, and now you look back and go, "How in the world did they come to this place?" Maybe it's your parents who are backslidden. I like what Pastor Chuck says. He says, "If you're not more on fire for Jesus Christ today than you were yesterday, then you're backslidden." Ouch! That hurts. Maybe it's your parents that are prodigal or backslidden. I pray that your fire will rekindle them, maybe convict them. Maybe if they're not saved, even bring them to the knowledge of salvation as they watch you walk out your faith, and walk it out, and live it out in the truest way.

You know what? You might have to tear down your parents' altar, their Baals, the things that they're trusting in. It might come to the place where God will call you, "You go. You're going to have to tear this down before them." If you don't do it, they'll never see the need. They'll never see how foolish it is. You need to know that, like Gideon, you heard God speak to you. Like Gideon, you'd better be sure that you're doing what God has called you to do. Four things here, if you're going to go do that:

1. First, like Gideon, you must see the immovable God, else your family will shake and quake you. Nobody probably makes us more sensitive about our faith, and even retreats our faith for us to speak openly, than our family. We can share in the workplace, we can go on a street corner and proclaim that we can live it loud and proud. Then we show up for the Memorial Day barbecue and we put our Christians t-shirt away, and we go there and we talk about baseball and barbecue sauce because we're afraid to talk about the

things of the Lord. So the first thing: You must see the immovable God, or else your family will shake you and you'll never be able to stand before them.

2. Secondly, you have to be drawn near to God. Just like Gideon, you have to have the heart of God. That's what was transpiring this whole time that God's working on Gideon; he's giving Gideon his heart and the two of them are becoming one. Here Gideon, he comes in. He knows his God is for him. He knows that his God wants to fight for him. He knows that his God is holy. He knows that his God is strong. He sees God for who he is. And then what happened? As we studied, he has his peace.
3. Thirdly, you have to be consecrated. The idols and altars of your own home have to go first. Before you're going to tear down anyone else's idol, before you're going to point out anyone else's altars, you have to make sure that your house is in order first.
4. Then fourthly, you very well may have to tear down the altars for them to see how weak their altar is. You will have to have boldness and say, "This that you believe, this what you follow, it's not in accordance with the word of God." Gideon tore down the altar because it was the word of God to him. Don't tell them, "I don't agree with you," tell them, "God doesn't agree with you." That's what Gideon is doing, "God doesn't agree with you." Gideon didn't have any desire to go tear down the altar. He was fine. He was having his peace and joy with the Lord, but then God spoke to him, "Go tear down the altar." So Gideon is tearing down the altar, and that's what he's saying, "God doesn't agree with you. It's not me." Gideon tore down the altar based on the word of God. That's what you have to be. Don't get yourself wrapped up in this righteous indignation. You go, "This is what the word of God says." Be careful about it. If you feel like you're filled with righteous indignation, I say leave that to the Lord. Let him decide and let him pour out the righteous indignation. We're the love people, and we're to tell them the truth in accordance with God's word. When their life is being eaten up and falling apart, and you have a chance to share with them, don't be afraid to just say to them, "This isn't working for you. Your way is not working for you. This isn't going well, and God's got better. Let me share with you what the word of God says." We don't come with a condemning, condescending, or better-than-you approach, we just come with, "God's got better."

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 6:33-36

Overview Chapter 6

We are in chapter 6, and the situation in Israel is grave and depressing. After 40 years of rest in the land, Israel began to follow after other gods, forsaking and turning from the One True and Living God, and the Lord gave them the desires of their heart and lifted His hand of protection from upon them. The resultant was that the Midianites came against them and oppressed them. The oppression was so great that the Israelites are living in the mountains in caves and dirt holes to hide from the Midianites. God's people are living in caves and dirt holes! When harvest time comes each year (for the last 7 years) the Midianites come and encamp against Israel, and then destroy the harvest and anybody that would try to stop them. So Finally after 7 years the people of Israel cry out to the Lord to deliver them (why it took so long is beyond me – why do we wait so long?) and God responds as He always does for He desires to see us free and victorious more than we ourselves do.

Judges 6:7 (NKJV) ⁷ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites,

Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves:

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are slaves to sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

God Raises up a Man

So God is always looking for a man/woman, who will be a rescuer, a deliverer, to a people who are oppressed and downtrodden. God has found his man in Gideon, but first He has to prepare Gideon for the work that is before him, and God shows up and meets Gideon under an oak tree and calls Gideon for who he will be, a mighty man of God.

Judges 6:11–12 (NKJV) ¹¹ Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order 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, you mighty man of valor!"

Outline 6:25-40

So a lots of tearing up in this passage.

- Gideon tears down the altar of Baal (6:25-27)
- The men of the city want to tear Gideon up (6:28-30)
- Gideon's father says let Baal himself tear up who tore him up (6:31-32)
- The Midianites come down to tear up the Nation Israel (6:33)
- God prepares Gideon to tear up the Midianites (6:34-35)
- Then we see Gideon tearing up his doubts (6:36-40)

Let's read our passage of scripture for today's study.

Judges 6:33–40 (NKJV) ³³ Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. ³⁴ But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. ³⁵ And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. ³⁶ So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said—³⁷ look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and *it is* dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." ³⁸ And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. ³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." ⁴⁰ And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

Do You have Power to Defeat Midianites

The Spirit of the Lord falls upon Gideon, and we will read in chapter 7 that God gives a great victory to Gideon and Israel. Today I want to ask you one question; do you have the power in your life right now to defeat the Midianites?

Midianites Mean

The Midianites oppressed Israel, attacked Israel, came to Midianites mean “strife”. Strife means “conflict or contentions between two unequal parties”. do you have the power in your life right now to defeat the Midianites? You will not beat them without the power of the Spirit of the Lord upon you.

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Who Needs this Power?

Who needs this power? You need the same power that Gideon had to defeat the Midianites in your life.

- A mother needs this power, the grandmother needs it
- A husband needs this power
- The youth swimming against the current in today’s culture needs this power
- A Sunday School teacher needs it, the evangelist needs it
- The business man needs it
- Every last one of us needs this power.

Gideon had the power to tear down the altar to Baal, but that isn’t the power God sends him off with to defeat the Midianites; that power wouldn’t be enough obviously, so God gives Him more. We ourselves can think we are doing well, we have done some great things, we have torn down some altars, we have stood against opposition, but here in our passage today we see if we are going to change and impact the world around us, we need this power.

The Midianites come down to tear up the Nation Israel (6:33)

Judges 6:33 Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel.

Midianites Encamp to Starve them – Keep Weak / Satan’s Strategy Today

Verse 33. Here comes the Midianites (along with the Amalekites and people from the East – just reading the way the sentence flows gives you this sense, this visual picture of a sea of people flooding into the land). They’re gathering, they’re coming to destroy the harvest of the land. So to keep Israel underfoot, to keep them starved, to keep the weak so they can’t rise up and fight and rebel and overcome them. Pretty good tactic. Don’t have to go to war, spend a lot of money on war, especially a death toll. All that we’ve got to do is go long enough to destroy their harvest, and that will keep them weak, and they’ll just be scraping to get by every day. They won’t have time to fight. They won’t have the strength to fight. This was the Midianites’ battle plan. Of course, we studied. So is that Satan’s plan against you? He wants to starve you out of the Word, of prayer, of fellowship, of the remembrance of what Christ has done for you. When you starve of those things, you will be spiritually weak and you won’t have the strength to fight and kick back against Satan and his wiles against you.

Year 8

Since the oppression has been for 7 years, and the Midianites come up every year at harvest time, that makes this year 8. In Biblical numerology, eight is the number that represents “new beginning”. Day 8 is the beginning of a new week.

God has a Man in Place / God calls Man in Advance / I Believe You are that Man/Woman Today

So here are the Midianites coming for war. They’re gathered. But let’s notice, God has his man in place. The man is Gideon. God always calls a man in advance of what he’s going to do. Do you realize right now, and I believe it’s each and every person in this room who willingly offer themselves to the Lord, he’s preparing you for something

that is yet to come? Something great and something mighty. He always calls his man, he always calls his woman in advance so how can prepare them, equip them, and still them against what will be coming so that they might go out and do great things.

You need this power!

God prepares Gideon to tear up the Midianites (6:34-35)

Judges 6:34 But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him.

But!

But – oh the power of that word when it is coupled to God. Outnumbered, outgunned, out matched, out flanked, every imaginable reason for another defeat – except for that little word “but” couple to a mighty God.

John 1:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:8 (NKJV) ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Matthew 14:27 (NKJV) ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”

No Armor – But Clothing (Clothed in Holy Spirit)

It’s time for Gideon to act, and at this critical moment God intervenes to enable him to do so by “cloth[ing]” him with his Spirit (v. 34). It’s not literal armor Gideon needs at this moment, but God’s Spirit to envelop and empower him. Gideon doesn’t get or need high tech weapons, nor great organization, not more time, not more people, simply God Himself and he is ready for war, and VICTORY! The word “baptism” which is so often the word used when the Spirit comes upon someone, simply means “to supply”. So God is supplying Gideon for all he needs for the battle before him.

You need this power! You need this Supply!

C. H. Spurgeon,

C. H. Spurgeon, a great British preacher of the last century, knew this very well. It was he who said (and this doesn’t apply just to a church but to each individual of the church),

I believe, brethren, that whenever the church of God declines, one of the most effectual ways of reviving her is to preach much truth concerning the Holy Spirit. After all, He is the very breath of the church. Where the Spirit of God is, is power. If the Spirit be withdrawn, then the vitality of the godliness begins to decline and we are backbiting. Let us turn to the Spirit of God crying, "Quicken thou me in Thy way." If we sorrowfully perceive that any church is growing lukewarm, be it our prayer that the Holy Spirit may work graciously for its revival. Let us return to the Lord. Let us seek again to be baptized into the Holy Spirit and into fire, and we shall yet, again, behold the wonderful works of the Lord. He sets before us an open door and if we enter not, we ourselves are to be blamed.

Who is Holy Spirit?

First of all, who is the Holy Spirit? He is God. So simply put you are being empowered not by God, but with God Himself. God Himself came upon Gideon so to go do the work God was desiring to be done, the defeat of the Midianites. Gideon has been clothed with God; now that is mighty armor for any battle!

3 Prepositions of the Holy Spirit found in the New Testament

There are three prepositions related to the Holy Spirit used in the Scriptures, and they easily define to us the works of the Holy Spirit, God Himself in our lives.

Para (With) – Convicts a person for the need to be saved

John 14:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷*the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with (para) you and will be in you.*

Romans 3:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ *There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.*

John 16:8–11 (NKJV) ⁸ *And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

En (In) – God takes up residence within a person once they receive Him as Savior

John 14:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷*the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with (para) you and will be in (en) you.*

John 20:21–22 (NKJV) ²¹*So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." ²²And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.*

Ephesians 1:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

Heppi (Upon) – empowers the person for the work/service God has for them

(Acts 1:5 NKJV) *"for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

(Acts 1:8 NKJV) *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon (heppi) you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Pastor Chuck Illustration

I love the illustration Pastor Chuck would give regarding these three prepositions. He would take an empty glass in one hand, and a picture of water in another. He would take the picture and bring it near the cup and splash some water against it, saying the Holy Spirit comes (para) alongside the person to convict their hearts of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come. Then He would fill the cup with water saying and when I person receives Jesus as Lord and Savior, God Himself takes up residence within (en) the person (forever – a guarantee and down payment). And then he would take the picture and pour the whole picture out in the glass having it overflow from the glass, saying then the Holy Spirit comes upon and overflows (heppi) the person for the work of the ministry to the world around them. What a great simple illustration explaining such an infinite topic, the Trinity of God and the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit Upon Them – in Judges

Gideon has the Spirit upon him, and now is prepared for battle. There are others in Judges we will read who the Holy Spirit came upon them for the work God had before them.

Othniel - Judges 3:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. ¹⁰ The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim.

Gideon - Judges 6:34 (NKJV) ³⁴ But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him.

Jephthah - Judges 11:29 (NKJV) ²⁹ Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced toward the people of Ammon.

Samson - Judges 13:24–25 (NKJV) ²⁴ So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. ²⁵ And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Others in OT – Spirit Upon Them

We read of others in the Old Testament who the Spirit was upon them.

Moses & the 70 Elders - Numbers 11:24–30 (NKJV) ²⁴ So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD, and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle. ²⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again. ²⁶ But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸ So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, one of his choice men, answered and said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!" ²⁹ Then Moses said to him, "Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!" ³⁰ And Moses returned to the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

Joshua - Numbers 27:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him;

King Saul - 1 Samuel 10:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.

King David - 2 Samuel 23:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ Now these are the last words of David. Thus says David the son of Jesse; Thus says the man raised up on high, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel: ² "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue.

Daniel - Daniel 4:8 (NKJV) ⁸ But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, saying:

NT Filled with Holy Spirit

The disciples who turned the world up-side-down (better said – right-side-up) were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter was filled again (Acts 4:8) showing we need to be refilled as necessary because we leak (hahaha). And we see Paul among others was filled with the Holy Spirit for the work of the ministry.

Apostles & Disciples (120) - Acts 2:1–4 (NKJV) ¹ When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Peter - Acts 4:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel:

Paul - Acts 13:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him ¹⁰ and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?"

Given to Jesus

Of course, the Spirit was upon Jesus as He walked and worked on the earth:

Matthew 12:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.

Luke 4:1 (NKJV) ¹ Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

You need this power!

C. H. Spurgeon,

AGAIN - C. H. Spurgeon, a great British preacher of the last century, knew this very well. It was he who said, I believe, brethren, that whenever the church of God declines, one of the most effectual ways of reviving her is to preach much truth concerning the Holy Spirit. After all, He is the very breath of the church. Where the Spirit of God is, is power. If the Spirit be withdrawn, then the vitality of the godliness begins to decline and we are backbiting. Let us turn to the Spirit of God crying, "Quicken thou me in Thy way." If we sorrowfully perceive that any church is growing lukewarm, be it our prayer that the Holy Spirit may work graciously for its revival. Let us return to the Lord. Let us seek again to be baptized into the Holy Spirit and into fire, and we shall yet, again, behold the wonderful works of the Lord. He sets before us an open door and if we enter not, we ourselves are to be blamed.

Promise to You - OT

And the Lord promised that it would be given to us in the Last Days.

Joel 2:28–29 (NKJV) ²⁸ "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. ²⁹ And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Zechariah 4:6 (NKJV) ⁶ So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

Promised to You - NT

And the NT promise to you

Mark 1:6–8 (NKJV) ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. ⁸ I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 1:4–8 (NKJV) ⁴ And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Don't have to do it Alone!

You don't have to do it alone, or own your own!

Every Mother Needs It

Deliverer, rescuer, every mother in this room needs the Spirit of the Lord to come upon them. Husband, youth, children's workers, missionaries, grandmothers, mothers, daughters, church planter,

Gideon is Filled -

Verse 34. Gideon is filled with the Holy Spirit. Here's seven principals needed to be baptized.

1. is that we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.
2. is a public profession that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord
3. is renunciation of sin.
4. is absolute surrender to God
5. is an intense desire for the baptism/filling with the Holy Spirit.
6. is definite prayer for the baptism/filling with the Holy Spirit
7. is faith (believing we have received the baptism/filling of the Holy Spirit

NT Principal – OT Picture

As we say often, for every New Testament Principal you will find an Old Testament picture, so we will see that in the baptism (the Spirit coming upon and overflowing Gideon).

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

1 Corinthians 10:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Principal #1 - Is that we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.

You must be born again, everything begins at the cross, everything comes down to an innocent sacrifice and an altar (Acts 2:38-39). We see Gideon recognizes and relating the two (Innocent sacrifice and an altar) are the pathway to Peace with God.

Acts 2:38-39 (NKJV) ³⁸ Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Judges 6:17-22 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. ¹⁸ Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You." And He said, "I will wait until you come back." ¹⁹ So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented them. ²⁰ The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. ²¹ Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. ²² Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face."

Principal #2 - Is a public profession that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord

God will not empower a person who hides in the shadows, who does not go public record professing God as his King (Matthew 10:32-33). Gideon made public profession by tearing down the altar of Baal. Have you given your life to the Lord? Tell someone and then come here and get baptized and make a public profession before man.

Matthew 10:32-33 (NKJV) ³² "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven."

Judges 6:25-27 (NKJV) ²⁵ Now it came to pass the same night that the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it; ²⁶ and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down." ²⁷ So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the LORD had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night.

Principal #3 - Is renunciation of sin.

God cannot flow and overflow through a vessel that is clogged and polluted with sin. We won't receive the Holy Spirit when asking, because we are in sin and disregarding His command. Gideon tears down the altar, and tears down the sin that was separating him from being filled (clothed) with the Holy Spirit. Gideon takes care of the sin that was in his home first before he can take care of it out on the street.

Acts 2:38-39 (NKJV) ³⁸ Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

1 John 3:22 (NKJV) ²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

The question often arises, "is the baptism of the Holy Spirit for personal holiness or practical works of God?". The answer is yes! We need not wrestle with the doctrine of it all, but only prepare a heart wanting both, and God will do both. You will find new power in overcoming sin personally when you are baptized (clothed/supplied) with the Spirit of God because God flows most powerfully through vessels that are unclogged and not polluted with sin.

Principal #4 - Is absolute surrender to God

We see a pattern throughout all who were filled, clothed, empowered with the Holy Spirit, and that is they surrendered themselves completely to the Lord, saying Lord do with me as you will. Your will is my command. You want me to tear down the altar of Baal and risk death, ok if that is your desire, that is my command. Some people want the Spirit of God upon them, but put boundaries on God of how and where He can use them. Lord I want this power, but not if you are going to have me witness to my friends, that will be embarrassing and they will think I am a spiritual fanatic. Lord yes, but not if I have to give up my Friday's to go preach, or you ask me to cross the sea, or

worse cross the street. God wants absolute surrender, are you will to do that? Do you trust Him enough to believe by faith that everything God does and will do, will always be for His Glory and our good. I won't ask you to make an emotional response to this message today, because I want you to spend time with the Lord and speak to Him about what you may be afraid of to not fully surrender your life to Him in every way.

Acts 5:29–32 (NKJV) ²⁹ But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. ³¹ Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

Principal #5 - Is an intense desire for the baptism/filling with the Holy Spirit.

You have to come to an end of yourself, and be desperate, knowing that you don't have the power to change that situation, to change that person, but a real encounter with the real God (overflowing from you can). Gideon wanted to see the Midianites defeated, and knew he couldn't do it, but He knew God could.

John 7:37–39 (NKJV) ³⁷ On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Judges 6:13–18 (NKJV) ¹³ Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." ¹⁴ Then the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" ¹⁵ So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." ¹⁶ And the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man." ¹⁷ Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. ¹⁸ Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You." And He said, "I will wait until you come back."

Here is the thing Christian, and it is a big thing to put in our mind regarding the power to defeat the Midianites, and that is..... it is a spiritual battle. That person you want to affect, that ministry you want to influence, the home you want to become a sanctuary for the Lord rather than a sanctuary for the world..... all those battles are spiritual and need to be fought in the spiritual realm with spiritual weapons (Ephesian 6). Christian, don't bring a knife to a gun fight, and when the enemy has the gun you bring a rocket launcher, when the enemy has a tank you bring a fighter jet with laser guided weapons, and when the enemy has the fort then just launch the nuke. Fight that battle where the battle is, in the spiritual realm, and we do that through prayer and being filled to overflowing with the Spirit of God.

Ephesians 6:10–13 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Principal #6 - Is definite prayer for the baptism/filling with the Holy Spirit

How do get it, simply ask. It is that simple, simply ask, because God wants to give it to you. Because..... you need it. Gideon is going to ask for a fleece as confirmation that God has clothed him and empowered him for the victory. That was OT mentality. We don't need fleeces today, simply ask!

Luke 11:11–13 (NKJV) ¹¹ If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Judges 6:36–40 (NKJV) ³⁶ So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said—³⁷ look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." ³⁸ And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. ³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." ⁴⁰ And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

Principal #7 - Is faith (believing we have received the baptism/filling of the Holy Spirit

Simply believe, whether you feel it or not, whether you have a physical manifestation of some kind (tongues or prophecy), by faith God believe God has given (clothed you) with this power.

Mark 11:23–24 (NKJV) ²³ For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. ²⁴ Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

Luke 11:11–13 (NKJV) ¹¹ If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

Judges 6:35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

Asher – Remembers the Song of Deborah / God always Gives Opportunity to Redeem Failures

Verse 35. Asher, they remember the Song of Deborah that was sung about them and here they are; they're ready to fight this time. God always gives us the opportunity to be redeemed from our failures. Have you missed out on something God has called you to do, to be part of? Maybe you were busy, distracted by the world. Maybe you were fearful and didn't want to enter in, maybe you were just outright selfish, but rest assured and take comfort, today He will call you again and give you opportunity to be redeemed and to enter in.

Judges 5:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan, And why did Dan remain on ships? Asher continued at the seashore, And stayed by his inlets.

Zebulun and Naphtali – Always looking for a good Fight

Now Zebulun and Naphtali, they rose up to the challenge in Judges 4 when Deborah and Barack rallied the nation to fight Jabin king of Canaan, and here they are rallying behind Gideon to go fight the Midianites. Seems like they are always ready for a good fight, just waiting for a leader to lead them.

Love when God's people get Sick and Tired – and United for War

So Gideon is rallying Israel, and I love it when God's people get sick and tired of being sick and tired, and unite for war. Here they all are. They're sick and tired of being sick and tired, but they were waiting for a leader. God raises up a leader, his name, Gideon. He's going to send Gideon to go to war, and to be the catalyst that draws and unites all of Israel together. All of Israel now, after seven years, is sick and tired of being sick and tired of the Midianites and the strife and the oppression that they bring upon them. And so we see another principal of why God gives, why you should want, this empowering of the Holy Spirit upon you, and that is so you can lead other believers into war, helping them help themselves to defeat the Midianites.

Oh that the Church and God's people – Get Sick and Tired

Oh, how I love to see Christians unite today. Christians being sick and tired of being sick and tired of watching people being devoured by the enemy. Watching marriages implode. Watching families have to watch their children go and become prodigals. Watching a nation that doesn't give Jesus Christ the glory that he deserves. Oh, I pray the Church will unite and be sick and tired of being sick and tired of watching these things. Maybe it all begins, maybe the Church just needs to first be sick and tired. Maybe the Church isn't even sick and tired of it. Maybe they don't even recognize it, or see it, or even care.

I Pray – Fresh Wind – Fresh Fire

I pray fresh wind and a fresh fire would blow across the churches of America today, that they would become sick and tired. I pray that it would begin right here in this study, this church.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 6:36-40

Overview Chapter 6

We are in chapter 6, and the situation in Israel is grave and depressing. After 40 years of rest in the land, Israel began to follow after other gods, forsaking and turning from the One True and Living God, and the Lord gave them the desires of their heart and lifted His hand of protection from upon them. The resultant was that the Midianites came against them and oppressed them. The oppression was so great that the Israelites are living in the mountains in caves and dirt holes to hide from the Midianites. God's people are living in caves and dirt holes! When harvest time comes each year (for the last 7 years) the Midianites come and encamp against Israel, and then destroy the harvest and anybody that would try to stop them. So Finally after 7 years the people of Israel cry out to the Lord to deliver them (why it took so long is beyond me – why do we wait so long?) and God responds as He always does for He desires to see us free and victorious more than we ourselves do.

Judges 6:7 (NKJV) ⁷ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites,

Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves:

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are slaves to sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

God Raises up a Man

So God is always looking for a man/woman, who will be a rescuer, a deliverer, to a people who are oppressed and downtrodden. God has found his man in Gideon, but first He has to prepare Gideon for the work that is before him, and God shows up and meets Gideon under an oak tree and calls Gideon for who he will be, a mighty man of God.

Judges 6:11–12 (NKJV) ¹¹ Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order 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, you mighty man of valor!"

Outline 6:25-40

So a lots of tearing up in this passage.

- Gideon tears down the altar of Baal (6:25-27)
- The men of the city want to tear Gideon up (6:28-30)
- Gideon's father says let Baal himself tear up who tore him up (6:31-32)
- The Midianites come down to tear up the Nation Israel (6:33)
- God prepares Gideon to tear up the Midianites (6:34-35)
- Then we see Gideon tearing up his doubts (6:36-40)

Let's read our passage of scripture for today's study.

*Judges 6:33–40 (NKJV) ³³ Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. ³⁴ But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. ³⁵ And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. ³⁶ So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said—³⁷ look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and *it is* dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." ³⁸ And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. ³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." ⁴⁰ And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.*

Then we see Gideon tearing up his doubts (6:36-40)

Judges 6:36 So Gideon said to God, “If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said—

Love Gideon’s Humility

I love Gideon’s humility and wisdom here, as he see it the Lord who

Judges 6:37 look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said.”

Notice Gideon Up on Threshing Floor

Verse 37. Notice Gideon's up on the threshing floor now. He's not in the wine press. He's not hiding in the shadow. To do the threshing it was always up in a high place where the wind would blow, so it would blow away the chaff as they would break the husk from the kernel. So Gideon, he's up on the mountain. He's up on a high place. He's not in the valley and shadows. He's up on the mountain. People, you can be sure, see him seeking the Lord. He's up in the open now. He's not hiding. I think he gets a lot of bad press about the fleece. But let it be noted here, he may be seeking this fleece but he's up out in the open. He's not hiding in the shadows like he was in the wine press. He wasn't destroying his father's altar in the dark like he did before. Here he is, up on the mountain. This is where he is seeking his fleece.

Every Leader needs to Be Person of the Mount

I think it's something to be noted right here, for all leaders, every leader must be a people of the mount. The people who go up on the mount, who seek the Lord in the high place, praying, looking for his will and his leading; and then secondly, people who aren't afraid to step out of the shadows, aren't afraid to be identified as God's man, as God's woman, God's leader. I think every leader must be a people of the mount, the high place. That's where Jesus gained his power, was up on the high place. May we be the same.

Matthew 14:23 (NKJV) ²³ And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.

Judges 6:38 And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water.

Judges 6:39 Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew.”

Judges 6:40 And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

Its Ok to Get Confirmation – You will Need it to Stand on when War Begins

Versus 36 through 40. It's okay. In fact, it's a good thing to get confirmation from the Lord before you go out to do something, and especially something that has such consequences as this. You need the confirmation to stand on when the arrows start to fly, when the enemy presses in.

We Don't Need Fleeces

Verse 36 through 37. We don't need fleeces. Hebrews 1 tells us God speaks to us, and so we don't need to be going and laying fleeces. That's definitely Old Testament. It's good to get confirmation and make sure that the Lord, you're in touch with Him, in tune with Him, and you're clear with Him; it's okay to get confirmation. But if God's spoken through his word, if God's laid it on your heart, then it's time to go. You don't need to lay out a fleece and delay anything. Just go and do what God's called you to do. We don't need fleeces today, we have something much better and greater, and that is that Jesus Christ speaks to us.

Hebrews 1:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³ who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

7 Things When Making a Decision

A Frequent Question / Flip Side – don't Ask / Belly of Fish

One of the most asked questions I get as a Pastor is, “how do I know if that was me (and my self-wants), or if that was something that the Lord was speaking to me. Sadly, on the flip side is an equal lacking, that people just go off and make decisions and feel – I'm a Christian and it will all work out because “God is Love”. God is Love this is true, and He will be with you, even in the belly of a great fish, but you would do well to go where He is leading, rather than asking Him to follow your lead – for you may find yourself all washed-up where you are trying to go. We live in a time where you can make some bad decisions and still recover because our economy is so great, but those days won't last forever and we are seeing the beginning signs of that. But as for our marriages, our children, I believe the margin of error there is zero, as the world and all the garbage available to a person leaves us in a place that one bad decision can start a person or family down a path of spiritual destruction. This study is vital to every Christian, and thus why you should move to the edge of your seats, and thus why you need to quit being distracted by whatever else it is that is on your mind, and totally lock-in on this word of the Lord today.

Whether Lord Seeking You – or You seeking Lord / Need not Struggle

Now, whether it is the Lord seeking you out, desiring to lead and guide you, or it is you seeking the Lord out for His leading and guiding, you need not struggle and strive with the leading of the Lord, for He desires to lead you. You see if anything is of the Lord, then it was initiated by the Lord, and desires upon our heart (whether in the form of a vision or not), are visions from the Lord, of Him wanting to lead you somewhere. So in your seeking of the Lord, or Him seeking you, large or small, think of these 3 groups, ask yourself these 7 questions, and you can have confidence you are going in the right direction, in the “Straight” direction as God tells Ananias, go to the street called Straight:

(Acts 9:11 NKJV) So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.

Is it Cool?

- Major Point 1 when considering your decision ask yourself, “how will this affect my relationship and service to the Lord?”
- Major Point 2 when considering your decision ask yourself, “has this desire stood the Test of Time?”
- Major Point 3 when considering your decision ask yourself, “am I striving, trying to force or make something happen?”

Will It Count?

- Major Point 4 when considering your decision ask yourself, “who am I really doing this for?”

Does it Conform?

- Major Point 5 when considering your decision ask yourself, “does it align with the Word?”
- Major Point 6 when considering your decision ask the Lord, “please give me a Word to stand on?”
- Major Point 7 when considering your decision ask yourself, “what does godly counsel say?”.

Too many Christians end in Belly of Fish / Hope you make Part of Daily Decisions

I've known too many a Christians to end up in the belly of a great fish, because they didn't consider these 7 things when trying to be led by the Lord, and I hope today you will make these part of your daily life making decisions, so you can always stay on the street called Straight.

Let's Flip to Exodus 13

Let's flip back in our bibles to Exodus chapter 13, for we see a wonderful passage of Scriptures where we see God leading His people.

Exodus 13:17-22 (NKJV) ¹⁷Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, “Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.” ¹⁸So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁹And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you.” ²⁰So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. ²¹And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. ²²He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.

Recap

To recap, God delivered the 10th and final plague, the death of the first born to all who would not apply the blood over the home. The Egyptians said get out, and heaped silver and gold upon the Hebrews. So now after 400 years of slavery, the children of Israel are leaving Egypt.

No One Knows the Way / Way to Go Moe

Now imagine this, they have been in Egypt for 400 years, no one really knows the way to the Promised Land, how could they, they've never seen the outside of Egypt, Moses has only gone as far as Sinai himself. If I am Moses I am saying this is great, Pharaoh has been defeated, we are free, only one problem though, does anybody know how to get to the land of Canaan? Now being a man, he couldn't ask directions, and with every pat on the back, way to go Moe, you are our leader, I'll follow you anywhere. Great Moses is saying to himself, problem is I don't know how to get there.

We Freed of Egypt – Going to Promised Land / Problem is how to Get there

Hey we have been freed from the bondages of Egypt; we are going to the Promised Land to see our Savior, but the fact is, how exactly do I get there, what path do you want me to take to get there Lord? We are going to need some help from the Lord.

Wish Lord lead Us by Cloud & Pillar / Better Way – Jesus Personal Relationship / The Word

So many people wish the Lord would lead them by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night; I can assure you something, we have a much better way – for today God speaks to us by the Son, and the Son leads us on our way, and that is a much better way, a personal intimate God speaking to His child, just as you speak to your child, giving them a Word to help them make decisions on what to do in life.

(Hebrews 1:1 NKJV) God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,

(Hebrews 1:2 NKJV) has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

(Psalms 119:105 NKJV) Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Good Example in Ex 13 / What decision for You / Ask 3 Questions

Do you know what, He gives us a good practical example in this passage on how to be lead by the Lord, how to determine the paths to take for our journey. In this passage, as the Lord lead the children of Israel, we see so does He lead us, if we allow Him to. So in your decisions, large or small, think of these 3 groups, ask yourself these 7 questions (to follow) when you are trying to determine if this is Gods will for your life:

1. Is it Cool?
2. Will it Count?
3. Does it Conform?

1.) Is it Cool?

Best Commentary – Psalm 105 / Actually Over Them – 120 / Cloud Moved they Moved

Best commentary on the Bible is the Bible, and Psalm 105 gives us more insight, maybe brings some clarity. For I think many of us think that the cloud was out in front of the congregation, but actually it was over them. God spread the cloud over the people to protect them from the 120 degree temperatures that the desert can reach in the heat of the day. So when God wanted to move the people, He would just move the cloud, and to stay cool they would move with the cloud.

(Psalms 105:36 NKJV) He also destroyed all the firstborn in their land, The first of all their strength.

(Psalms 105:37 NKJV) He also brought them out with silver and gold, And there was none feeble among His tribes.

(Psalms 105:38 NKJV) Egypt was glad when they departed, For the fear of them had fallen upon them.

(Psalms 105:39 NKJV) He spread a cloud for a covering, And fire to give light in the night.

God wants us to Stay Cool / Yoke is Easy

God still directs us that way, He wants us to stay cool, He doesn't want us getting all uptight in our relationship and service to Him. Jesus said, my yoke is easy, my burden is light. God doesn't want to move you into any place that will cause a burden on your relationship with Him.

(Matthew 11:29 NKJV) "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

(Matthew 11:30 NKJV) "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

God Wants to Commune with You

God loves the communion with you he loves it that you're seeking his will and he's not playing hard to get but he loves being with you he loves talking to you he doesn't want you just fly by running up give me direction and then running away on the something new were always so worried about the tomorrow what are we going to do tomorrow gods like I just want you today I just want to be with you today I just want to joy you today and tomorrow asked me and I'll tell you the same I want to be with you I want to communion and have oneness with you

When we have this one this communion with the Lord that hold power thing we study last week it will flow and power because we're Tatch to the vine I am the vine you are the branches are from me you can do nothing but all attached to him the vine oh how sweet the supply of the Spirit of God is upon us and we will bear much fruit and who is the fruit for us for those around us

Major Point 1 when considering your decision ask yourself, "how will this affect my relationship and service to the Lord?"

Ezk 44 – Linen & Wool / Every Decision (Live, Work, Marry) How Effect Relationship to Lord

In Ezekiel 44, they were told to wear linen only, no wool, God doesn't want us to get all hot and bothered in our relationship, ministry and service to Him. Can I make that point to you, not just which ministry to serve in, but yes for every decision you make in you life, whether it is where to live, what job to take, whom to marry, the FIRST question you must ask yourself, how will this effect my relationship and service unto the Lord, for if you are truly seeking first the Kingdom of God, your relationship and service to Him, will always be a part of any decision. How will this effect my spiritual growth, my study of the Word,

prayer time, communion with Him, fellowship, church attendance, and ministry involvement? Major Point 1 when considering your decision ask yourself, "how will this affect my relationship and service to the Lord?" I am amazed how many people make major decisions of life, and don't consider how it will effect their relationship with the Lord.

(Ezekiel 44:17 NKJV) "And it shall be, whenever they enter the gates of the inner court, that they shall put on linen garments; no wool shall come upon them while they minister within the gates of the inner court or within the house."

(Ezekiel 44:18 NKJV) "They shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen trousers on their bodies; they shall not clothe themselves with anything that causes sweat."

Look at Context of Matt 6:33

Look at the context of Matthew 6, and you will see that that all the other stuff we are talking about, is in that context, fiancés, family, etc:

(Matthew 6:28 NKJV) "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

(Matthew 6:29 NKJV) "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

(Matthew 6:30 NKJV) "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

(Matthew 6:31 NKJV) "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"

(Matthew 6:32 NKJV) "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

(Matthew 6:33 NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Don't Sweat It / For Me Tired or Energy / Not Saying it always Easy

So in Ezekiel 44, God says I don't want you sweating, I want you to stay cool, stay under the cloud. So often something will be proposed to me for the church to do, or my home, a different job, and when I think of doing something it, immediately I get a burden, almost like I am tired, just the thought of it makes me tired, that is a sure clue to me that it is my thoughts, not the Lords, for when God gives me something to do, He gives me the energy and excitement to do it. Now I am not saying it is going to be easy, I am not saying that it will not come without war (for we studied that last week – war is inevitable), but I don't start to sweat over the decision, I start to look forward to it, I have a cool refreshing outlook on the task ahead.

God put Desire There / God Initiator

The reason it won't be a burden is because God laid it upon your heart, and His yoke is easy and His burden is light, He won't ask us to do something that He hasn't equipped us to do. So that desire that is in your heart, God put it there. God is always the initiator, not us initiating and God responding (Ok God, I've been delighting myself in you, now give me that boyfriend/job I want; no, God says just enjoy your relationship with Me and I'll fill your heart with things that are better and beyond anything you could have thought of).

(Psalms 37:4 NKJV) Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart."

(Psalms 37:5 NKJV) Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.

Father knows Best

Sometimes we treat God like a genie or like the fairy godmother who was at the anniversary party of a sixty-year-old couple celebrating their thirty-fifth anniversary. “Congratulations,” the fairy godmother said. “I’m going to give you each one wish. What would you like?” “I would like to go on a world cruise,” the wife answered. Poof! Tickets were in her hand. “What would you like?” she said, turning to the man. Pulling the fairy godmother aside, he said, “Frankly, I would like to be married to a woman thirty years younger than I am.” Poof! He became ninety. We ask for the dumbest stuff. And the Lord loves us enough to say, “I’m not going to honor that request because you don’t understand what you’re asking for.” I’m so glad we serve a God who can’t be ordered around. I’m so glad our Father loves us too much to grant our petitions if He sees they will be harmful to us.

Major Point 2 when considering your decision ask yourself, “has this Desire stood the Test of Time?”

God Lays It – You Will Continue / My Flesh it Fades / Major Point 2 – Test of Time

So when God lays something on your heart, and it is not a burden, but a joy. God’s will is what you will want to do. If you are not in God’s will, especially if you are in some habitual sin, you will not know or hear His will for you. What God lays on my heart, won’t be what He laid on your heart, but because He put that desire in my heart, I can go on, while many others would quit. Do something that is your will, and not God’s will, and you will burn out, fade away, and have a mess on your hands, and maybe others to. Here is how I know that my desire, is God’s desire, and that is that over time, the desire never goes away. I find something that is of my flesh, fades away in a short time, it is a whim, and actually if it doesn’t come to pass in a few months, I forget about it. But if it is of the Lord, it stands the test of time, it is something that just won’t go away. Major Point 2 when considering your decision ask yourself, “has this Desire stood the Test of Time?”

(Psalms 37:4 NKJV) Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

(Psalms 37:5 NKJV) Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.

Major Point 3 when considering your decision ask yourself, “am I striving, trying to force or make something happen?”

Must Not Strive / God will bring it to Pass / the Church / Major 3 / Stay Cool

Paul told Timothy, the servant of the Lord must not strive. If whatever you are doing, or thinking of doing, if you are continually striving, struggling over it, struggling to make it happen, sweating it out, ask yourself.....why is this such a struggle? If it is God’s will, He will bring it to pass, no need for you to get all uptight about it. I continually find myself saying to the Lord, this is your ministry, this is your church, all I need is to stay in communion with Him, and whatever happens after that, is up to the Lord, no

stress for me and I just keep cool in my linens. Now there are times when I find myself sweating, trying to whip something up in my strength, and I'll say, but I know this is important, this needs to be established or developed, and I'll get all in a sweat, get it done, get it out there, and find out, nobody wanted it, nobody needed it, it didn't help me as I thought it would, all I did was lose sleep, and wasted precious time. Major Point 3 when considering your decision ask yourself, "am I striving, trying to force or make something happen?" Just relax, if it is God's desire, He will make it happen, He will bring it to pass, He will open the door for you. You need only be ready to walk through the door when the opportunity comes. Keep cool my beloved.

(2 Timothy 2:24 KJV) And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

Went Up Orderly Ranks / If Confused – Wait

Back in verse 18 of Exodus it says that they went up in orderly ranks. Do you see there that there was no confusion, no chaos, all things were done orderly. God knew where He was leading the people. Imagine 3 million people, moving, and there was no confusion. There is a word there for us, that if we allow the Lord to lead us, then we won't live a life of confusion. When you are striving, you will have confusion, and I can tell you either it is not God's will, or it is not God's time, and in both cases you need to just wait upon Him. And if it is the leading of the Lord, it will stand the test of time.

(Exodus 13:18 NKJV) So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.

(2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV) For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Is it Cool:

- Major Point 1 when considering your decision ask yourself, "how will this affect my relationship and service to the Lord?"
- Major Point 2 when considering your decision ask yourself, "has this Desire stood the Test of Time?"
- Major Point 3 when considering your decision ask yourself, "am I striving, trying to force or make something happen?"

2.) Will it Count

Will it count, you see, God is doing something mighty here, God is establishing a nation, this is a whole new dispensation of His working, and what He is doing here will have eternal ramifications. The people under this cloud are more than just along for the ride, more than just getting to a new place to live and work (now out of Egypt), they are part of something bigger – God is bringing them into the land that will birth the Messiah, and will be the prophetic timepiece for major prophecies to come, as it deals with the people and land of Israel.

Acts 1 – In the Clouds / We Give an Account

Speaking of clouds, in Acts 1, we see that Jesus is coming back in the clouds. When He comes, you and I will stand before Him to give an account, not of our sins for that has been washed away, but we will give an account of what we did with the opportunities that He set before me.

(Acts 1:9 NKJV) Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

(Acts 1:10 NKJV) And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel,

(Acts 1:11 NKJV) who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

You Will care / Birthday Party / Millennial Kingdom

The day you stand before His throne, and cast your crowns at His feet, you will care. You may say I don't care about casting crowns; I just want to make it. Trust me, you will be sorry, you will wish that you had something. It will be like showing up at a birthday party or get a Christmas gift without having one to give in return. Not to mention, what you do now, will determine what you will be doing in the Millennial Kingdom, for as you rule today, is how you will rule in that time. And if you don't care now, you won't care then.

(1 Corinthians 3:12 NKJV) Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

(1 Corinthians 3:13 NKJV) each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

(Revelation 4:10 NKJV) the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

(Matthew 25:21 NKJV) "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

When He Comes – What will He Find You Doing / Be All There

Let the cloud lead you in all your decisions. When He comes back in the clouds, will he find you serving Him, or serving yourself? When He comes, will you be seeking first the Kingdom, or seeking first what was best for you? Wherever you are, be all there, what ever you are doing, look at it and say is this bringing Him glory, how can I make it so it does bring Him glory. When He comes in the clouds, be able to say to yourself, I was busy about my Father's business, I was seeking first the Kingdom, I made what I was doing count for eternity.

Live Life Backwards

As I always say, the key to living is to live life backwards. Live life backwards from heaven and you'll see how easy it is to decide if that thing, really counts.

Major Point 4 when considering your decision ask yourself, "who am I really doing this for?"

Will this Impact Eternal Things

So whatever you are considering, ask yourself, what impact will this make on the eternal things, or will this just satisfy my desires, my self-pleasures? When you weigh those things out, in the light of eternity, it will help you see if this is really your self-interest, or the interest of God. Major Point 4 when considering your decision ask yourself, "who am I really doing this for?"

Mt Transfiguration / Great Plans – Not My Plans

Remember back on the Mount of Transfiguration, after Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus, Peter gets all excited and says let's build 3 booths, 3 memorials, and the Lord interrupts him, and say this is My Son, hear ye Him. God was saying hey you got all these plans and ideas Peter, but it isn't about your plans and ideas, it is about My plans. For My ways are above your ways, and what I have for you is more abundant than anything you'll ever dream up. Peter I don't care about building buildings, I am going to use you to build me a body. For us, we just have to be honest with ourselves.

(Matthew 17:1 NKJV) Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;

(Matthew 17:2 NKJV) and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

(Matthew 17:3 NKJV) And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

(Matthew 17:4 NKJV) Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

(Matthew 17:5 NKJV) While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

(Isaiah 55:8 NKJV) "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.

(Isaiah 55:9 NKJV) "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

(Ephesians 3:20 NKJV) Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

Ask Yourself:

Is it Cool:

- Major Point 1 when considering your decision ask yourself, “how will this affect my relationship and service to the Lord?”
- Major Point 2 when considering your decision ask yourself, “has this Desire stood the Test of Time?”
- Major Point 3 when considering your decision ask yourself, “am I striving, trying to force or make something happen?”

Will It Count?

- Major Point 4 when considering your decision ask yourself, “who am I really doing this for?”

Does it Conform

As we had said (verse 18), they moved in orderly columns, and they moved together. To stay where God was leading, they had to stay in their columns, under His cloud. To go your own way, meant facing the consequences of desert heat, the beasts of the animals, and the armies of the enemies. It also meant missing out on the manna, and the water from the rock as we will read in chapters to come. In order to stay in the flow of where God was going, they had to conform and stay in their ranks.

Major Point 5 when considering your decision ask yourself, “does it align with the Word?”

Does it Align with the Word

We have the same today, we have this Word to lead and guide and us, be obedient to this word, and you will not be outside the camp facing the dangers just described. No some decisions don't even need to be prayed about. No you can't date that person they are not saved. No you shouldn't form that business with him because he isn't a believer. And on and on it goes, if it violates the word, the decision is clear. If it doesn't violate the word, or confirmed by the Word, then you have a Green Light to proceed. What does the Word say about missions, go. What does it say about ministering to the orphans and widows, do it, what does it say. The word is a lamp unto our feet, problem is we want a spotlight upon our head,

we want to see the beginning and the end. Major Point 5 when considering your decision ask yourself, “does it align with the Word?”

(Psalms 119:105 NKJV) Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Major Point 6 when considering your decision ask the Lord, “please give me a Word to stand on?”

War is Inevitable / Heb 1 – He Speaks / Ask for a Verse

As we saw back in verse 17 of Exodus, God took them the long way to avoid war, because they were babes. But we also saw that war, is inevitable, because our King is at war, so that means then we too are at war. Listen precious saint, I cannot say this strong enough, and clear enough, if you are pondering a major life change, be assured, at some point war will come should you move forward with that change. New job, moving away, major ministry changes or something of the likes; can I encourage you in this, God speaks to His people today, through His Son, ask the Son to give you a word to stand on, so when the hard times come you can go back to specific moment and say I know this is hard, it even looks as if I made a mistake, but I remember the specific word the Lord had given me, and I knew this is what I was to do. That specific word may be a verse, a moment in prayer where you knew it clearly was the Lord, or maybe a brother gave you a word and it immediately sunk deep into your and you knew it was from the Lord. Ask the Lord, He will talk to you. Major Point 6 when considering your decision ask the Lord, “please give me a Word to stand on?”

(Hebrews 1:1 NKJV) God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,

(Hebrews 1:2 NKJV) has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

Cloud of Witness / Read the Stories

Speaking of clouds, we are told in Hebrews that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witness. You know we can read stories in the Bible of men and woman of God, and they can be examples for us, as we see they went through the same things we do. Search your Bible, and I will assure you that there will be an example, a word, of the very situation you are in. You need to balance with all the other Major Points, for we can name it and claim it because the Word says it, but God has more:

(Hebrews 12:1 NKJV) Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

(Romans 15:4 NKJV) For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

(Romans 15:5 NKJV) Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

My Personal Life

I can think of some big ones in my life:

God gave me a word to stand on when I left my aerospace job and went to Bible college, obviously everyone thought I lost my mind. This word came after several months of prayer whether and when I was to go:

Acts 9:6 (NKJV) ⁶ So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

God gave me a word to stand on when school was over and I was praying well what is next, I had been offered a job at the Bible College, I had been offered assistant pastor positions out with a couple church on the West Coast, but God spoke to me while I was doing my laundry at 6am the day after I graduated and told me to return to the East Coast:

Luke 8:38–39 (NKJV) ³⁸ Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

I needed these words because when I returned from college to the East Coast there was no job for me, 9 months of unemployment, and get this, nobody wanted me in the ministry. Well-meaning Christians, some in leadership, asked if maybe I missed God's voice, if I wasn't in God's will, to which they never moved me, not once, for even through all that I knew God had spoken and I continually came to stand on these verse knowing my God spoke to me.

God gave me a word to stand on to start this church, and I needed when nobody came for 6 months, I needed when people challenged the calling, I still need it today because the war never ends when you are in the midst of God's work. I was serving at CC Baltimore, which is north of where we are today obviously, and I was well liked, I was leading mission teams, I would fill in for the pastor when he went out of town or was sick, people really thought I was spiritual (haha). I come here, and nobody comes, and all of a sudden people don't think I am so spiritual, many wondered if I was striving, or seeking my own glory; but God had told me in advance, (verse 26 – it is desert). Should we ever be surprised when we are thirsty when we are in the desert? God gave me a word to stand on when the hard times came and come, and so too He will for you, but you have to wait on Him to hear His voice.

Acts 8:26–27 (NKJV) ²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. ²⁷ So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship,

God gave me a word to stand on while I was dating Renee. As in most relationships, you have a time where you ask yourself is this the person I want to spend the rest of my life with. Mind you I was 38 years old, 38 years of singleness, I knew how to cook, sew, and clean (haha), I was more than fine sharing my closet with myself (haha). But God spoke to me, and this time it was through Oswald Chambers devotional. He showed me what Renee would become (February 14th Devotional), a song bird, that would sing in the dark, and how prophetic that would become even more so as she would write her devotional book and her cover would have the song bird on it. And then He spoke again to me on (May 8th Devotional), because the stretching I was facing, as marriage was taking me into a place of total surrender to Him, for I was so much more spiritual when I was single (haha), as marriage reveals we are not as spiritual as we think we are. God was stretching me, and He spoke to me through that devotion that became a word I stand on even after all these years. He speaks to me continually that you are to die for her, your family now, it is not about your wants, but their needs. So God gave me a word to stand on, especially for when times get hard, and every Renee gets that thought of (what in the world was I thinking when I said "I do"), I remind her of the word God spoke to me, and she needs to stand it (haha).

February 14th - The discipline of heeding

What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. Matthew 10:27.

- At times God puts us through the discipline of darkness to teach us to heed Him. Song birds are taught to sing in the dark, and we are put into the shadow of God's hand until we learn to hear Him. "What I tell you in darkness"—watch where God puts you into darkness, and when you are there, keep your mouth shut. Are you in the dark just now in your circumstances, or in your life with God? Then remain quiet. If you open your mouth in the dark, you will talk in the wrong mood: darkness is the time to listen. Don't talk to other people about it; don't read books to find out the reason of the darkness, but listen and heed. If you talk to other people, you cannot hear what God is saying. When you are in the dark, listen, and God will give you a very precious message for someone else when you get into the light.
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- After every time of darkness there comes a mixture of delight and humiliation (if there is delight only, I question whether we have heard God at all), delight in hearing God speak, but chiefly humiliation—"What a long time I was in hearing that! How slow I have been in understanding that! And yet God has been saying it all these days and weeks.' Now He gives you the gift of humiliation which brings the softness of heart that will always listen to God now.

May 8th - The patience of faith

Because thou hast kept the word of My patience. Rev. 3:10.

- Patience is more than endurance. A saint's life is in the hands of God like a bow and arrow in the hands of an archer. God is aiming at something the saint cannot see, and He stretches and strains, and every now and again the saint says—"I cannot stand any more.' God does not heed, He goes on stretching till His purpose is in sight, then He lets fly. Trust yourself in God's hands. For what have you need of patience just now? Maintain your relationship to Jesus Christ by the patience of faith. "Though He slay me, yet will I wait for Him."
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- Faith is not a pathetic sentiment, but robust vigorous confidence built on the fact that God is holy love. You cannot see Him just now, you cannot understand what He is doing, but you know *Him*. Shipwreck occurs where there is not that mental poise which comes from being established on the eternal truth that God is holy love. Faith is the heroic effort of your life, you fling yourself in reckless confidence on God.

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- God has ventured all in Jesus Christ to save us, now He wants us to venture our all in abandoned confidence in Him. There are spots where that faith has not worked in us as yet, places untouched by the life of God. There were none of those spots in Jesus Christ's life, and there are to be none in ours. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee." The real meaning of eternal life is a life that can face anything it has to face without wavering. If we take this view, life becomes one great romance, a glorious opportunity for seeing marvellous things all the time. God is disciplining us to get us into this central place of power.

We have a speaking God, who speaks to us and leads us and guides us. His rod and His guide us and leads us, and His leading brings us comfort.

Psalm 23 (NKJV) A Psalm of David. ¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. ³ He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Major Point 7 when considering your decision ask yourself, "what does godly counsel say?".

Wisdom in Counsel

Listen Christian, In the multitude of counsel there is wisdom. Do you seek out godly leadership in help for your decision, or not, because maybe you are afraid that they will say something that isn't what you want to hear. Don't ask every person in the Church, but have those few that you know and trust are led of the by the Lord, know the Word of the Lord, and have demonstrated their love for you. If you don't want to seek out godly counsel, I would say you need to examine yourself and ask why. Major Point 7 when considering your decision ask yourself, "what does godly counsel say?". The reason there is safety in the multitude of counselors is because others can step back and see things that you are too close to see. Or others have a spiritual maturity that is beyond yours, and just know things that you don't.

(Proverbs 15:22 NKJV) Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established.

(Proverbs 24:6 NKJV) For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, And in a multitude of counselors there is safety.

Need not Struggle

You need not struggle and strive with the leading of the Lord, for He desires to lead you. So in your decisions, large or small, think of these 3 groups, ask yourself these 7 questions:

Is it Cool?

- Major Point 1 when considering your decision ask yourself, "how will this affect my relationship and service to the Lord?"
- Major Point 2 when considering your decision ask yourself, "has this desire stood the Test of Time?"

- Major Point 3 when considering your decision ask yourself, “am I striving, trying to force or make something happen?”

Will It Count?

- Major Point 4 when considering your decision ask yourself, “who am I really doing this for?”

Does it Conform?

- Major Point 5 when considering your decision ask yourself, “does it align with the Word?”
- Major Point 6 when considering your decision ask the Lord, “please give me a Word to stand on?”
- Major Point 7 when considering your decision ask yourself, “what does godly counsel say?”.

When all 7 Line Up

Well what happens when all 7 line-up, all 7 are green lights? Then it comes down to faith, and why we call this Christian Life the Great Adventure. But let me just say this, and make it real easy; when they came to Jesus, they said Master what are the 2 greatest commandments, and Jesus said love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul. And, love your neighbor as yourself, in this is all the law and the prophets. Beloved, if you can do that, doesn't matter where you are or what you are doing, God is pleased.

(Matthew 22:37 NKJV) Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”

(Matthew 22:38 NKJV) “This is the first and great commandment.

(Matthew 22:39 NKJV) “And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

(Matthew 22:40 NKJV) “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

This Very Moment determine if in Will

Now If you ever wonder if you are in God's will at this very moment, then do these 2 things, and you will know that you are. If you are not doing them, then know you are not in God's will, and I can assure you, it isn't where you are at, or whom you are with, it is a condition of your heart that needs to be corrected. These 2 things move you into God's perfect will because, when you love the Lord with all your heart, mind, and soul, then you won't be indulging in habitual sin. Any person indulging in habitual sin, I tell them there is no way for you to know if you are where you are suppose to be, doing what you should be doing, and with whom you should be, if you are living in habitual sin. And, if you are loving your neighbor, you'll quit focusing on yourself, and you won't be apt to make the error of seeking first your kingdom.

Galatians 5:19-21 (NKJV)¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions,

heresies, ²¹envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Make Part of thought Process / More Peaceful Life – Sweeter Communion

So 3 groups, 7 questions to ask yourself when making decisions. I suggest to you to make them so a part of your thoughts, that they will constantly examine all your thoughts and actions and motives, and you will find yourself experiencing a more peaceful life, and sweeter communion with your Lord.

Come for Prayer

If you want to pray and discuss what is heavy upon your heart, come up to the altar today and we will have people available to pray with and for you.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 7

Judges 7:1-8

Overview Chapter 6

We are in chapter 6, and the situation in Israel is grave and depressing. After 40 years of rest in the land, Israel began to follow after other gods, forsaking and turning from the One True and Living God, and the Lord gave them the desires of their heart and lifted His hand of protection from upon them. The resultant was that the Midianites came against them and oppressed them. The oppression was so great that the Israelites are living in the mountains in caves and dirt holes to hide from the Midianites. God's people are living in caves and dirt holes! When harvest time comes each year (for the last 7 years) the Midianites come and encamp against Israel, and then destroy the harvest and anybody that would try to stop them. So Finally after 7 years the people of Israel cry out to the Lord to deliver them (why it took so long is beyond me – why do we wait so long?) and God responds as He always does for He desires to see us free and victorious more than we ourselves do.

Judges 6:7 (NKJV) ⁷ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites,

Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves:

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are slaves to sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

God Raises up a Man

So God is always looking for a man/woman, who will be a rescuer, a deliverer, to a people who are oppressed and downtrodden. God has found his man in Gideon, but first He has to prepare Gideon for the work that is before him, and God shows up and meets Gideon under an oak tree and calls Gideon for who he will be, a mighty man of God.

Judges 6:11–12 (NKJV) ¹¹ Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order 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, you mighty man of valor!"

Today's Passage

I want to slow down here today on these eight verses because they are so vital to our understanding, they are a paramount passage regarding spiritual warfare. How many here today believe they are in a spiritual warfare? It is true, we are, as we are told by our Lord in Ephesians 6 that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood but principalities and powers. When I go bowling I wear my bowling shoes not my running shoes, when I go to running I wear my running shoes not my bowling shoes. When I go on patrol with the police department I wear my bulletproof vest not my Hawaiian shirt, and when I go to war against the devil, I put on my spiritual armor, not my pajamas. Knowing the environment, we are entering, determines the way we dress for it. Being aware of the environment we in, that surrounds us, readies our minds on how we are to live in that environment. So today's passage is a rich passage on spiritual warfare. So let's get ready for war.

Ephesians 6:10–13 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Pray

Let's Pray – before we enter into the war zone!

Outline – Judges 7:1-8

- God gives us a New Name – Live to Your New Name (v.1)
- Know the where the Enemy Camps (v.1)
- Don't fight from your heels – Go on the Attack (v.2)
- Your Power is in Your Weakness (v.2)
- You think Everyone got it Together (v.3)
- We may not be as Ready as we Think we are (v.4-7)
- Don't take Eyes off the Enemy (v.7)
- Stay Ready (v.8)

Judges 7:1–8 (NKJV) ¹ Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley. ² And the LORD said to Gideon, “The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’ ³ Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, ‘Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.’ ” And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained. ⁴ But the LORD said to Gideon, “The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, *that* of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall go with you,’ the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ the same shall not go.” ⁵ So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, “Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink.” ⁶ And the number of those who lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. ⁷ Then the LORD said to Gideon, “By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the *other* people go, every man to his place.” ⁸ So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all *the rest of* Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

God gives us a New Name – Live to Your New Name (v.1)

Judges 7:1 Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

Gideon has a New Name

Verse one. Gideon getting ready for war now and he's identified in this first verse by his new name, and his name means “He who contends with Baal”. Gideon is now known as a giant slayer. As he has slayed the king of idols there in the promised land. God gives him a new name after a new work of God in his life, of everything that we read in Chapter six.

Do you Believe You are a Giant Slayer? / You have Through Christ Jesus

Gideon's given the new name Jerubbaal, and he's a giant slayer. He torn down the altars, the altar of Baal and Asherah, and then erected a new altar to the One True and Living God. Do you believe you have the ability to slay giants? You do because you have. You who have given your life to Jesus Christ, you have torn down the greatest giant slayer, sin and death, eternal separation from the Holy God. You, through the faith in what God has done, just like the faith that Gideon had. God did the work, Gideon walked into the victory. Jesus Christ has done the work for your salvation and you have walked into the victory. Now you can be a name it claim it and you can claim it, that you have the power to defeat every giant that comes into your life because you are a giant killer by faith and believing that God can tear down the giants in your life just like he did Gideon.

Romans 8:37–39 (NKJV) ³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Old Name

And know this that some people are not going to recognize your new name, your new nature, your new life. Just know that and accept that, but you keep living to the new name and nature, and don't look back nor let someone try to take you back and say that old man is how you will always be. You are a new creation in Christ. And if you are here today and have not made that commitment to Christ, tore down the false idols and altars and have committed and dedicate your life to Christ, then today turn from your sin and ask God to forgive your sin, and be received as His Son/Daughter.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

You can Have a Chapter 6 Life – Just Meet & Wait on the Lord

In each and every one of us in this room can have a chapter six life, where God meets us and shows up and speaks to us, and shows us things about himself and about ourselves, and makes promises to us. Promises of how He sees us, so much a part from how we see ourselves, how he adores us, and how he wants to do great things in and through us. You can have a chapter six life. You need only to meet with God and wait upon him, and have an ear to hear what he has to say, and have a heart to follow and obey what he wills for your life. You can have a chapter six life that then leads into this chapter seven life. Oh the glorious Christian life, how beautiful it is.

Know where the Enemy Camps (v.1)

Judges 7:1 Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

They can See Each Other

Gideon will be on one side (v.3 – Mount Gilead), the Midianites will be on the other side of them to the north (hill of Moreh). The Midianites are going to be able to see all that's going on. No one is really hidden. You can see the forming and we will read that the Midianites have one hundred and thirty-five thousand soldiers at the minimum that we know of. They came with camels and they came in like a locust. History tells us they would come in for long sieges. They would set up tents. They would come in, they would bring their wife and their children, their herds to sustain themselves. They came in like a swarm of locust.

Judges 8:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen.

Lots of Detail about where Midianites Are / Know Where Satan Camps – Sets up Shop Against You

Verse one. Lots of detail here about who's camping where in the situation and it's good for us so that we can gather and understand this passage of all that's happening. I want you to see this detail is much needed detail because it is the detail of Israel's enemy, the Midianites. Where they were, how they were camped, and what they were doing. Christian, you need to know where Satan camps and where he waits for you also so that you can make a battle plan accordingly. We need to recognize the wiles of the devil and his schemes and where he hides and where he sets up his shop and where he waits for us. Just like the details of this verse one, we need those same details in our lives so that we don't get surprised, that we're always on guard and ready for the enemy and where he waits for us.

Hockey

Now this is just me, not making a call for any other, unless the Lord speaks to you personally about this. But I grew up watching and loving the Pittsburgh Penguins. They are having quite the playoff run, in fact tight now they are playing for the Stanley Cup. I am rooting for them, but not watching them. The television network the games are on knows the demographics of who watches hockey (men 24-55) and they throw the vilest commercials on there, to which I say I am not letting this through my eye gate, even fast forwarding doesn't work because you still see the split-second image of flesh/carnality, to which I say no – I am not compromising. I apply 1 Thessalonians 5, and I test all things, and I abstain from every form of evil. Simple test, if Jesus was sitting there watching along, how comfortable would our time together be. The word "test" in that verse means to "scrutinize", and that is exactly what I am doing. And if it can quench my Spirit, then I abstain completely from it. That is one example of

recognizing where Satan camps, and where he waits for me. We must all recognize where he camps, and say I am not going there, or I know he is there and therefore I need to be on watch for him as war is sure to follow.

1 Thessalonians 5:19–22 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies. ²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

Don't fight from your Heels – Go on the Attack (v.2)

Judges 7:2 And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'

Take Battle to Enemy – Don't Fight from Heels

Verse two. Gideon takes the battle to the enemy. Sometimes I think we're way too passive. We are like always on our heels, we're always in a defensive posture, we're always fighting from behind it seems. We're always trying to regain ground or our hopes, at best, is just to maintain the ground. There's times for us to be in defensive mode, but it seems like too much time we're in always, a continual, defensive mode. When we read through the scriptures, as we read through Joshua, as we read through Judges, we continually see offensive attacking moves by God's children against the enemy. It's a picture for us. Again, too many times we're like, "Man, the devil's putting it to me. He's really giving it to me. Oh pray for me, the devil's pressing in hard. Oh pray for me, the devil has my children captive. Oh pray for me, I really am pressed hard this month", whereas if we look and see these examples through Joshua and Judges, we see that Israel rarely ever fought from a defensive position, but always went into an offensive position. We see through the scriptures ... Judges chapter 3, verse 10, Othniel went out to war. Judges chapter 3, verse 28, Ehud said, "Follow me", and he went on the attack. Judges chapter 3, verse thirty one, Shamgar, he went on the offensive and killed 600 philistines with an ox-goat. Judges chapter 4, verse 14, we see Barak with the leading of Deborah rallies the children of Israel and he went down and he went on the offensive. In Book of Joshua the Children of Israel were always on the offensive taking ground, Jericho, Ai, and going against the various kings.

Judges 3:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim.

Judges 3:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Then he said to them, "Follow me, for the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand." So they went down after him, seized the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over.

Judges 3:31 (NKJV) ³¹ After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.

Judges 4:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.

Joshua 6:3 (NKJV) ³ You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days.

Joshua 8:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now the LORD said to Joshua: "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.

Joshua 10:7 (NKJV) ⁷ So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor.

Joshua 10:40–42 (NKJV) ⁴⁰ So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded. ⁴¹ And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon. ⁴² All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

Israel Always Defensive - #8 New beginning go Attack

The Lord said to Gideon, "Go. I'm giving you this battle. Let's take the battle to the Midianites", and it's going to be an offensive, Gideon's going to attack them rather than waiting to be attacked, which continually happened. What we see a pattern here with this story of the Midianites coming against the Israelites for seven years, Israel was always in a defensive position and continually lost. Here, in the eighth year, the number of new beginning, Israel's going to go on the offensive and they're going to have their victory. I think it's time for many of you to come into the number eight, the new beginning. Cry out to the Lord and say, "Let's go battle this. Let's go attack rather than hold and try to just hang out. Let's get aggressive and attack".

Warning - Going on Attack comes with Greater War / Carroll Park – Radio / Most Hellish 12months of Life

It will come with war. I will just warn you of that. When we went to war at Carroll Park, by taking the gospel into Carroll Park, and at the same time, the Baltimore riots had just happened, and at the same time, we had just started our radio ministry broadcasting the word of God into the city of Baltimore, man the devil came. He came because we were the ones attacking. He launched a counter-attack. I'll be honest. I just wasn't ready for it. I didn't realize it. I can speak to you today now after a year, a season, of attacking, of taking it to the devil. I can speak and tell you the power in it, but I can also give you warning so you don't take this as rah-rah speech, but you count the cost and you understand it is a hellish fight. For the past 12 months, this has been the most hellish period of my life personally. In all my years of ministry, in all my years of being a Christian, walking with the Lord now 25 years, being in the ministry as a senior pastor some 14 years, this past 12 months of attacking and going on the attack has been the most hellish walk of my whole life. The things that are coming against me and the wows of the devil and his counter-attacks for my direct attacks. Our radio ministry is an attacking ministry and everyone here has fruit in that as it is in ministry of this church that doesn't seek listener support and sustain itself because we want to attack the enemy at the very heart of his stronghold and if he is the prince and power the air when we're going to go knock out is there time and we're going to clean up for Christ who let the word of Christ go over the airways of the radio in the 20th largest city in the United States of America

Crazy Night – But that isn't Spiritual warfare / Warfare is over People

I don't think I've ever shared this story, but I think it's applicable to tell you. A year ago, May 2015, when we had just launched the attack in the Carroll Park, when we had just launched the attack in Baltimore City by joining the radio, and teaching the word, and giving the word of God to the people of Baltimore. I come out here one evening for just a time with the Lord. I like to just get alone with him and pray, seek him, seek a time with him. I was praying. I'm not a charismatic type person, as you know.

As I was praying, I just felt a lifting of God and just this strengthening that I did start to name it and claim it, but I wasn't claiming prosperity. I was claiming power. I was praying to God giving glory for his great power. Then I spoke out loud, I said, "The devil is done. The devil, you, are going to get pounded. God is coming. God is going to do a work. His kingdom will come. His will will be done. Devil, your kingdom is coming to an end because the King of Kings is coming, and he's going to make a powerful stance right here in this church in this place. He's driving you out and you will be a defeated foe. You will be a squatter at best. God is going to do a great work." It was powerful. To be honest with you, by the end, however long that went on, I don't even know, in the end, I'm glad all the neighbors were gone because I was loud, and I was speaking with force.

Then when it was over and done, and I said my amen, and I went to close up and make it back home ... I will say a storm was forming but this was different. As I left the sanctuary and came in near the back, it was like I could literally hear demons howling like they were howling in agony. It was getting louder and louder. My natural mind was saying, "No, this is just wind. The storm is coming just like Gideon could say, "Well, of course, the fleece would be wet. It's humid at night. The water would draw to the fleece." I looked at it in a natural term but the way it continued on and the way that the sounds came, it sound like agony, and it sounded like demons were agonizing.

I was gripped with fear. I will be honest. I was scared. I'm all by myself. I don't know how many demons are around me. We should always realize that is the way the world we live in. It's a spiritual realm. It's a spiritual realm around us, but I was scared. I could sense fear, but I knew God had the victory. I said, "Time for me to leave."

I just started heading towards the door. True story. As I walked passed the bathroom, the men's room, I heard something fall over in the men's room. There's nothing in the men's room to fall over. I heard something. I felt like somebody is in this building. Somebody is in this bathroom. My natural mind said, "Maybe somebody had come in while I was praying." Then, again, I had locked the door so nobody could have come in. If someone from the church came in, they would have said, "I'm here." When that thing, whatever that noise was in the bathroom, my heart skipped up another 20 beats a second. I just said, "I ain't even looking. I am heading to the door. I'm going to set the alarm. If the alarm goes off, I'm going to let the county police come and deal with them because I'm out of

here." There's power in taking the battle to the enemy. I think we see that in this passage, this illustration before us today.

I want to tell you what I just explained and described. That's not spiritual warfare. There might be a spiritual realm. That's not spiritual warfare. Spiritual warfare is when the devil comes and directly comes against you, or the devil comes directly against the person you love, your spouse, your kids, your extended family, your church family, your community. That's the spiritual war. All that other stuff, it's nothing. It's just a glimpse into the spiritual realm but it's nothing. The people, that's what the battle is over. It's not over a piece of property, a building. Property, nothing. It's over people. That's where we have to fight the battle for.

Most Hellish – Most Victorious

I'm going to tell you this. Although it's been the most hellish, it's been the most profitable and victorious time in all of my life. I have seen more victories in one year than all the other 13 combined, myself individually and we collectively as a church. I want to teach you, encourage you, and give you the charge that today the Lord he wants you to take the battle to the enemy. He wants you to go into the attack position rather than waiting and sitting back on your heels. Take the battle to the enemy.

Attacker Believes he Can Win / Attacking Changes Your Mind – Living in a New Place of Power

Why and what's the power of it is when you plan offensives, you are putting it into your mind that you are the attacker and not merely a defender. The attacker rarely ever thinks he's going to lose. If he thought he was going to lose, the attacker would just sit back and live another day. When you're the attacker, you attack because you believe that you have the power for victory. The aggressor aggresses because they think they can win. What happens in this mind of being the attacker rather than being on the heels just waiting for the devil and trying to hold ground is that you now live with the mind of the power of Christ that is in you. His promises are sure and true. You too can go and have these victories and take more ground. You can drive the enemy out. You can set the captives free. It's a whole new way of thinking. I think it will be a whole new way of thinking for many of you because many of you live in this continual "I just want peace". You live in this continual place of "I just want to maintain and hold ground". You live in this continual place of the devil keep taking it to me. When you will change it and say, "I'm taking it to the devil", you will find yourself living in a brand new great power.

Since when did Satan become Greater than He who is In You?

Ohh Satan is really putting it on me today, he pounding me good. Hey Since when did Satan have the power greater than us - 1 John 4:4

1 John 4:4 (NKJV) ⁴ You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

If you think there is anything you can't beat - you are already beaten

Prayer Jabez

I love the prayer of Jabez, a great outline for your prayer time, as he prayed for His territory to be enlarged, and that he might not bring pain to the Lord's heart.

1 Chronicles 4:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain."¹⁰ And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.

Attacking Prayer - Coming with Jesus to Set Captives Free

Attacking this prayer, I'm coming after the strongholds. I'm coming to take land. As John 10:10, I'm coming to set the captives free. Evangelism does that. Pray for those who are oppressed. Look at the story of Abraham rescuing Lot. No defensive position was going to rescue Lot. Abraham had to go on the attack story after story. We say, "Devil, I'm coming against you. I'm coming to attack you, and I'm coming with Jesus. I ain't coming by myself. I'm coming with pure power."

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Dress for War

Ephesians 6. He tells us how to dress for war. That armor, you use it defensively and many times you need to, or you can use it offensively and go in the attack. Same armor for either battle positions.

Ephesians 6:14–20 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

3 things for the Offensive – (Prayer – Word – Shoe leather)

We see three things and they're not in any specific order but all three of them play together: prayer, the word and action.

- Prayer, that's the aerial campaign that bombards the enemy's position.
- The word is what we stand on. It's what cuts to the heart and changes lives. It doesn't just divide spirit and soul, but it divides the wicked one and his ways.
- Thirdly, the action. This is one of the greatest ones: taking the battle to the enemy. The action of faith, believing that prayer matters, the action of faith, believing that the word of God changes lives and is true. The action of the faith that [puts shoe leather to our faith and go to the offensive, go to the battle. Go onto that place no one goes. Go out to that go out and boldly proclaim and live your faith and take the battle to the enemy.

Your Power is in Your Weakness (v.2)

Judges 7:2 And the LORD said to Gideon, “The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’”

Your Power is In Your Weakness / Stay Humble and Reliant

Your power is in your weakness. Stay humble and reliant on the Lord. A victory could be more disastrous than defeat if we think it was our doing. God is literally protecting Israel by dwindling the soldiers down to a miracle level.

God will not Share Glory

Plus, God will not share His glory with any man. May we be careful when God starts to use us.

Isaiah 42:8 (NKJV) ⁸ I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.

God Uses Weak and Foolish / When Weakest – Then Strongest

God uses the weak and foolish things to confound the wise. Do you qualify? When you are at your weakest than you are at your strongest. You don't win on your strength or great will, but by reliance unto the Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:26–31 (NKJV) ²⁶ For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence. ³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—³¹ that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”

2 Corinthians 12:7–10 (NKJV) ⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

I Can Do All things Through Christ

And again, it is not me coming after the enemy, but me with my Warrior God that I follow into the battle by faith.

Philippians 4:13 (NKJV) ¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

God teaching to Rely on Him

God in every battle is teaching us to trust Him for everything -God could have won battle without - just cast hail from heave. But God is drawing and developing Gideon and Israel to fully trust, surrender, and submit to Him.

You think Everyone got it Together (v.3)

Judges 7:3 Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.' " And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

Fearful = Concern for Safety / Afraid = not to Have Heart in Battle

Fearful - to be concerned for own safety. Afraid - is to not have the heart in the battle. They were both fearful and afraid.

Deuteronomy 20 / Fear is Contagious

This calling is back to Deuteronomy 20 where God says if you are afraid go home. Go home if afraid because if your heart not in it the person next to you will pay for it. Fear is contagious. Boy I have seen people get excited about doing something for the Lord, and then one person shows up and starts casting seeds of doubt, unbelief, making a challenge to the calling with so-called spiritual reasoning behind it, or dropping gossip, and then it spreads like wildfire. Hence why God says if you are afraid, you can go home, and nobody is to think anything less of you, for the fact is you are simply obeying the word of God.

Deuteronomy 20:8 (NKJV) ⁸ "The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, 'What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.'

When in Fight – God wants whole Heart in It

So when you are in the fight, God says He wants our whole heart to be there.

Proverbs 3:5–6 (NKJV) ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

2/3 Afraid and Nobody Knew It / I bet You think Everyone Got it Together Here Don't You?

So 22,000, that is 2/3 of them are afraid, and they go home. They showed up to fight, they had swords in hand, they came forward to the calling, but deep inside their heart of hearts they were afraid. Two-thirds of them were afraid, and nobody knew it. I bet you think everyone has it together here don't you? I can tell you they don't, we don't, many if not more than 2/3rd in this room are afraid, they are fearful of things no one even knows about, many are hurting inside and keep it bottled up and hidden because they think if they say something people will be shocked, people will say hey I thought you were super-Christian. Listen, if we would totally be honest with each other, we would say its true I am really struggling right now, life isn't great, I am not the super-saint people think I am, and I need prayer. And listen, no one is going to judge you here, if you need to talk we are here for you, to share your burdens.

Galatians 6:2 (NKJV) ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

We may not be as Ready as we Think we are (v.4-7)

Judges 7:4 But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, that of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go."

Judges 7:5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink."

Judges 7:6 And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water.

Judges 7:7 Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place."

They think Ready for Battle – But they are Not

They think they're ready for the battle but they aren't. The Lord may say to you not right now, I have other plans, and if/when He does don't get upset at God or the people He tapped to lead, just trust and wait for Him. Bless you for going but let the Lord decide if you can enter that battle. Believe it or not, sometimes God is going to say, "Not right now."

Don't take Eyes off the Enemy (v.7)

Judges 7:7 Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place."

Fat Guys

Some commentators, they say that these guys, these 300 God picked because they were too fat to get down on their hands and knees and that's why they have to lap like a cup in their hands. If that is true and I was there, the I would have been part of the 300.

Josephus

But I want to share something interesting with you. Now we are reading recorded scriptures. Judges probably recorded by Samuel, but we don't know for sure. But along with the written word, came the oral word. It is people passing story down to their kids, and then the kids down to their kids. They tell the stories of what they had heard sitting around the fire, or eating a meal together, or going on long journeys. So around 70AD a Jewish historian named Josephus who defected to the Romans and became a historian for them, began to write down the history of the nation of Israel, and of course much of what he recorded was based on interviews with Jewish people, as they retold the stories that were passed down to them. So here is what Josephus wrote regarding this event in historian, that happened about 1300 years before the birth of Josephus.

- Now that they might not pass God over, but ascribe the victory to him, and might not fancy it obtained by their own power, because they were a great army, and able of themselves to fight their enemies, (216) but might confess that it was owing to his assistance, he advised him to bring his army about noon, in the violence of the heat to the river, and to esteem those that bent down on their knees and so drank, to be men of courage; but for all those that drank tumultuously that he should esteem them to do it out of fear, and as in dread of their enemies. (217) And when Gideon had done as God had suggested to him, there were found three hundred men that took water with their hands tumultuously; so God bid him take these men, and attack the enemy. Accordingly they pitched their camp at the river Jordan, as ready the next day to pass over it.

Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). The works of Josephus: complete and unabridged. Peabody: Hendrickson.

Face-to-Face with Enemy / 300 Never lost Awareness of Nearness of Enemy

The men God picked cupped their hands to drink from, because they were afraid of the enemy. But they didn't leave when offered to leave "if afraid", they stayed. Here is the situation, these 10,000 have left the hill, are down at water level, and guess who is down at water level too, the Midianites. They are right there before the enemy, it is hot, Josephus says it is high noon, and 9700 men just throw themselves down and start drinking up water, right next to the enemy. If enemy launched attack right at moment they plunge their face into the water, they would be cut to pieces before they could draw their sword. Now the others, these 300, they don't plunge their face to the water, they don't get into a prone position, they are fully aware the enemy is near, they are lapping water in a posture that they can respond in a moment notice to draw sword, and engage the enemy. The 300 never put their guard down.

Never Put Guard Down

Christian, the biblical application for you and me is this, 300 never put their guard down in the presence of the enemy, and you and I can never take our eyes off the enemy. They had to come out in open to get water, and never put their guard down for enemy was near. And your enemy the Devil lurks around you like roaring lion, seeking to devour you.

1 Peter 5:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

Keep Eyes Peeled – For His Ways

You can't just click, you can't just walk and stroll, you can't just let your kids click and walk. Attack yes, but stay defensive and on guard between attacks.

Stay Ready (v.8)

Judges 7:8 So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

Stay ready

Verse eight. They take their provisions in trumpets and there's a sign. Sometimes God is going to say no. Love your heart, but here's still some things we got to work out in you. There's still some fear. There's still some preparation. Notice what he says to these, "Go home. Take your provisions and your trumpets with you." Trumpets were the sound of the battle cry. What God is saying is stay ready. You never know when the next battle will come, and you will get the nod by God to go. Stay ready.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 7:9-14

Overview Chapter 6

We are in chapter 6, and the situation in Israel is grave and depressing. After 40 years of rest in the land, Israel began to follow after other gods, forsaking and turning from the One True and Living God, and the Lord gave them the desires of their heart and lifted His hand of protection from upon them. The resultant was that the Midianites came against them and oppressed them. The oppression was so great that the Israelites are living in the mountains in caves and dirt holes to hide from the Midianites. God's people are living in caves and dirt holes! When harvest time comes each year (for the last 7 years) the Midianites come and encamp against Israel, and then destroy the harvest and anybody that would try to stop them. So Finally after 7 years the people of Israel cry out to the Lord to deliver them (why it took so long is beyond me – why do we wait so long?) and God responds as He always does for He desires to see us free and victorious more than we ourselves do.

Judges 6:7 (NKJV) ⁷ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites,

Cycle

Throughout this book, we will see a cycle that is repeated seven times, a cycle very similar to the one in which we so often find ourselves:

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are slaves to sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

God Raises up a Man

So God is always looking for a man/woman, who will be a rescuer, a deliverer, to a people who are oppressed and downtrodden. God has found his man in Gideon, but first He has to prepare Gideon for the work that is before him, and God shows up and meets Gideon under an oak tree and calls Gideon for who he will be, a mighty man of God.

Judges 6:11–12 (NKJV) ¹¹ Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order 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, you mighty man of valor!"

Today's Passage

Well over the past studies we have seen God tap Gideon as His man, and first up was tearing down the altar of Baal (we have to take care of business on the home front before we can be used outside the home; so moms and dads, any unfinished business at home that needs to be dealt with?), then we saw the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon (and we studied God wants to supply us with all we need, and that supply is God Himself; Christian you leak, so ask for a fresh filling right now, right here, today), then Gideon asked for sign, and laid out the fleeces, and last week we saw God dwindling down Gideon's army from 32,000 to 300, and now it is battle time (versus 135,000 Midianites (that is 450 to 1), as last week we had an in-depth study on spiritual warfare.. So today we continue on with "principals and promises" for spiritual warfare, as we now look at the actual fight between Israel and the Midianites.

Outline Judges 7:9-15

V.9 - It Happened - (will you be ready)

V.10-11: if you are still Afraid - (Fleeces don't Work)

V.11: Take Purah - (you don't have to go it alone)

V.12-14: The Dream - (God is in Every step - Sovereign Control)

V.15: Then Gideon Worship - (He who knows His God will do great things)

V.16-18: it is Gideon - (Enemy knows Your Name)

V.19-22: Torches and Trumpets - (God will supply all your needs)

V.23: Called Naphtali - (Stay ready Christian)

V.24-25: Beheaded Them - (Finish the Enemy when have him on the run)

V.9 - It Happened - (will you be ready)

Judges 7:7 Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place."

Judges 7:8 So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

Judges 7:9 It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand."

It Happened / Stay Ready

Verse 9 - It happened on the same night. Did Gideon know that it was going to be tonight, that it was going to be that quick, that tonight was going to be the night that God said, "Arise," Did Gideon know that? There were no strategy sessions, there was no animal sacrifices, no prayer meeting to prepare. It was just, "Arise. Let's go." Christian, stay ready. You can't have an off day. You never know when you'll be in the battle of your life. It could be this very same night that we speak of right now. Stay ready. You can't waste the night away doing wasteful things. You need to stay sharp and you need to stay ready. You need to have a body rested and a spirit well-equipped. You can't be under the influence of alcohol. You can't be bloated with the things of the flesh.

You must stay ready, because it could be tonight. You need to stay ready so you can fight with sharpness.

- You never know when the opportunity will come to preach (hence why God tells us to be ready in season and out of season).
- You never know when you'll have the opportunity to share Christ.
- You never know when you have that opportunity, have a unique conversation with your child that could change their life.
- You never know when God's going to bring somebody before you and that you'll be called to comfort those who mourn.
- You never know when you're going to have fight for your marriage. The battle for your marriage, the greatest battle could be tonight.

God says, "Gideon, arise." You'll never know when God says, "Arise. Let's go." Christian, do you know what your tonight will hold? Christian, will you be ready for it.

God has given each of you a ministry, from parenting, to marriage, from the ballfield to the boardroom, He has given each of us our own special ministry, and we must always be ready, and thus the only way to do that is to stay ready.

2 Timothy 4:2-5 (NKJV) ² Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

And don't get tired of doing good, of staying ready, don't ever think today can be an off day.

Galatians 6:9 (NKJV) ⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

V.10-11: if you are still Afraid - (Fleeces don't Work)

Judges 7:10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant,

Judges 7:11 and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp.

Fleeces don't mean much - still afraid

Verse 10 ... Gideon is still afraid, and you know what? Fleeces don't work. You know why fleeces don't work? Because they don't contain all the details. The fleece probably sounded good at 32,000 men (4 to 1 – but God is with me), the fleece is losing its power when they go to 10,000, (13 to 1), but then when he goes to 300 men (450

to 1), he is saying to himself the fleece thing was all my imagination. How we have visions of how things are going to unfold and play out, but a fleece never comes with the details. What we find is that our vision of how we think things are going to unfold and happen really don't ever live up and meet the reality of what truly happens. That's why fleeces don't work, because they don't have the detail. When we have God's word, we have all the detail we need, because his word is more than enough.

Gideon's 7 Things

We looked at 7 things of knowing the will of God for our lives. Just want to refresh those as we look at this life of Gideon now up to this point.

1. We ask, "How will this affect my relationship with the Lord?" We've seen Gideon's life. He wanted to please the Lord. Even though he didn't want to, he knew going into the battle against the Midianites to not go would affect his relationship with the Lord.
2. We ask, "has it stood the test of time?". We can say, "Well, this is only a couple day period here that's happening." Did it really stand the test of time? You know, when we look at the life of Gideon, he's been thinking about this for some time. He knew the history of God's deliverance, and he had desire to see it happen. When the Angel of the Lord showed up, he questioned why didn't it happened. Why isn't God moving? This has stood the test of time. He was sick and tired of seeing this situation, and he wanted to see it change. He just didn't know at that time, that he was going to be the one who was called to make a change.
3. We ask "Are we striving?" We can see Gideon was anything but striving. He wasn't trying to make something happen that wasn't there. In fact, we can often accuse him of being weak in faith and overly cautious. No striving there.
4. Fourthly, who am I doing this for? When we see Gideon, he's doing it for the nation of Israel. He wanted to see the nation set free. We don't see any selfishness here, because Gideon, he's going to risk his life to see this happen. Not for himself, but for the whole nation.
5. Fifthly, does it align with the word of God? He knows the history of the nation of Israel. He knows he's in the promise land. He would know the story of Joshua because he quoted it himself. He knows for Israel to be set free, it aligns with God's word.
6. Sixth, Lord give me a Word to stand on. Three times he's been given the word, but it's not until this last time that he'll finally have a word that he can stand on and go forth with. You know what you see there? God is so patient. God will, in his grace, continually give us a word until we grab onto it and hold onto it, and say, "This is the word that God has given me." Gideon, he has a word to stand on. Now he's telling his brother, "Come on. Let's go.". The Lord wanted Gideon and his 300 men to attack the camp of Midian that night, but first He had to deal with the fear that still persisted in Gideon's heart. God had already told Gideon three times that He would give Israel victory (6:14, 16; 7:7), and He had reassured him by giving him three special signs: fire from the rock (6:19–21), the wet fleece (6:36–38), and the dry fleece (6:39–40). After all this divine help, Gideon should have been strong in his faith, but such was not the case. How grateful we should be that God understands us and doesn't condemn us because we have doubts and fears! He keeps giving us wisdom and doesn't scold us when we keep asking (James 1:5). Our great High Priest in heaven sympathizes with our weaknesses (Heb. 4:14–16) and keeps giving us more grace (James 4:6). God remembers that we're only dust (Ps. 103:14) and flesh (78:39).
7. The last point we always say What does Godly counsel say?, "Well, Gideon had God himself giving him counsel. That's pretty good Godly counsel." You can have Godly counsel, because the word of God and wise men and women who know the word of God can help you decipher and weed through things you're thinking about, and give you Godly counsel, so that you may go in and enter in and take all that the Lord would have for you.

Fleeces Don't Work

At the end of Chapter 6, Gideon asks for a fleece but it doesn't work. He's still afraid. God knows it is. God knows he's still afraid. If Gideon wasn't afraid he wouldn't have had to go down to seek this confirmation. He didn't say to the Lord, "No. I'm good. We're good. Let's go." No. Gideon goes down because he needs to hear this word of confirmation that God's going to give him. Notice that God gives him a confirmation. God initiated this, because he

knew the fear that was in Gideon's heart. God gives him a final word to stand on, and it will be all that he needs to go and stand on it.

Faith is Believing God Will

Christian, faith is believing God will. God will what is the question. God will do what he said he will. God will do his word, promise to you. Gideon has his word to stand on, and now because of that word, Gideon is coming back to these men and say, "Let's go. Let's rock."

Hebrews 11:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ² For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

Hebrews 11:32 (NKJV) ³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

V.11: Take Purah - (you don't have to go it alone)

Judges 7:11 and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.” Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp.

We have a Helper

We continually forgot that we have a helper, and thus we continually think we are in this alone, and have to do it all alone; while God will always say to us, take your helper with you, you don't have to do this alone.

John 16:7 (NKJV) ⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

Our Helper Supplies Us

Who is our servant, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the trinity, He is a person. Take your servant, Purah, which means fruitful, coming from the branch of a tree. So what does He (the Holy Spirit) give us? He supplies. As we have studied in what it means to be given the baptism of the Holy Spirit (we are supplied by God). So we take the fruit of the spirit with us. We need this comforter, the Holy Spirit. Take the fruit of the Holy Spirit with you, Galatians 5. He will supply you when you go down, when you're preparing of the battle. He'll supply you with whatever you need. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. That's what he'll supply you with. Purah, your servant, the Holy Spirit is here to serve you, to come alongside you. What you would find in this time, Purah, would be Gideon's servant, he'd be an equivalent of an armor bearer. He would carry Gideon's body shield, his sword, his spear, whatever he might have. It's a beautiful picture of your servant, the Holy Spirit who comes along you, supplies you. He wants to be your armor bearer, and for whatever you need in the battle, He can produce the armor that you need, the spiritual armor, so that you might have all you need for the spiritual war that you're in. How do I do this practically? You take Purah the Holy Spirit with you into every battle. It is a mind-set, a spiritual mentality, where we ask the Lord daily to supply us. Every morning before I head out the door for the day, in my morning devotions, I have a daily commitment I make to the Lord and I commit myself to Him by offering myself as a living sacrifice, I commit to sanctify myself (set myself apart from the world), and I offer myself as a servant to Him; then I ask for strength from Him (by His Holy Spirit) to supply me to accomplish all He puts before me as His servant, and then I ask for “Solomon” who was known as the wisest man on earth, and thus I am asking for wisdom (I use Solomon so I have 5 “S” – Sacrifice – Sanctify – Serve – Strength – Solomon).

John 15:5 (NKJV) ⁵ “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Galatians 5:22–25 (NKJV) ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Zechariah 4:6 (NKJV) ⁶ So he answered and said to me: “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts.

He Goes with Us

He's our wing man going into the battle, or we're his wing man. We'll never figure that out in the dynamic of the sovereignty of God and the free will of man. God won't, without us, he won't do these things without us. He calls us to go into the battle, to stand beside him, to go do these things, which he could do by himself. He chooses to draw us in and to have us join beside him.

God Teaching them to Fully Trust in Him

As we had discussed in the last study, God could easily defeat the Midianites. He doesn't need even 300 men. He could do it by himself. He could rain hail down or fire and lightning, flood. What he's doing is here he's raising up a nation. He's raising up a man. He's raising up a group of men, to completely and wholly trust in Him. God is teaching the nation of Israel and these men to fully and holy trust him. Commit themselves to him and to follow him. He can only do that by making them come to a place of trust and commitment. Surrender in absolute desperation for him. That's what he's doing in your life. He's teaching you to trust him. He's teaching you to commit your ways to him. To follow him so that you might have a communion and a personal relationship with him for all the days that you walk on this earth.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV) ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

V.12-14: The Dream - (God is in Every step - Sovereign Control)

Judges 7:12 Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.

Judges 7:13 And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed."

Judges 7:14 Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

Imagine the scene

Imagine the scene. Swarms of men (135,000 we read in chapter 8), all their camels, it looks like a swarm of locust have invaded the area. Truly if your Israel it is a terrifying scene as you look out at them as a swarm of locust, who are 7-0, as they have crushed them 7 years straight.

A Ridiculous Dream

So the dream is a little loaf of bread rolls into the camp and knocks over a tent that has been fastened down with tent pegs. A hamburger bun knocks down the tent. Imagine a loaf of bread knocking over tent - crazy - as crazy as 300 knocking over 135,000 - the dream is accurate

Rumors of Gideon are Swirling

The rumors about Gideon are swirling. The Midianites have heard the story about him, and they're fearful because they feared their false god, and Gideon tore their false god down. Of course they don't know he's a false god, so they're fearful of a man who can defeat their god.

Notice Dreamer & Interpreter – Exact Outpost

Notice that it is another who interprets - by name - and all at the very moment that Gideon comes to that exact location out of who knows how many outposts he could have happened upon

God is in Sovereign Control of Gideon

God is sovereignly in control of this situation and moment for Gideon. We look at this, and we can clearly see how he aligns these things. Gideon's going down. It's 135,000 Midianites. The land looks like it's covered with locust. It sounds like there's a camel for every man. You just take a picture of that in your mind, and you can imagine how huge the Midian camp looks like at this point. How many outposts they would have. Dozens upon dozens. Men would sleep in the middle, and the outposts would be around, and these outposts would be who knows, every 100 yards, 50 yards. Enough that they could see an enemy coming, and make alert for the men to wake up and get

ready for war. Who know how many dozens of outposts there are, and yet here the Lord arranges for Gideon to go down to this specific outpost, and it has to be this specific situation. One man has a dream, and yet the man that he tells is the man who's relieving him at his post, and this man has the interpretation. The statistical probability to this is off charts. You are at least at (67,500 to 1). It's impossible, but God does it. He arranges it as such, and this is the one that Gideon shows up on. It has to be this one because these are the 2 men that God put the dream and the interpretation into.

Not just a Bible Story – But Promise to You

This story of Gideon isn't just a Bible story. It's a promise of God to you. I'm in every detail of your life. The Lord is saying to you in this picture: I know every detail of your life. I'm arranging the world and the details just for you. I am involved in every detail of your life, and I want you to see me. I want you to see my hand. I do these things so that you might be drawn to me. That you might totally trust me. Commit your ways to me. I want you to see that I'm leading you, and I am guiding you. You're not just meandering. Your life isn't some happen chance. There's nothing that you need to wish for and want and strive to change, because I'm in your moment. I'm in every detail of your life, and I will lead you and guide you to your next detail and your next place because I'm the sovereign God in your life.

Christian – Where will Sovereign hand of God Lead You today?

Christian, where will God's sovereign hand take you today, and will you recognize it? Will you recognize him being in every detail of your life? Arranging and shaping, involved in every detail. The question can always be, how about when I'm outside his wheel? Are we still in the details? We read that at the beginning of Chapter 6. God turned him over, gave them what they want. He knew where they were. He knew the details. Here we see a man and a nation coming back, and we see God's sovereign hand in every detail.

Bible College - Haircut

I am reminded of the time when I was at the Bible College that I had felt the leading of the Lord to write a Gospel letter to every person I knew in a close way. The total came to 200 letters. It was lots of work writing the letter, but after it was done I was now ready to print, address, and put postage, and mail away, and continue to pray. So that week I went to get my haircut, and I would get it cut at the college as we all co-op at the college to keep cost down. Paul cut hair as that was his gift, some washed dishes, others cooked, as for me I maintained the swimming pools and cut wood for the fireplace in the winter months. So I go to get my haircut, and before Paul would cut somebodies hair he always laid hands on them and said what can I pray for you. So I told him about my venture in faith, and he laid hands and prayed, and at the very end he prayed "and Lord provide the financial means to do this". Then it hit me, wow this isn't going to be cheap. It is going to cost around 200 dollars, which is a lot of money when you are in college and not making an income. So haircut is over, I go to the post office to pick up my mail, and there is a letter there, and I open it, and it reads, dear Ray the Lord laid this on my heart to send to you this check. The amount, you guessed it, 200 dollars. God is so good, and it was more than His great provision that moved me, but His confirmation that I was doing what He called me to do.

A LITTLE GIRL'S PRAYER

~By Helen Roseveare~

Helen Roseveare is a medical missionary and author from England who served for years in the former Belgian Congo.

One night I had worked hard to help a mother in the labor ward; but in spite of all we could do she died, leaving us with a tiny premature baby and a crying two-year-old daughter. We would have difficulty keeping the baby alive, as we had no incubator (we had no electricity to run an incubator) and no special feeding facilities.

Although we lived on the equator, nights were often chilly with treacherous drafts. One student midwife went for the box we had for such babies and the cotton wool the baby would be wrapped in. Another went to stoke up the fire and fill a hot water bottle. She came back shortly in distress to tell me that in filling the bottle, it had burst. Rubber perishes easily in tropical climates. "And it is our last hot water bottle!" she exclaimed. As in the West it is no good crying over spilled milk, so in Central Africa it might be considered no good crying over burst water bottles. They do not grow on trees, and there are no drugstores down forest pathways.

"All right," I said, "Put the baby as near the fire as you safely can; sleep between the baby and the door to keep it free from drafts. Your job is to keep the baby warm."

The following noon, as I did most days, I went to have prayers with any of the orphanage children who chose to gather with me. I gave the youngsters various suggestions of things to pray about and told them about the tiny baby. I explained our problem about keeping the baby warm enough, mentioning the hot water bottle. The baby could so easily die if it got chills. I also told them of the two-year-old sister, crying because her mother had died.

During the prayer time, one ten-year-old girl, Ruth, prayed with the usual blunt conciseness of our African children. "Please, God," she prayed, "send us a water bottle. It'll be no good tomorrow, God, as the baby'll be dead, so please send it this afternoon."

While I gasped inwardly at the audacity of the prayer, she added by way of corollary, "And while You are about it, would You please send a dolly for the little girl so she'll know You really love her?"

As often with children's prayers, I was put on the spot. Could I honestly say, "Amen"? I just did not believe that God could do this. Oh, yes, I know that He can do everything. The Bible says so. But there are limits, aren't there? The only way God could answer this particular prayer would be by sending me a parcel from the homeland. I had been in Africa for almost four years at that time, and I had never, ever, received a parcel from home; anyway, if anyone did send me a parcel, who would put in a hot water bottle? I lived on the equator!

Halfway through the afternoon, while I was teaching in the nurses' training school, a message was sent that there was a car at my front door. By the time I reached home, the car had gone, but there, on the veranda, was a large twenty-two pound parcel. I felt tears pricking my eyes. I could not open the parcel alone, so I sent for the orphanage children. Together we pulled off the string, carefully undoing each knot. We folded the paper, taking care not to tear it unduly. Excitement was mounting. Some thirty or forty pairs of eyes were focused on the large cardboard box.

From the top, I lifted out brightly colored, knitted jerseys; eyes sparkled as I pulled them out. Then there were the knitted bandages for the leprosy patients, and the children looked a little bored. Then came a box of mixed raisins and sultanas --- that would make a nice batch of buns for the weekend. Then, as I put my hand in again, I felt the could it really be? I grasped it and pulled it out --- yes, a brand-new, rubber hot water bottle! I cried. I had not asked God to send it; I had not truly believed that He could.

Ruth was in the front row of the children. She rushed forward, crying out, "If God has sent the bottle, He must have sent the dolly, too!" Rummaging down to the bottom of the box, she pulled out the small, beautifully dressed dolly. Her eyes shone! She had never doubted.

Looking up at me, she asked: "Can I go over with you, Mummy, and give this dolly to that little girl, so she'll know that Jesus really loves her?"

That parcel had been on the way for five whole months. Packed up by my former Sunday school class, whose leader had heard and obeyed God's prompting to send a hot water bottle, even to the equator. And one of the girls had put in a dolly for an African child --- five months before --- in answer to the believing prayer of a ten-year old to bring it "that afternoon."

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Helen Roseveare is a medical missionary and author from England who served for years in the former Belgian Congo.

Reign – in “Sovereign”

Notice the word reign in the word sovereign

He in Control of Gideon – And You / Do you Believe That – Do you Live like That?

God is sovereign and in absolute control - and as he directed Gideon's steps so does he direct yours - do you believe that - do you live like that - where you are what you are doing he has directed and arranged

He Reigns (Obedience and Disobedience)

He is in control even when you are disobeying, even when you were exercising your free will to sin. And in control when you cry out to Him.

Judges 6:1 (NKJV) ¹ Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years,

Judges 6:7 (NKJV) ⁷ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites,

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?

- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 7:15

Overview

So God's people are living in caves, dirt holes, because they bought the lie and followed after the gods of the land (the gods of Canaanites). God gave them what they wanted, let them follow after the other gods, and now they are enslaved to their enemies, living in dirt holes, for 7 years every time they go to harvest their crops their enemies the Midianites come and destroy the crops, and finally after 7 years they are sick and tired of being sick and tired and they call out to the Lord – save us!. God hears, He always does, and He is come to rescue them, deliver them, hence the title of this great book we are studying (Judges – literally means rescuer/deliver).

God found a man He could use, the man is named Gideon. Gideon first tore down the altar of Baal that his father had built right there in the Promised Land and he and all Israel were worshipping (so he takes care of business at home first). Then God fills him with His Holy Spirit for power. Gideon asks for a sign, and we know the story of the fleeces. Then God dwindles Gideon's army down from 32,000 to 300. Gideon is afraid again, so we see fleeces don't work. So God says Gideon if you are still afraid go down to the camp of the Midianites and hear what they are saying about you and you will be strengthened. So let's read verses 9-14 as a recap and pick up our verse-by-verse starting in verse 15.

Judges 7:9–14 (NKJV) ⁹ It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. ¹⁰ But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, ¹¹ and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp. ¹² Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. ¹³ And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." ¹⁴ Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

So we studied last week how God is in sovereign control of every step and detail of our lives. Do you believe that Christian, do you live your life in the freedom, peace, and security that He is not just in your life, but every detail of your life.

Outline Judges 7:12-25

- V.12-14: The Dream - (God is in Every step - Sovereign Control)
- V.15: Then Gideon Worship - (He who knows His God will do great things)
- V.16-18: it is Gideon - (Enemy knows Your Name)
- V.19-22: Torches and Trumpets - (God will supply all your needs)
- V.23: Called Naphtali - (Stay ready Christian)
- V.24-25: Beheaded Them - (Finish the Enemy when have him on the run)

V.15: Then Gideon Worship - (He who knows His God will do great things)

Judges 7:15 And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand."

Gideon Worships in Midst of Enemy / God is in Sovereign Control of your Life

Gideon worships the Lord, literally in the presence of his enemy. That doesn't seem like a safe place to do it, unless you trust God's word, and that you know God is in sovereign control of your life. For when you do, regardless of the situation and circumstances, good report or bad, you can rest in Him.

Psalm 23:5–6 (NKJV) ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Do you trust Him, I mean really trust Him with every detail and circumstance of your life? When you do, you will live in a new power and new peace. Camden seen or heard about that thing where you turn your back and fall into the arms of someone and they catch you. Well he said daddy lets do that, and guess what I didn't realize he wasn't my little baby no more, and I dropped him! But Renee quickly covered the situation by saying, but Camden your heavenly Father will never drop you, you can always be sure He will catch you. And maybe that is you today, maybe your earthly father has dropped you, hasn't been there for you, has let you down, maybe it was a friend, a church, a spouse; know this, God will never drop you can trust Him, you be sure of Him and in Him, and He will never leave you nor forsake you, and He is in every detail of your life. He loves you, proved it by giving His only Son for you.

Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV) ⁵ Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

The Father Watched – He Gave His Only Begotten Son

May I side bar for a moment before moving on. This week I was working on something regarding ministry, to which I won't get into the details on, but with all the hate and violence going on in the world, I had to count the cost and say there are people who kill you for speaking out about these things. I had to ask myself, am I willing to die for speaking truths, and proclaiming Jesus is the only way. To be honest, I had no problem saying yes, and I had no fear of the future. But then I considered but what if they came after my family, attacked, tortured, or killed them because of my words. We read it daily in the news it is happening to our brothers and sisters who proclaim the name of Jesus in Countries that are hostile towards the Gospel, can we expect our lives to always be immune from those things. Man, it was a struggle, to think and consider my wife and children being harmed because of the Gospel, it was hard. How about you, how does that sit with you, it is hard isn't it? And now, I/we have an ever so slight understanding of what God the Father experienced when He "gave" His only Begotten Son. Any dad, any mother, we would gladly say "take me", leave my son/daughter, I will gladly trade places with them. But the thought of watching, and not doing anything about it..... when we have the power to actual do something to rescue them! Imagine what the Father endured giving, watching, His Son go to the cross, especially when He has all the power to do something about it!

John 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Communion Service – He is a Good Father

Let's take Communion together before moving on. How fitting to do so on Father's Day. You have a good Father, a Father who loves you and will withhold nothing from you that is good for you, He proved it by giving His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who He Himself gladly went to the cross for you so that you might have new life and eternal life.

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NKJV) ²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Not Ready for Battle until Worship Well

So back to our text, Gideon hears the battle belongs to the Lord and He has already given Gideon the victory, and Gideon worships the Lord right there on the spot. Here is a key takeaway regarding Gideon worshipping the Lord after this revelation, and that is you are never fully ready for battle, – until you have worshipped well.

Worthy of Praise

Worship means - The most commonly cited definition of the word "worship" is based on the etymology of the English word: "Worship" is derived from the Old English word "woerthship." So, when we worship God, we are proclaiming (or giving him back) his worth. Another way to say it, proclaiming (giving back) His worth. You are worthy of all praise, honor, and glory. Just look at the scene of heaven, to which I say why wait until heaven, worship Him now for He worthy and worth it.

Revelation 4:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns

before the throne, saying: ¹¹ "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

***Revelation 5:11–14 (NKJV)** ¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" ¹³ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" ¹⁴ Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.*

God is Mighty – I am Needy

Worship brings you to the place God is mighty and I and I needy - then with those two things in the forefront of your mind you will be ready for battle because until you come to the place of worship you will be like Gideon and your heart will be a mess and you'll be filled with anxiety, your mind will be racing, you will not be able to sleep, you will be worried about tomorrow's battles. But when you can come and enter into worship, and you dwell on the power of your God, His promises, His greatness, then you will know that will lead to where He desires, and do what He desires, and you will have peace and confidence in that, before the battle comes.

Come Tuesday for Corporate prayer

Come on Tuesdays for Corporate prayer, and what we do is worship based prayer, not grocery list prayer. We spend the majority of the time giving Him praise and glory for all He is. By the time prayer request comes, we know who reigns, and we have trust He hears and will do all according to His will.

Worship Breaks Through the Spiritual Warfare

Worship breaks through, worship breaks through all the spiritual warfare going on in our minds, and brings us to the place of power.

Daniel 11

Daniel 11 he who knows his God will do great exploits, and Daniel 11 talking about the end days and we're living in them. Know your God through the study of His Word, and you will see he is mighty, and you are needy, but coupled together you will do great exploits for Him.

***Daniel 11:32 (NKJV)** ³² Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.*

Worship Prepares the Battlefield

Worship prepares you for the battle; but notice something here and that is that the Midianites are fearful too, and when the fight breaks out, they are confused and anxious, and they start killing each other. So, we see that worship not only prepares us for the battlefield, but worship prepares the battlefield too. Worship puts the enemy on his heels.

Jeremy Camp

(as told by Jeremy Camp – May 2016) I started reading it in Mark 16:15 where it says go into all the nations and preach the gospel to all creation. I remember just hitting so heavy like I've never, never felt before. I've always been a minister but I really said, "Okay, God. If you want me to go, I'll go. Wherever you want me to go, I'll go. I want to go preach the gospel. I don't care what the cost, I don't care at all."

We got our first call. You guys know the Markey's? The Markey's are an extraordinary group of people that God has used radically over in Europe that have literally transformed that whole area in an amazing way. They were pastor of ours growing up, my dad who is here tonight, so thankful my dad's here. It was my dad's pastor and he poured into my dad and poured into our lives so much and then went over and started these churches. I remember just getting the first call saying, "Hey, do you want to come to Ukraine and do an outreach?" I remember saying, "Yeah, I'd love to. Give me some details." Everything started working out.

Then we got a phone call from the other Markey's in Kyrgyzstan saying, "Who would you like to, in the same trip, do another outreach here in Kyrgyzstan?" I remember going, "Okay, yeah. If this works out." It just seemed like

nothing was working out at all. It seemed like it was almost a red flag. I was like, "You know what, it's not the right timing to do 2 outreaches in 1 trip, Ukraine going all the way to Kyrgyzstan, I don't know if we should do it." I told Jed, I said, "Jed, I don't know if it's just something that we can do. It just seems like it's too much."

I remember Jed just saying, "The email that really hit me guys that I remember to this day says if you don't feel like the Lord wants you to do this, that's the key right there, if you feel like the Lord doesn't want you to do this, then okay. I will let you know that in this predominantly Muslim country, this is probably the last year this will ever happen. People are starting to be fearful, they're starting to go underground. This is probably going to be the last time this will be an opportunity to do an outreach here in this city." I remember sitting there going, "How can I say God I'm ready to go wherever, no matter what the cost, I'm going to serve you? How can I do that and not be willing to go to this country?" We agreed. God gave us so much confirmation through his word. There's so many people, so much prayer. We knew that God was calling us to go.

I remember the trip started, we had this amazing prayer time and the trip started and went to Ukraine. It was unbelievable, you guys. I'm telling you, we saw just amazing things happen. I remember it just ... It happened so fluidly, so naturally, God moved in such radical way and we're all high five when we are done, the Jesus dance like, "Yes, this is awesome. We're on fire. We're off to conquer the world." I remember we got to Kyrgyzstan and it was different, I'm telling you. It was different. Something was different. My father went with me, he can attest to that. Everyone involved can attest that something was different. As we walked off that plane, I felt an oppression I've never felt before.

I remember my first call of duty here was to do a press conference for all the media in the area. I just remember just sitting there and this lady kept going, "But why are you here? Why are you really here?" You see, we had to be very careful because this is a predominantly Muslim and we had to have all this approval from the KGB and all these different people saying, "Okay, why is a Christian artist coming over here to get his concert?" I had to be very, very careful about what I said. I had to pray for wisdom from God will give me to say to these people.

I knew at that moment the enemy was on the prowl. I knew he did not want us there. At that very moment, I was like, "Okay, something is not right." I remember the first workshop that we did, it was a worship leader workshop and at the end of the workshop, everybody kept coming up and the predominant theme was we're fearful. We're fearful. I remember just praying for all these different people and just praying for fear to leave and I started to feel it. I remember that night I was trying to share and my mind was just distracted, I couldn't think straight. I remember just going, "This is the enemy. This oppression. This is spiritual warfare."

After that, we did this youth event. As we're walking up to do the event on the stage, I remember hearing my pastor friend say, "We'll have to deal with that later." I said, "Excuse me, deal with what later?" He said, "No, no. Don't worry about it." I said, "No, no, I want to worry about it. What's happening?" He's like, "Well, they've been hearing your interviews and they hear that you're a lot more bold than what they thought about your faith." They said that even though the concert is going to take place and that if it does take place, if you say the wrong thing, then they'll put Pasha, our pastor friend, in prison for a year. What? I remember just going, "How did this even happen?" I'm like, "So what we do?" He says, "We'll worry about when we get to it. You do the event, this youth event." The big event was on Saturday, this was Thursday.

When I got on stage and I felt that fear. I felt gripped by fear and I started playing and I felt like I was playing through a wall. I was trying to sing and I'm talking about God's goodness. I started singing a song called Our God is Greater, our God is stronger, who can stand against us? We've got his force, who can stand against us? I'm telling you, it broke in that room. People started coming forward, getting in on their face in the floor where the Holy Spirit fell and I remember I was so wore out because I kept battling. I said I'm not going to stop and it was not going to stop me.

Lyrics – Our God by Chris Tomlin
Water You turned into wine
Opened the eyes of the blind
there's no one like you
None like you

*Into the darkness You shine
Out of the ashes we rise
There`s No one like you
None like you*

*Our God is greater, our God is stronger
God You are higher than any other
Our God is Healer, awesome in power
Our God, Our God*

*Into the darkness you shining
Out of the ashes we Rise
No one like you
None like you*

*Our God is greater, our God is stronger
God You are higher than any other
Our God is Healer, awesome in power
Our God, Our God
Our God is greater, our God is stronger
God You are higher than any other
Our God is Healer, awesome in power
Our God, Our God*

*And if Our God is for us, then who could ever stop us
And if our God is with us, then what can stand against?
And if Our God is for us, then who could ever stop us
And if our God is with us, then what can stand against?
Then what can stand against?*

*Our God is greater, our God is stronger
God You are higher than any other
Our God is Healer, awesome in power
Our God, Our God
Our God is greater, our God is stronger
God You are higher than any other
Our God is Healer, awesome in power
Our God, Our God*

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Then what can stand against?
Then what can stand against?*

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***Daniel 11:32 (NKJV)** ³² Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.*

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

***Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)** ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 7:15-25

Overview

So God's people are living in caves, dirt holes, because they bought the lie and followed after the gods of the land (the gods of Canaanites). God gave them what they wanted, let them follow after the other gods, and now they are enslaved to their enemies, living in dirt holes, for 7 years every time they go to harvest their crops their enemies the Midianites come and destroy the crops, and finally after 7 years they are sick and tired of being sick and tired and they call out to the Lord – save us!. God hears, He always does, and He is come to rescue them, deliver them, hence the title of this great book we are studying (Judges – literally means rescuer/deliver).

God found a man He could use, the man is named Gideon. Gideon first tore down the altar of Baal that his father had built right there in the Promised Land and he and all Israel were worshipping (so he takes care of business at home first). Then God fills him with His Holy Spirit for power. Gideon asks for a sign, and we know the story of the fleeces. Then God dwindles Gideon's army down from 32,000 to 300 (that's 450 to 1 as Midianites have 135,000). Gideon is afraid again, so we see fleeces don't work. So God says Gideon if you are still afraid go down to the camp of the Midianites and hear what they are saying about you and you will be strengthened. So Gideon goes down and he overhears them talking about the dream they had of him coming in and overrunning them (7:9-14), they are fearful of Gideon and his God, and now we pick up in the actual battle.

Judges 7:15–25 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." ¹⁶ Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. ¹⁷ And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: ¹⁸ When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, 'The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!' " ¹⁹ So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. ²⁰ Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" ²¹ And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. ²² When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath. ²³ And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites. ²⁴ Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan. ²⁵ And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.

Outline Judges 7:12-25

- V.12-14: The Dream - (God is in Every step - Sovereign Control)
- V.15: Then Gideon Worship - (He who knows His God will do great things)
- V.16-18: it is Gideon - (Enemy knows Your Name)
- V.19-22: Torches and Trumpets - (God will supply all your needs)
- V.23: Called Naphtali - (Stay ready Christian)
- V.24-25: Beheaded Them - (Finish the Enemy when have him on the run)

V.15-18: it is Gideon - (Enemy knows Your Name)

Judges 7:15 And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand."

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Judges 7:17 And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do:

Judges 7:18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon! "

Do as I do – Sounds Like Apostle Paul

This reminds me of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthian church:

1 Corinthians 11:1 (KJV 1900) ¹ Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Dads – Can you Say that to Your Kids Today

People follow, because they were looking for a leader. Calling all leaders today! Especially you dads, we need to lead in our homes first.

Character – When Nobody is Looking

It has rightly been said - *true character is what you do when nobody is watching*. So Dad, mom's too, can we say to our kids, even when we are all alone, "do as I do".

Gideon adds Sword of Lord – That is where Power is

Verse 18. Gideon adds sword of the Lord, the Midianites only said the sword of Gideon, but Gideon makes sure when he tells his guys. They're fearful the sword of Gideon, but let's make sure they understand that the power is the sword of the Lord.

Judges 7:14 Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

Prayers Few – Secure Blessings of Many

Gideon is now Jerubbaal under his new name. He single-handedly defeated Baal, which is the God of the Midianites also. Although thirty-two thousand will leave, there is still the one who by himself, tore down the altar. He took ten men, but it is he, only one, who is recognized as the one who destroys. As we say many a times, the prayer and faithfulness of the few can secure the blessing of the many. We see that in this story here and it's applicable for our lives today. We saw the prayers and actions of (Moses and Phinehas) secure the blessings for a whole nation (See Psalm 106). In this world, this country that we live in, that our simple one, two, three, ten dozen or two, as small as that is, our prayers can secure the blessing of the many. May we not faint in our faithfulness and commitment to prayer before our Lord.

Psalm 106:19–23 (NKJV) ¹⁹ They made a calf in Horeb, And worshiped the molded image. ²⁰ Thus they changed their glory Into the image of an ox that eats grass. ²¹ They forgot God their Savior, Who had done great things in Egypt, ²² Wondrous works in the land of Ham, Awesome things by the Red Sea. ²³ Therefore He said that He would destroy them, Had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach, To turn away His wrath, lest He destroy them.

Psalm 106:28–31 (NKJV) ²⁸ They joined themselves also to Baal of Peor, And ate sacrifices made to the dead. ²⁹ Thus they provoked Him to anger with their deeds, And the plague broke out among them. ³⁰ Then Phinehas stood up and intervened, And the plague was stopped. ³¹ And that was accounted to him for righteousness To all generations forevermore.

Enemy Knows Gideon's Name / Gideon the Giant Slayer

As Gideon and his servant spied on the Midianites, they overheard a conversation through which, much to his surprise, Gideon was made aware of the fact that the Midianites were afraid of him. Amazing! This man, who, just a few days previous, was hiding in a winepress, frightened, worried, intimidated, now had a reputation throughout the whole host of Midian as being a fearless warrior. Why? No doubt the Midianites heard how he had pulled down the altar of Baal, effect challenging Baal face to face. Even though only a few people saw Gideon do this, even though only a few people were initially aware of it, word spread that he was a man of power.

The same is true today. Many times we are afraid of the demons of the enemy—but in reality, the enemy knows we who name the name of Jesus Christ can utilize His name, stand in His authority, and be unstoppable. If you have been moving out for Jesus Christ—even if it's not widely known by those around you—your name is known in hell. If you're being attacked, persecuted, hassled, bombarded—rejoice. It means they're talking about you a lot down there. If you're never persecuted, never attacked, never hassled—that's when you need to worry.

"Yea all those who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," Paul told Timothy (2 Timothy 3:12). He didn't say all Christians shall suffer persecution, because not all Christians will. But all who live godly—who make a mark, who impact this world—will suffer persecution.

Notice the Power of the Testimony / Share Your Testimony

I want you to notice something here my Christian brother and sister, and that is the power of your testimony. Oh it goes further and wider than you have any idea of. Share your testimony, share it often, and wrap it together with new life, that God gave His Only Son for you, because He loves you, and always make your testimony about the power of your God, His great love, His great grace, His great mercy, and His great forgiveness to all who will come to Him.

Do You Have Testimony? / Gospel

Before moving on, may I ask any and all here today, do you have a personal testimony, do you have a story of a time where you asked Jesus to forgive your sins and to have a personal relationship with Him? If not, why not today? He is a good Father, and He gives His life for you, and will lead you and guide you and at the end of life your last breath on earth with follow by your first breath in heaven for all eternity in His Glorious Kingdom.

John 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV) ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

V.19-22: Torches and Trumpets - (God will supply all your needs)

Judges 7:19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands.

Judges 7:20 Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, “The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!”

God is into the Details

Notice the scriptures say they held the torches in left hand and trumpets in their right. 31,102 verses in this Bible. God is telling the history of the universe, history of Israel, history of salvation, the history of His son, then the telling of end times – and he uses precious space to specifically tell us what hands they used (left or right) to hold the torches and the trumpets. It is very specific. Why does God take up the space here to get that specific about the details? Because he is a God of details, and He is into every detail of your life. He knows what is in your left hand, and what is in your right hand. God loves you, and is in every detail of your life. I remember many years ago when I had just returned to Florida after graduating from the Bible College. I was waiting upon the Lord for next step and so was filling my time with whatever I could that would please the Lord. So a friend of mine (great brother in the Lord – picture of living on faith), felt the Lord lead him to make a home as a halfway house for battered woman and their children. Now as I said he was a man of faith and wow did I see some miracles happen here. Here he is, living on the couch in his office he was such a man of little means. But first miracle was the house was sold to him for 1 dollar, oh and by the way the house was located just one block from the beach. So I was refurbishing the swimming pool, getting everything back up and running as it had not been run for years. All the pumping and filtering system was dry rotted and not working, the water was algae green. So I started working on that, but while I did I saw miracle after miracle, God into every small detail. Starting with 1 dollar to buy the house. One day I am at his office, he tells me, lets pray because we have a 400 dollar bill that is due today and I have zero money in the account. The post man shows up, he starts opening mail, love offering for 10 dollars, here is one for 40, wow here is one for 100, and at the end of the last letter – ya you guessed it, a total of 400 dollars in love offerings. Now, because this was a home for battered woman, it was a secret, only people inside the ministry knew where it was so if/when the day came that the abusive husband/boyfriend came looking for them, they wouldn't know where to go (day before cell phones PTL). One day I show up as it took about 6 months to refurbish the home and get it livable, and a truck shows up from a local bedding and mattress store, and the guy said I just felt the Lord leading me to bring you 13 single mattresses, can you use them? Of course you know our God, we needed exactly 13 single beds. Another day an HVAC guys shows up, says I just felt a need to stop and ask if you needed any free help on your air conditioner. How awesome our God is. Me, I had to a terrible problem with the pool overflowing because of the heavy rains Florida can get, and then the water would flood into the home. So I made and overflow system, that when the pool reached a certain height it would pump overflow water outside the

fence into an underground water catch. So what I did was dig a big hole about 10 foot by 10 foot. The plan was that it would be filled with rocks, and the water would drain into the top of the rocks and then slowly seep through the rocks to the bottom of the hole and then get absorbed by the ground. It is called a French Drain in the irrigation world. So I dig this hole. Then I am standing and looking at it saying ok well now I just have to come up with about 200 dollars and call a place to deliver me the rocks. Where am I going to get 200 dollars? Just then I see this guy coming towards me with a wheelbarrow from a couple houses away. He comes up to me and the wheelbarrow is filled with rocks. He says I am busting up my concrete patio and I saw your hole and I was wondering if I could dump all my pieces of concrete into your hole rather than having to take them to the dump. With a smile I said – sure ☺. So I finish the whole system, and all the PVC piping out to the hole is laid, the ground is covered up, I finish all the PVC piping for the pool and inside the garage where the pump was. I get all the way to the last connection, and I need a 6-inch-long, 2 inch diameter piece to finish, and I didn't have it because I was using different diameter for the whole project. I searched everywhere, but nothing. I was like bummer I really wanted to finish this because I can't get back here for at least a week if not two, and if it rains the house is going to flood. The nearest Home Depot is 30 minutes away and I have to be somewhere in 30 minutes. Oh well, it is what it is. I am just going to clean up the job and come back when I can. So I finish my cleanup by sweeping everything into the dust pan, I go out to the trash can, open the lid, and trash was all the way up to the brim, and dead center on the top of trash, is an exact 6inch by 2 inch PVC pipe. All I had to do was slap glue and put in place, and then throw the pool pump switch. God is into every detail of your life, and that means every!

Matthew 10:30–31 (NKJV) ³⁰ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Psalms 56:8 (NKJV) ⁸ You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?

Judges 7:21 And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled.

Judges 7:22 When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.

Middle Watch / Genius Strategy – Anxiety & Fear

Verse 19. Middle of the watch. That's about somewhere between 10 to 2pm, and in a place like that when you don't sit up and watch television, you're at wars readiness, you're sleeping. It's 10 to 2.

- They're dead center on sleep.
- Then the blaring sound of 300 trumpets (which are actually rams horns – called shofars in the original language of our text). Go out on the web and listen to some of the sounds of a shofar being blown. When done right, they do a sound of awe coming out of them.
- All the campfires are out at this point, it is totally pitch black in the camp. If you ever look out at a bright light then turn in to the darkness you can see it's a brilliant battle plan.
- The torches are hidden in the vessels because if 300 men are marching with torches the folks in the outpost going to see them coming.
- Quite genius strategy here. Gideon is waiting for the watch change, so the guys who are coming on are groggy. It's the middle of the night, and so shouts and anxiety spike in the middle of the night. Confusion is on the rise.
- Don't forget there is probably 135,000 camels that are all freaked out at this point.
- They see 300 torches completely surrounding them (and usually it was 1 torch leading 1,000 soldiers), they are thinking ambush.
- They probably are thinking those 32,000 leaving was all a trap, as they circled around them and it is an ambush. The situation is mass chaos.
- But as your eyes can't adjust to the brightness and the darkness, they see images with swords and they can't tell difference between comrade or enemy, so they take the every man for himself approach and start swing swords indiscriminately.

It is a genius strategy.

Remind you of Jericho

Speaking of testimonies and “do as I do”; does this story resemble something to you? How about Joshua and Jericho. Walk around similar to surround. Blow the trumpet, shout, walls tumbling similar to pots smashing. Good example left by Joshua to Gideon. Christian you never know when your actions/examples will be played out, applied by someone else.

See Something Awesome Here – Hear Something Awesome – the Sound of God

I want you to see something awesome here, better said, hear something awesome here, and that is what the shofar stood for and was used for in the Nation of Israel.

A curved musical instrument made of a ram’s horn (Heb. šôpār, “trumpet” or “horn”). The shofar produces two tones, and is important for its signaling quality rather than its musicality. Its sound carried a long way, and thus it was used

- to signal attack (Josh. 6:4; Judg. 3:27),
- sound the alarm of war (Jer. 4:19),
- prepare for war (51:27),
- suspend battle and recall troops (2 Sam. 2:28; 18:16),
- and declare victory (1 Sam. 13:3).
- It was also used to praise God in worship (Ps. 98:6; 150:3),
- announce the accession of a king (2 Sam. 15:10; 1 Kgs. 1:34, 39; 2 Kgs. 9:13),
- summon the Israelites to Sinai (Exod. 19:13, 16, 19; 20:18; cf. Heb. 12:19),
- proclaim the New Year Festival (Lev. 23:24; Num. 29:1),
- and herald the arrival of the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem (1 Chr. 15:28).
- It warns of God’s judgment (Hos. 5:8; Amos 2:2),
- the day of the Lord (Joel 2:1; Zeph. 1:16),
- and eschatological revelation (Isa. 27:13; Zech. 9:14; Rev. 8:2, 6, 12; 9:1, 13).

Simply Put – the Sound of God / Jesus Voice like a Trumpet

Simply put, for the Nation Israel, and throughout the whole Bible, it is the sound of God. It was a sound that meant God is on the move and getting ready to do something. This sound would have brought fear into the hearts of the Midianites but strength and power into the hearts of the Israelites because they were reminded that their God is on the move. How sweet that sound must have been to them as they haven’t heard that sound probably now for 7 years. We are told in Revelation 1 that Jesus had the voice as of a trumpet. So the blowing of the trumpet is the sound of God, and in Nehemiah God says He will come and fight for them. The trumpet was to the enemy and the ally – God is engaging in the battle, be ready for here He comes. Christian Jesus comes and fight for you. What battle, what is before you, what struggles do you face today..... know and remember that Jesus fights for you.

Revelation 1:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹ saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

Nehemiah 4:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.”

There will Come a Future Day

And there will come a day, just like this day of God versus the Midianites, that God will blow the trumpet on a Christ rejecting world. A day when His grace comes to an end, and man will be judges according to their deeds. Again, if you don’t have a testimony of the day you came to have a personal relationship with Jesus, I pray your testimony begins here today. I am not trying to cast fear, and force an emotional response, but the day will come when sinful man will face the judgment of Holy God.

Revelation 6:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

Revelation 8:1–6 (NKJV) ¹ When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. ³ Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. ⁶ So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

God Equips for What You Need – Supplies All Your Needs

There's no record recording that God told Gideon to do this with the torches God simply told him the strike at night on this very night - Gideon has no military experience with this plan that he comes up with this brilliant and so what we see is God who always equip you with what you need for the very moment that you need it.

Philippians 4:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Where did 300 Shofars Come From

Everything has to tie out for me when I study the word. I never just say, well not sure how all that could happen but I will just accept it by faith. And I have to tell you, I really was just scratching my head on where in the world did they get 300 shofars (rams horns). Now some commentators say they were left by the departing 32,000 (7:7-8). I can't accept that for the text reads to me that they took their provisions with them, not left them behind. So did God miraculously make 300 rams horns show up, no I don't think so. I pondered that for a long time, then I finally saw it, they were there on the ground already. This is Mount Gilboa (sometimes called Mount Gilead). It is a mountainous and rocky terrain. Well guess where rams live. Guess where rams shed their horns. Guess where rams die. Right where they live. Gideon picks up 300 horns right from the very ground they stand on.

Judges 7:7–8 (NKJV) ⁷ Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place." ⁸ So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

Supply Before Us

Sometimes the supply is right before us, but we can miss it. I remember when I was praying and preparing to plant this church I was driving all over the County looking for a place to meet. I park and pray for God to open a place to meet in Annapolis. I would look all over the County for a place to rent. Then one day just a passing a conversation about the situation a friend said, well why not just start in your house, you got that. Those words spoke to me, and so I started in the house on a Thursday night at the kitchen table. So Christian, what is right where you are, what you own already, is readily available to you, that you can use to make the sound of God, and change a world around you. Grab that and use it for His glory.

V.23: Called Naphtali - (Stay ready Christian)

Judges 7:23 And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.

Judges 7:24 Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan.

Gideon wanted Others to Taste the Victory

Come down against the Midianites: This was not unbelief on Gideon's part. Though God started the work with a small number of soldiers, once the work began, Gideon wanted many to get involved in the work.

Stay Ready

Verse 23. Stay ready. These people that are getting called into the battle are the very same people that were sent away from the battle, and now they enter in.

Judges 6:35 (NKJV) ³⁵ And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

Judges 7:8 (NKJV) ⁸ So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

V.24-25: Beheaded Them - (Finish the Enemy when have him on the run)

Judges 7:24 Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan.

Judges 7:25 And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.

Became a Memorial

Not telling the story real time it's a retelling of the story and so where these guys are beheaded became the name for that place not that it was that place and that's where they ended up being killed

Finish them Off

When you have enemy on run, finish him off. Don't rest until you utterly destroy him. Show no mercy, give no grace.

Cutoff the Source

These guys are on foot. The camels dashed in all the chaos. So Gideon gives the battle call to not only pursue the enemy and to finish them off, but to secure the watering places. Ever run in heat, a real hot day? If you don't rehydrate, you might make it a few miles, but after that your body begins to shut down on you. Another great military strategy for a farmer (God supplies wisdom). I know I say it all the time to cut the source of (internet, tv remote, places you hang out), but may I get under you skin? Kill the source under your skin of bitterness, resentment, gossip, backbiting, slander, malice..... too often we let those things live because they are out of sight, but God will say, crucify them, cut them off, cut them out.

Galatians 5:16–21 (NKJV) ¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Romans 1:28–32 (NKJV) ²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, ³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

John Baptist / Satan's Trophy Room

I am reminded of the story of the beheading of John the Baptist

Mark 6:14–29 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." ¹⁵ Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets." ¹⁶ But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" ¹⁷ For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. ¹⁸ Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹ Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; ²⁰ for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. ²¹ Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. ²² And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you." ²³ He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom." ²⁴ So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" ²⁵ Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." ²⁶ And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷ Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, ²⁸ brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹ When his disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

And here is where Satan stands back and smiles in his victory. John the Baptist – taken out.

Man had gone 400 years without hearing from God. 400 years from Malachi to John the Baptist. Consider this, in the beginning:

- Adam walked with God in the garden,
- Enoch walked with God and had sons and daughters,
- Noah walked with God, and foretold Gods judgment to come,
- Abraham, Isaac and Jacob proclaimed his promises to the people,
- Moses went into Pharaoh’s court and said the Great I Am” has sent me for His people,
- God gave them judges, then kings, and prophets for years and years, and years.....

And Then God gave them silence – for 400 years, Malachi to Matthew. As years turned into decades, and decades into centuries, Hope turned into hopelessness, they had not heard from God; then God spoke again through John the Baptist. The resultant was a great revival as people repented. John came in the power and authority of the great prophet Elijah. John introduced the Messiah to the world, He said “Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” John baptized Jesus Christ, imagine what that must have been like. Imagine reading John’s newsletter that week.

Now he is dead, and Satan feels exulted. The greatest prophet of all times, brought down because of a dancing girl. Satan lavishes in his victory.

It says His Head was brought on a platter:

- In January we saw the coveted Lombardi Trophy (Super Bowl Champs) raised high. In May somebody will hold a Silver Platter over their head at Wimbledon. And in June the Stanley Cup Trophy (Hockey Champs) will be skated around some hockey arena. Then later in June NBA, then October MLB.

All trophies will symbolize a victory over an opponent. They will symbolize that on that day and that time the holder of that trophy had victory over their opponent.

I wonder if Satan, with his arrogance (I will exalt my throne above the stars of God I will be like the Most High (Isaiah 14:12-15)) has a trophy room. Some symbols to remind him of past victories over God’s chosen.

If he does,

- I imagine this platter hung on the wall with an inscription “32 AD - John the Baptist goes down” – God’s spokesman silenced.
- There would be some coats and stones there. The coats that Saul of Tarsus held, and the stones used to kill Stephen.
- There would be the fire that Peter warmed himself by as he denied the Lord 3 times.

There would be platters and memorabilia of the many Ministers and Christians that Satan has taken down. Some of the memorabilia may be:

- empty bottles of alcohol,
- drug needles and empty baggies,
- pornographic magazines,
- big fat paychecks with tons of overtime logged on it – laying on empty church seats
- or computers that were used to go places on the Internet that Christians should not go.
- wedding bands with broken vows

But you know what I like about Satan’s trophy room? Trophies disappear from his trophy room. You see many of his trophies are only temporary.

- For the platter of John the Baptist was only a temporary victory. Quick, who was the first martyr for Jesus Christ? How many of you said Stephen? But truly John the Baptist was the first New Testament martyr for Christ. We may be oblivious to it, but tens of thousands of Christians are martyred every year in this world because of their faith. How many of the millions of martyred Christians gained strength from the story of John the Baptist. How many have looked at John’s example of preaching the truth even to the point of death and it gave them strength to stand firm like John did, and in turn brought many people into

the Kingdom. The platter of John the Baptist is now in Jesus' trophy room - it is a jewel / a crown that will be thrown at His feet. Satan – you can kill the messenger, but the message will never die

- The coats and stones from Stephen's death are now jewels that will be thrown at Jesus' feet also. I believe as Saul held those coats and watched Stephen get stoned, he also saw Stephen's face as Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father ready to receive him. I believe this affected Saul greatly. Saul's heart was now prepared to meet the Lord on the road to Damascus. The coats and stones became symbols of victory as Paul went on to become the second greatest evangelist to ever walk on this earth.
- The fire Peter warmed himself beside on the night he said "I don't know Him" - would represent God grace and love, the Good of second, thirds, and 500 hundredth chances, as Peter would be restored and become a pillar in the early church.

And there are some trophies that only stayed in Satan's trophy room for 3 days:

- The whip that was used to strike Our Lord 40 times,
- the bag that was put over His head to buffet Him,
- the robe the soldiers cast lots for,
- the reed they mockingly made Him carry,
- the crown of thorns crushed into His head,
- the sign that read "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews",
- the nails that pierced His hands and feet,
- and the cross used to crucify Him.

What looked like victory for Satan, "the Messiah silenced, crucified on a rugged cross on some hill in Palestine", became Satan's ultimate defeat. It became God's greatest victory. For by way of the cross, sinful man may come before the Holy God, received and accepted into His arms of love.

Christian it is only a trophy to Satan if it is a defeat. A defeat is where you don't get up, and where you quit and give up. Christian use your past failures as a place to claim a victory, a place where you got up and went on to do great and mighty things for the Lord

Christian, if Satan has your name on a trophy in his trophy room, then today you go get it back.

- Do not let the past failures keep you down. Today Church lets begin to write a new testimony. A testimony of how we took our lowest moment or our worse defeat and let God turn it into our greatest comeback. A testimony of A Of a new Christ Centered marriage
- Of sexual purity,
- Of drug and alcohol freedom
- Of an illness that brought people to Christ
- Of a job loss that drew you closer to Christ and His power
- Of ayou fill in the blank_____

Whatever it is, let it not take you to defeat and depression, but to joy and victory as God turns the table on Satan. And does a great work in your life.

ON this Day

Like Joshua (after 400 years of slavery), like Gideon (after 7 years of oppression), may we hold the trophy high – On this Day, On this Day, I was the victor, and I was the overcomer, through Christ Jesus.

Same Power Available to You Today

Christian believe this, receive this, but the same power that God gave Gideon for victory, He gives to you today. We are told that the same power that rose Jesus from the grave, is available to us today. Christian you can have victory today, because you have the power to have it. So boldly come to the throne of grace and lay out to God what Midianites are outnumbering you and ask Him to come fight for you.

Ephesians 1:19–21 (NKJV) ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 8

Judges 8:1-21

Together 2016 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. on July 16, 2016.

WASHINGTON – Speaking to thousands of Christians gathered on the National Mall Saturday, Christian football star Tim Tebow said Christians can change their communities and neighborhoods simply by loving "every person they come in contact with" and by loving Jesus Christ.

Tebow, a college football analyst, missionary and Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback at the University of Florida, was invited to speak at the Together 2016 gathering organized by Pulse and its founder Nick Hall, who were expecting as many as 1 million people to attend.

Tebow, who opened a hospital in his native Philippines to serve the orthopedic needs of children not fortunate enough to afford treatments and simple procedures, challenged the thousands in attendance to show love to others that Jesus has shown to them.

Tebow recalled his junior year in college when University of Florida head coach Urban Meyer challenged his team to "finish strong." After Tebow led the Gators to a victory in the 2007 BCS National Championship Game, he recalled Meyer coming up to him after the game and telling him that he loved him and that he was proud of him for finishing strong.

"That night, after all the celebrations and everything, I was sitting in my hotel room thinking about everything that had transpired in my life. ... That is really where I came up with my ultimate goal of what I want my life to be and what I want my life to represent," Tebow explained.

"I thought how cool would it be for one day when I am standing before my Heavenly Father — who has given us a task, He has given us a command, He has asked us to do something — how cool would it be when I leave this Earth and I am standing before the God that created every single one of us, for Him to pull up His headsets that run this world and walk up to me with His arms open wide and say, 'Timmy, I just want you to know I love you, I am proud of you, you finished strong.'"

"The reason I tell that is because we have been given a command, we have been asked to do something," he continued. "You know what? You can hear a lot of people give dissertations on this and this and this. But I will tell you what, for me, I will break it down into two things — loving Jesus and loving people."

Tebow then issued a challenge to those in attendance who don't know Jesus and the sacrifice He made on the cross to get to know Christ and to know that Christ seeks a personal relationship with them.

"He loves you so much that He died for you. If you were the only person on this Earth, He would have died for just you," Tebow stressed. "That is how much He loves you."

But for those in attendance who already know Jesus and have accepted Him as their savior, Tebow challenged them to share the love of Christ with others in their lives.

"I am going to challenge you to love every single person in your life. I am going to challenge you to love your husband, your wife, to love your kids, to love your families, to love your communities, to love your neighbors, to love every single person you come in contact with," he said. "So many times, we can get confused — 'what do I do and how do I do it?' I'll tell you what. Let's break it down and make it real simple. When we love Jesus and we love people, we are going to make a difference and make an impact."

"If this body of people right here decides that we are going to take on that challenge to love people and love Jesus with everything that we have, we can change our communities, we can change our neighborhoods, we can change the Kingdom of God," Tebow concluded.

Be Watchful after Victory

Be careful where you travel for business or vacation. You might pick a place that's dangerous.

According to an article in the June 25, 1993 issue of Pulse, there are fifty-six nations that have serious problems with land mines. Angola has 20 million mines waiting to maim or kill, Afghanistan 10 million, and Cambodia 4 1/2 million; and the expense of removing them is more than these nations can handle. The wars may be over, but the dangers haven't vanished.

The saintly Scottish Presbyterian pastor Andrew Bonar wasn't thinking particularly about land mines when he said it, but what he said is good counsel for all of us: "Let us be as watchful after the victory as before the battle." That was the counsel Gideon needed after he'd routed the Midianites, because his problems still weren't over. He discovered some "mines" that were ready to explode.

Thus far in our study of Gideon's life, we've seen his responses to the Lord's call to defeat the enemy. At first Gideon was full of questions and doubts; but then he grew in his faith, believed God's promises, and led his army

to victory. In Judges 8, the account focuses on Gideon's responses to various people after he had won the battle; and it tells us how he handled some difficult situations.

[Wiersbe, W. W. \(1994\). Be available \(pp. 68–69\). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.](#)

Judges 8:1 Now the men of Ephraim said to him, “Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?” And they reprimanded him sharply.

Why didn't Call Us

These guys come after the battle, after the routing, after the easy victory because the Lord delivered the Midianites. They come and they give Gideon the business, rebuking him for not calling them to be in the beginning of the battle. Now, we don't really know would they have come if Gideon would have called them? If they came would they have left because they were fearful like the 32,000 that originally came and 22,000 left because they were fearful? We don't know. We know it's always easier to come and want to be part of something after it's all over and it's clearly determined what the outcome will look like. These guys come, they give Gideon the business for so-called not calling them in the beginning of the fight.

Living in Caves

You know? I think a takeaway here for us is I think everybody knew the battle was on. I think everybody knew the battle was coming. Everybody knew that the Midianites came down every year at this time to destroy the harvest. Everybody knew that and everybody went into hiding. We've studied that from the beginning of chapter six when Israel up in the mountains and caves, and if they couldn't find caves they were digging holes and they were placing their whole families in these dirt holes because of the fear of the Midianites who would come every year at harvest time and destroy the harvest, destroy any livestock they found wandering in the land, and then anybody who would oppose them obviously would be killed. We see that because of what will be spoken in here later in chapter eight. That they killed Gideon's brothers.

They didn't ask to Join Fight / How do I Get Involved

These men didn't come and ask to be part of the fight, that's what we can clearly see and know. Where they waiting for the invitation? To which I would say, "Really? Do you really need an invitation to join the battle and fight for freedom? Do you really need that?" What's the takeaway for us? I think so often times people in the churches will say, "I didn't know. I didn't know that was going on. I didn't know I could get involved in that." Many times people come and they'll say, "Hey. How do I get involved in something?" To which I always reply, "You just did by asking." I have found in the ministry over these years that asking people to take up a ministry is practically one of the worst ideas that I ever had and will have because many times people do it because they feel obligated because we have asked. Many times people do it and they have no heart for that ministry, many times we will do it and they will find themselves frustrated because it truly wasn't their gifting. We try very, very selectively to never ask people to do something unless we know it's something that they would want to do, it's something that they've indicated that they want to do.

We Leave it Up to You

For you, we leave it up to you to say, "I want to be involved. I want to do something for the Lord. How do I teach Sunday school? How do I get on the cleaning ministry? How do I get opportunities for evangelism? How do I get opportunities to be on the barbecue cookout team? How do I get opportunities, and you fill in the blank?" What we do is we leave it up to the individual to ask. The way I see the picture here they came, they gave Gideon the business, but what they didn't do was they didn't ask, "Hey Gideon. Can we join the fight?" I believe they knew that the fight was on because this was an annual event and everybody knew the Midianites were coming. Then everybody would have been talking, "Hey. Have you heard? They're gathering up a crew to go fight the Midianites. First time in seven years people are gathering to fight." They would have known. If they really wanted to get involved all they would of had to do was ask.

Prayer (God's Sovereignty vs Man Free Will) / Intercession Prayer

Another point regarding this matter of how do I get involved, a most often asked question and one of a great theological struggles is Gods sovereignty and mans free will. We see them all through the scriptures, we see them

coexisting together where man exercises free will but finds out that it was God's sovereign will all along. We see God's sovereign will moving into the hearts of man and then becoming man's will. The greatest one is when we say prayer. Why would prayer matter? If God's sovereign and knows all things, if God wishes and desire to work and do a thing why does he call us into prayer if he already has desired in purpose of what he wants to do in that situation? To which I say God calls you into intercession prayer so that you may catch his heart. God calls you into intercession prayer so you may capture his heart, his heart for what he wants to do, his heart for wanting to change that situation. What he's doing in inner session prayer is he's partnering with you and bringing you into partnering with him because when you capture his heart you can't sit by and watch idly by.

See, when you enter into intercession prayer God starts to move in your heart. God starts putting that burden that's on his heart onto your heart. If you don't pray it's rare that you're going to catch some type of vision from God. If you don't pray rarely are you going to catch what the burden of the Lord is. How many times what a great prayer is, "Oh, God, break our hearts of the things that break yours." You know what? That has to begin in prayer. When we come away and be still and know that he's God and we spend time with him quietly before him. We start asking him, he starts speaking to us, and then he'll show us something. Our heart will become so moved that we can't just sit by and watch, we have to engage in whatever that things is.

Jesus – Heart of Compassion

I'm reminded of Jesus and the feeding of the 5,000. He comes and he sees the 5,000 that's just men only, women and children would be there. It says that he saw them as sheep as without a shepherd. It says that he had compassion. What does Jesus do? He feeds them, he feeds them the word of God and he feeds them the bread. Again, a picture of the word of God. The bread of Jesus who came down from heaven. The point that I make about that specifically is "Compassion" is seeing something and being moved into action. Compassion just doesn't see something and go, "Oh. That's too bad." God compassion moves a person into action. It says, "I can't just sit here and watch this. I can't just walk by and go isn't that a shame? I have to get engaged."

Mark 6:34 (NKJV) ³⁴ And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.

Prayer moves to Action

When you find yourself praying for the family whose husband just deployed for one year, and as you pray for that family it will be impossible for you to not be moved with compassion and give the wife a call and say, "What do you need? Hey, can I bring a dinner over for you? Do you have time to have a coffee together? I just want to spend time with you, I want to encourage you, and I want to love on you because I know how hard it must be to have your husband away for a year and you are by yourself raising your children, all six of them." When you pray for a nation in the state that it's in, God will put the burden upon your heart that's on his. Oh, that the whole would change. Oh, that the people would come back to me.

Prayerless – Could Care Less

Prayerlessness creates carelessness for a person could care less because they haven't been touched by the heart of God to be moved with compassion.

That's Why God calls you To Prayer

A burden will be on your heart, and that burden will move you into some type of action whether that's evangelism, whether that's standing up in your class, that's standing up in your school, that's standing up in your workplace and taking a stand and say, "No. Sir. I believe the word of God and I stand with the word of God, whatever that might be." That's why God calls you, calls me into prayer because prayer brings us to a place that we catch and capture the heart of God and we will be moved into the action towards whatever that thing is. You pray and then if God moves in your heart on something and you say, "How do I?" You come, you ask, and we will do everything within our possibility to align your gifts and calling with opportunities and openings.

Judges 8:2 So he said to them, “What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?”

Judges 8:3 God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you?” Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.

Gideon was Reprimanded

So Gideon risks life and limb. We will see later in the chapter his son is with him (not sure if he was one of the 300 or he came after). Gideon would be a marked man by the Midianites and hunted down and killed for revolting if this revolt would have failed. Gideon even had food we read in chapter 6 because he was threshing it in the winepress, and had food enough to sacrifice to the Lord, and thus he was doing ok compared to others. Gideon risked it all, took leaps of faith, went to war with torches and trumpets, and God gave him a great victory..... And now here comes some guys who themselves for 7 years were hiding in caves, got to come and be part of the mop-up, reprimanding and complain, and correct this great act of faith, this great act of courage..... After the battle is over and the threat retired.

His Reply

Gideon's response about gleaning grapes over vintage is him saying yes "I" of Abiezer (name of his tribe) got a harvest (vintage), but you guys of Ephraim got the choices grapes out of the harvest, as you got to kill the kings who were the leaders of though who have harassed us and oppressed us, and killed us over these last 7 years. You guys are awesome.

Soft Answer

Proverbs 15 says a soft answer turns away wrath. How soft are your answers Christian? Christian husband, how soft is your answer to your wife? And wives how soft is your answer to your husband? How soft is your answer in the workplace, how soft is your answers to your coworkers?

Proverbs 15:1 (NKJV) ¹ A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

He who can Guard Tongue – has Wisdom of the Lord

He who can guard his tongue has the wisdom of the Lord.

Proverbs 31:26 (NKJV) ²⁶ She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness.

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV) ²¹ Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

Is Every Word Anointed?

Is every word you speak anointed of God? That you THINK before you speak?

Before you speak ... Think!

- T – is it true?
- H – is it helpful?
- I – is it inspired
- N – is it necessary?
- K – is it kind?

Judges 8:4 When Gideon came to the Jordan, he and the three hundred men who were with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit.

Life Verse

Oh verse four - May that be a life verse for all of us!

I Just Want Rest

How many times I say I just want to rest and I just recently said Lord I'm tired I just want to rest I don't want to quit the ministry I don't want to depart from the ministry I just want a rest from the constant grind, the continual warfare that comes with this..... to which the Lord spoke so clearly to me in a loving way, but in the way of a

commander in chief, he says to me there is no rest, you will have no rest because there is no rest to be had in this battle that you are engaged in. Christian the earth is a battleground not a playground.

DL Moody

DL Moody says I grow weary in the ministry but I do not grow weary of the ministry. He had come home from preaching 3 sermons on a Sunday morning, he came into the house and plopped down on the sofa and his wife looked at him and said wow you look tired, very tired, you look really bad. To which he replied: I grow weary in the ministry but I do not grow weary of the ministry

Yoke Easy – Burden Light

When I am tired regarding the things of the ministry and the Lord I immediately know that it's because I'm not where I'm supposed to be, doing what I'm supposed to be doing, and every time it has nothing to do with the ministry but everything to do with the distractions and cares of the world. I feel it is something that is up to me, something I have to handle and manage rather than casting all things on to the Lord who says "my yoke is easy and my burden is light", "cast all you cares upon Me for I care for you". AKA – give it to me and let me handle this. I overthrew the 135,000 Midianites with Gideon and 300, can I not take care of this for you?

Matthew 11:29–30 (NKJV) ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

1 Peter 5:6–7 (NKJV) ⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

If Think You are Sacrificing

If you ever think you are making a big sacrifice for the Lord, then you need to step back and reevaluate what you are doing, and in what manner of spirit you are doing it in. Notice Romans 12 doesn't say reasonable sacrifice but reasonable service. Our lives are living sacrifices to Him, but what we do is simply reasonable service, a natural response to His goodness and His sacrifice for us.

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Don't Grow Tired of Doing Good

Don't Grow Tired Christian of doing good.

Galatians 6:7–10 (NKJV) ⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

What Great Examples

You know we are just reading stories, so we think, , but how great and true Romans 15:4 is, as it tells us they written for our example. Just look at just these two points of these four verses that if we apply them to our lives for how greatly impacted our lives will be. I love this Word, thank you Jesus for giving me this Bible, your word, your heart, and your guidance for me on how to live a victorious Christian life in this world.

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Psalms 119:105 (NKJV) ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

SPECS

We must always be asking the question as we read, what does this mean, and what does it mean to me, how do I apply it to my life.

While working at the Space Center several years ago, I was a rocket mechanic working on the Atlas Centaur Rocket carry satellites into space. This rocket was approximately 20 stories tall, had 100,000 pounds of rocket fuel, the engines produced 500,000 pounds of thrust, and would travel at mach 25 (which is roughly 18,000mph), to get to

that speed we would have to fly around the earth and use the earth's rotation to slingshot the rocket into space, 23,000 miles above the earth in what is called geosynchronous orbit. The whole flight time was 23 minutes.

The rocket cost 100 million dollars, and the satellite cost 150 million dollars. So each launch was worth a quarter of a billion dollars. Once that rocket lifted off, there was no getting it back. The mission was either 100 percent success or 100 percent failure, basically it was all or nothing.

To give ourselves every chance for a successful mission, we did extensive testing on the launch pad for 3 months prior to the flight. We had a Test Manual and every test was pass or fail based on the "specifications" – "SPECS" as we called them. If a part was outside the "SPECS" then it was replaced at whatever the cost. If the SPEC said 100 or less, and the test results said 100.1, then it failed. The SPECS were our guidelines for mission success.

In God's economy, 250 million dollars is chump change compared to one day in the life of one of His children's, after all it was for us that He endured the Cross. And as I am studying the Word (The Life Manual for mission success), I have a set of SPECS I am constantly looking for as I read. SPECS, S..P...E..C..S;

S – Sins to Forsake -- Do not be deceived, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers..... will not inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

P – Promises to Believe – God's promises gets me through the hard times. (For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

E – Examples to Follow -- And Jesus was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. (Mark 6:34)

C – Commandments to Obey -- Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

S – Stumbling Blocks to Avoid – And Lot pitched his tent towards Sodom (Genesis 13:12)

Judges 8:5 Then he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian."

Judges 8:6 And the leaders of Succoth said, "Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?"

Judges 8:7 So Gideon said, "For this cause, when the LORD has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers!"

Judges 8:8 Then he went up from there to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way. And the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered.

Judges 8:9 So he also spoke to the men of Penuel, saying, "When I come back in peace, I will tear down this tower!"

Judges 8:10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen.

Judges 8:11 Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and he attacked the army while the camp felt secure.

Judges 8:12 When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them; and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.

Judges 8:13 Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle, from the Ascent of Heres.

Judges 8:14 And he caught a young man of the men of Succoth and interrogated him; and he wrote down for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men.

Judges 8:15 Then he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you ridiculed me, saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your weary men?' "

Judges 8:16 And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth.

Judges 8:17 Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

Succoth

Succoth was allotted to the tribe of Gad (Josh. 13:27). Gideon asked the people of Succoth (and Penuel) to provide food for his army while he was pursuing the Midianites. Gideon later punished them for their refusal to grant this request (Judg. 8:5–17). Penuel is located very close to Succoth, and most likely was land that was given to the tribe of Gad

Overview

Gideon and his men were pursuing two of the Midianite kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, knowing that if they captured and killed them, the enemy's power would be crippled and eventually broken. The army crossed over the Jordan to Succoth in Gad, hoping to find some nourishment; but the men of Succoth wouldn't help their own brothers. The two and a half tribes that occupied the land east of the Jordan didn't feel as close to the other tribes as they should have, and Gad had sent no soldiers to help either Deborah and Barak (5:17) or Gideon. While others were risking their lives, the people of Gad were doing nothing. The men of Succoth didn't think feeding a hungry brother was an opportunity to show love but was a risk they didn't want to take, and they were rather impudent in the way they spoke to Gideon. Since Gideon received the same response from the men at Peniel (Penuel), he warned both cities that he would return and discipline them.

Gideon comes back with 2 kings in Tow

God gave Gideon and his men victory over the fleeing Midianite hosts and enabled him to capture the two enemy kings. Triumphantly he retraced his steps and kept his promise to the men of Succoth and Peniel. Providentially, he found a young man who was able to give him the names of the seventy-seven leaders in Succoth who had refused to help him and his army. He showed them the two kings whom the elders had said Gideon would never capture, and then he chastised them, apparently by beating them with thorny branches. He then went to Peniel and wrecked their tower, killing the men who had opposed him.

Notice 2 Things

I want you to notice two things here about this passage:

1. Notice the refusal to help God's people is a serious offense especially when they're at war with the enemy. We are told in scripture to help God's people. God is serious about this, and we should be too.
2. And the reason they refuse is because they didn't believe that God could deliver a victory. They are hedging their bet with the world, rather than with God, and that is an insult to God.

James 2:14–17 (NKJV) ¹⁴ What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Matthew 25:34–36 (NKJV) ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

Luke 3:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ So the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?" ¹¹ He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise."

1 John 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

1 John 3:18–19 (NKJV) ¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. ¹⁹ And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

James 4:4 (NKJV) ⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Judges 8:18 And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, “What kind of men were they whom you killed at Tabor?” So they answered, “As you are, so were they; each one resembled the son of a king.”

Judges 8:19 Then he said, “They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the LORD lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you.”

Judges 8:20 And he said to Jether his firstborn, “Rise, kill them!” But the youth would not draw his sword; for he was afraid, because he was still a youth.

Judges 8:21 So Zebah and Zalmunna said, “Rise yourself, and kill us; for as a man is, so is his strength.” So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments that were on their camels’ necks.

Crescent Moon – Islam

Verse 21 the crescent ornament, that's the beginning of the sign for Islam. We can see it goes all the way back to, this was probably written about 1250 BC, Islam began with Mohammad around 600AD, so the crescent moon about 2000 years before Islam. They had the crescent moon because they worshipped the moon, and that is part of the foundations of Islam.

Flattery – Good to Taste but Bad to Swallow

Verse 18 - The two kings were shrewd in the way they answered Gideon, flattering him by comparing him and his brothers to princes. Someone has said that flattery is a good thing to taste but a bad thing to swallow, and Gideon didn't swallow it! How could he spare these two evil men who had taken food from the mouths of Jewish women and children and had brutally killed Jewish men?

How Soldier Died – Matter of Honor

In those days, how a soldier died was important to his reputation. Abimelech didn't want to die at the hand of a woman (9:53–54), and King Saul didn't want to fall into the hands of the Philistines (1 Sam. 31:1–6). For a child to kill a king would be the ultimate in humiliation thus Gideon told his young son Jether to execute the two criminals. By doing so, Jether would not only uphold the law of the land and humiliate the two kings, but he would also bring honor to himself. For the rest of his life, he would be known as the boy who executed Zebah and Zalmunna.

Mosaic Law – Avenger of the Dead

According to Mosaic Law, the family was to avenge crimes like this by killing those responsible for the murder. There was no police system in the land, and each family was expected to track down and punish those who had murdered their relatives, provided the culprit was guilty (see Num. 35:9–34). In the case of Zebah and Zalmunna, the culprits were not only murderers but also enemies of Israel.

Numbers 35:16–19 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *But if he strikes him with an iron implement, so that he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.* ¹⁷ *And if he strikes him with a stone in the hand, by which one could die, and he does die, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.* ¹⁸ *Or if he strikes him with a wooden hand weapon, by which one could die, and he does die, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.* ¹⁹ *The avenger of blood himself shall put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death.*

Not a Lad – at Least 20

Now wipe away 14-year-old boy. He is old enough to carry a sword therefore he's old enough to fight that means he's at least 20 years old because that's only take a census for men who were of age to go to war.

Numbers 26:3–4 (NKJV) ³ *So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho, saying:* ⁴ *“Take a census of the people from twenty years old and above, just as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt.”*

The Avenger of Blood – was to be Nearest Kin

Now the “avenger of blood” was to be the nearest of kin. It is obvious that Gideon is nearer than his oldest son.

The Beginning of the Decline

Gideon gives the command for his youngest son to kill these 2 kings. I believe what we're seeing here is the beginning of the decline of Gideon. Oh, the man of faith. Yes, he's still in the hall of faith. He stepped out in faith, him and 300, and went against 135,000, but what we're seeing here will be the beginning of his decline, and we will pick this up in our next study, as we look at the decline become complete, so you don't want to miss that.

Setting Up Son's Future

Gideon, what he's setting up here I believe is he wants his son, his oldest son to get credit for killing these 2 kings. Gideon is setting up and establishing his lineage and his family for reverence and honor in Israel. If my son kills these 2 kings, then people will follow him and we'll see that in our next study, and that's why I apply this principle here with his older son, and him wanting him to kill these 2 kings.

Son Won't – Afraid / Penuel died in Collapse of Tower

Gideon says for his sons kill them, but he can't, because he's fearful. He's never killed anyone before. Well, guess who else has never killed anyone before? His father, Gideon. His dad hasn't killed anybody. He's led this great uprising, revolt, and complete victory against the Midianites, but he has never killed anyone himself. What has happened back at Penuel was that the people that were killed were people who were in the tower (that was their stronghold and place of protection – so they they thought), and obviously wouldn't come down to be corrected like Succoth leaders were, so the people died who were in the tower as it was torn down. But they died in the collapse, not with the sword.

POINT – Dad's You can't take Kids Further than You have Gone Yourself

Here is my point, and what I want to say to you dads, you'll never lead your children to a place than you yourself have been. His son couldn't do the act, because he never saw the example set by his father. These kings needed to be destroyed, or they will come back to this generation or the next generation, and destroy them, and put them under oppression. They must be destroyed completely, right here and right now, while opportunity avails itself. Gideon, as the leader should have been the one who set the example, but he didn't, and his son had no example to follow. Dads, are you setting the example? Are you showing your children by your action what needs to be dealt with decisively, even sometimes violently, if you will, in order to crush this thing? Do they see the example in your life on a daily basis, that when it's their turn, they have a visual example before them of what their father has done, and therefore, they know what they are to do? I pray that for every father in here today, that you'll take that to heart and you'll apply these things to your life personally.

Recap

- The Power of Intercession
- A Soft Answer turns away Wrath
- Christian don't Grow Weary of Doing Good
- God is serious about helping His People
- Dad – You can't take Your Children Further than you Have gone Yourself

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 8:22-35

Finishing the life of Gideon

So after 3 months of verse-by-verse on the life of Gideon we finish our study of his life today. The Midianites were oppressing Israel for 7 years. God found a man, his name was Gideon, who would be brave enough and bold enough, and have the faith enough to go fight the Midianites (all 135,000 of them) with torches and trumpets. God brought a great victory to Israel, Gideon given the opportunity to be an instrument in what God wanted to do. But sadly we are going to read of a decline, gradual, but in the end very complete. Yet we will read not of condemnation, nor of anger of the Lord, not of judgement from the Lord, just a sad ending of someone who started so strong, yet ends so poorly.

How do you want to Finish

How do you want to finish? How you respond that question today will determine your finish. Let me encourage you in this if you haven't been doing well, if you been off, His mercies are new every morning, great is His faithfulness, and He will see you through. But it starts with you today saying Lord, I don't just want to finish, I want to finish strong, help me Lord to finish strong.

Lamentations 3:22–24 (NKJV) ²² Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"

Judges 8:22 Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian."

People Missed It

The people missed it, that it was the Lord who delivered them, not Gideon. People have this tendency to look to what they can see, feel, and touch, and thus man so often looks to a man/woman they can look up to. There's a tendency in the heart of each of us to want to look to a man to give us direction. Why? Because it's easier to go to someone and say, "Tell me what I should do," rather than to seek the Lord and say, "Father, what is Your desire and intention for me in this matter?" How important it is that we learn to seek the Lord and to seek His face.

Where is the Worship / Worship Leads to Wisdom

But where is the worship, where is the praise, where is the give glory onto his name for the great victory! In Judges 5 after Deborah and Barack's victory look at the scene of praise. Do you know why we put such an emphasis of worship based prayer because we see lack of worship praise and thanksgiving leads to bad decisions and bad plans. But when we see it is our God who fights for us, it is our God who does the work for us, it is He who brings the victory, we will seek Him for our direction rather than try to figure it out in our own reasoning. We will have trust, we will have patience, and we will have peace, and we will seek Him and then wait for His leading.

Worship leads to Wisdom!

Judges 5:3–5 (NKJV) ³ "Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes! I, even I, will sing to the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel. ⁴ "LORD, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth trembled and the heavens poured, The clouds also poured water; ⁵ The mountains gushed before the LORD, This Sinai, before the LORD God of Israel.

Psalm 27:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!

Psalm 37:7 (NKJV) ⁷ Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

Psalm 138:2–3 (NKJV) ² I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name. ³ In the day when I cried out, You answered me, And made me bold with strength in my soul.

Worship – will Lead You to Finish Strong

Worship will lead you to finish strong.

Judges 8:23 But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you."

Great Answer – Every Great Leader will Point to Jesus

Great answer Gideon, great answer, "the Lord shall rule over you". Every great leader of God will know they are a lousy leader compared to Jesus Christ. Every great leader of God will then always quickly point people to Jesus, the greatest leader. Parents want to be great leaders, lead you kids to Jesus, teach them how to call upon Him, teach them how to seek Him for all their needs. In the ministry, don't block the person's view of Jesus. In the workplace, in the schoolyard, on the college campus, when you are recognized as a leader let them know it is because of your relationship with Him, and it is Him who leads you, and point all praise back to Him so they will want to know him the way you do.

Work – Stolen Presentation

I remember a time back at work I'd put together years of experience and a couple hundred hours of work to put a training package together, a slideshow presentation, and I had put it out there on the network folder that we used to store our data. I would continue to tweak it and polish it as time permitted in between my regular workload assignments. One day shortly after, the director called me, says, "Hey, can you go sit in on a meeting? One of your colleagues is giving a presentation. Sounds really interesting for us, something that we could really use. Go sit on it so you can tell me what it looks like," as he wouldn't be able to make it for various reasons.

I go to the presentation and the guy puts up there on the screen, and right off the bat I look and I go, "Wow, that cover sheet sure does look familiar. That was a very unique cover sheet, looks just like the one I had created," but it had his name on it, this presenter. Then he goes to page one, page two, page three, and every page I'm sitting there going, "This is my presentation." He literally, after he went through a hundred something slides, he literally had taken my presentation and the only thing that he changed in it was my name and put his name on it, to which I said nothing. I just left it, because I wasn't going to get all involved in the drama.

See, a funny thing happened in that his presentation there failed. He tried to present it and train it around the company, and it literally failed everywhere he went, because see he couldn't train it, he couldn't speak it, he couldn't connect it from his personal being to others because of one thing; he didn't create it. It wasn't part of him, it didn't come out from him.

Jesus created man – He knows how to lead Them

You know what? Nobody can lead human beings like Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is the one who created man. Out of his very being man became and man existed, and who better to lead than the one who created? Who better to take somebody to a greater place, a deeper place, a higher place, than the one who created them and knew everything about them? The greatest leader is Jesus Christ.

Genesis 2:7 (NKJV) ⁷ And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Get them into the hands of Jesus

Colossians says he holds all things together. That's you. Your name is written on the palm of his hand, and next to these nail-scarred hands are your name that the scriptures tell us. You're always on his heart, and every time he looks down at those hands he sees your name and the price that was paid for you, and he was glad to do it.

Colossians 1:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Isaiah 49:15–16 (NKJV) ¹⁵ "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you. ¹⁶ See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.

His Feet Leading them Where to Go

Romans 10 says, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the Gospel of peace," and Jesus had nail-scarred feet at that. Those are the beautiful feet. Those are the beautiful feet that are coming to you. Those are the beautiful feet that died for you, and as a leader this is who we, if you want to be a great leader, this is who you lead people to. You take them to Jesus. You let them see the nail-scarred hands, you let them see the beautiful

feet that were nail-scarred. Get them to Jesus and let His nailed scarred feet lead them to where he wants them to go.

Romans 10:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

The Pierced Side that Birthed Them

And let them see the pierced side where blood and water came out. Just as the picture in Genesis, out of the side of Adam God took a bone to form woman, out of the side of Jesus as blood was poured forth for you and for me, are we born and birthed.

John 19:34 (NKJV) ³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

Genesis 2:21–23 (NKJV) ²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. ²³ And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

Leaders Lead them to Jesus

As leaders, every great leader, this is who they lead people to, because if you can get them into the hands of Jesus Christ, whose hands are nail-scarred and whose hand that person's name is written, if you can get them to Jesus with those nail-scarred feet who's coming to them, for them, and walking with them and will lead them, you've taken them to the greatest place you could ever lead them to, because out of his side was birthed that creation, that beautiful person. That's what every great leader will do, we'll take them to Jesus.

Judges 8:24 Then Gideon said to them, "I would like to make a request of you, that each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder." For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.

Judges 8:25 So they answered, "We will gladly give them." And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder.

Judges 8:26 Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were around their camels' necks.

Judges 8:27 Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house.

The Hole in the Armor

A true leader turns them back to the Lord, and that is what Gideon said. But now we begin to see the beginning of the fall of this great man. Although he turned them back to the Lord to rule over them (as he says), notice that he doesn't say it was the Lord who delivered you. And now he will say, I have only this one request..... and so it begins, so sadly we will see it end.

I Don't want you to Forget Me

Gideon says, "I won't rule over you. The Lord will rule over you". We can see Gideon's also saying, "I don't want you to forget me in this great work, so I'm going to build this ephod within my home town. Everybody will remember what I did".

1700 Shekels

This is a lot of gold, just 1700 shekels is about 40 pounds of gold, not to mention the large ornaments that were on the camels and the pendants. The Ishmaelites wore gold earrings, and there were now 135,000 of them dead before them.

Description of Ephod and Breastplate

This ephod was worn by the High Priest in the Tabernacle, it was made of metal that went on the shoulders, and were imbedded with a large stone on each shoulder that were engraved with the name of the 12 tribes of Israel on it. The breastplate covered the chest, and had 12 stones on it and each stone had a name of a tribe of Israel on it. That was made of gold, and then it was gold chains held it on the shoulders, then it had gold chains hanging off the

bottom, and then what tied it all together to make it so it didn't move around and clank and slide up and down, it was all wrapped together by a sash that went around the waist. That was of fine linen. It was purple.

Exodus 28:5–30 (NKJV) ⁵ “They shall take the gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and the fine linen, ⁶ and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen, artistically worked. ⁷ It shall have two shoulder straps joined at its two edges, and so it shall be joined together. ⁸ And the intricately woven band of the ephod, which is on it, shall be of the same workmanship, *made of* gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen. ⁹ “Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: ¹⁰ six of their names on one stone and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth. ¹¹ With the work of an engraver in stone, *like* the engravings of a signet, you shall engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall set them in settings of gold. ¹² And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders as a memorial. ¹³ You shall also make settings of gold, ¹⁴ and you shall make two chains of pure gold like braided cords, and fasten the braided chains to the settings. ¹⁵ “You shall make the breastplate of judgment. Artistically woven according to the workmanship of the ephod you shall make it: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen, you shall make it. ¹⁶ It shall be doubled into a square: a span *shall be* its length, and a span *shall be* its width. ¹⁷ And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: *The first row shall be* a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; *this shall be* the first row; ¹⁸ the second row *shall be* a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; ¹⁹ the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; ²⁰ and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings. ²¹ And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes. ²² “You shall make chains for the breastplate at the end, like braided cords of pure gold. ²³ And you shall make two rings of gold for the breastplate, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. ²⁴ Then you shall put the two braided *chains* of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate; ²⁵ and the *other* two ends of the two braided *chains* you shall fasten to the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in the front. ²⁶ “You shall make two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which is on the inner side of the ephod. ²⁷ And two *other* rings of gold you shall make, and put them on the two shoulder straps, underneath the ephod toward its front, right at the seam above the intricately woven band of the ephod. ²⁸ They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, using a blue cord, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod. ²⁹ “So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy *place*, as a memorial before the LORD continually. ³⁰ And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the LORD. So Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.

The High made Intercession between God and the people

The high priest was the man who stood for the people in proclaim the will of God to them the high priest was the one who stood between the people and God and interceded on their behalf.

Gideon Set Up Ephod

So based on the weight of all this gold that was used to make this ephod, it doesn’t appear to be an ephod that he wore, but a very large one that he placed for all of Israel to see, so they won’t forget Gideon.

Gideon Wasted the Opportunity

Gideon did not reestablish the tabernacle and the priesthood. Gideon now had substituted himself into what should have been done down at the tabernacle and the priesthood. Gideon now has this great victory, this great success, this great power. The power, the spirit of God was put upon him. He had everything. He had the calling. He had the anointing. He had now the respect. He could have led the people back and said, "It's time to rebuild and set the tabernacle back up. It's time to get the Levites. It's time to start the sacrifices again. It's time to have the priesthood again". We hear nothing of that. Gideon wasted the unique position God had given him.

Ephod meant for High Priest / Priest for Tabernacle / Gideon Moved Center of Worship

The ephod was meant for the High Priest. The High Priest was meant for the Tabernacle. Both of those, at this time, was supposed to be in Shiloh. It'll be later that it will move to Jerusalem. We see Gideon. He's moving it to his hometown. Do You See It – Gideon just moved the center of worship for the nation not just to his hometown, but to him.

Joshua 18:1 (NKJV) ¹ *Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of meeting there. And the land was subdued before them.*

Jeremiah 7:12 (NKJV) ¹² “But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel.

Urim & Thummim

Do you know what was tucked into the High Priests garment as it was pieced together with the Ephod and Breastplate, it was the Urim and the Thummim. The High Priest would pull out one of those (probably stones)

from his pouch and it was to guide in the will of God to the question that was being asked. Here Gideon is making himself in a priest because that is what the ephod was all about. Now if you want to know the will of God you have to come to Gideon if you want to have intercession and reconciliation with God you're going to have to come to Gideon

It became a Snare / People give him Money

It says it became a snare. You know why it became a snare? Because now he has to put himself in the place of elevation before the eyes of the people. So people come to him instead of God. We know also that along with this power would come money as people would gladly pay him for his service to them, and Gideon will become rich in this system he has established.

Gideon Compromised the Word

Here we see he compromised on the word of God, way back it all started with the two kings that, as the kinsmen redeemer, which literally means next of kin, it was his job to be the avenger of the brothers that were killed by these kings. He tries to pass it off to his oldest son, who we can see all the way back then the compromise. "Oh, but if I have my oldest son, he'll be revered and revered throughout all the land, and I will establish him a kingdom forever and my son's sons." He started to compromise thinking that he had special privilege to change the word of God. That was the beginning of his compromise. Now we see it continuing on as he sees himself the right to move the center of worship from Shiloh to his hometown, and he is now the direct man to God before the people rather than the High Priest.

Gideon's Religion

Gideon, took God's religion (religion – Latin for re-linking), Gideon took the way to re-link to God, and adjusted it to meet his likening, to his lifestyle, to his comfort. How easy for each and every one of us to do that. How easy for the church to do that, and we see that today. Well I know God's Word says this, but I believe based on my circumstance, it doesn't mean that fully for me. Churches today doing the same,

Easy to Compromise – Don't think Prosperity means you Right

It's easy to compromise even when we are committed. Gideon was fully committed to the Lord, so too are we, but it's still easy to compromise if we don't stay diligent and on guard. Verse 28 the land was at peace and Christian be careful when we think peace and prosperity means that we are doing everything right. Maybe you hear it said we're having even said yourself well after all God is blessing my life materially financially relationally so I must be doing something right

Outward Appearances don't Confirm

Outward appearances can never confirm whether someone is being obedient or compromising the word of God. Gideon seems to be giving in verse 23 a statement of absolute commitment to the Lord but unfortunately we see that underneath of his heart that wasn't true

How do you want to Finish – All Depends on Obedience to the Word

So the question for you to have in your mind as we study thorough these last verses of Gideon's life..... how do you want to finish? It will all depend how you choose to obey the word of God in your life.

I Don't have Opinions – I have Doctrine and Theology

If you spend enough time with me here, and it won't be that much time, you'll hear me say we don't have to have an opinion on everything. It seems like that with Facebook and these social medias. Somebody writes one post and everybody has to give an opinion. Nobody thinks, "Is this truthful? Is it helpful? Is it inspired? Is it necessary? Is it kind?". They just think if I speak it, then it was inspired and anointed by God, rather than seeking, saying "Lord, is this what you want me to say?". The other thing you'll hear me say, and I say it often is, I don't have opinions. I have doctrine and theology. That is what I am led by. It's not what I feel. It's not what I think. It's not what I speculate on. I have doctrine and theology and that's what leads my life and leads the decisions I make, easy ones and hard ones. Things I don't want to do, and things I do want to do. But I always find that when I do God's word, even when I didn't want to do it, I still find blessing in it. I still find power in it.

In between black and White – is an Opinion

The Word of God is black and white. Do you know what you find in the middle of black and white? An opinion. People like to say it's a gray area. God's Word is black and white. Anything in the middle of that black and white is an opinion. Here we see Gideon compromising on the Word. It was black and white. It wasn't for him to give his oldest son the so called honor to kill these two kings. It wasn't up to him to build an ephod. That was for the high priest. That was to be made in a special way. The high priest was to be with the tabernacle, and the tabernacle wasn't to be in Ophrah. It was supposed to be in Shiloh.

1 Corinthians 4:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

The Midianites Robe

Verse 26. Gideon now has the robes of the Midianite kings, which I just say, what do you do with the robes of the Midianite kings? You're certainly not going to wear them around Israel. That's just going to look odd. That's going to look weird. It'd be like me wearing an African tribal outfit here in the states. People are like, "That doesn't fit. What's that all about?" What did he do with them? He used them to make the ephod. It says it right here. All these things were part of this ephod that he made.

Tear a Piece of World Off

That's what I see, here's what Gideon's doing with this robe of the Midian king. He's not going to wear them, but he's going to tear a piece of it off, the finest fabric, and he's going to use it to wrap around his waist (or large ornament he made) to hold this ephod that he's making all together and tied into one piece.

Churches and Individuals – Being Culturally relevant

You know, there's lots of churches and there's lots of Christians who are trying to tear a piece of the world off and make it work on their own Christian walk, tearing a piece of the culture, piece of the world, what's happening in the world, what the world likes, and they're trying to tie it in and make their Christianity culturally relevant and acceptable.

God doesn't need the World – He is Cross Generational

God doesn't need the world. He doesn't need any piece of the world to make himself cool, acceptable, or relevant to the generation. Jesus Christ is cross generational. He goes across every generation, regardless of age. He goes across every new fad or thing because of the cross. The cross speaks of his love. It speaks of his power. He doesn't need anyone to make it cool or acceptable or more palatable to the taste. When someone taste and see that the Lord is good, when someone gets a taste of his heart, of his love, when someone gets a taste of all that he is, we don't need anything else, for Jesus Christ is cross generational. Jesus' whole point of his price that he paid for salvation on the cross was not to clothe us with some old clothing made of the world. He takes those things off. He considers them grave clothes. He burns them. He robes us with righteousness. He puts on a white robe that represents that we're cleansed and we're forgiving of our sin, and that the old things have passed away, and behold all things have been made new. He doesn't put the world us, nor should we.

Individual Lives

You know in your individual life, I know this isn't popular to say, but I'm not here to be popular or culturally relevant or culturally sensitive. I've been accused of legalism more than once, and that was just this week. The cross is cross generational. It is the power unto salvation and the victorious Christian life.

- We don't need to dress like the world. Examine yourself. "Am I dressing like the way Peter calls, or am I dressing like the world to be relevant with the world?"
- How about the recreation life and leisure activity? Football Sundays, "Ain't got time for church. I've got season tickets."
- How about recreational drinking or even worse, just drunkenness? With the world, it's acceptable. "Go on. Have a few brews. Happy hour." It's how we stay culturally relevant. "Hey, maybe I'll even get to share the Gospel." You won't. You'll just be considered a drunken Bible thumper, even if you're not even drunk. You have a beer in your hand, and you start talking about Jesus, people think you're just being emotional.

They think you just got some liquid courage, and now you're going to talk about this. They're not going to be receptive to it.

- How about tearing off a piece of the world with the music? So many Christians tell me how they love certain musicians who literally blaspheme God and his ways with their song and their political stance.
- How about our language that we use? Do we speak like the world or do we speak like every word is anointed and came straight from the heart of God?
- How about in the workplace? Do we work like the workers, or do we work like those who are called to be above the work? Workforce and work is unto the Lord.

Churches Wanting to be Relevant

Oh, we see churches all the time wanting to be culturally relevant. Want to meet people where they're at, make it feel like a rock concert. Let people sit for a bunch of visits, and then somewhere along the line, we're going to tell them about Jesus. It doesn't work like that. Be careful. It didn't work that way for Gideon. We always say this. If Jesus is not enough, if his word is not enough, then nothing will ever be enough. We're just wasting our time here. Trying to mix the world and the spiritual thing, it's not prescribed by God. If you go back to the church that turned the world upside down, read the Book of Acts, that you're guide on how God wants the church to be built.

Book of Acts is the Model

We can see there was nothing culturally relevant about that church. They were driven out of the culture. They were driven out of their city. They were driven out of their old religion. They were driven so far that they were threatened with death. Many of them suffered death. You'll find no world mixed with the early church. When you get to the Book of Corinth, you'll start seeing the church that was corrupted because they were trying to be culturally sensitive. The Apostle Paul had to rebuke them greatly. That's a study in and of itself.

Acts 2:42-47 (NKJV) ⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. ⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

New Religions Don't work Well – Look at Life of Gideon

Be careful about tearing off a piece of the world and trying to mix it into your Christianity. You're literally making a new religion. You're defiling the pure religion of Jesus Christ. Be careful, because what we see, it sure didn't work out well for Gideon.

Judges 8:28 Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon.

Verse 4 – Before Verse 28

Verse 28. Before Verse 28 could happen, Verse 17 through 21 had to happen, and Verse 4 had to happen. Let that Verse 4 be a life verse. They were exhausted, but they kept pursuing. That's what we need to do.

Judges 8:4 (NKJV) ⁴ When Gideon came to the Jordan, he and the three hundred men who were with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit.

Don't let Enemy Regroup

Verse 28. What's the application that we see here? Don't ever give the enemy time to regroup. Finish him while you've got him.

Best Thing More War

The best thing that could ever happened to Gideon was more war he did great until peace came, and that's when he collapsed.

Look Out America

All this ease and abundance that Gideon had, that's what makes Sodom fall. Ezekiel tells us, "They had much abundance and ease". We can look and see that was a problem in Gideon's life and we can see the trend of the

United States of America. Too much abundance and ease. Too much time to say, "I think I can go and satisfy my flesh because I deserve it".

Ezekiel 16:49–50 (NKJV) ⁴⁹ Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. ⁵⁰ And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.

Judges 8:29 Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house.

Judges 8:30 Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives.

Multiply Wives – That is what Kings Did

It became a snare because even he bought into it, we can see. He started to elevate himself and he started to live like a king. He started multiplying wives, when it was clearly told in the Torah that kings were not to multiply wives when the day came that Israel would have a king. He compromised on the Word. Through his victory, abused it and gave himself special rights and not obeying the word. He put himself that he was a special exception to the Word. Though the Word said this, he felt he could make it say that in the special application. Just imagine if Gideon would have followed that passage out to not only not multiply wives, but to write the law down, imagine how greatly his life would have changed – good example for us too.

Deuteronomy 17:14–20 (NKJV) ¹⁴ "When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' ¹⁵ you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. ¹⁶ But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' ¹⁷ Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. ¹⁸ "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. ¹⁹ And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, ²⁰ that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

Judges 8:31 And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

Abimelech – Father is King

Gideon gets a concubine and as we'll see in the land of Canaan, the kings there, they had many wives and they had concubines. He's living like a king. Abimelech means "Father is King". Abimelech was the name (used as a title) for the kings in the land of Canaan. It was used just like the Egyptians used the title Pharaoh and the Romans used Caesar.

Had a Ceremony for Him

And the way the Hebrew is formed in this sentence for naming his son it lends itself to that he actually had a ceremony to do it so that everybody would know that he did it it came from him and he said this and is settled

Don't Need to be Going to Shechem

You have 70 sons, you don't need to be going to Shechem

Concubine – What Kings Did / Dad's Need to Invest in Kids

Why he's running off from his home town down to where this concubine is, just means he has way too much time on his hands. He has way too much abundance in his hand. He should have been home working. He should have been home tending to his children. But here he is, running off down to satisfy the pleasures of his flesh. Hey dads, can I say this to you? You need to be home. You need to be home with your family. You need to be home investing in your kids. I understand business. I've been a part of it. But you need to balance it and you need to decide it and you need to determine it. This is as much as I can give you. And I let them know in my work place. This is how much time away from the family I can give you. That's the agreement we have. I need to be home investing in my wife and investing in my children and investing in my spiritual walk.

Invested in Flesh - Rather than children

This relationship with this concubine will come back to haunt Israel, as we will read next chapter (Abimelech will kill the 70 sons of Gideon) in a grab for power. Gideon was investing in the flesh rather than investing in his kids, and that will always have consequences.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NKJV) ⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Control Flesh – or It will Control You

Control the flesh, or it will control you. Let me just speak this to anybody who's dating, anybody who's single, even to a married man. Marriage will not satisfy your lust problem. If you don't know how to rule over your body through the help and power of God's spirit, marriage will not satisfy your lust problem. What you have is you've never controlled the flesh. The flesh isn't subject to the spirit. The flesh is ruling you. You must learn to put the flesh in submission. You only do that daily by killing the flesh, and rising up the spirit of God that's within you. So many people think, "I've got this lust problem. I'll just get married, and then I won't have to worry about it." You will, because it's a sin that doesn't get satisfied with marriage. It's a sin that must be nailed to the cross like every other sin.

1 Corinthians 6:12 (NKJV) ¹² All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Judges 8:32 Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Judges 8:33 So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god.

Judges 8:34 Thus the children of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side;

Judges 8:35 nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.

Common Thread – Compromise the Word

One common thread of Gideon's decline and it is his will. It will be compromising the Word of God. We see a key after a great success and a great victory, we see a very direct continual, some what gradual but always continual decline happen to Gideon and it's because of his compromising the Word of God.

Be on Guard for Land mines

Could this apply to you, having a great victory? Be care, Christian. God writes these things we are told in Romans Chapter 15 Verse 4 for our instructions. As we said last week, the war's over in Afghanistan but there's 10 million land mines that are still in the land, buried, waiting to go off. The war's over in Cambodian Vietnam, but there's still 4.5 million land mines spread throughout the land. Be careful.

How do you want to Finish Christian

How do you finish strong, Christian? First of all, right now, today, purpose in your heart, I want to finish strong. I want to continually go on to greater things, and greater things in the Lord. You purpose that in your heart, and God will honor that. He will meet you and he'll speak to you.

Earth is Battleground not Playground

The Earth is a battle ground, it's not a playground. We are preparing for war, and the war is daily.

Lessons from Gideon's Compromise:

The Sword – Compromised Parental Example

Ephod – Compromised on the Pure Religion

Robe/Wives – Compromised on Cultural Influence

Concubine – Compromised on Investing in his Children

Response**Come to Throne of Grace**

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 9

Examples in Gideon

We have finished the life of Gideon (covering chapters 6-8). Gideon gets more verses than anyone else in the Book of Judges, even Samson (100 verses compared to 96). Obviously God wants to show us many things through Gideon's life, many examples to see, and applications to apply (Romans 15:4/1 Cor 10:11), so that we may live the victorious Christian life He desires for us to live, and to avoid the pitfalls the enemy places before us. For every New Testament principal, we find an Old Testament picture, and we find lots here with the life of Gideon.

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

1 Corinthians 10:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Israel Oppressed for 7 Years – Living in Dirt Holes

We have followed Gideon from hiding in the winepress in the shadows of the night, hiding from the Midianites who have oppressed the whole Nation of Israel now for 7 years. The oppression so great that we read the Israelites are living in caves and dirt holes up in the mountains and hills.

Sick and Tired / Cry Out to Jesus – He will Come

God's chosen people are living in dirt holes, fathers are moving their whole family from their homes in the Promised Land up into dirt holes in the mountains. Surely not the abundant life they were told they can have living in the Promised Land. Israel got sick and tired of being sick and tired, even though it took them 7 years to reach that point, but they cried out to God and heard them (and He always does), and God responded by raising up a man to deliver/rescue the people from their bondage and oppression. You sick and tired of being sick and tired, cry out to the Lord, He will hear you, and He will come and rescue you. He may use a person as His agent on earth to walk with you through it, but they will only be a minister that He will flow through to reach you, as it will be Him who is the one who rescues you. You need Him today (in your marriage, your children, something you are in bondage to) cry out to Him and He will come to you – today! I am reminded of the disciples who were caught in the midst of a storm at sea, it is dark, they were being tossed all around, the wind was wiping, they were full of fear, but Jesus was coming even before they cried out to Him, but when they did Jesus entered the boat, and the storm ceased. And then they worshipped him. Jesus will do the same for you today, whatever storm you are in, call out to Him, and He will come to you, and you will hear Him say, "Be of good cheer, It is I, don not be afraid.

Matthew 14:22–33 (NKJV) ²² Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. ²³ And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. ²⁴ But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. ²⁵ Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." ²⁸ And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." ²⁹ So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" ³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

Israel Cried Out – God Delivered Them

After 7 years Israel cried out, God delivers them, He uses Gideon to be the agent He used. We read the story of Gideon's 300 men, using only trumpets and torches, we read the Midianites were totally subdued and the land rested for 40 years.

But – Sadly Gideon Compromised

But sadly we read the story last week of Gideon compromising on the Word of God. We read how as directed by the Word of God, he being the next of kin was to avenge the death of the two kings that unlawfully killed his brothers; but Gideon tried to pass the responsibility off to his oldest son so his son would get the credit and thus

have a lifetime of honor before the people of Israel (known as the killer of evil kings). Then we read of him setting up the golden ephod in his hometown and the people came and worshipped it; essentially he moved the center of worship from where the Word said it was to be (Shiloh) to his hometown of Ophrah, it can be argued I just want to be closer to God, and we read that is not only became a snare to the Nation of Israel, but Gideon himself. And finally we read how Gideon took many wives, and had a concubine, and that too was a compromise of the Word of God as God had directed that men were not to do that. So 3 things

- Compromise of being Kinsman Redeemer to set up his sons future – but is just seemed to make sense in my mind.
- Compromise of moving center of worship to his hometown – but is just seemed to feel so right in my heart.
- Compromise with many wives and a concubine – but it just felt so right to my body.

And here we see the life of Gideon, isn't that far away from us now is it. I know this is what the Word says, but what I am doing just seems to make so much senses, even if it isn't in perfect agreement with the Word of God. But what I am doing just feels so right in my heart even though it isn't in perfect agreement with God's Word, but God knows my heart. But what I am doing with my body isn't in perfect agreement with God's Word, but it just feels so right to my body, God knows my special circumstance, and besides who am I really hurting. We can read the life of Gideon, and we can see how we are not that far apart from him.

Chapter 9 – About Gideon's Sons

Now in chapter 9 we will read the story of all that happened to Gideon's sons. All 71 of them. Two main characters emerge in the passage, and that is the son of his concubine (Abimelech) and his youngest son of the 70 (Jotham). We are going to read of family betrayal, a coup, then a civil war, then utter destruction.

First Time – Deleted all my Notes

I have taught over 1,000 Bible studies in my life. I start to study on Monday, and study the passage all week. I add notes to my MSWord file all week, and then on Saturday I try to make all those thoughts and note flow together as an integrated message. And for the first time, yesterday I took all my notes, probably 10 pages worth, and deleted them all. I had good exposition of all the things we could apply regarding family unity, the heartache of betrayal, the plots of the enemy, the schemes of man, but we are not going to go into those applications today, in fact we are mostly just going to read the passage.

Book of Judges – 21 Chapters (400 Years)

I want you to consider this, the history of the Book of Judges covers about 450 years of Israel's history. There's only 21 chapters written to cover this 450 year period, covering these 13 judges. God takes a whole chapter, one out of 21, that's almost 5%, to tell the story about this son Abimelech. Five percent for one man of the 450 year history. Now, you tell me how important this story is that God's about to tell us in today's passage. How important is it, and what does God want us to glean from it and to apply for our lives today?

This Chapter is Still About Gideon's Compromise – And the Result of It

See here is the point, this story isn't so much about Gideon's sons, but Gideon. This chapter is still about Gideon, all 57 verses (Gideon really gets 157 verses of this book); what we will read today (5% of the whole book) is about the consequences of Gideon's compromise of the Word of God had upon his children.

Dad's You Must Engage – Reap what Sow

Dads you must engage, mothers you must engage, our children will reap whatever we sow into them, and I am talking about the spiritual things.

Galatians 6:6–10 (NKJV) ⁶ Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. ⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Still Application for you if Not a Parent Today

But if you are not a parent, this word is still for you as someday you be, and when you are, what type of parent will you be? You can determine that today even if you aren't a parent, because today you are laying the foundation of you will be when you are a parent.

Verse 1,

Judges 9:1 Then Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, to his mother's brothers, and spoke with them and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying,

Son of Concubine

Jerubbaal being another name for Gideon, Abimelech was Gideon's son, the fruit of his relations with one of his concubines (8:30-31).

Judges 8:29–31 (NKJV) ²⁹ Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. ³⁰ Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives. ³¹ And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

Concubine – Not Good Enough to Marry

Here's Gideon, he has this concubine, which would not be equivalent to a wife. She'd be second to a wife, but she would qualify for his physical pleasures. He would have his relationships with her physically, but not to the point that she was equal with the wives that he had, and therefore neither would his children with that concubine be equal to the other children. A summation of that is, Gideon has this gal in Shechem that basically, "You're good enough for me to have a physical relationship with, but you're not good enough for me to marry. You don't meet the family standards or what the others would think, therefore you're not good enough to be my wife, but you're good enough to have a relationship with physically."

I say to you young girls here today, you meet some man who ... He thinks you're good enough to have a physical relationship with, but not to the point that he's willing to put a ring on your finger FIRST and say "I do", then that's how he's treating you, good enough for physical but not good enough to commit my life to, to honor and to cherish until death do us part. Run from him. Separate and distance yourself from him, because if he doesn't value you enough that he thinks you're marriage material and he's willing to make a covenant commitment to you and to God, then get away from him, because he'll never be committed to you because he's proven it right now that how he values you ... He's treating you as secondary, not good enough to marry, but good enough that he wants to have a relationship physically right now.

Judges 9:2 "Please speak in the hearing of all the men of Shechem: 'Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal reign over you, or that one reign over you?' Remember that I am your own flesh and bone."

Judges 9:3 And his mother's brothers spoke all these words concerning him in the hearing of all the men of Shechem; and their heart was inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother."

Judges 9:4 So they gave him seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless men; and they followed him.

Temple of Baal up and Running / Lord of Covenant

Well the Temple of Baal is up and running in full strength, and that didn't take long after Gideon's death to get that up and running. Baal-Berith literally means, lord of the covenant. Israel has made a covenant with Baal, and has rejected the covenant that God offers to them. Temple funded by prostitution history tells us.

Judges 8:33–34 (NKJV) ³³ So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god. ³⁴ Thus the children of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side;

Joshua 24:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; ¹⁷ for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. ¹⁸ And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God."

Man Will Serve Something

We see Israel establishing Baal and making a covenant with him to be their king, and here is the truest fact of human nature as God has designed us: That is, if you don't make the one true God, Jesus Christ, your God, something will take that place and fill that place of being a god in your life. We are designed by him to seek him, to seek a higher being other than ourselves, to live in a place higher than this earth, and he designed us like that.

Revelation 4:11 says, "For his good pleasure we were created." We were created to have a relationship with him, a personal relationship, and if we reject that relationship with him, something else will become God, because we are designed to be seeking after something greater than ourselves. You may feel that void in your life, you may know that something's missing, and what that "missing" is, is God has created in every man a God-shaped hole, a vacuum in their life that only he can fill. People who don't want to be filled by him because they want to pursue things that are more appealing to them and fit their idea of who God should be, they'll find a god, and that thing will be lesser, subservient to the one true God, but man will accept and make that their god, and then they will serve that god. Every man, woman, child has been created with that God-shaped hole in their heart to want to seek him and find him, but if they don't, then they'll fill it with whatever they can find, and here's what we see in the story of the Israelites.

Revelation 4:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

Today – You Can Ask Him into Your Heart

How do you do that you may ask? By simply asking Him to forgive your sins, and to come and be God of your life.

- Recognize – your sins separates you from Him a holy God
- Repent – means to turn and follow, and you turn away from your life, and start to follow Him, and you will know how to do that through His Word and the leading of His Holy Spirit that He will give you.
- Receive – and simply ask Him to come into your life and take control.

And if after service you want someone to pray with you, to help you have this conversation with God, come up front and one of the elders will be here for you.

Romans 3:23 (NKJV) ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

John 10:27–28 (NKJV) ²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

Romans 10:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

Don't Wait – For Something Else will Fill It

And don't wait, for something will fill that hole, that void; the Scriptures plead with you that today is the day.

2 Corinthians 6:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Judges 9:5 Then he went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his brothers, the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, on one stone. But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, because he hid himself.

Judges 9:6 And all the men of Shechem gathered together, all of Beth Millo, and they went and made Abimelech king beside the terebinth tree at the pillar that was in Shechem.

Action Complete

Abimelech had the ruffians he hired place the heads of his brothers on a single stone and lop them off.

Now Jotham – Prophecies

Now the youngest son Jotham runs for his life, then climbs a mountain that creates a natural amphitheater that allows the voice to travel for several hundred yards. About eight hundred feet in elevation, Mount Gerizim was the mountain on which the people of Israel spoke blessing when they entered the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 27:12). Mount Gerizim overlooks the city of Shechem. Jotham made his way up to the top of that mountain.

Judges 9:7 Now when they told Jotham, he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice and cried out. And he said to them: “Listen to me, you men of Shechem, That God may listen to you!

Judges 9:8 “The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them. And they said to the olive tree, ‘Reign over us!’

Judges 9:9 But the olive tree said to them, ‘Should I cease giving my oil, With which they honor God and men, And go to sway over trees?’

Judges 9:10 “Then the trees said to the fig tree, ‘You come and reign over us!’

Judges 9:11 But the fig tree said to them, ‘Should I cease my sweetness and my good fruit, And go to sway over trees?’

Judges 9:12 “Then the trees said to the vine, ‘You come and reign over us!’

Judges 9:13 But the vine said to them, ‘Should I cease my new wine, Which cheers both God and men, And go to sway over trees?’

Judges 9:14 “Then all the trees said to the bramble, ‘You come and reign over us!’

Bramble is Worthless – Only good for Fire / Abimelech is the Bramble

The bramble is a thorn bush, the most worthless plant in the Middle East. It produces no fruit and is too low to the ground to produce any shade. Its wood cannot be used for any kind of construction because it splits too easily. All it can do is burn.

Judges 9:15 And the bramble said to the trees, ‘If in truth you anoint me as king over you, Then come and take shelter in my shade; But if not, let fire come out of the bramble And devour the cedars of Lebanon!’

Judges 9:16 “Now therefore, if you have acted in truth and sincerity in making Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done to him as he deserves—

Judges 9:17 for my father fought for you, risked his life, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian;

Judges 9:18 but you have risen up against my father’s house this day, and killed his seventy sons on one stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his female servant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother—

Judges 9:19 if then you have acted in truth and sincerity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you.

Judges 9:20 But if not, let fire come from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and Beth Millo; and let fire come from the men of Shechem and from Beth Millo and devour Abimelech!”

Judges 9:21 And Jotham ran away and fled; and he went to Beer and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

Fruitful Trees Wouldn’t do this / Only Bramble

Jotham’s parable is simply saying, a fruitful tree would never do this. A fruitful and true leader would never kill 70 of his fellow countryman in order to be ruler. The parable warns, if you did this in the flesh, then you will be burned, for as Abimelech has done to the 70 sons of Gideon, eventually he will do to you. But also, what was sown in the flesh will reap in the flesh, and eventually you will both turn on each other and burn each other up, because what has been done has been totally done in the flesh.

The Works of the Flesh will always Burn you Up / Contrast Flesh vs Spirit / Reaping what Sow

Galatians 5 lists the works of the flesh. It's not an exhaustive list, but it's a pretty complete list. Compare that to the works of the Spirit, and you see quite the contrast. Reminder, the context of Galatians 5 flows right into Galatians 6, where God says whatever a man sows, that shall he reap.

Galatians 5:19–21 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:22–23 (NKJV) ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Galatians 6:7–10 (NKJV) ⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Judges 9:22 After Abimelech had reigned over Israel three years,

Judges 9:23 God sent a spirit of ill will between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech,

Judges 9:24 that the crime done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be settled and their blood be laid on Abimelech their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem, who aided him in the killing of his brothers.

God Not Allow Sin to Go Unpunished

So we see in verse 24, that God will not allow sin to go unpunished.

God Sent Spirit of Ill Will

Notice that it was God who sent a spirit of ill will between Abimelech and the men of Shechem. We see the same thing in 1 Samuel 11:6, when God sent a spirit of jealousy upon Saul, and again in Isaiah 19:14, when God sent a spirit of perverseness upon the people. Mark it well: Demons, evil spirits, even Satan himself cannot function outside of God's permissive will (Job 1). But why would God want tools like demons or Satan? In order to provide mankind an alternative. You see, man must have an alternative in order for him to choose a relationship with God. "I will give mankind a choice," says God. "He can either choose Satan and his hellish henchmen, or he can walk with Me. The choice is that simple." Demons and Satan himself are actually tools of the Lord and cannot move apart from His permission. Therefore, when there is a spirit of ill will, a spirit of jealousy, a spirit of perverseness moving in people, my attitude towards them must not be one of condemnation. Rather, my attitude must be one of compassion. Instead of looking at people as vicious, I must look at them as victims. Nothing can happen to us without the Lord allowing it. Take comfort in that. God actually uses the enemy to accomplish His purpose. "I'm being attacked," we cry. Yet the Lord would say, "I've allowed it for important reasons. Trust Me, seek Me, and you'll see why I've allowed this to be."

1 Samuel 11:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard this news, and his anger was greatly aroused.

Isaiah 19:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ The LORD has mingled a perverse spirit in her midst; And they have caused Egypt to err in all her work, As a drunken man staggers in his vomit.

Job 1:12 (NKJV) ¹² And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Ephesians 6:12–13 (NKJV) ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Judges 9:25 And the men of Shechem set men in ambush against him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed all who passed by them along that way; and it was told Abimelech.

Men of Shechem – Deal Financial Blows

After three years, bad blood developed between the men who were ruled by the bramble, and Abimelech himself. No longer enamored with Abimelech, the men of Shechem decided to raid caravans passing through their area in order to deal a financial blow to Abimelech's kingdom.

Judges 9:26 Now Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers and went over to Shechem; and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him.

Judges 9:27 So they went out into the fields, and gathered grapes from their vineyards and trod them, and made merry. And they went into the house of their god, and ate and drank, and cursed Abimelech.

Judges 9:28 Then Gaal the son of Ebed said, "Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal, and is not Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem; but why should we serve him?"

Judges 9:29 If only this people were under my authority! Then I would remove Abimelech.” So he said to Abimelech, “Increase your army and come out!”

Gaal – Comes on Scene

So now this guy Gaal comes on the scene now and he wants to be king. He calls Abimelech to a fight. He gets his beer muscles on, and the fight is on. Truly wine is a mocker, makes fools out people, some of the dumbest decisions are made when a person gets full of booze. His beer muscles will bring destruction upon him in the end.
Proverbs 20:1 (NKJV) ¹ Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

Judges 9:30 When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was aroused. Judges 9:31 And he sent messengers to Abimelech secretly, saying, “Take note! Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem; and here they are, fortifying the city against you.

Zebul – Double Agent

Gaal didn’t realize Zebul was a double agent, working for Abimelech, but we will see appearing to be a confidant to Gaal, all in order to set Gaal up for a fall.

Judges 9:32 Now therefore, get up by night, you and the people who are with you, and lie in wait in the field.

Judges 9:33 And it shall be, as soon as the sun is up in the morning, that you shall rise early and rush upon the city; and when he and the people who are with him come out against you, you may then do to them as you find opportunity.”

Judges 9:34 So Abimelech and all the people who were with him rose by night, and lay in wait against Shechem in four companies.

Judges 9:35 When Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance to the city gate, Abimelech and the people who were with him rose from lying in wait.

Judges 9:36 And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, “Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!” But Zebul said to him, “You see the shadows of the mountains as if they were men.”

Judges 9:37 So Gaal spoke again and said, “See, people are coming down from the center of the land, and another company is coming from the Diviners’ Terebinth Tree.”

Judges 9:38 Then Zebul said to him, “Where indeed is your mouth now, with which you said, ‘Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?’ Are not these the people whom you despised? Go out, if you will, and fight with them now.”

Put Up or Shut Up

“You’re just seeing things,” Zebul assured Gaal, all the while letting Abimelech get closer to the city and give Gaal less time to rally his men, who we have seen were drunk the night before, therefore battling a hangover. But eventually not Able to deceive Gaal no longer, Zebul changes tactics and says to Gaal, “Put your money where your mouth is. You wanted to fight Abimelech. Here’s your chance.”

Judges 9:39 So Gaal went out, leading the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech.

Judges 9:40 And Abimelech chased him, and he fled from him; and many fell wounded, to the very entrance of the gate.

Judges 9:41 Then Abimelech dwelt at Arumah, and Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers, so that they would not dwell in Shechem.

Wine is a Mocker

Truly wine is a mocker, makes fools out people, some of the dumbest decisions are made when a person gets full of booze. Gaal’s beer muscles brought destruction upon his life in the end.
Proverbs 20:1 (NKJV) ¹ Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

Judges 9:42 And it came about on the next day that the people went out into the field, and they told Abimelech.

Judges 9:43 So he took his people, divided them into three companies, and lay in wait in the field. And he looked, and there were the people, coming out of the city; and he rose against them and attacked them.

Judges 9:44 Then Abimelech and the company that was with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city; and the other two companies rushed upon all who were in the fields and killed them.

Judges 9:45 So Abimelech fought against the city all that day; he took the city and killed the people who were in it; and he demolished the city and sowed it with salt.

The Bramble brings Fire – Just like Prophecy Said it Would

What had Jotham said in his parable? He said, “If you guys aren’t right in this, Abimelech will burn you.” And now Abimelech is doing just that as he unleashes his fury towards Gaal on the men of Shechem. Abimelech not only destroyed all of the people in his own hometown, but he also put salt in the land so nothing would ever grow there again.

Judges 9:46 Now when all the men of the tower of Shechem had heard that, they entered the stronghold of the temple of the god Berith.

Judges 9:47 And it was told Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together.

Judges 9:48 Then Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who were with him. And Abimelech took an ax in his hand and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it and laid it on his shoulder; then he said to the people who were with him, “What you have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done.”

Judges 9:49 So each of the people likewise cut down his own bough and followed Abimelech, put them against the stronghold, and set the stronghold on fire above them, so that all the people of the tower of Shechem died, about a thousand men and women.

The Bramble brings Fire – Just like Prophecy Said it Would

What had Jotham said in his parable? He said, “If you guys aren’t right in this, Abimelech will burn you.” And now Abimelech is doing just that as he unleashes his fury towards Gaal on the men of Shechem. Abimelech not only destroyed all of the people in his own hometown, but he also put salt in the land so nothing would ever grow there again.

Judges 9:50 Then Abimelech went to Thebez, and he encamped against Thebez and took it.

An Alliance

A city ten miles away, Thebez was evidently in alliance with Shechem.

Judges 9:51 But there was a strong tower in the city, and all the men and women—all the people of the city—fled there and shut themselves in; then they went up to the top of the tower.

Judges 9:52 So Abimelech came as far as the tower and fought against it; and he drew near the door of the tower to burn it with fire.

Judges 9:53 But a certain woman dropped an upper millstone on Abimelech’s head and crushed his skull.

Judges 9:54 Then he called quickly to the young man, his armorbearer, and said to him, “Draw your sword and kill me, lest men say of me, ‘A woman killed him.’ ” So his young man thrust him through, and he died.

Judges 9:55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed, every man to his place.

Judges 9:56 Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father by killing his seventy brothers.

Judges 9:57 And all the evil of the men of Shechem God returned on their own heads, and on them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

Men Building their Legacy

A woman (just a certain woman – no name given) in the tower of Thebez took the upper part of a millstone—eighteen or twenty inches in diameter, and two or three inches thick—and threw it right on Abimelech’s head and he died, killing the so-called great king. Abimelech says to armor bearer kill me so it isn’t recorded a woman killed me the great and fierce warrior that I am – guess what Abimelech, it doesn’t matter, it was recorded that a woman killed you. How interesting to me, such a reminder to me, people (men and woman alike), who invest their whole life into things that are going to perish in moment. People investing whole lives because when they die they want

people to remember them for their greatness (whether in the workplace, politics, on the sports field), yet in the end, if they truly could stay around long to see it after they die, they are quickly forgotten.

Matthew 16:24–26 (NKJV) ²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

The Life of Gideon – The Price of Compromise

Interesting story, some great nuggets to glean from, and plenty more there that we didn’t cover. But truly this story is a follow-on, for us to see the price that was paid by Gideon’s sons, for his compromise.

So Gideon’s 3 Compromises:

- Compromise of being Kinsman Redeemer to set up his sons future – but it just seemed to make sense in my mind.
- Compromise of moving center of worship to his hometown – but it just seemed to feel so right in my heart.
- Compromise with many wives and a concubine – but it just felt so right to my body.

Dads You Must Engage – Reap what Sow

Dads you must engage, mothers you must engage, our children will reap whatever we sow into them, and I am talking about the spiritual things.

Galatians 6:6–10 (NKJV) ⁶ Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. ⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 10

Book of Judges Covers about 450 year Period

The Book of Judges covers “about” a 450-year period of the history of Israel. From the time beginning right after Joshua, up until the coronation of King Saul (the first king of Israel). So somewhere around 1450-1350BC to 1050-950BC. Samuel will be the last of the Judges, and will be the one who anoints Saul to be King.

Acts 13:18–21 (NKJV) ¹⁸ Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. ¹⁹ And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. ²⁰ “After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. ²¹ And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

Judge means Rescuer/Deliver

The word “judge” in the Hebrew means “deliverer, rescuer”, and so today we read of 2 more judges (Tola and Jair), and the beginning of a third which will set us up for our next study in chapter 11. So let’s get into it, and see what the Lord has for us.

Judges 10:1–6 (NKJV) ¹ After Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in the mountains of Ephraim. ² He judged Israel twenty-three years; and he died and was buried in Shamir. ³ After him arose Jair, a Gileadite; and he judged Israel twenty-two years. ⁴ Now he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys; they also had thirty towns, which are called “Havoth Jair” to this day, which are in the land of Gilead. ⁵ And Jair died and was buried in Camon. ⁶ Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him.

Judges 10:1 After Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in the mountains of Ephraim.

Judges 10:2 He judged Israel twenty-three years; and he died and was buried in Shamir.

God is in the Details

God is in the Details – And Every Detail of Your Life

Judges Chapter 10, Verse 1. I want you to look and see just the detail here of this man named Tola. He is the son of Puah. His grandfather is Dodo. He’s a man from the tribe of Issachar, and he dwelt in the city of Shamir and that city is located in the mountains of Ephraim.

It’s a lot of detail of an introduction of a man; it’s making very clear who this specific man is. But I want you to know also why the details? Because God wants you to know that He’s in the details. God knows every detail of your life. He knows your family situation, He knows your family relationships, He knows where you live, and He knows the environment you live such as the mountains. He knows what city you live in, what’s the environment of the city that you live in. He knows what your parents are like, He knows what your family lineage is like, and therefore He knows your whole life and your whole upbringing and how that impacted you for good or for bad. He knows every detail of your life, and He wants to make that point as He’s always a God of detail. And He’s in the details; every last detail, even when they look meaningless. Why spent all that print and time on them? Because God’s saying, “Every detail of your life is important to Me, and I know everything that’s going on in your life.”

7 “I AM” Statements

In the Gospel of John Jesus spoke 7 “I AM” statements,

1. I AM the Bread of Life (John 6:35)
2. I AM the Light of the World (John 8:12)
3. I Am the Door (John 10:9)
4. I AM the Good Shepherd. (John 10:11)
5. I AM the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25)
6. I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6)
7. I AM the Vine (John 15:5)

John 6:35 (NKJV)

³⁵ And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

John 8:12 (NKJV)

¹² Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

John 10:9 (NKJV)

⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

John 10:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

John 11:25–26 (NKJV)

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

John 14:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 15:5 (NKJV)

⁵ "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Exodus 3:13 / No Present Tense – No Past Tense – Existence Tense / The Becoming One

I am was a name for God in the Old Testament. God would come ... Remember, when Moses, the Lord met with him in the burning bush and Moses, and he commissions him and go to the children of Israel. Moses said, "What's your name?" Who should I say sent me? The Lord said, "I am that I am. I've always been, I am now, I always will be. In fact, there is no past tense, present tense with me. I am the self-existent one. I always live in the present tense." That's who sent you. Have fun explaining it to them. But it's the name for God, and Jesus seven times, through this Gospel He says, "I am. I am the way, the truth and the life. I am the good shepherd. I am the door" over and over again. What is He communicating? He is communicating, clearly understood by the Jewish mind, that He's divine, that He's to be understood as being divine.

In the Hebrew language, the words "I AM" can be translated to mean, "Becoming One". God, Jesus, is saying I am the "Becoming One", and I desire to become to you all that you need. I want to become to you your salvation, your peace, your truth, your life, your leading, your protector, your love, I want to, and I can, become all things you you. Beloved of God, what do you need Him to be to you today? He will be that to you, He has the ability to be that to you because He is God! Jesus is God, the Eternal One, who knows you by name and loves you! What do you? Let Him become that to you today.

Exodus 3:13–15 (NKJV) ¹³ Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' " ¹⁵ Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'

Let's go to Revelation – The Alpha and the Omega

And please let me read to you out of the Book of Revelation, "I Am" statements with "beginning and the end, for your Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega (first and last letters of the Greek alphabet), as Jesus (God) clearly make clear that He is God (look at Revelation 21:5-7), He is the eternal God, he has always been, and will always be, as he is the first and the last, and that means everything in-between. And your God is the beginning of your life, the finishing of your life here on earth, and everything in-between, and He knows every detail of your life, and wants to be in every detail of your life, and today he says to you what do you need Me to be for you, what do you need me to become to you, for I am, and can, and will be, all things to you, for I am the Becoming One, I am the Alpha and the Omega, and I am everything in-between.

Revelation 1:7–8 (NKJV) ⁷ Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. ⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 1:10–13 (NKJV) ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹ saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." ¹² Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

Revelation 1:17–18 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

Revelation 21:5–7 (NKJV) ⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.” ⁶ And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

Revelation 22:12–13 (NKJV) ¹² “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”

Isaiah 41:4 (NKJV) ⁴ Who has performed and done it, Calling the generations from the beginning? ‘I, the LORD, am the first; And with the last I am He.’ ”

(Isaiah 44:6 NKJV) “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.

Saved by the Worm

Tola – the Worm

Verse 1, Tola. Means worm. Sounds kind of silly, a worm arose to save Israel. But I want you to see the power of just this one statement, because not only does Tola mean worm and he rose to save Israel, but Jesus Christ in Psalm 22 identifies himself as a worm. He arose not only to save Israel if they would come, but all of mankind if they would come. A worm, He made himself, God of the universe lowered himself and became a worm for you. What type of God becomes a worm? What type of God would lower himself to be the lowest species on the planet? God became a man; that man became a lamb, the Lamb of God (John 1;29) who takes away the sins of the world and as he was crushed and beaten and bruised, thereupon the cross, he died was laid in the tomb and became a worm. What type of God becomes a worm? What type of God becomes a lamb? What type of God becomes a man? This is the God who loves you. This is the God that knows every detail of your life. This is the God who’s on his way to you right now if you open up to Him, and you cry out to Him. He always raises up rescuer/deliver for those who will cry out in true repentance to him.

Psalm 22:6 (NKJV) ⁶ But I am a worm (tolah – means scalet), and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people.

John 1:29 (NKJV) ²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Tola means Scarlet

Tolah also means “scarlet” (= “Crimson” 38x). Scarlet dye was made from a particular worm, Cermes vermilio. The Cermes vermilio pierces the thin bark of twigs to suck the sap, from which it prepares a waxy scale to protect its soft body. The red dye is in this scale. When reproducing, the female climbs a tree (usually the holm oak), where it bears its eggs; the larvae hatch and feed on the body of the worm. It gives its life...a crimson spot is left on the branch; when the scarlet spot dries out, in three days, it changes to white as it flakes off... (Zondervan Biblical Encyclopedia).

Isaiah 1:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

God Takes Ordinary – Makes Extraordinary

Shamir & Tola – Obscure

Shamir,” where he lived, is otherwise unknown, but since it has the same three consonants in Hebrew as the better known Samaria it was probably the same place under an earlier name. Certainly the accompanying phrase, “in the hill country of Ephraim,” places it in the same general locality. But the fact that we’re forced to speculate about it is significant in itself. Of his father, “Puah, son of Dodo,” we know nothing at all. Tola is an obscure man from an obscure place and an obscure family.

The details of these two men, Tola and Jair. I want you to see that God sees your heart and your deeds. Nothing is overlooked by what you do in his name. God is looking for a man, a woman, to rise up and rescue. Note, they're not recorded as extraordinary people, but there was some greatness in them. They're just ordinary people who made themselves available to God, and therefore they went from being ordinary to extraordinary. We all want to do great things for the world. We all want to do great things and make our life count, but we think we're too ordinary. We think we don't have gifts. We think we don't have all the talents, and yet what we read over and over through this book of Judges is God just taking an ordinary man, an ordinary woman, who made themselves available and he makes them extraordinary and does extraordinary things through their life.

Tola Saves to Personal Holiness

Let's recap the math here as we look at where we're going. After Deborah and Barack led the victory over the Canaanites, Israel had peace in the land for 40 years. Then they did evil in sight of the Lord by serving the Baal's so God turned them over to the Midianites. Gideon led the children of Israel to victory over the Midianites, and then Gideon ruled and reigned and there was 40 years of peace in Israel, chapter 8 verse 28. Then we have this 3-year period that we studied last week in chapter 9 of Abimelech rising up and we saw some internal strife. We saw civil war, but what we didn't see was any outside oppression from an outside enemy. Then we come in and we just read verses 1 through 5 of chapter 10 and we see 23 years of peace with Tola, 22 years with Jair, a total 45 years of peace. Then we look at chapter 8 verse 33, after Gideon had died, after the 40 years of peace, we see Israel going back to worship the Baals. Here in verse 6, we come and we now read, "Again did evil and they worshiped the Baals." What I want you to see through this web that we just laid out here is there is no external enemy coming in to fight against Israel. We're going to read that in verses here, coming up, before we finish the chapter, but what we see is no external enemy coming against Israel at this time. The question is what then did Tola and Jair saved them from? What I clearly see here is starting there with Tola. He saves Israel from the worshiping of these false idols. After Gideon died, they go back and they worshiped the Baals and the Ashtarothe. Then Tola comes on the scene and he saves them, but we see there is no eternal conflict because it's not until chapter 10 that we're going to read of outside enemies coming in and oppressing Israel. What is happening here? Tola saved Israel from themselves. Tola saved Israel from the worshiping of these false idols, these false gods they were worshipping instead of the One True and living God. Tola establishes holiness and devotion back unto the Lord, and then Jair comes on the scene and he maintains it. It's not until Jair dies, it's not until 45 years later of these 2 men leading Israel into the holiness of the Lord do we read them going back into idol worship and then being under the oppression of the enemies that had surrounded them.

*Judges 5:31 (NKJV)*³¹ "Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD! But let those who love Him be like the sun When it comes out in full strength." So the land had rest for forty years.

*Judges 6:1 (NKJV)*¹ Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years,

*Judges 8:28 (NKJV)*²⁸ Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon.

*Judges 8:33 (NKJV)*³³ So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god.

*Judges 10:1 (NKJV)*¹ After Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in the mountains of Ephraim.

*Judges 10:3 (NKJV)*³ After him arose Jair, a Gileadite; and he judged Israel twenty-two years.

*Judges 10:6 (NKJV)*⁶ Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him.

*Judges 10:8 (NKJV)*⁸ From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who were on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead.

People Need Saved From Something – Then To Something

People don't just need saving from their physical/tangible situations but they need saving from the sin that separates them from the Holy God. That's what's needed the same today for us. What we see is they save them not just from something but to something. That's always what salvation is going to be. They saved them not just from something but to something. We're always being saved from something that's going to harm us and destroy us but always being saved to something that's going to strengthen us and grow us and that is we're being saved from the world and the destruction of the world and we're being saved unto God in his perfect ways. You know what? We always have to be a people, when we save people from something but we always have to save them to something. We can't just say, "Don't do that." We have to say, "Here's what you are to do, and this is what we as parents, this is what God is looking for among men and women today, is people who will be like a Tola and a Jair and go save people from something and to something and be a rescuer. We need to save them to Jesus Christ! [2 Corinthians 5:20–21 \(NKJV\)](#) ²⁰ *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.* ²¹ *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Judges 10:3 After him arose Jair, a Gileadite; and he judged Israel twenty-two years.

Judges 10:4 Now he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys; they also had thirty towns, which are called "Havoth Jair" to this day, which are in the land of Gilead.

Father's Impact on the Sons

Some teachers say the sons riding on donkeys speaks of the family living in luxury, elevating themselves above the people, for they were so wealthy each son had their own donkey; but I don't see that at all for we need only go back to Judges chapter 5 to see that the riders of donkeys at this time in Israel were those who were rulers/judges/leaders in Israel. Gideon had 70 sons, and we read none of them followed. Jair has 30 sons, and yet we see all 30 of them followed Him. Then we read in Verse 4 that they had cities named after them as a family, and to the day of this writing of this passage, those cities are still called by that name. That's how great of an impact that family made on their environment that when they died no one just wiped away and changed the name of the city. This is a tremendous impact that the father gave to his sons and has carried to his sons and imparted to his sons which therefore then were imparted to the cities, even to the day of this writing of the Book of Judges. What amazing impact that a father could have on his children, and then that also that impact went over into the cities. Absolutely amazing.

[Judges 5:9–10 \(NKJV\)](#) ⁹ *My heart is with the rulers of Israel Who offered themselves willingly with the people. Bless the LORD!* ¹⁰ *"Speak, you who ride on white donkeys, Who sit in judges' attire, And who walk along the road.*

Judges 10:5 And Jair died and was buried in Camon.

Lived and Died

We see in Verse 2, Life of Tola, and we see in Verse 5, the Life of Jair, we see the very simple statement of life; they lived, they died, and they were buried. That's pretty much the cycle of life. They lived, they died, and they were buried. They had these short verses but we see power in these short verses. Tola judging for 23 years and Jair judging for 22 years, rescuing, saving, leading, guiding, protecting Israel. Look how short their live verse is. So I ask myself, and I would ask you, what would God record of you if it only came down to two verses, three at the most? What would God say of your life? How would He record your life? If man was to record your life, what would their two or three verses? If you were to go and meet a person today, a man who didn't walk and follow Jesus Christ, how would they record your life? If you want and a brother or sister recorded your life into two or three versus, how would they record your life? But above all, how would God record your life? So I would ask you, how would you record your life? As you ponder that today; if my life was to be summed up in the one or two verses, what would it say? He was a great businessman? She was a great cook? None of those things are wrong or bad. But would your testimony read something of power for the Lord, that pleased the Lord? That made a difference in the life of people? I like how the Apostle John gives his only self-identification in the Gospel of John about himself, and he simply says he whom Jesus loved. John's heard the heartbeat of God as he rested his head on the chest of Jesus, and that was a good enough summation for him. That is the summation I want, Jesus loved me, and I knew the heart of God.

[John 13:23 \(NKJV\)](#) ²³ *Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.*

Funeral of Jessica

Went to a funeral last week. A sad funeral, a very young woman. Died of breast cancer. But amazing woman, loved the Lord with all of her heart. She would make the statement, "I don't have breast cancer, I have blessed cancer. I'm going to use this as a blessing, and I'm not going to let it be what identifies me." She was an amazing witness for Jesus Christ. So much so, at her funeral at the visitations hundreds of people come in to pay their respect. All of them knew the same theme about her life, and that was that Jesus Christ was the Lord of her life. That was so blessed, as I was standing there with the husband. A man came up, got dressed up for the situation, put on a suit. Came to pay his respect and support the family. As he approached the husband, it was obvious he had no words. He knew not what to say. He actually did not even understand the details of Jessica's life, of what that meant to follow Jesus Christ. But he knew she was special, and he loved her and he loved her husband. He came and he hugged the husband and he wept and he says, "I don't know what to say. I'm so sorry for your loss."

To which Jessica's husband Jonathan says, "Oh don't mistake. That's not Jessica that you see in that casket. That's just her body. The real Jessica, she has risen from the dead and she is now in Heaven with Jesus. Because she gave her life to Jesus and believed that he was the Lord of all creation, and was her personal savior and she gave her life to him." He said, "That's not Jessica that you see, for she has risen."

I tell you what, that is a tremendous summation of two or three verses of someone's life right there. I pray, when I am laid to rest as I lived and I died and I was buried, that the people would say, "That is not Ray Bollas in that tomb. He is alive more so than ever, and he has risen and he is in Heaven with Jesus and he's Heaven because of Jesus and the finished work of the cross."

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 (NKJV) ⁶ So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Judges 10:6 Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him.

Youth – You have to Make it Your Own Faith

Verse 5 of Judges chapter 10, we read a sad statement that when Jair died, moving on into verse 6, and Israel then did evil in the sight of the Lord. We've read that Jair's life impacted his sons, that his sons followed after him, a family business, if you would, as he ruled and reigned in Israel, his sons co-reigned with him it appears. They had donkeys and they would ride to the town and they would uphold the justice of the Lord and the holiness of the Lord. It carried on, and even to this day, it still remain, but what I want you to see something here is that's so awesome and how powerful it is, the faith and the following of the children, of the sons, that when Jair died, there was no judge to rescue and deliver Israel. Israel therefore went back into their idol worship as we read. I think it's important for you youth to see this. When the parent died and was off the scene, not one of them took the pace to be the judge and rescuer of Israel. For you youth, I just want to make a statement, I think it's awesome that you follow your parent's faith. I think it's awesome that you've grown up and has received that. I think it's amazing and tremendous that you're here today right now, among the saints, in church. You could be doing so many other things, but what I want to present to you today and I want to challenge into your heart, if it has not happened, may today be the day that it happens, that you make your faith your faith. It's no longer the faith of your parents. It's no longer the following of your parents, but it's yours. You own it. You believe it 100%. You receive it and you're living, because then when the day you leave, you live it and you carry it forth, and you're the next generation of a rescuer to a nation, to a family, to a church, to a community. We watch so many youth grow up in the church, faithful in children's church, then in the youth, into the youth ministry, and they're walking and they're doing so strong, and then they go to college and they walk away from their faith. People will say so many times, "Well, it's because of all the cares of the world that comes before them," and there are some truth to that, absolutely, but I think one of the biggest things is they didn't make it their faith. It was their parent's faith more than it was their faith. They were okay with it, and they enjoyed it and they believed it. When it came time to fight for themselves, the faith wasn't there and therefore they couldn't fight it as such. We see that example here. 30 kids and not one assumed the role of the judge. Timothy is a great example in the Bible, as his parents faith became his faith, and that is for your consideration today – whose faith is it, and am I ready to stand alone on it.

2 Timothy 1:5–7 (NKJV) ⁵ when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. ⁶ Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Judges 10:7 So the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon.

Baal

Baal was the rain god, the god of the intellect. Because the people of the region were dependent on rain, and because weather was a mystery to them, Baal was their explanation for everything they couldn't understand. Later on, it would be the prophets of Baal Elijah would challenge to send forth rain upon a drought-stricken land (1 Kings 18).

Ashtaroth - Easter

Ashtaroth, also known as the Babylonian god, Ishtar, and in Rome as "Easter," was the goddess of fertility, whose signs were, interestingly, the rabbit and the egg. Baal and Ashtaroth—the god of the intellect and the goddess of the senses—are two gods our own society still serves. Truly, behind every Penthouse and Playboy magazine looms the goddess Ashtaroth. And on every college campus where men flaunt their intellect and think themselves too wise to bow the knee to the God who reigns in heaven, there lurks Baal.

Philosophy behind False gods

There is way more to these false gods that Israel served than we think. We think they are burning some incense and making some chants, and the heading out to work. But far be it from that. History tells us what the philosophy was behind the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth. To find their favor (for a good crop, for a good business, for personal financial gain) a person would go down to the temple of Baal/Ashtoreth and pay money to the temple prostitute and have sexual relations. So the representation was becoming one with the god, and then the god would honor the person with their personal desires, because they had honored the god with their action. The whole false religion, shaped by man, fueled by the Devil, was to the person for their personal pleasure (sexual) and comfort (wealth).

God Gave them Over

Verse 7. We see the Lord turn them over to their desires. That's what sold means. Free will is free choice, meaning free to choose. God turns them over to their free will. Free will will produce and result in something. If our free will is to follow after the things of God, it will produce the things of God. If our free will is to follow after the things of man and the flesh, it will produce the things of man and flesh.

That isn't a deep theology, but there comes a point in time where God says I must give you what you want because it's your free will. For Me not to give you what you want, you want to worship these gods, you want to follow these gods because we see times where they're turning to these gods, these false gods, but God's not judging them or bringing correction to them. It's called grace. Then there comes a time where God says in order for Me to honor your free will, in order it for you to choose Me or those things, I have to allow you to fully experience them to the fullest degree.

Love without a choice is not love at all. Love without a choice is rape, forced into something that you don't want. Those are harsh words and drastic words, stinging words to say, but love must give a choice. In order for free will to be free, it must allow free choice. Love must always allow free choice.

God has Free-Choice – and he Chooses you

God has free will. God has free choice. May we not miss that. We're made in his image and God has free choice. God has free will and I want you to see He chooses you. He chooses you, He extends His hand to you, He says come to Me I want to have a personal relationship with you. I choose you, but I will honor and give you your choice, will you choose Me.

When I asked my wife to marry me, I chose her, but I said to her "Will you marry me?" and gave her her free choice. I would fully honor that if she would've said no because I would not want a relationship with somebody who didn't want a relationship with me. There would be no way that I could force her to love me. The only way she could ever love me was if it was in her heart and desired. God has free choice and he chooses you. That's how special you are. Now He gives you that same choice today.

Judges 10:8 From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who were on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead.

Picks Off those Outside the Promised Land

Verse 8. We see the two and a half tribes that were on the east side of the Jordan River. They're taken first. It's always going to be the pattern of attack. Satan wants to attack the ones that are separated. Here we could be living all 12 tribes united with borders that protect, water borders of the Jordan River, the waters of the ocean on the other side, but these two and a half tribes will see this pattern throughout the rest of the Bible. They always get attacked first because they're low hanging fruit. They put themselves out there.

We studied in the book of Joshua and before that as they were traveling with Moses, they wanted the land on the other side of the Jordan, not in the promise land, because we read it was a beautiful land. It was a land flowing with abundance. Great crops, great place to raise cattle, but I tell you what, it was a lousy place to raise kids. It's constantly the first to be in attack.

That's why the Lord speaks to you today. He wants the church unified. That's why He says in Hebrews, don't forsake the assembly of the brethren. This is why we come together. We strengthen each other. Even if you feel that you're strong enough to live outside the borders of the promise land, there's people inside who are not and they need you to come and stand. This is a team sport, if you would. We must be one, we must be united, and we don't just come here for ourselves, every Sunday we come here for the others also. There's two sides of the coin. For me to stay strong and for me to keep you strong. We see that pattern.

Hebrews 10:25 (NKJV) ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Judges 10:9 Moreover the people of Ammon crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was severely distressed.

Only have to Fight 9.5 Tribes

Verse 9. The enemy comes into the promise land and instead of having to battle 12 tribes, they're going to battle nine and a half because the others didn't join.

Enemy Always Wants to Take More Territory

Verse 9, here we read, the enemy comes in from the west and they take and conquer the 2 and a half tribes of Israel that were on the east side of the Jordan. That's Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh. Then after they conquered them, they crossed over the Jordan, and now they're coming for the other remaining tribes of Israel, the other 9 and a half tribes. What I want you to see there and understand is the enemy always wants to expand his territory. He's never content with just conquering this one region and moving on. Dads, I want you to know, after he gets you, after he gets your marriage, he wants to go after your kids. You have to lay a blockade upfront. Protect yourself personally, your personal integrity and holiness, personal holiness, and then you need to protect your marriage, and then you need to be on guard and fight for your kids, because he wants one and then he goes after another.

Carol Cymbala / We Must Stand in Gap of Prayer

I'm reminded of the story of a Pastor Jim Cymbala tells of going into Brooklyn, rundown, nothing like it is today if you've been there lately. Started, took over his father-in-law's church of 13 people. God starts doing an amazing work. A revival starts happening within the people, the church starts to grow and grow and expand and wonderful things, but all the while, his daughter Chrissy, she begins to struggle with the things of the world, the cares of the

world, the vanities of the world, looks and accepted boyfriends, et cetera. One thing leads to another and she finds herself then consumed in walking away from the Lord and consumed in the addictions of drugs. That's not my point in my story, because it's a miracle story that through the power of prayer, you can read that in his book, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, I recommend it for everybody, through power of prayer, she returns to the Lord. Even today now, she is married, her and her husband are doing a mighty work out in Chicago. The point that I want to tell you is Carol, in the midst of it, while she's away, Chrissy is away from her mother and father, the devil spoke to her and she hears his whispers and he says to her, "Oh, you can do all the great things you want to do here in Brooklyn and have all this great success, but I want you to know, I got your daughter and I'm coming for the rest of your kids." Pastor Jim will tell the story where she said, "You can stay. I'm leaving. I'm not going to lose another child," but they didn't leave obviously. They dug themselves in and went to war in prayer and the battle of that, but I see just such an amazing picture of that story. Satan always wants to expand his territory. He'll never be content with 1, he wants 2. When he has 2, he wants 4. When he has this city, he wants the next state. When he's got the state, he wants the country. This is the battle that we're in, and this is the battle that we see through these Scriptures. He always wants to expand, but God is always looking for a man. God is always looking for a woman who will stand in the gap and go to war for the people. It starts in our homes. It starts in our marriages, and it protects our families, protects our children, and we go and expand it further and greater.

Where do Wars Come From

I find it interesting this week, along that lines, because we're looking at the wars all around us. We're looking at these terror attacks, and the Pope and Franklin Graham got into a little social media wrangling back and forth. Pope saying it's not a war about religion. Franklin Graham says it's absolutely war about religion, and so what I would say is, yes, you're both right and you're both wrong. It is both and it's neither. What it is, it's the enemy wanting to expand his territory fueling the fire through the works of the flesh, and if you would, turn with me to James chapter 4 verse 1 through 8 and we'll read where wars truly come from. We'll see they come from Satan. Anything else, it's all just details of how he's operating. You can attack and go against, to battle those details, but until you come and see what is the fuel behind those details, you'll never stop it. This will only be stopped folks through the power of prayer.

James 4:1–8 (NKJV) ¹ Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do they not *come* from your *desires* for pleasure that war in your members? ² You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. ⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? ⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "*God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.*" ⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.

Judges 10:10 And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against You, because we have both forsaken our God and served the Baals!"

Judges 10:11 So the LORD said to the children of Israel, "Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites and from the people of Ammon and from the Philistines?"

Judges 10:12 Also the Sidonians and Amalekites and Maonites oppressed you; and you cried out to Me, and I delivered you from their hand.

Judges 10:13 Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods. Therefore I will deliver you no more.

Judges 10:14 Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in your time of distress."

They Worship gods He Already Defeated

The Lord had given Israel victory over seven different nations (Jdg. 10:11–12), but now Israel was worshiping seven different varieties of pagan gods (v. 6). No wonder God's anger "was hot against Israel" (v. 7). What foolishness to worship the gods of your defeated enemies! God says to them, why serve the gods that I have defeated? Think about that. Is not the defeated always weaker than the conqueror? Why would we serve anything that He has defeated? It just proves that they're weak. If we're truly honest, we go why would we follow these weak dumb gods? Here's a couple of them. They're all part of the philosophy. Let's turn to Galatians Chapter 5. We must stay sharp on these things.

Judges 10:15 And the children of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned! Do to us whatever seems best to You; only deliver us this day, we pray."

Judges 10:16 So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD. And His soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel.

Cried Out – But had yet to Cleanse their Homes

Verse 15 through 16. Did you catch that? They cried out in verse 10, but it's not until verse 15 and 16 that we see finally they put away their false gods. In verse 10 they cried out to the Lord, in verse 15 they even prayed, but it's not until verse 16 that we see true repentance as they put away, they repent, they turn from, those false gods. When they had called out to Him in verse 10, come save us, the false gods were still in their homes, the false gods were still part of their life. God gives them this whole dissertation of, I'm not going to save you, I'm not going to come help you. It's not that God's being vengeful, what God is being is honest to them. I can't help you until you turn to Me from them. As long as you still have them in your life, I can't come and give and flow My full power to you.

Judges 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against You, because we have both forsaken our God and served the Baals!"

God Responds

Verse 16. Says God's soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel. The relief wasn't immediately after repentance. Forgiveness is, and I want you to always know this, forgiveness is always immediate, God's forgiveness. God's forgiveness is always immediate, but there may be a period of time as He does His work in you to purify you that the situation will change.

There will always be a period that you can just about guarantee because of the law of sowing and reaping where you will reap what you've sown, it's just the law. Sometimes we have to separate the punishment from the crime, the crime, if you would, of breaking His laws. Immediately forgiven the moment we say, forgive me. I've sinned against you Holy God. Then there comes this reaping that we have to deal with whatever that would look like. There might be a financial consequence, there might be a physical consequence. There might be a time of what we had harmed someone else and now we have to wait for their hearts to be turned back to us. Forgiveness is always immediate between man and God, but the repentance part and the restoration part could take time.

Repentance Looks like Something

Verse 15. Put away means literally utterly destroy. Means to utterly destroy it, leave no remnant of it. That's what we need to do when sin rises its head and we recognize that it's in our life. We need to utterly destroy it. They put away these gods and what we see is genuine repentance looks like something. You can actually see it. It's more than tears, it's actions of turning back. Repent means to turn and follow. What we see is repentance looks like something and you'll know it. I love what they say in verse 15 also there comes a time and a place where you go do whatever you want. I fully accept the consequences, but whatever the consequences, I'm willing to face those consequences just to be back with You and right with You.

At Whatever the Price

I think there's a time where we continually and we can continually try to keep covering something, try to keep something afloat, try to not just come with and say you know what it's better just to cut it loose and let it die and let God do with it what He wants, whatever the price is to me because I need to get right with Jesus and I need to get right with Him right now.

Peace and Rest

Peace and Rest will come when we say here it is God, I utterly destroy it, now do with me as you will for I trust you fully and know you will do every good and perfect thing in my life, even when it seems painful and hard, ultimately I know it turns out that you will take these ashes and turn them into beauty. King David after his sin, he tried to hide it, but not until he came clean with it, was he cleansed from it, and entered into a peace and a rest from it.

Psalm 51 (NKJV) To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David When Nathan the Prophet Went to Him, After He Had Gone in to Bathsheba. ¹ Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. ⁴ Against

You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.⁶ Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.⁸ Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice.⁹ Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.¹¹ Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.¹² Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.¹³ Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You.¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.¹⁶ For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering.¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise.¹⁸ Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.¹⁹ Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, With burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

Psalm 84:11–12 (NKJV) ¹¹ For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly. ¹² O LORD of hosts, Blessed is the man who trusts in You!

Isaiah 61:3 (NKJV) ³ To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”

Romans 8:31–36 (NKJV) ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

Judges 10:17 Then the people of Ammon gathered together and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled together and encamped in Mizpah.

Judges 10:18 And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, “Who is the man who will begin the fight against the people of Ammon? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”

Sets Up Next Study

So verses 17-18 sets us up for our next study so read all of chapter 11 and that is where we will pick up next week.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 11

Judges 11:1-28

Recap/Intro

To recap, where we ended in Judges was that the children of Israel had gone back to worshipping the false gods of the land of their enemies that surrounded them. Therefore, the Lord gave them over to their desire, because God will always honor a man's free will. The resultant of that, and not because of God's vengeance, but just the law of reaping and sowing, when God gave them over and allowed them to have what they desired, it overcame them. What we read is, "The enemies of the surrounding countries oppressed Israel for 18 years."

Judges 10:6–8 (NKJV) ⁶ Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him. ⁷ So the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon. ⁸ From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who were on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead.

Sin Cycle

We see this continual cycle. They cry out and as always, God's always ready to deliver and meet the cry of his children. That's you today. Whatever your need is, may you know that your God cries out to you.

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are enslaved by sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they are saved from their sin.

God Always Hears – Responds to Your Cry

May you know that you move the heart of God when you humble yourself and say, "I need you." God will honor you to say, "I don't need you. I got this." The minute you cry out from a true heart, a pure heart that you mean it with all your heart, God will show up and deliver.

Judges 10:17 Then the people of Ammon gathered together and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled together and encamped in Mizpah.

Judges 10:18 And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, "Who is the man who will begin the fight against the people of Ammon? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

Who Will Fight For Us

Verse 17 and 18 of Chapter 10, it says, "Israel's looking for a man who might go to war for them." I like that. They're saying, "Who will begin the fight? We're looking for someone to go start the fight and someone to lead the fight." May I say this?

The purpose of life is not to arrive at death safely.

We Christians spend way too much time seeking how we can comfort ourselves and make our lives comfortable.

Christians too Busy Fighting Each Other

And we Christians spend way too much time fighting against one another. I personally, I won't do it. I can't win those fight, Christians against Christians. When Christians fight Christians, everybody loses. There is no winner. I fight where I can win. I fight where I know I can have a victory. I know that I can beat the devil because I got my 4 X 4, which is First John, Chapter 4, verse 4, "Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world." I know we can win this fight.

1 John 4:4 (NKJV) ⁴ You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Go Pick a Fight with the Devil

Christians, go pick a fight with the devil. You start that in the war room, because it is a war room. That is the battle is in prayer. You go into the prayer closet. That is where you strategize and that is where you launch your battle plan.

I invite you to come join us on Tuesday nights, as we turn this house of prayer into a war room and we go to war, and we battle against all the things that are oppressing and coming against us, knowing that our God hears, and knowing that our God is here, and knowing that our God wants to do a work.

Prayerlessness creates - Carelessness

I make my point again that I've said so many times in the past. Prayerlessness creates carelessness, meaning that I could care less. We come with prayer and we meet the Lord in the house of prayer. It's there that through prayer, that we catch the heart of God. God places the heart that He has for that situation, that person, that country, that church, whatever that may be and what his heart for it is. We have read, in Judges 10, when his people cry out, He agonizes because he can't bear to watch his people suffer and He responds. Many times, He's going to respond through you. He's going to use you as his response to be his agents here on Earth. That's why we come and we turn this into a house of prayer.

We have a Warrior God

I want you to know this and listen to this carefully. We have a warrior God. Our God is a warrior. Our God is a fighter. Our God is a battler. He is a God of love, yes, but loves the fight for it's his heart desire to set us free and to deliver us. That lamb that was slain before the foundations of the world, the man who became a lamb is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He has a heart of a warrior. He comes and He fights for his people. He fights for you.

Revelation 5:5-7 (NKJV) ⁵ But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." ⁶ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Bare Arm of the Lord

I love that passage. It says the bare of the arm the Lord. It's literally saying, "When God rolls up his sleeves, look out. He's coming for war. He's coming for a fight." So many times, we look at him as a weak kneed, gentle, too gentle God who gets overrun and overpowered. He is a warrior God and He fights for you. When He rolls up his sleeve and He comes to do battle on your behalf, look out, enemy, whoever that enemy may be. "He doesn't come to fight as a Lamb, but a Lion.

Isaiah 52:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The LORD has made bare His holy arm In the eyes of all the nations; And all the ends of the earth shall see The salvation of our God.

He is so Awesome

I love him. He's amazing. What a God. I have a warrior God. He's a rock. He's a strong tower, but He is the lion of the tribe of Judah. I praise him for that strength and power.

Mercies New Every Morning – but Not for His Enemies

Lamentations, 3:22 and 23, his compassions and mercies are new every morning. Great is his faithfulness, but they, that mercy and compassion are for you only. The enemy gets none of that mercy and compassion. When God comes with rolled up sleeves, He's coming to look for a fight with that enemy. He's going to fight for you. We have a warrior God.

Lamentations 3:22-24 (NKJV) ²² Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"

God Always Looking for a Fight / No Mercies for Enemy

God's always looking for a good fight. You know what? Me too, but I'm only picking the ones I can win. The ones He's in, that's the ones I can win. The ones He's in, that the one He calls me to come and join him in. Hey, we Christians, we love "love and peace". Hey, I say, "Go find a fight and get into it. Fight to set someone free. Fight to set someone who's weak and too weak to fight for themselves, go fight for them. Go stand beside them. Go help rescue them." Yeah, it's going to be a battle. It's going to cost us some sweat. It's going to cost us some time. It might even result in the enemy coming with a counterattack upon us. When we go and we fight for somebody else and we get into the battle, what amazing things happens in our lives personally. Our God is a warrior God. He fights to set the captives free. To be like him, we go and do the same thing. Take a look at Luke, Chapter 4, verse 10.

Luke 4:17–19 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

Judges 11:1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, but he was the son of a harlot; and Gilead begot Jephthah.

Judges 11:2 Gilead's wife bore sons; and when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out, and said to him, "You shall have no inheritance in our father's house, for you are the son of another woman."

God Doesn't Care about Your Lineage / All He cares about it You

Verse 1: He's the son of Gilead. For we see that he was the son of a harlot, and I want to tell you something up front. He doesn't care about your family lineage. He doesn't care what your family environment was like, where you lived and how you were raised and what your education was like, the doesn't care about your family lineage. He doesn't care what the world thinks of you as we read this passage and Jephthah's very own brothers are rejecting him. God doesn't care what the world around you thinks of you. He doesn't care what the Church and the so-called Christians think of you. All that he cares about is you. I want you to understand this regardless of where you've been, whether it's where you were born or where you've been this week and what you've done this week. I want you to see that Psalm 139 says that God was there when you were conceived, that it was God who formed you in your mother's womb. That word, there for formed, it literally means tapestry. It's God who wove you into who you are, and he considers you a masterpiece. He was there and he doesn't care what anyone else thinks, he doesn't care what the world says, because you're his and you're special in his sight.

Psalm 139:13–16 (NKJV) ¹³ For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.

Who does he Look Like?

A true story from way back. A man grew up as the son of the town prostitute. The town joke was him; they would say, "who does he look like? They would not allow him in the stores or on the walkway. He started to go to go to church, and he met the Pastor. The Pastor said, "you know who you look like? And the man thought to himself, the last person I expected it from was the Pastor. Pastor said, "you look like the son of God, go claim your inheritance." He was two times elected governor of his state.

Spoiler Alert

Hey, here's a spoiler alert regarding Jephthah. I'll tell you in advance before we read it because we won't finish it all today, but God will use Jephthah in a mighty way and he'll use you also. He doesn't care what the world thinks of you, he doesn't care what the Church thinks about you, he doesn't care what your family thinks about you, he thinks of you. He thinks great things of you, and he is a God who doesn't look for where you've been and what you qualify for, he will qualify you. He will make you into who you are and use you as he wants to, and we're going to see. Everybody rejected Jephthah, son of a harlot, get out of our family, get out of our home, we don't want nothing to do with you, but we see God will do great and mighty things regardless of them.

People Judge without Facts / Or Know the Heart of God

There will be those in the family who will judge you without all the facts of who you are and what lies in your heart and what you need to know is that God knows. Those people make their judgment without all the facts and they say the things that hurt pierce you deep to the very core of your being that you have to know that God knows, God loves you, God knows your heart he knows what your intentions are and you have to look beyond man's wounds and look to the wounds of God who went to the cross for you so that he might sit at the right hand of the throne of God and live to make intercession for you as he does even when the world and they were believers have made a false assumption of you. They thought that he wasn't worthy to be there brother but they didn't know what was in his heart for God did God's going to raise him up because God knows what's in his heart

Hall of Faith

And if you need any more confirmation regarding this, go to the Hall of Faith

Hebrews 11:32–34 (NKJV) ³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: ³³ who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Judges 11:2 Gilead's wife bore sons; and when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out, and said to him, "You shall have no inheritance in our father's house, for you are the son of another woman."

Gilead – Chasing Flesh / An AWOL Father

Verse 2: There's no mention of where the father, Gilead, is, what is involvement was in the lives of his sons and in the life of Jephthah, but, clearly, the brothers are united and they hate him and they have hostility towards him so much that Jephthah can sense it and he flees. He's not driven out, he runs out. Whatever the case was, I just want to see and say his father is either dead or was an AWOL father, not there for his sons, and what we can clearly see is Gilead, the father did not invest in the things of the Lord, with the sons, and I think this relationship with the harlot demonstrates where his heart ... He was too busy chasing the pleasures of the world, the pleasures of the flesh, rather than investing in his children, and I just want to take that as a message to all of us dads.

Present – But Absent

Here we see again, just like Gideon, we see another dad whose pleasing of the flesh causes serious problems through the whole family, and there was consequences for it. May we not be AWOL fathers. One of the things I say about that, I can be so consumed and overloaded with the cares of the world, with my job, cares of the world with even ministry and serving the Lord that I can totally overlook the most immediate near-term ministry, that's my wife and my children. Then, there's even the other places that I call present, but absent. Physically present with them, but my mind and my heart is absent from them because I'm still thinking about what needed to be done, what's not done, what I'm going to do, and those things are consuming my mind, and so the very time that I have with them, I'm totally wasting it and not investing in them. Be careful about that, dads, and again, we see a picture here. We must be fathers that invest in our children.

Judges 11:3 Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob; and worthless men banded together with Jephthah and went out raiding with him.

Worthless Men / Tob – Wild West

Verse 3: So, it says that he gathered worthless men. That means men just like him, vain men, empty men, men that had no families, men that had empty lives because nobody else wanted them, so they gather and rally around each other. They live in this town called Tob, which as described though the historical writings is it's like a wild wild west city. It was lawless and rough guys lived in that town, guys who took the mufflers off of their donkeys so they would rev loud and hard and be heard, guys with cut-off sleeves, and all those types of things. This is where Jephthah and his men are living because it's the only place that they could live because they weren't accepted anywhere else.

Raid the Ammonites

But, we read that they went out raiding. Who would they be raiding, literally, they're raiding the Ammonites. The Ammonites are giving Israel a hard time for 18 years, but, here, Jephthah, he's giving the Ammonites a hard time for 18 years by raiding them. It's interesting and I think what we'll see is the Ammonites know who he is, and so when he stands up as a leader, they recognize his leadership and they don't slap him down and say, "Who are you?" They apparently and obviously have heard of him.

Judges 11:4 It came to pass after a time that the people of Ammon made war against Israel.

Judges 11:5 And so it was, when the people of Ammon made war against Israel, that the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob.

Judges 11:6 Then they said to Jephthah, "Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the people of Ammon."

Judges 11:7 So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "Did you not hate me, and expel me from my father's house? Why have you come to me now when you are in distress?"

Jephthah doing just Fine / Picture of Jesus / Leave Comfort fight for those who Rejected Him

Verse 7: So, what we see here is Jephthah, he's not in distress, he seems to be living just fine. It's the nation of Israel, the ones who is distressed, because Jephthah, he's not saying, "Yeah, they've been giving me a hard time, I'll join you." He's like "What are you calling me for? Now, you guys are having a hard time and now you're coming to me." Here we see Jephthah doing something that so often gets overlooked, but he's fine. His life was okay as it was from a comfort position, but he's willing to leave his comfortable position to go help those who are distressed and oppressed, those who aren't doing well were going to see him be willing to leave his security and step into a fight and a battle, and that's a picture for us. Are we willing to leave our comfortable lives, our comfortable schedules that we have and then leave and go battle for somebody else who is distressed and oppressed, who can't deliver themselves. It's the heart of God, and everyone of these judges, we see a picture in some way, a shadow of Jesus Christ. Here, we see a shadow and picture of Jesus Christ as Jesus was rejected by his own people and yet Jesus will still come and be a rescuer and a savior to the very people that rejects him.

Compromise Leaves You Weak

V7 - they need him because not a man would be man enough to stand - moral compromise will leave you weak, no courage, and no faith. Every day you compromise is a day that you grew weaker rather than stronger

Judges 11:8 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "That is why we have turned again to you now, that you may go with us and fight against the people of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

God Molded a Man

Now this see this God allowed it to shape his character to turn him into the mighty man of valor that God wanted him to be and needed him to be. Joseph rejected by his brothers thrown in the pit thrown in the prison then took to the palace to deliver a whole nation And Jesus rejected by his very own so that he might deliver the whole world

Nothing Ever Wasted

Nothing ever wasted with the past experiences I'm good or bad you never wasted I think simply we go here's what I got how do you want to use.

God will Use Your Gifts

I want you to see here, God will use your skills even if they originally or have not been used for his glory. We see in Verse 1, that he was a man of valor, as he's raiding the Ammonites. God is going to use that skill that he developed raiding the Ammonites to go defeat the Ammonites. In Verse 3, as he would go raiding as a man of valor, we see that he knows guerrilla warfare, because he's not going to go and defeat these guys head to head. He's not going to defeat the Ammonite army, so he must be doing guerrilla warfare, night raiding, sneak around attacks and these type of things, and he's going to use them in his battle against the Ammonites of what he's been doing with his everyday life, he's going to use now for the glory of God in the ministry, and God will do the same for you.

God will use Your Background

God will use all of your background and experience. So often we want to separate it. This is what I do for a living and this is what I can do for the Church, because we don't realize so often the things we do for a living, so often the things we're good at in our home, whatever they may be are the very things that are needed in the ministry. We try to separate them not realizing that God gave them for me. I'll let you use them for your livelihood, and your personal life and enjoyment, but they're created to use for me, for my glory, in my Church to minister to my body, and therefore, that's why you have these gifts you just happen to be making a living with them.

We Often Think God Cant Use Them

I think we often think also, God can't use this, it's only good for the world to which I think we deceive ourselves, we sell ourselves short, but it's not just for the world, it's something that God says, "Let me use," and sometimes we get embarrassed by that. I'm reminded of the boy with five loaves and two fish and the disciple brings him and says, "Hey, we've got this little boy here, five loaves and two fish," and you can almost hear the embarrassment, chuckle underneath with the uncomfortable look of, "well, what's that among so many." What they don't realize at that point was that it was great and mighty and could be turned into something for many. What they might have come with in embarrassment, they would later look back and learn and go, "Wow, what I thought was too little, what I thought wasn't enough, what I thought was kind of a foolish offering, here I can see God uses it and does great things with it," and so, too, will he for you.

John 6:8-10 (NKJV) ⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹ "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" ¹⁰ Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

Talk to Church – We will Find Place for Your Gifts

Talk to me, tell me what you're good at, tell me what you want to be used by the Lord, tell me what you have a skill and a gifting of and who knows what God might do. I'm saying this jokingly, but it is kind of funny in one sense, but not really is last week, when I came in, I had my personal recorder, it's called a Zoom recorder. It's a high quality recorder; we use it to record things for our website and the radio, and I was putting it in the shelf, Jeremy was standing in front of me, and he goes, "Oh, the good old Zoom recorder." I said to him, "This is a unique recorder. You know about this recorder?" He says, "Yeah, I use it at work in our media department." I said, "Are you serious? I have struggled for over 30 days trying to learn how to use this recorder and how to set the levels and what microphones work with it and how it can, what quality of recording can it go, and all of these type of things," and here, all along was somebody, literally three feet away from me, who knew how to use this recorder. We think, "Oh, what's that, among so many, who cares that I know how to use a Zoom recorder." We just never know what God's going to do.

Be ready to do Small Things

But you have to be ready to do the small things, for a lot of people have a hard transition from business world into church world and sometimes they feel that the task they being asked of their gift is too low for them and therefore their gifts don't get used because they despise the day of small things.

Wisdom World doesn't Fit in Church

And be careful not to try to apply the wisdom of the world, the business world, into the church, for the church isn't a business, it is the body of God, and must be led by the wisdom of God, not the wisdom of the world.

Judges 11:9 So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "If you take me back home to fight against the people of Ammon, and the LORD delivers them to me, shall I be your head?"

Look at Humility

In verse nine, look at the humility. Recognize that Jephthah recognizes here that the battle belongs to the Lord and he's humble about that and he knows he can have no victory unless the Lord gives it to him. This is who this man is.

Great Faith to Fight with Weakness

Verse nine. Jephthah has great faith and great faith in the Lord because we have to recognize that he is going to go to war with a bunch of men who were afraid to fight for eighteen years and yet, he's going to rally these men, compromised for eighteen years who are afraid to stand up and fight for eighteen years. He's going to rally them to go fight.

Great Lesson – One Man/Woman can Rally a Whole Group

But there is a lesson to be seen here and that is one man, one woman willing to fight can turn the hearts of the weak to strength to make them mighty men and mighty women of valor. Will you be that person today? That's the challenge the Lord will have for you.

Judges 11:10 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, “The LORD will be a witness between us, if we do not do according to your words.”

Judges 11:11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words before the LORD in Mizpah.

Mizpah

Mizpah means “may the Lord watch over You”, it's not an endearing word. It's, they don't trust each other.

Up the Ante

Verses eight through eleven, we see back in six that, come be a commander over us. He's not into that, so they have to up the ante in verse eight. They have to come and say, be over us. Be over us as a leader, as the whole nation, not just the war. You know what? Hear these men who are coming, these elders. Eighteen years ago, they went and worshiped false gods. They weren't man enough to fight. They didn't have the strength and the courage to stand up and fight eighteen years ago and now here they are in this position that they're continuously oppressed. That's what compromised will always does. It always leaves us vulnerable. It always make us have to commit the things that we really don't want to. They really don't want Jephthah to be their commander, but because they wouldn't fight at the beginning here they are, they're too weak to fight now. They don't have the strength. They don't know how to fight because of all these eighteen years they've just been rolling over and letting themselves be walked over. Here's what happens. For eighteen years they become weaker every year and for eighteen years their enemy because stronger. As they were being oppressed the enemy was taking their things and getting stronger and able to strengthen their military with equipment and animals and recruitment of people and here they're giving those things away and they can't make themselves stronger. Here they are, the enemy that they once had defeated, has now regrouped and re-strengthened and formed an army against them that they can't defeat because their strength is greater than them because they were afraid to fight in the beginning.

Is there Something Needs to be Crushed in Your Life?

Christian, is there something in your life right now that needs to be crushed? Is there something in your life right now that needs to be dealt with and it's still early enough to do it? You need to do it today. You can't let it strengthen and gain a foothold and then a mountain hold over you. You have to crush it now before it makes its way out of the valley that you have put it into. The enemy will continuously come back.

Judges 11:12 Now Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon, saying, “What do you have against me, that you have come to fight against me in my land?”

Wisdom in Diplomacy / End the Fight before it Begins

Verse 12: For a fighter, Jephthah is pretty smart, pretty wise. He's not the wild wild west guy like we might have pictured him to be as he's rejected, the son of a harlot, and he's going out raiding. Look at this, he starts with diplomacy to see if it can be worked out and resolved peaceably. You know, it matters how you say something and with what attitude. Just imagine if we stopped a battle before it started and said, "Hold on, now. Why are you mad at me? What has brought this on? Can we resolve this? Can we work this out? Maybe there's a misunderstanding. Let me understand why you are upset. I would like to resolve this peaceably." This approach, it applies between believer and unbeliever. We're told in the scriptures to live peaceably with all people if possible. How many times

do we wish we could have stopped a war before it started by just saying, "Hey, let's talk about this. Is there a misunderstanding?" We might find that we were the one who was wrong, or we might find that they totally took something that was small and minuscule and turned it into a mountain and that Satan got hold of them and worked on them and worked on them and then they believed the lie, and even though they're worked up, possibly by interceding and saying, "Can we resolve this," it could be resolved without a battle, without going to war.

Judges 11:13 And the king of the people of Ammon answered the messengers of Jephthah, "Because Israel took away my land when they came up out of Egypt, from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok, and to the Jordan. Now therefore, restore those lands peaceably."

Here is Why

Verse thirteen the king responds here's why he's doing what he's doing.

Jephthah is Known Among the Enemy / Does Enemy Know Your Name / He still will Come Against You

We see that Jephthah is known among the Ammonites to which I ask myself and after pondering that all week, I can now ask you, "Does the enemy know your name?" If he does, I want you to know, even if he knows your name, he still always thinks he can take you down. He's willing to lose ninety nine battles out of one hundred to win the big one, the one that ends you, the one that silences you, the one that wipes out your family, and maybe wipes out your whole life. The enemy continues with the relentless attack. The enemy never retreats against you. The enemy only reloads, so don't be surprised. He's going to continually come and he's willing to lose ninety nine to win that last one that wipes you out. How do we counter it? We have to be relentless ourselves. We have to understand there is a peace that only comes on the other side of the war and that peace for us may not come until the other side of the war that is eternal and we step into glory with him. Keep pushing hard. Don't look for rest. Be relentless. Look for battle everyday.

Judges 11:14 So Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon,

Judges 11:15 and said to him, "Thus says Jephthah: 'Israel did not take away the land of Moab, nor the land of the people of Ammon;

Judges 11:16 for when Israel came up from Egypt, they walked through the wilderness as far as the Red Sea and came to Kadesh.

Judges 11:17 Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, "Please let me pass through your land."

But the king of Edom would not heed. And in like manner they sent to the king of Moab, but he would not consent. So Israel remained in Kadesh.

Judges 11:18 And they went along through the wilderness and bypassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab, came to the east side of the land of Moab, and encamped on the other side of the Arnon. But they did not enter the border of Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab.

Judges 11:19 Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon; and Israel said to him, "Please let us pass through your land into our place."

Judges 11:20 But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory. So Sihon gathered all his people together, encamped in Jahaz, and fought against Israel.

Judges 11:21 And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they defeated them. Thus Israel gained possession of all the land of the Amorites, who inhabited that country.

Ammonites versus Amorites

Verse twenty-one, don't confuse the Ammonites with the Amorites. It's an easy confusion but here Jephthah, he's telling them, this battle that we had three hundred years was with the Amorites. It wasn't even with you, so I'm not sure why you're even getting involved in this like it was something to do with you. Big difference between the Ammonites and the Amorites.

Judges 11:22 They took possession of all the territory of the Amorites, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan.

Jephthah knows His History & Word

Verse fourteen through twenty-two we still see diplomacy. Jephthah, he's responded and wow. He knows the word of God. Everything he has said is in exact accordance of how it played out with Moses and the children of Israel after the exodus from Egypt when we read that account in Deuteronomy, chapter two. Can I say this Christian, and what an example we have here in Jephthah, is be ready to give an answer. We need to be a people who know our Word and to be ready to counter the airs and errant principles of the world today. People speak on God's behalf who have never read the word of God. We need to be a people that constantly take them back to the world of God and say, this is what the word of God says. What you're saying is not what is written and if we can get them to the word, we've got them to Jesus Christ Himself, because he is the word.

1 Peter 3:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

USA Fool to Force Land Issue on Israel

Here we are, the debate over who owns the land of Israel. This debate is almost thirty-five hundred years ago, and you know what? The debate has not ended still to this day. I'll say this. Just as Jephthah said, according to the word of God, the land is Israel. God said that it is because the Bible records it as such. The land is Israel's. I say this to United States of America and to any and every politician and anybody who wants to support a politician, the U.S. is a fool to try to step in and make Israel divide up their land, or to tell Israel what land is theirs and what land isn't. What the United States of America has to do is agree with what the word of God says and then let God take it from there. At best, just be quiet United States of America. I tremble for America when they go in and they force Israel and hold money or partnership or alliance and allying with them in any way based on here's what you must do with land. Genesis chapter twelve, verse three, God says, I will bless those who bless Israel and I will curse those who curse Israel. I will never support or agree with any politician who tries to force Israel to give up land. I say just stay out of it. To force them in any way can bring a cursing of God upon the nation that has intervened in that way.

Genesis 12:1-3 (NKJV) ¹ Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. ² I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Judges 11:23 'And now the LORD God of Israel has dispossessed the Amorites from before His people Israel; should you then possess it?

Judges 11:24 Will you not possess whatever Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever the LORD our God takes possession of before us, we will possess.

Should have Hit Send Button

Verse twenty-three, twenty-four, he probably should've hit the send button at the end of verse twenty-two. Twenty-three, twenty-four, he's rising up and he's building up for war and as we have studied in times past in the Proverb, a soft answer turns away wrath.

Proverbs 15:1 (NKJV) ¹ A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

Judges 11:25 And now, are you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel? Did he ever fight against them?

Balak didn't ask for Land back

Verse twenty five Jephthah saying, "Balak didn't say, 'Hey, give me my land back,' and here you are trying to say it, that's ridiculous

Judges 11:26 While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along the banks of the Arnon, for three hundred years, why did you not recover them within that time?

300 Years – Just now Bringing this Up

Verse twenty-five and twenty-six, Jephthah says, what are you just now bring this up for? Three hundred years ago and now you're just bringing this up again? So much for the diplomacy. Jephthah's really letting it rip now and giving him what he thinks of them and I think we all know what the result of that is. I do find it interesting, so many times that people, Jephthah is saying this is three hundred years old. You're just now bringing it up to us? I think

there's so many times people bring stuff up and you're like, what are you talking about, and they go, back in two thousand and seven, and you're like, you mean something that was nine years ago? I can't even remember something that's nine days ago and you've been holding onto this for nine years? So many times people just carry this stuff and that's why it's good to spring that diplomacy and say, wait, let's talk about this. You've been carrying this for a long time. Let's get to the bottom of this before we get to this place of aggression and these type of things.

Must Know Our History

So we say, take away a heritage of the people and they're easily persuaded. Spoken by none other than Karl Marx, the author of The Communist Manifesto. When you forget your nation's history, then the enemy can have his way with you and do as he pleases and that's what's trying to happen here in our nation. Has the principles of the nation that were established on the biblical principles of Jesus Christ are slowly being stripped away and the people are forgetting the nation's history and therefore, are willing and they easily give things away and just say, "Okay. Well I guess, I never really did own them." Jephthah give us the example. "They're ours and you can't have them. God gave them to us and I'm going to defend them," and that's what we need to be. We need to be of people who defend the faith and that we say, "This is the history of America." That study's out online. You can listen to it. I don't know what page.

Jephthah Knew his History & Bible / Even after being Rejected / Doesn't Matter what Others Say/Done

Jephthah knew his history. He knew his bible and he doesn't let other Christians, so called a family keep him from that word. Jephthah's brothers cast him out. Jephthah's family didn't want him because of his past, but I want you to see something here and we need to apply it for ourselves. His family lineage didn't keep him from becoming a man of the word. What his family thought of him as brothers and sisters didn't keep him from being a man of the word. What his countrymen thought of him didn't keep him from being a man of the word and that is for you today.

It doesn't matter what your brothers, your sisters think of you. It doesn't matter what the world thinks of you. It doesn't matter what the church says or this group of Christians or whatever. It doesn't matter if a church or a group of Christians kicked you out of their circle, don't take that as an excuse to walk away from the Lord and don't take that as an excuse to not be in His word. Don't take that as, "This Jesus thing just isn't going to work for me." No. Go numb, go with me, still I will follow. That's what you have to say. They all reject me, you haven't reject me and I will continue on with you, so don't turn back Christian, be relentless. No retreating but just reloading because we got a long battle to go and we got a long way to go in it.

Judges 11:27 Therefore I have not sinned against you, but you wronged me by fighting against me. May the LORD, the Judge, render judgment this day between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon.' "

Judges 11:28 However, the king of the people of Ammon did not heed the words which Jephthah sent him.

Still Comes without Cause

The king of Ammon is still coming, without cause and justification. Don't be surprised when the same happens to you. There may be times and circumstances where you are saying where in the world is this coming from, why are you saying this and coming at me like this, this is baseless and unfounded. But the flesh doesn't care, Satan doesn't care, it will just keep coming and coming, because the enemy never backs off, he simply reloads.

How Could God of Love Destroy Nations

How can a God of love destroy whole nations? What we see here with Jephthah sending diplomatic relations is God's grace he's giving them opportunities stand-down, but the King of Ammon doesn't, he rejects God's grace. God's love and grace is still love and grace, even if it is rejected.

Stay on the Word – Not Human Wisdom

Here's what I absolutely love about this Jephthah is that he's speaking to an unbeliever who's in extreme disagreement with him but all through this, Jephthah stays in the context of the word. He stays in the context as we see the word, the history, of a land based on the word. Secondly we see the self-evaluation that when he

regards himself he speaks, I have not sinned. I have not broken the word of God, and then thirdly he stays true that there's one true God, and it's Jehovah and it's not the God of the Ammonites who is Chemosh. All through this he continuously speaks the word of God.

Be Smart During Election

Be smart during this election time. We have two candidates who just are open mouth and let it rip and such mud slinging, such negativism, just such tearing down and it's easy for us to get dragged into that mindset as politics come up. Which it does, whether it's at a dinner table or at a coffee break room, people start picking sides and they start becoming very passionate about the side that they're on and it's easy for us to get on and get into the same character as them and speak with such a negative approach, speak with downright hatred or anger and speak with just such worldly reasoning, whereas that's not what God calls us to do. We're to stay in our true character at all times and it's the character of Jesus Christ. We're to represent Him all times in love and we're to stay peaceable and we're to stay gentle and kind and when we have these conversations, make sure you ask yourself, is what I'm going to say next anointed by God? Is this coming from Him or am I just speaking? Then, ask yourself, how can I respond to this particular situation, whether political or anything else and how can I respond with a Biblical principle, with a Biblical story, that we continuously stay in the character of our Lord Jesus Christ and don't come into the character of how the world handles these things?

Word needs to be Basis – Regardless whether Unbeliever

The word needs to be the basis, regardless whether it's believed or not with whoever we talk to. That's even Christians. Doesn't matter whether you believe this word, I stick to the basis. I'm not coming to change, you don't believe this, let me try something else to convince you. We stay with the word whether they believe the word or not just like this king in Ammon. We don't see Jephthah trying to do some other type of work around for peace. He came with the word, the word was rejected. He doesn't say, how about if we divide the land, or how about if we pay you some type of tribute? How about, he doesn't do any of those things. He's like, I gave you the word. It wasn't good enough for you, so now here we move on and here's how we're going to respond to that.

Give Counsel that is Sure – Anointed Words

It's the same, when I talk to an unbeliever with marriage problems, I take them to the word of God. I got lots of great marriage principles based on the word of God, but I'm not going to give them those principles without it being clarified, this is the word of God, because those principles will work for a while but they will utterly fail in the end unless you go to the word that can change, the word that's empowered, and that the word is very from the throne of God Himself. That's the same when you're having discussions of addictions or anything else. Take them to the word and talk the word and stay on the word regardless, because I know I stand on solid ground, right or wrong, to their response, but I know I'm on solid ground and that I can walk away and say, I gave them a word that can change their marriage. I gave them a word that can change their lives, because when I talk to people struggling with drugs and alcohol I know my very word could change their lives and change it for the worst, that they could go and harm themselves in some way, because I didn't give them the word and they go and they're depressed and they have no hope. It's the same when I speak of marriage, when I speak to unbelievers about their marriage, I stick to the word and the heart of the word, Jesus Christ and know that if they divorce I gave them true word. I'm very careful because we can give counsel that has them say, you know what? I'm walking away. If we don't give them godly counsel they can say, I'm walking away. As I always say, we don't have to live with our opinion and so, we walk away and we go to dinner and watch a movie. They walk away, they divorce and now their marriage, their life, is changed forever and their children are changed and impacted forever and they impact those children who will have children, could go on and on for generations because of our one word that we did not stop and go, is this word anointed?

Peace on Other Side of War

Verse twenty-eight, but this king of the Ammonites he's not going to listen to the logical reasoning. He's not going to listen to the Biblical position. He's not going to even listen to the theology of is your god wanted you have it why didn't He take it three hundred years ago and so here they are, war is staged. What I have to say to you Christian in the example is sometimes there is a peace that only comes on the other side of war.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 11:29-40

Recap

We are in Judges 11. Israel has been oppressed and distressed by the Ammonites now for 18 years. Israel got sick and tired of being sick and tired, and cried out to the Lord to deliver them, rescue them, and God's heart was moved by their cries and He raises up a man to deliver them from their oppression, and that man is Jephthah. Jephthah was a son of a harlot, he was rejected by his family and tribe, he was driven out by their hatred towards him and went and lived apart from them. But Israel needed a leader to go fight the Ammonites, and they come calling to Jephthah who has experience in fighting. Last week we saw him trying to negotiate a peace deal with the King of Ammon, trying to use reasoning over a sword, but the King of Ammon would have none of it, the King of Ammon is set on conquering Israel and possessing their land, and so we pick it up here in verse 29, as the battle lines have been drawn, and war is on the horizon.

Remind You

May I remind you, this is not only history, but your God wants to use these examples to equip us and conform us into the image of Christ, and to give us practical examples and guidance on how to live a life that is set apart and sold out for God and His glory (For His Glory, and Our Good).

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

1 Corinthians 10:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Read Judges 11:29-40

Judges 11:29-40 (NKJV) ²⁹ Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced toward the people of Ammon. ³⁰ And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, ³¹ then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering." ³² So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and the LORD delivered them into his hands. ³³ And he defeated them from Aroer as far as Minnith—twenty cities—and to Abel Keramim, with a very great slaughter. Thus the people of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel. ³⁴ When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, there was his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels and dancing; and she was his only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter. ³⁵ And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he tore his clothes, and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! You are among those who trouble me! For I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot go back on it." ³⁶ So she said to him, "My father, if you have given your word to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, because the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the people of Ammon." ³⁷ Then she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and bewail my virginity, my friends and I." ³⁸ So he said, "Go." And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains. ³⁹ And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man. And it became a custom in Israel ⁴⁰ that the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

Outline Judges 11:29-40:

- You Need the Holy Spirit to Come upon You (v29)
- The Word is the Inspired Word of God (v29)
- Commitments Cure Complacency (v30-31)
- Parents our Decisions Affect our Kids (v32-35)
- Look at this Amazing Young Woman (v36-40)
- Christian, Is Every Word You Speak Anointed? (v40)

You Need the Holy Spirit to Come upon You (v29)

Judges 11:29 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced toward the people of Ammon.

You Need the Spirit / Baptism - Supply

Verse 29, Jephthah has the Spirit of God come upon him. He's one of a handful of judges who we will read about that will have the Spirit come upon them (Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson); but I believe that the Spirit of the Lord came upon all the Judges, but it just wasn't noted accordingly, because every great leader of God needs the

Spirit of the Lord upon them. We need this Spirit to come upon us so that we might have the supply of God for the battle that is before us.

1st Baptisms

There are two baptisms of the Holy Spirit and many Christians get very confused about it. Let me just summarize it. In the first baptism it means filling, supplying. The first one is when a person receives Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. It says that they are filled, baptized, sealed with the Holy Spirit, that is God Himself literally taking up residence inside of you. The book of Ephesians tells us it's God's promise, it's His down payment, it is His guarantee that we are His and that He's coming back for us, His personal possession.

John 20:22 (NKJV) ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

When God comes and takes up residence, tabernacles, dwells, in you – that is literally what it means to be born-again, because wherever God is, there is life.

John 3:3 (NKJV) ³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

2nd Baptism

Then, the second baptism, for the first one is one and done forever; there is no subsequent baptism. Once a person gives their heart and life to Jesus Christ they are sealed and saved. The second baptism, and we see that after Jesus breathed on His disciples (John 20:22), he would later tell them to tarry (wait) for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The first, breathing on, was that receiving and sealing for salvation, but He tells them to tarry because that is the second baptism, and that is to receive the supply (for that what baptism means), the empowerment, for the work of the ministry that God would have you to do. We read about that in the book of Acts. What else we read is, it's a continual need, a continual supply, because as you give out and pour out in the works of the ministry you are emptying the supply that you have and, therefore, is why you will need to be re-filled, have subsequent fillings of the Holy Spirit. Those are the two baptisms of the Holy Spirit upon the believer.

Luke 24:46–49 (NKJV) ⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Acts 1:4–8 (NKJV) ⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 2:1–4 (NKJV) ¹ When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 4:31 (NKJV) ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

We must wait for it – tarry and ask the Lord for this Supply/Baptism of the Holy Spirit

YOU CAN'T HAVE INSTANT GOD! – Jim Cymbala

Jephthah is receiving a supply of the Holy Spirit to go do the battle that is before him. There is an example for us here in the book of Judges, just as we see Peter and Paul in the book of Acts getting his supply of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 4:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel:

Acts 13:9 (NKJV) ⁹ Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

How do you Receive the Holy Spirit?

How do you receive the Holy Spirit, you simple ask.

Luke 11:11–13 (NKJV) ¹¹ *If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

Recommended Reading – Living Water by Chuck Smith

Speaking of the Holy Spirit, I would encourage you to read Pastor Chuck Smith's book "Living Water" which gives a great breakdown on the Holy Spirit, the works of the Holy Spirit, in a person's life. It takes you to the depths that you get a great and tremendous understanding of the Holy Spirit, but it is not written so deep and so theologically that it gets laborious and overwhelming that you quit reading it after the first chapter. It's a rather short book considering that it's about the third person of the Trinity, but I think it's at just the right level for each of us.

The Word is the Inspired Word of God (v29)

The Word is Inspired

Just to look back on verses 14 through 28 of chapter 10, why didn't the Spirit of the Lord come upon Jephthah when he was reasoning with the King of Ammon? I'll tell you why. Jephthah was reciting the Word of God, and the Word of God is God himself for the word became flesh. The very word that you hold in your hand is not merely a book of black ink on white pages with some red words through it. It's literally inspired by God himself, the Spirit of God that gives life to it for scripture's given by inspiration of God we are told. I just make the point, the word is inspired. The Spirit is upon the word, and every time you use it, do you use it wisely? Do you use it correctly? That word is inspired.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

The Sweetness of this Book

Oh the sweetness of this Word of God, what a treasure we hold in our hands. I pray you search the Scriptures, I pray you eat and chew, meditate day and night on this Word, for it is life changing. It is God's Word to change us into His image.

Psalms 19:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ *More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.*

Study this Book

Study this book, for in it is the very breath of God breathed upon you, spoken to you.

2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV 1900) ¹⁵ *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

Commitments Cure Complacency (v30-31)

Judges 11:30 And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands,

Judges 11:31 then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

Human Sacrifice Strictly Forbidden

Human sacrifice was strictly forbidden by the Mosaic Law in passages such as Leviticus 18:21 and Deuteronomy 12:31. It is almost certain that Jephthah was familiar with such passages because when he negotiated with the Ammonites he demonstrated that he knew God's Word.

Verse 29 – The March towards the Battle / The Gravity of the Situation Comes Upon him

Back in verses 29, notice how the details of the march towards the battle is written out. The people are coming, and you can picture it. After eighteen years of being oppressed, eighteen years of people being sick and tired of being sick and tired, the whole nation is stirred and the excitement is running that we're going to war. We have a

warrior with much experience who has a repeated history of victories over this enemy. People are now getting excited. Their day of deliverance is coming. They hear it's Jephthah. As Jephthah marches, or maybe he's riding on a donkey or horse, as he's going through, the townspeople, the word's going out before them, and people are running to give their words of encouragement and to cheer him on, to let them know that they support him and that they love him for what he's doing. Now, you can start gathering what this picture's like.

- The little kids do what little kids will do. It's war time, so these kids are grabbing their sticks and their playing war and hitting each other with the swords.
- The elderly men, who are too frail to fight, they're coming out and they're cheering him on. They're giving that look, "I wish I could go. If I had the strength, I'd be with you, but I give my heart and my strength to you in spirit. Please, go fight for me for the fight that I can no longer do because of my old age."
- Elderly women coming out. Here's all the mothers that he's never had as he was born to the harlot. All the mothers that everyone else had, now they're all his mothers.
- Here comes young maidens, pregnant. Jephthah knows what an overrunning army of the Ammonites will do to that woman. She can't run, and she can't hide.
- The young maidens who are virgins. Jephthah knows what's going to happen to them if the Ammonites come out and overrun them. What their life will be. Just imagine it.

I believe the weight and gravity of the situation has come upon him. He now realizes, "They're all looking to me. I've committed myself to being their rescuer and their deliverer. If I fail them, it's just not me now. It's all the nation, because, after everything I've said to this Ammonite king, there will be no mercy. He will come with full vengeance and full death and slaughter. The women will be raped. The women will be enslaved. The young boys will be taken in to become slaves, and all the men will be killed. I've now put all the Nation of Israel into this situation.

"Before I could do guerrilla tactics, hit and run. I only had me and my family to worry about, but there's no hitting and running, there's no hiding. I'm a marked man forever, and I've just stepped the whole nation up into a battle." Wow. What the gravity of the situation must now be upon him.

Dads, you ever feel like that? You ever look at something, a decision that you make, a decision that you're going to make, and you say, "Oh my goodness, what am I doing? What if this goes wrong? How greatly this can affect my family." I remember when Camden was only a few months old, I think he was about four months old, Renee was at the women's Bible study, I was down in my office studying, Camden was in his car seat that was placed next to me at my study, and we had just decided to move out of our townhouse into a single family home which was double the price. I remember sitting there going, "Oh Lord. Did I make the right decision? I had things so easy here in the townhouse, do I really need to expand into a bigger house?" I looked at Camden, and all the weight and gravity of the situation just collapsed upon me as I said, "If I've made a mistake, if I put myself in a position that I could bring a financial ruin upon my family, what have I done? Look how it's going to affect you." I remember just the weight of that decision, because it was such a large decision. Here we are Jephthah got this mountain upon his shoulder of what he's just committed the Nation of Israel to. Now, that sets him up for what he'll do next with this foolish file.

Even Spirit-filled can get in Flesh

Even a Spirit-filled man can do foolish things. The Holy Spirit does not overwhelm and control us, He guides us—and that guidance can be resisted or ignored at smaller or greater points.

The Gravity of the Situation – Resort to the Tactics of the Flesh

With the weight of what just happened, I think we see even this man of faith, even this man who the Spirit is upon him, he now is finding himself in a place, "Oh boy. What have I just done?" To blow all of our minds of everything that we just read about him, here we come and we see a man who's trying to make a bargain with God. "I'm going to make a deal with you God. Hopefully, by doing so, I can influence you to come to my side. That I can influence you to do this for me and favor my outcome."

Who did he Think would Greet him / My dog – Camden Greeting me

He's making this deal with God thinking that, "Somehow I can influence God by holding out some bargain." How foolish. Who was he expecting to greet him? Surely he didn't think that it's God because we see his reaction that he didn't expect it to be her. Could it be that he was expecting it to be one of his servants? He very well could have servants now because remember, he went out raiding. Could it be a family member? We have to leave that option open. Could it be a pet? I really don't know how Israel lived that time with pets but I know if I was to make this vow that my golden retriever would just about guarantee to be the sacrifice because that's who I know jumps up and greets me every day.

It is interesting as I was studying this and thinking this over on Monday when I pulled into the driveway, Camden came running from inside the house out to greet me with that beautiful smile of his and that precious angelic face of his, running and skipping and giving me a hug and saying, "Daddy." I can tell you this, at that moment as I was contemplating Jephthah and his daughter, I could absolutely 100% relate of what he felt like when his daughter came out. Whatever he thinks is going to come out, he definitely was considering it a sacrifice, because if it costs nothing, it means nothing and he would know to offer God something that means nothing to him would mean nothing to God.

The Sacrifice would Cost him – Meant Something to Him

He's making a vow trying to break a deal with God by offering sacrifice, something that will cost him. Therefore, whatever he's going to sacrifice, it does mean something to him but I can tell by his reaction of his daughter coming out, his sacrifice wasn't all the way up to the level of his daughter.

Why do we Make Vows / Dishonorable versus Honorable

Why do we make vows to God?

- Sometimes we make these vows and they're dishonorable and we think we could actively actually persuade God by a bargain. It's an insult to Him, but as even still today we'll say, "Oh how gracious He is. What a gracious God that He entertains us with our foolishness and not strike us down."
- Sometimes we do it because it's honorable. It's something from our heart. We're not making a vow to broker a deal. We're just making a commitment to Him. "I want you to know my heart Lord. I want you to know where I'm coming from because I love you so much." That's honorable and there is nothing wrong with that as long as it is in accordance with the scriptures.

Psalm 37:4 – Delight thyself in the Lord

Verse 31. Listen, Psalms 37:4 says, "Delight thyself in the Lord and He'll give you the desires of your heart." This is why we make some dumb vows where we think we can bargain with God and persuade Him to our side as if He's sitting there going, "Well, I'm not sure if I really want to give this to you and do this." Then we make this vow and God's like, "Okay, how can I say no now. You persuaded me." Now, delight thyself in the Lord and he'll give you the desires of your heart. God's already put the desire in your heart and that's why it is so pressing against and upon your heart.

Unfortunately, people who think God can be bargained with and persuaded by things, they think that verse means, "If I delight myself in the Lord, if I go to church, if I wake up early and have prayer, if I really show Him how serious I am, He's going to give me that thing that I so want. I want that spouse. I want children. I want ministry. I want that job, so if I wake up early and pray 3 hours and if I go to church every Sunday then I'm going to persuade Him to give me what's on my heart."

Where God's saying, "No, no, I put those desires on your heart. I put them there. See, you delight in Me, and delight Me. We have oneness and communion together. You're my child. I'm your Father and I want to give you these things, and therefore I put the burden on your heart to want them and then when you get them you'll know it's because we delight in each other. You delight in me. I delight in you." It's nothing that you have to twist His arms over. He already wants to give it to you.

Psalm 37:4 (NKJV) ⁴ Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

The Victory was Already Jephthah's – Just go Take it by Faith

As for Jephthah, He already wanted to give you the victory. He raised you up. He ordained it all. The victory was already yours. You had it by faith that God was going to do something. You didn't need to do anything more than go take what God had already given to you, what He had already put in his heart and that's the same for you today Christian. Those desires in your heart for the things that are pleasing to the Lord, the very things that God would want for you, they're from him. He wants to give them to you and simply you need to just wait and watch and move on and take step by step as He would give you. At his time He would give it to you but you need not make no vow or whip anything up to try to have it. It's already yours. It will come in time to pass.

Keep Your Vow / Let Yes be yes

I would just say one more, making vows/oaths to twist God's arms is foolish. It's not of the Lord. Here's a list of scriptures that says don't do it, but if you do make a vow, commitment, God says you better keep it and He's serious about that because He's serious about letting your yes be yes and your word being your word and what He wants to implant in you is that every word you speak is serious and you need to speak with wisdom and you need to speak under the control of the spirit that is in you before you say and make foolish vows.

Matthew 5:33–37 (NKJV) ³³ "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' ³⁴ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; ³⁵ nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷ But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

James 5:12 (NKJV) ¹² But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

Commitments Cure Complacency

There is such great power I'll tell you, in commitments because you know what, commitments cure complacency. When you make a commitment to God, He keeps you from being lazy. We have a saying, "Sign up, show up." That's your commitment. It will keep you from waking up and going, "Well, I don't know. I don't think I ... I think I want to stay home now." Whereas a commitment cures you from becoming complacent.

5 S's

I, therefore, pray every morning. I set myself apart in my prayer time,

- and I offer myself as a living sacrifice to the Lord.
- I then seek to sanctify myself and set myself apart as I literally am asking the Lord to keep me on guard for the wiles of the devil, and that my flesh will not fall to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, because there is no way that if I am engaged in any of those things, in bondage or chained to them in any way, there is no way that I can lead effectively, whether it's my marriage, my children, my ministry, or in the workplace.
- Then I pray to the Lord to give me the heart to serve so as to serve as He did
- Then I call out to the Lord that I need His strength because there is no way that I can do these things in and of my own strength, and I need His Spirit and power to be upon me.
- Then I pray my 5th S. If you notice it was sacrifice, and sanctify, and then serve, and then strength, and my last one that I pray, and I put these Ss' so I can remember them if I don't have time to sit down in front of my computer. It's Solomon, which means wisdom. I call out to the Lord every morning saying, "I have no means in and of my own intellect of the wisdom of how to handle anything that's going to be put before me. I need your wisdom, Lord. Because when leaders lead, great and mighty things happen, but here we see a calling, leaders be ready to lead.

1 John 2:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

My morning commitment if nothing else, is a reminder of what is important to me, and how I am to live differently from the rest of the world

Parents our Decisions Affect our Kids (v32-36)

Judges 11:32 So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and the LORD delivered them into his hands.

Judges 11:33 And he defeated them from Aroer as far as Minnith—twenty cities—and to Abel Keramim, with a very great slaughter. Thus the people of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

Israel Cried – God Delivered

Israel cried out, and God delivered. It was nothing to do with the vow.

Judges 11:34 When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, there was his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels and dancing; and she was his only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter.

Moved from Tob to Mizpah

Verse 34, just make a note there. Jephthah has moved from Tob to Mizpah, so does that change the dynamic of what he would expect? Would him coming home if he was still living in Tob be the same environment of who would come out of the house as compared to now he's in Mizpah? Maybe he has servants that came with being a leadership of Israel. Maybe he's never even been there yet because I don't know how he moved from Tob to Mizpah so quick in this negotiation to go to war and become the king. Not the king but the head over Israel. He might not even know what to expect and that could play it in, and so take away that is, don't make statements, don't make plans, don't arrange things without all the facts or you'll find yourself in some very tough places.

Judges 11:3 (NKJV) ³ Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob; and worthless men banded together with Jephthah and went out raiding with him.

Judges 11:35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he tore his clothes, and said, “Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! You are among those who trouble me! For I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot go back on it.”

Judges 11:36 So she said to him, “My father, if you have given your word to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, because the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the people of Ammon.”

Our Kids Want us to be godly

In this verse, I hear Jephthah's daughter saying, “Dad, you're a man of integrity. Don't back down now.” Parents, our kids want us to be godly. Our kids want us to be people of integrity. Our kids want us to excel in the things of God.

Parents – Our Decisions Impact our Children

Parents may we see decisions we make, agreements we go into, words that we speak how greatly they impact our children. Do you think through all your actions, decisions? Do you pray them through?

Look at this Amazing Young Woman (v36-40)

Judges 11:36 So she said to him, “My father, if you have given your word to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, because the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the people of Ammon.”

Judges 11:37 Then she said to her father, “Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and bewail my virginity, my friends and I.”

Judges 11:38 So he said, “Go.” And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains.

Judges 11:39 And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man. And it became a custom in Israel

Judges 11:40 that the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

What Amazing Young Girl – Willing to Lay life down for Nation

Look at this young girl, wanting to please her father and the Lord, willing to lay down her life and her personal wants and desires to please her Lord and to honor her father. There's something great that was in this girl, something powerful was happening in Jephthah's family if this is the attitude that his daughter would have, "Wow." I wonder if I examined myself close enough is the type of impact I would have on my family right now today?

Everyone did Right on Sight – Yet this Girl Stayed Pure

We're living in a time where everyone did right in their own sight and yet, here's a young girl old enough to understand virginity, old enough to know what comes along with a marriage relationship and she remains pure. What an amazing girl. We see her being dedicated to The Lord, desiring to honor her Lord and desiring to honor her Father, that he might not dishonor The Lord. Don't miss this amazing young woman and miss out on her life as we try to ponder through the vow, what actually happened, how remarkable, she submitted herself for the sake of the nation, recognizing that it was God who gave the victory to her Father and that her nation was now free because of her father and she even owned up to a vow that she didn't make. That part of the victory came because of her Father's vow, even as wrong as we know it was, but she's willing to become a virgin the rest of her life if that's what it means to be devoted to God, say as in serving down at The Tabernacle, where she was even willing to give her life and to be sacrificed. This is an amazing young girl.

Judges 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

You young men and woman, you can do it, you can remain pure even when all the friends around you are doing what is right in their own eyes, you can remain pure and true to your God.

Christian, Is Every Word You Speak Anointed? (v40)

Language – Or/And

Commentator Adam Clarke agreed that according to the most accurate Hebrew scholars, the best translation is I will consecrate it to the LORD, or I will offer it for a burnt-offering. As he wrote, "If it be a thing fit for a burnt-offering, it shall be made one; if fit for the service of God, it shall be consecrated to him."

Judges 11:31 (NKJV) ³¹ then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

Judges 11:31 (Young's Literal Translation) then it hath been, that which at all cometh out from the doors of my house to meet me in my turning back in peace from the Bene-Ammon -- it hath been to Jehovah, or I have offered up for it -- a burnt-offering.

OR – He didn't do it

The questions. The more you study Jephthah's vow, the more puzzling it becomes. He simply could have said, "Lord, if You help me defeat the enemy, when I get home, I'll offer you a generous burnt offering." But he couched his vow in ambiguous terms.

- How did he know who or what would come out of the door of his house? What if the first thing to greet him happened to be an unclean animal that was unacceptable to God? Then he couldn't fulfill his vow! The Hebrew word translated "whatsoever" (KJV) or "whatever" (NASB) is masculine and suggests that he expected to meet a person, but what if that person turned out to be a neighbor's child or a total stranger? What right did Jephthah have to take either life and thereby offer to God a sacrifice that cost him nothing? (See 2 Sam. 24:24.)
- Furthermore, surely Jephthah knew that Jehovah didn't approve of or accept human sacrifices. Jephthah gave evidence of familiarity with the Old Testament Scriptures, and he would have known about Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 22) and the commandments in the Law (Lev. 18:21 and 20:1–5; Deut. 12:31 and 18:10). Granted, the period of the Judges was a spiritually dark era in Israel's history, and the Jews did many things that were wrong,
- but it's doubtful that Jephthah's friends and neighbors would have permitted him to slay his own daughter in order to fulfill a foolish vow. King Saul's soldiers didn't let him kill his son Jonathan, who had violated his father's foolish vow (1 Sam. 14:24–46).

- And where would Jephthah offer his daughter as a sacrifice? Surely he knew that the Lord accepted sacrifices only at the tabernacle altar (Lev. 17:1–9), and that they had to be offered by the levitical priests. He would have to travel to Shiloh to fulfill his vow (Deut. 16:2, 6, 11, 16), and it's doubtful that even the most unspiritual priest would offer a human sacrifice on God's sanctified altar, victory or no victory.
- In fact, if people knew that Jephthah was going to Shiloh to slay his daughter, they probably would have stopped him along the way and kidnapped the girl! A national hero like Jephthah couldn't easily hide what he was doing, and surely the story would have spread quickly among the people during the two-month waiting period (Jdg. 11:37–39).
- But even if he made it safely to Shiloh, Jephthah could have learned from any priest that paying the proper amount of money could have redeemed his daughter (Lev. 27:1–8). As a successful soldier who had just returned from looting the enemy, Jephthah could easily have paid the redemption price.
- Other pertinent questions arise. In spite of Numbers 30:1–2, would God take seriously a vow that violated both human rights and divine law? Would a Spirit-empowered man (Jdg. 11:29), committed to the Lord (11:11), even make such a vow? The more I ponder these questions, the more perplexing his vow becomes and the more convinced I am that Jephthah didn't promise to offer any human sacrifice to the Lord and did not kill his own daughter.
- Solutions. More than one expositor has pointed out that the little word "and" in the phrase "and I will offer it up" (11:31) can be translated "or." (In the Hebrew, it's the letter waw which usually means "and." See the beginning of Ps. 119:41 for an example of what the Hebrew waw looks like.) If we take this approach, then the vow was twofold: Whatever met him when he returned home would be dedicated to the Lord (if a person) or sacrificed to the Lord (if an animal).
- Since he was met by his daughter, Jephthah gave her to the Lord to serve Him at the tabernacle (Ex. 38:8; 1 Sam. 2:22). She remained a virgin, which meant that she would not know the joys of motherhood and perpetuate her father's inheritance in Israel. This would be reason enough for her and her friends to spend two months grieving, for every daughter wanted a family and every father wanted grandchildren to maintain the family inheritance.
- Nowhere in the text are we told that Jephthah actually killed his daughter, nor do we find anybody bewailing the girl's death. The emphasis in Judges 11:37–40 is the fact that she remained a virgin. It's difficult to believe that "the daughters of Israel" would establish a custom to celebrate (not "lament" as in KJV) the awful sacrifice of a human being, but we can well understand that they would commemorate the devotion and obedience of Jephthah's daughter in helping her father fulfill his vow. She deserves to stand with Isaac as a faithful child, who was willing to obey both father and God, no matter what the cost.
- Verse 40: We see that the virgin part is continually is the emphasis of this sorrow and the point being made is more of an issue than the death and that doesn't make sense. Nobody would be like, "Oh, bummer, I'm going to die in two months." Or "Oh, bummer, I'm going to die, but the worst part is, I'm going to die a virgin." It seems to be an indication that she's going to go have her time with her girlfriend's, weeping that she's never going to be a bride, but spending this time before she would go into, basically, solitude of just prayer, wherever it would be, The Tabernacle or whatever would be established for her. Notice that she sticks true to her vow and commitment of purity, she didn't say, "Oh, you're going to kill me, let me go down to Ocean City for the next two months and just live like the heathens." She goes out with her girlfriends, they have a time for two months bewailing the situation, but she doesn't defile herself and go into carnality, that she continues on with the commitment that obvious she has with The Lord. This is an amazing young girl, let's not miss it because we spend all the time looking at the vine.

AND – He did it

But I have a rule in interpreting the scriptures, and that is take everything literal, unless it is clearly not.

So he did because:

- Although he was strong in one part of the word didn't mean he was thoroughly knowledgeable in all parts of the word. Cannot we ourselves relate to that personally
- Jephthah was susceptible to do foolish things, rash things, just as we ourselves are.... Even when we have total love and commitment to the Lord.

- He lived in Tob, the wild west, and for 18 years he watched the other nations around him make human sacrifices
- The Tabernacle may not have been erected and operating because for 18 years Israel played the harlot with the gods of the Canaanites, so there is no Priests to stop him, and say this is wrong, and there is no altar of sacrifice so Jephthah is making his own altar so there is no one to stop him
- The people are afraid to stop him or say anything because they fear him, or they revere him (after all he must hear the voice of God, for he just delivered a miracle of defeating the enemy after 18 years).
- But I have a rule in interpreting the scriptures, and that is take everything literal, unless it is clearly not

Why is it Grey – YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOUR WORDS CAN LEAD TO – Are they Inspired?

Verse 40, why is there some gray, if not absolute gray, trying to figure out what really happened in this story? I believe it's divinely inspired to be that way so that there can be enough uncertainty for us to wonder and to doubt what really happened.

Because we just never know where our words can lead to and we can read this story, and if he only sacrificed his daughter to a life of abstinence and virginity living devoted to the Lord at the temple, serving the Lord at the Tabernacle, then we could read and say, "Well, that wasn't so bad. It could have been worse," well, unless you consider the outcome for the daughter and how her life was changed. If you look at it as if he actually did sacrifice her then we sit in total shock that this foolish vow spoken from his lips, the words of his mouth, changed this daughter's whole life and ultimately changed his whole life because he'll have no offspring. We can sit and say, "Wow, the gravity and magnitude that words can spring."

That is why I believe this is written as such that we'll actually sit and ponder and ask ourselves, "Do the words I speak, do I consider how they can affect my life, or my family's life, or the people around me their life so greatly," and will I say to myself, "Before I speak am what I am going say in accordance with the Word of God," and then, "Is it truly inspired by God?"

Proverbs 18 – Death & Life are in the Tongue

Proverbs 18, verse 21 death and life is in the tongue.

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV) ²¹ Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

But read the whole Proverb to see more words of wisdom regarding our tongue.

Proverbs 18 (NKJV) ¹ A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment. ² A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart. ³ When the wicked comes, contempt comes also; And with dishonor comes reproach. ⁴ The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; The wellspring of wisdom is a flowing brook. ⁵ It is not good to show partiality to the wicked, Or to overthrow the righteous in judgment. ⁶ A fool's lips enter into contention, And his mouth calls for blows. ⁷ A fool's mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul. ⁸ The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body. ⁹ He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer. ¹⁰ The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe. ¹¹ The rich man's wealth is his strong city, And like a high wall in his own esteem. ¹² Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility. ¹³ He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him. ¹⁴ The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, But who can bear a broken spirit? ¹⁵ The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. ¹⁶ A man's gift makes room for him, And brings him before great men. ¹⁷ The first one to plead his cause seems right, Until his neighbor comes and examines him. ¹⁸ Casting lots causes contentions to cease, And keeps the mighty apart. ¹⁹ A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a castle. ²⁰ A man's stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth; From the produce of his lips he shall be filled. ²¹ Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit. ²² He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the LORD. ²³ The poor man uses entreaties, But the rich answers roughly. ²⁴ A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Our Word have Impact

Jephthah, as we closed out chapter 10, we just see a man who knew the Word of God and he stayed in character with that Word of God all the way through his negotiations and diplomatic approach to the king of Ammon, and if only he would have stayed in character when he came under this pressure then he wouldn't have made such a foolish vow. The words we speak changes lives. Jephthah can go to war and know that he spoke the Word of God, he gave opportunity for there to be peace rather than war and then when we read of a great slaughter Jephthah doesn't have to look back and wonder if he should have gave up the land to broker peace and preserve life, or whether he should go to war. He used the Word of God to determine which direction this conflict would go. At the

end of it no matter how many lives were lost he doesn't have to look back and question himself. Nor will you when you apply the Word of God with the heart and meekness of God to your life and the life of those around you so that when life plays itself out thereafter the Word that was given there's no second guessing, "Should you have done it better or different," because you did it according to the Word of God.

Jeremy Camp

(as told by Jeremy Camp – May 2016) I started reading it in Mark 16:15 where it says go into all the nations and preach the gospel to all creation. I remember just hitting so heavy like I've never, never felt before. I've always been a minister but I really said, "Okay, God. If you want me to go, I'll go. Wherever you want me to go, I'll go. I want to go preach the gospel. I don't care what the cost, I don't care at all."

We got our first call. You guys know the Markey's? The Markey's are an extraordinary group of people that God has used radically over in Europe that have literally transformed that whole area in an amazing way. They were pastor of ours growing up, my dad who is here tonight, so thankful my dad's here. It was my dad's pastor and he poured into my dad and poured into our lives so much and then went over and started these churches. I remember just getting the first call saying, "Hey, do you want to come to Ukraine and do an outreach?" I remember saying, "Yeah, I'd love to. Give me some details." Everything started working out.

Then we got a phone call from the other Markey's in Kyrgyzstan saying, "Who would you like to, in the same trip, do another outreach here in Kyrgyzstan?" I remember going, "Okay, yeah. If this works out." It just seemed like nothing was working out at all. It seemed like it was almost a red flag. I was like, "You know what, it's not the right timing to do 2 outreaches in 1 trip, Ukraine going all the way to Kyrgyzstan, I don't know if we should do it." I told Jed, I said, "Jed, I don't know if it's just something that we can do. It just seems like it's too much."

I remember Jed just saying, "The email that really hit me guys that I remember to this day says if you don't feel like the Lord wants you to do this, that's the key right there, if you feel like the Lord doesn't want you to do this, then okay. I will let you know that in this predominantly Muslim country, this is probably the last year this will ever happen. People are starting to be fearful, they're starting to go underground. This is probably going to be the last time this will be an opportunity to do an outreach here in this city." I remember sitting there going, "How can I say God I'm ready to go wherever, no matter what the cost, I'm going to serve you? How can I do that and not be willing to go to this country?" We agreed. God gave us so much confirmation through his word. There's so many people, so much prayer. We knew that God was calling us to go.

I remember the trip started, we had this amazing prayer time and the trip started and went to Ukraine. It was unbelievable, you guys. I'm telling you, we saw just amazing things happen. I remember it just ... It happened so fluidly, so naturally, God moved in such radical way and we're all high five when we are done, the Jesus dance like, "Yes, this is awesome. We're on fire. We're off to conquer the world." I remember we got to Kyrgyzstan and it was different, I'm telling you. It was different. Something was different. My father went with me, he can attest to that. Everyone involved can attest that something was different. As we walked off that plane, I felt an oppression I've never felt before.

I remember my first call of duty here was to do a press conference for all the media in the area. I just remember just sitting there and this lady kept going, "But why are you here? Why are you really here?" You see, we had to be very careful because this is a predominantly Muslim and we had to have all this approval from the KGB and all these different people saying, "Okay, why is a Christian artist coming over here to get his concert?" I had to be very, very careful about what I said. I had to pray for wisdom from God will give me to say to these people.

I knew at that moment the enemy was on the prowl. I knew he did not want us there. At that very moment, I was like, "Okay, something is not right." I remember the first workshop that we did, it was a worship leader workshop and at the end of the workshop, everybody kept coming up and the predominant theme was we're fearful. We're fearful. I remember just praying for all these different people and just praying for fear to leave and I started to feel it. I remember that night I was trying to share and my mind was just distracted, I couldn't think straight. I remember just going, "This is the enemy. This oppression. This is spiritual warfare."

After that, we did this youth event. As we're walking up to do the event on the stage, I remember hearing my pastor friend say, "We'll have to deal with that later." I said, "Excuse me, deal with what later?" He said, "No, no. Don't worry about it." I said, "No, no, I want to worry about it. What's happening?" He's like, "Well, they've been hearing your interviews and they hear that you're a lot more bold than what they thought about your faith." They said that even though the concert is going to take place and that if it does take place, if you say the wrong thing, then they'll put Pasha, our pastor friend, in prison for a year. What? I remember just going, "How did this even happen?" I'm like, "So what we do?" He says, "We'll worry about when we get to it."

I started walking to the stage and there's a picture of me and a bodyguard with me and he's this really intense looking and I literally am with a big smile on my face right before we go on and I remember, I just felt God's pleasure. I felt his power. I started walking on stage and bass player comes up to me and he looks at me and he's like, "Just in case, it's been an honor." I was like, "Don't tell me that before we go on." I'm telling you guys, this was chaos. We walked on stage and the moment we started proclaiming the name of Jesus, I remember we had 8,000 people still show up. We had picketers all around. The news station, the main news station in the area was saying, "Don't come to this event. It's provocative in nature and is going to agitate the people." 8,000 people still showed up. When I first started singing and I started proclaiming the name of Jesus, about 2,000 people left because Jesus is Jesus is a rock in the face for those who are stumbling.

I remember it was supposed to rain that day and all around us was a black cloud, all around us. Above us, it was clear as day, clear blue skies. Unbelievable. I remember as we got on stage and started sharing, I remember I would go up to share because I was literally ... I'm at shower that night going, "God, please let every word be of you because I know that my actions, what I may say could cause someone to be in prison for a year. Please I want every word to be of you."

Let me tell you something, even for all us and for me included, the words that we say, if we really, really took that to heart, that our words affect people that greatly, can you imagine how we will walk on stage trembling in fear? It's good but not that we don't have God's power, but I remember going, "Every single word Lord, please, let it be from you." I remember I'd step into the mic and I share, I would hear nothing else in the Lord and I would back up and I'd keep playing again and I walk up. It happened all night. I remember it felt very discombobulating. Even though I felt God's hand, I just was like, "Was that? Was that?" My dad goes, "That was the most anointed I've ever seen you," because every word was from the Lord because I was scared to death.

Christian – Is Every Word you Speak Anointed

Christian, do you realize how impacting your words are to those who hear them? Do realize the impact of them to your children? Do you realize the impact of them to the person who is contemplating suicide? Do you realize the impact of them to your spouse? Once spoken you can never get them back. Do you realize the impact of them to the person who is struggling with addiction? Do you realize the impact of them when you gossip? When you backbite. Do you realize your child may become defeated and turn to the world, your spouse may be crushed to think is that really what you think of me, the person considering suicide says well here is another person who blew me off (yea that is right how could you know – and that is the point that you can never know what is going on in someone's heart), how about man's wisdom rather than God's Word to the person addicted to drugs, how about gossip destroying the reputation of another person, gossip tearing down the reputation of a church and the person says well I am not going there (and thus they go nowhere and their whole family and marriage is affected – literally generations affected because of it). Christian, "death and life" are in the power of the tongue..... is every word you speak from the Lord, and in accordance to His Word, and truly inspired (anointed/saturated) by His Spirit. [Proverbs 18:21 \(NKJV\)](#) ²¹ Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

Remember Jephthah, you never know how impacting your word are, and you never know the ramifications of them upon yourself, and others.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 12

Judges 12:1-15

List of Judges

So today we finish the life of the 8th judge (depending how you want to count and who you want to count), Jephthah, we have studied up to this point (Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah/Barak, Gideon, *Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephthah). Then before the chapter is over in just a quick 8 verses we will cover 3 more (Ibzan, Elon, Abdon), then next week we start our study in the last judge of this book, the life of Samson. Samuel will be considered a judge of Israel but he is not listed in the book of Judges, but his life is covered in the Book of Samuel, which also begins the cross-over from Israel having judges, to having kings.

- Abimelech ruled in Israel for 3 years, but it is never said he was a judge. He self-appointed himself as a judge through violence and political maneuverings; he was never appointed by God.
- Barak joined Deborah for the fight, but was never called a judge specifically in the Book of Judges, however it should be noted that he is referenced in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 13.
- The bible student need not get wrapped up on these semantics, but stay focused on what is it that God is teaching in this book about the history of Israel, personal faith, and examples and applications for our everyday walk as believers and leaders.

Recap Jephthah

So Jephthah as we have studied (chapter 11) was the son of a harlot, was driven out by his brothers for being so, but was well equipped by God in the ways of war and leadership, and led a great victory (as delivered to him by God) over the Ammonites. We saw that he was a man of great faith (as he is listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 13), a man who knew the word of God and history of Israel, but was susceptible to the flesh (as we saw his foolish and rash vow). So we pick it up here in chapter 12, and once again we will find (as promised in Roman 15/1 Cor 10) tremendous examples and applications for our lives personally today.

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

1 Corinthians 10:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Judges 12:1 Then the men of Ephraim gathered together, crossed over toward Zaphon, and said to Jephthah, "Why did you cross over to fight against the people of Ammon, and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house down on you with fire!"

Seems to be Pattern of Ephraim

This seems to be a pattern of the men of Ephraim, showing up as the dirty work and dangerous work is done. We saw them coming with same attitude towards Gideon back in chapter 8.

Judges 8:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now the men of Ephraim said to him, "Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?" And they reprimanded him sharply.

Summoned – Stirred Up

Verse 1, it says gathered together and the word literally means 'to be summoned'. Someone or a group of someone is stirring this up. It's not everyone gathered together on their own accord, but they summoned and called together to come, and when they did show up, whoever summoned them stirred them all up, so much so they are ready to burn down Jephthah's house.

Be Wary of Anyone who Tries to Turn You against a Brother / It Only Brings Death & Destruction

Be wary of anyone that would ever try to tear you apart, turn you against a brother or a sister in the Lord. These men of Ephraim and these men of Gilead they are brothers. They are actually from the same tribe and yet here they are being stirred and turned against each other. These people that summoned to have this conversation and then stirs, they will only bring death and destruction and we will see that in our passage today but talking to those type of people today. Those who summoned, those who sound spiritual, those who bring all these accusations,

they sound spiritual but all that will ever produce when brother turns against brother is a spiritual death. I mean the killing of things of the Lord, spiritual, possibly even physical destruction as they happen, they can bring upon you or your family physical, material, personal destruction and harm because it is dividing the body.

Romans 16:17–20 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. ¹⁸ For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. ¹⁹ For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. ²⁰ And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

John 17:20–23 (NKJV) ²⁰ "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³ I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Anyone who Divides – Is in the Flesh / Looking for Spoils – Personal Gain

We will see they do this in the flesh. This is clearly the flesh and when it happens in your life it's clearly the flesh. Anytime someone tries to turn you against another brother or sister, they are in the flesh and just recognize it and know it's not of the Lord. I believe one of the things they are trying to do here is manipulate Jephthah to share the spoils war. They were afraid to go to battle but here it is, the battle is won, there is great spoils from the 20 cities that Jephthah defeated so there is lots of spoils to be taken. Now here come Ephraim, "Hey, we want to get a piece of the spoil." They are not come out and say as such. They figure a whole tribe of all of them that had been stirred together, and stirred up together, that they can come and defeat this one man Jephthah together and then go make claim to the spoils. You see that is the way it's always is. The flesh is always looking for some type of personal gain. The flesh is always looking for some type of elevation of pride or some type of elevation of recognition but as we see in the things of the Lord, it will ultimately destroy Ephraim before we finish these next few verses.

Proverbs 16:16–19 (NKJV) ¹⁶ How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver. ¹⁷ The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who keeps his way preserves his soul. ¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. ¹⁹ Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Judges 12:2 And Jephthah said to them, "My people and I were in a great struggle with the people of Ammon; and when I called you, you did not deliver me out of their hands.

I was in Man-Strife & you Didn't Help / Gives Opportunity to Stand Down / Pride Leads you Don't want Go

Verse 2 says a great struggle, it literally means "a man strife", so Jephthah is saying, "I was in man strife, I was in a struggle against man. It was a great struggle and I called you and you didn't even come to help me. You didn't come to deliver me and rescue me. You let me do it and battle it alone." So Jephthah had called but Ephraim did not step up to fight. Jephthah corrects them, he gives opportunity to stand down. Jephthah says, "Hey, I asked you to come join the fight and you refused. Why are you here trying to cause trouble right now?" Jephthah is giving them opportunity to stand down, yes swallow their pride but he has given them opportunity to stand down before something worse happens but Ephraim will not. Your pride will always lead you into a place that you are going to find, I wish I didn't enter into because then you can find yourself it's too late to stand down. You went too far and so that is what we are going to see with Ephraim, there was no retreat at this point.

Proverbs 16:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

MY PEOPLE / I fought for MY PEOPLE

Verse 2, and I love what Jephthah says and catch that, he says, "My people." Jephthah takes personal responsibility, ownership if you would, of the people on his immediate surrounding. Born of a harlot, rejected by his people, yet he says these are my people and the enemy came against them, I could have hid. I could have run but I stepped up, I stepped in, I engaged for the people to fight the enemy that was oppressing them, and distressing them, and coming upon them. These were my people. I took ownership of them. They were laid on my heart and therefore I went to battle for them. I love that as I look at what he says, "They are my people."

Hall of Faith Fight for People

That is why that's hall of faith material and you will read about Jephthah in Hebrews chapter 11. That is what great men of faith, great women of faith do. They go and they fight for the people, my people even though they are

God's people, even though they are not their people in a literal family sense but they make them their people and they go and they fight for them.

Please Fight for Me / Please Fight Person on Right or Left

Can I ask you, would you fight for me personally? Would you this day say, "My pastor, my teacher, he is mine." Would you fight for me? Would you say, "That's my brother."? Would you fight for my wife? As the enemy comes against my wife, would you say, "Hey, that is my sister."? Would you fight for my sons? Would you say, "Those are my sons." As you fight for my children. Would you say, "Those are my children."? That person to your right, that person to your left, would you say, "Those are my people, my sister, my brother, my daughter, my son, my brother. These are my people and I commit to fight for them. I call them my own."

Pick Fight Against Them – Pick Fight Against Me

I commit to you I will do the same for you. I will fight for you as my own. I will say this is, these are, my people. These are my brothers. These are my sisters and when the enemy presses in, there enemy therefore is pressing in against me. The enemy is picking a fight then with me and as I watch the world push, and I watch the world try to tear them apart, then I take it personally. I say, "These are my people and I'm joining the fight. I'm not going to hit and run. I'm not going to go and take care of myself. I'm going to engage because these are my people and all the power that comes with that."

I am reminded growing up one day my older brother got in a fight at the bus stop; the next day my parents told me to stand out in the driveway and be ready to join the fight if another one started. I am reminded getting into a fight with my brother's best friend when we were playing football. He had tackled me and then was roughing me up after the play, I being much smaller took a rock and hit him in the face with it, splitting his lip, I was a dead-man; and as he moved in for the kill (if you would), I heard a bear charging and then attacking (my brother), even though it was his best friend, there was no hesitation on whether or not to enter the fight. I am reminded of Don McClure telling the story, growing up in a Christian home, he and his three brother walking home one night and one of the brothers got in a fight with another boy. So they fought one-on-one, and the others gathered a circle to watch them go at it. Just then their father drove by, seeing the whole thing, which cause the fight to stop. As they walked home the brothers said oh you are so in trouble, dad is going to be so mad at you for getting into a fight. As they entered the home dad was in his usual chair reading his newspaper, and he called the boys to him, and he said "if I ever see one of you in a fight, and any of you standing by watching and not helping, you will get a whipping like you never imagined". Christian, may we be like a Jephthah and say "My people", and if you pick a fight with my brother or sister, you have just picked a fight with me too, as I will not stand by and watch the fight, but I am entering and engaging, and don't expect me to stand by and watch.

Come Fight on Tuesday / Can Win it On Earth – Till Win it in Spiritual Realm

Can I encourage you? Come Tuesday, let's make Tuesday "my people" as we come here as a family and we pray, "my people". I'm going to go to war for them and I'm going to go to the battle ground in prayer because if we win it in prayer, we've won it here on earth. Too many times we try to enter the battle on earth and we haven't fought it in heaven and we find ourselves getting beat. We find ourselves getting whipped and we then we wonder why and it's because we fought the wrong battle in the wrong battle ground. Come Tuesday and we come together as a family and we fight.

Judges 12:3 So when I saw that you would not deliver me, I took my life in my hands and crossed over against the people of Ammon; and the LORD delivered them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?"

My Lowest/Highest Moments – People I thought I could Count On

Verse 3a, some of my lowest moments in my life is when people I thought I could count on weren't there for me but I say some of my highest moments is when the people I thought I could count on weren't there for me. My lowest moments, when the people I thought I could count on weren't there. My highest moments for the people I thought I could count on weren't there and all that I had was Jesus.

2 Corinthians 12:7–10 (NKJV) ⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Never Know Jesus is Enough – Till Jesus all You Have

Listen Christian, you will never know that Jesus is enough until Jesus is all that you have. You will never know Hebrews 13, hall of faith type things until everyone has left you or those around you can't do anything for you, then you will know his presence in a special and new way, for you will never know that Jesus is enough until Jesus is all that you have. I love how God responded to Joshua before the fight of his life as he led the children of Israel into the Promised Land (read Joshua 1:5). God says the same to us today, I will never leave you nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5).

Joshua 1:5 (NKJV) ⁵ No man shall *be able* to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV) ⁵ Let your conduct *be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*”

Lord Delivered Me

Verse 3b, Jephthah says the Lord delivered me. What is faith? It's not knowing what's going to happen, but just knowing God is going to do something, that's what faith is. The Lord delivered him. Separate that whole foolish vow thing, and lets just look and see (Hebrews 13) God calls him a man of faith.

What is Faith?

Ask that question and you will get a myriad of answers, it would be an interesting survey to perform inside the church and out on the streets. But thankfully we don't have to struggle with the question, nor the answer, for the Bible tells us what the definition of faith is in Hebrews 11:1. Faith is the substance (realization) of things hoped (expectation) for, the evidence (confidence or proof) of things not seen. Simply put, “hey I can't see this at this moment in the physical, but I am confident and fully expect God is going to do something”.

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:32 (NKJV) ³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

Don't Know How You Going to Do It – But I fully Expect You Will

- Noah – not sure what rain is, nor what an ark is, but I am confident you are going to do something, so I am going to go get the hammer and saw and start building.
- Abraham - not sure how what this great Nation looks like you are talking about, but I am confident you are going to do something, and in the meantime I am going to start looking for this city whose builder and maker is God.
- Moses – not sure how the greatest nation and military might on the planet is going to get defeated by a bunch of malnourished slaves, but I am confident you are going to do something, so I am going to get my staff and go see Pharaoh
- Joshua and Israel – not sure how we take this fortified city with its impenetrable walls, but I am confident you are going to do something, so let's get our walking shoes on.
- Gideon - not sure how 300 malnourished men will defeat 135,000 well equipped Midianites, but I am confident you are going to do something, so let's go grab some trumpets and torches.
- Jephthah – not sure how I am to defeat the mighty Ammonites with a bunch of weak and fearful Israelites, but I am confident you are going to do something, so let's call them out and get this rumble started.

Notice that all of them were in the same place, not sure what and how you are going to do this, but I am sure you are going to do something, and I am going to do what you called you me to do in response to it, I am going to engage by action before I can see the physical outcome.

Not sure what is going to happen, but am totally sure, God is going to do something!

Imagine where Jephthah's Heart is – Loss of Child

Verse 3c. Jephthah says, why have you come to fight me? Can you imagine what Jephthah, where his heart and mind is at this moment right now? Chronologically he has fought Ammon, he has returned, his daughter has come out of the house. It's doubtful that two months has passed, but it could. Let's just go with it has not. He came home, his daughter comes out. We can go with that reasoning because when she came out and she said, "Father, the Lord has delivered your enemies, the Ammonites into your hand", she didn't make any mention of the Ephraimites becoming his enemy.

What we have here is his heart has gone from the high high of a victory against his enemy to coming home and have the love of his life, his only daughter has now been dedicated to the Lord. We'll leave last week's study for its interpretation. He has devoted her and his heart is ripped. His family lineage line is over, possibly never going to see his daughter again, possibly. We don't know all those details, but what we know is his life is changed greatly. His daughter is now not in what the future would have thought it to be of marriage, a husband, a family, Jephthah being a grandfather, Jephthah raising up next generation, whatever it might be, that is over.

Jephthah has delivered Israel by the working of God himself, but his heart is ripped out because the great gain of the victory was nullified by the great loss of his daughter. Then here comes these men, stirred up and summonsed by people in the flesh to come and give him this grief. These are so-called brothers in the Lord in the family of God. They lay all this out on him. Can you imagine being in that state and you're hearing what's being said, and you're really literally saying, "I could care less about this. Do you have any idea what's going on in my life right now? Do you have any idea what just happened to me?".

My Story – Medical Report

I can relate to this multiple times, but I can remember one several years ago. We had received a medical report, it was life changing, it was devastating. It was like our lives went into a fog. "Is this real? Is this really happening to us? What does our future hold?" I remember a family being summonsed, stirred up, and they come in that same few day period, and they come and they literally start this onslaught of critique and criticism. Everything that we weren't doing, everything that was wrong, everything of poor leadership, lousy teaching, the list went on and on and on.

I sat there and I listened to it all that my mind kept going back to was the medical report, was the impact of what this meant upon my life and I was saying to myself, "Did you even hear what we said, that the doctor said? Did you even hear what's going on in my family? Did you even hear what's upon me? Was this that important to you? Was this that bad that you couldn't rally beside me and try to comfort me and say what can we do for you? Instead it was what can you do, what's wrong for your life, what you're not getting, why you're angry, why you are upset about this thing".

God says I was There – I Know

Maybe you've been there, you've been hurt. Maybe you can relate to what I say, some event, something along those same lines. Your world seems to be imploding. You're living in a fog. You wonder what tomorrow will ever bring and somebody comes and because of their pride or their selfish desires, they come and they lay this out upon you. Listen, I want you to know this, God will say to you, "I was there." If you're going through it right now God will tell you, "I am here in the midst of it, and I am still here. I saw it. I know it. I was the one who caught your tears. I am carrying your burden. I know you think it's heavy, but if you would only know how much of the burden that I am carrying, you would see. I am not just carrying your burden, but I am carrying you at the same time.

I Carried You – Am Carrying You

I carried you through it and if you're in the middle of it I will carry you to the end of it. I will carry you until you can walk again. I never left you and I will never leave you. I will carry you as long as you need to be carried, until you're healed, until you are strong enough to walk again. I will carry you and I will never leave you nor forsake you. I am

the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, and that means I am everything between. Everything that's going on in your life, I am everything between. I know exactly what's going on right now in this moment in your life. I know about the people that hurt you and I know about the things that have been said about you, but I want you to know that I know and I'm walking in the midst with you. I am the becoming one. That's what the word "I AM" literally means. Jesus is the great I AM. I am the becoming one and I want to become to you all that you need in the midst of this because I see it.

I Gave Jephthah the Victory – I will Give it to You Also

Just as I gave Jephthah the victory, I'll give you the victory. Just as they wouldn't come to help in the fight that was before you, I'll come and be in the middle of the fight that you're in. When that fight is over and they come to fight against you, you just know this, I will come and I will correct it. Even if they are my children, even if they are part of the family, judgement begins in the house of the Lord and I will take care of that. You don't need to, and you don't need to worry about it. You just need to know this one thing: I am here, I'm carrying it, I saw it, I heard it and I am in the middle of it".

God Says to Forgive Them / Don't Let Bitterness Choke You Out

Listen, he will also say to you, "Forgive them, they know not what they do." Don't let them hurt you any more than they already have. Don't let the root of bitterness choke you out and choke out the fruit. John 15, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Apart from me you can do nothing", but when we are attached to the vine we are promised to produce much fruit, but we have to look and we have to see this like in any horticulture example because the law of reaping and sowing is true.

Luke 23:34 (NKJV) ³⁴ Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.

Hebrews 12:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

John 15:5 (NKJV) ⁵ "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

If you allow this root of bitterness to grow in the soil beside where you are it will overgrow you. It will choke out the vine that you're attached to. It will cover you, it will cover the Son, light, and it will put you into darkness. It will keep the living water from washing over you when it falls from the heavens to cleanse you because it is covering you, this root of bitterness that has overgrown you. You're still attached to the vine, but you're choked out, you're shadowed by this root of bitterness that they have put upon you.

Fruit You Family/Others Eats will Be Choked Out

You won't produce fruit and you won't have fruit that others can eat, especially your spouse or your family or those in the ministry alongside of you. You will not have the fruit of the Spirit because it's being choked out by this thing that has happened against you, and therefore you won't be able to pick, and the family and friends won't be able to pick from you the fruit of love, because it'd be choked out, joy, because it will be choked out, peace because it will be choked out. You'll have no peace. Patience will be choked out. Kindness will be choked out. Goodness will be choked out because that's what happens when the root of bitterness takes root. It chokes everything out. All the fruit is choked out. Faithfulness will be choked out. Kindness and self-control will be choked out and you'll find yourself with no self-control because these things have overtaken you. They've overshadowed, and the light of Christ cannot flow and fall upon you.

Galatians 5:22–25 (NKJV) ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

You Never Know What they Going Through

Verse 3c ... Please take this third point on this example before us. You never know what that person is going through. What news they've just heard, what mound of bricks has just been placed upon their shoulders. You never know what fear and uncertainty we have, they have upon them and so would you please always, and tag this to last week's study, before you speak have you prayed for them? Have you fought for them? Have you called

them my people? Have you put them on your heart? Have you committed yourself to love in them before you would go and say anything along the lines that we see here within Ephraim?

Listen Christian, we're all we've got beloved. We're all we got. The nation of Israel is outnumbered by all the enemies around them. A continual cycle of enemies pressing in against them and here's Ephraim, were so outnumbered but we'll go and divide the few numbers that we do have. The outcome is, the nation of Israel as we'll read, has just been reduced by 42,000. These men of Ephraim are strong fighters when they're man enough to fight. They rather than rallying against the Ammonites, the enemies who is oppressing and distressing they rally around each other and come attack the body. They've just weakened and reduced the body by numbers. They just divided the body and the strength that they could have. They will always be a price to be paid.

Then that person that has hurt you and said these things, if they're not believers, just remember this, they're perishing and will continue to perish in the everlasting death in eternal separation. The question for you is what does that mean to you? How big is it, that thing that they said, that thing that they've done to you compared to their eternal state? Is it worth it to separate and have bitterness, hatred, animosity towards them that you can never reach them again for the very life that they need in Jesus Christ.

Let's Pray Now to God about this

Pray right now. Say to the Father, "Father, I let it go." Open your heart to him, and say, "I will not let it choke me anymore. I forgive them." What I mean by that is, forgiveness means to send away. "I'm sending this away. I'm not allowing it to weigh me down. Lord, set me free. I want to be free. I want to run with you. I want to enjoy you. I want the abundant life that you desire for me, and I can't, as long as I hold this thing and carry this thing. Set me free, Lord, I pray. In your name, Amen."

Judges 12:4 Now Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. And the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim, because they said, "You Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites."

Judges 12:5 The Gileadites seized the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites arrived. And when any Ephraimite who escaped said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead would say to him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he said, "No,"

Judges 12:6 then they would say to him, "Then say, 'Shibboleth!'" And he would say, "Sibboleth," for he could not pronounce it right. Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan. There fell at that time forty-two thousand Ephraimites.

Means Flowing Stream

As is the case in our own country, different dialects began to develop throughout Israel, Using this to their advantage, the Gileadites required everyone waiting to cross the Jordan to say, shibboleth, which means "crossing" or "flowing stream." You see, the closest the Ephraimites could come to "shibboleth" was sibboleth—and their pronunciation was a dead giveaway. One word would cost them their lives. One word would make the difference between living and dying. Their destiny hinged on a single word.

Shibboleth means flowing stream, and here they are at the Jordan River. With this word the people from the tribe of Ephraim were easily identified by their dialect. They had a hard time pronouncing the "h" in Shibboleth and said Sibboleth instead, therefore giving themselves away.

Creek - Crick

This example is likened to if we were in Pennsylvania and I was going to cross the water stream and you stopped me or anybody from Pittsburgh and says, "What is this?" The correct answer is, it's a creek spelled C-R-E-E-K, but all of us in Pittsburgh we would say it's a crick. Don't ask me why, that's just how we say it and pronounce it, and so that was the test here that we're looking at with the me of Ephraim. That's the equivalence.

Your Speech Reveals You Citizenship

Verse 4 through 6. Your speech reveals you. It tells what land and what country you are from. I'm reminded of the story of Peter there at the fire, his speech exposed him of where he was from. May I ask you, how is your speech? Does it reveal where you're from and how this all plays in again to last week's study as we look at that? Death and life are in the power of the tongue but when you speak, is your speech seasoned with salt? Does it make people hunger and thirst for what you have? Does it take them to the place that Psalm 34 verse 8, Oh taste and see that the Lord is good.

Matthew 26:73 (NKJV) ⁷³ And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you."

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV) ²¹ Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

Psalm 34:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

Do they Taste and See – Lord is Good

Do they want to taste and see the Lord that you proclaim? The life that you live? Can they see it, can they feel it, can they sense it through your speech? Does your speech condemn you or does your speech elevate you to where your heavenly citizenship is there with Jesus Christ? Or does your speech sound just like everybody else in the world that no one can tell the difference between you who's a believer in Christ who has been sealed for eternal redemption and when you take your last breath on earth, you'll take your next breath in heaven? When you live here on this life, you have the living God, the great I am, the becoming one, living inside of you or when you speak, do you sound just like the next person and there's little difference? Our speech should reveal to the world around us, where our citizenship is.

Judges 12:7 And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried among the cities of Gilead.

Judges 12:8 After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel.

Judges 12:9 He had thirty sons. And he gave away thirty daughters in marriage, and brought in thirty daughters from elsewhere for his sons. He judged Israel seven years.

Judges 12:10 Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem.

Judges 12:11 After him, Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel. He judged Israel ten years.

Judges 12:12 And Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried at Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.

Judges 12:13 After him, Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel.

Judges 12:14 He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy young donkeys. He judged Israel eight years.

Judges 12:15 Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mountains of the Amalekites.

Beauty of Quiet Leadership

Verse 15, oh the strength and beauty of quiet leadership. We just read 3 men in all their greatness, they were silent, no great fanfare about them, no great feats about them but what we see clearly with 2 of them was about their family. That their family, they raised their family. They provided for their family. That their family followed their ways. We see there's greatness in quiet leadership, greatness in leading the family. For when the family is strong, the nation is strong and when the nation is strong, God is glorified. What we're reading with these final accounts of these 4 men that spent 25 years, the family is strong and the nation of Israel is strong. No one can overcome them, no one can defeat them because the family is strong and therefore the nation is strong, and when the nation is strong, God is glorified.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 13

Judges 13:1

Introduction

We have been studying the life and times of the period in the history of the Nation Israel where they have what are called judges, who were leaders of Israel before Israel had kings. We have studied 11 up to this point, twelve if you count Barak, and today we come to our last judge in this book, and probably the most famous, possibly the most complex, and surely the most interesting. Last week we closed with 3 judges totaling all of 8 verses, while the life of Samson will cover the next 4 chapters and 96 verses. We summarized those 3 judges of the beauty of quiet leadership, just getting the job done, no drama, no fanfare, just quietly, but strongly, leading their family and leading the Nation. Samson, will be anything but quiet leadership, drama will abound, Hollywood loves men like Samson, they are great for ticket sells.

1949 Movie

The 1949 movie, the trailer begins with

- “Now relive the colossal drama, of the mightiest colossus that ever lived” and
- “for shattering thrills, and earth shaking excitement, for savage drama, see Samson and Delilah”.

At the time it was the third most watched movie in the world behind “Gone with the Wind” and “the Best Years of Our Lives”.

- Personal Note – I highly recommend not seeing the movie or remakes, it is too fleshly.

Samson Outline

In the next 4 chapters we will cover:

- His Birth and Special calling from the Lord – chapter 13
- His Philistine Wife the Beginning of the Fall – chapter 14
- His Rage against the Philistines (1,000 to 1) – chapter 15
- His Kryptonite (Delilah) Falling/Destruction – chapter 16
- His Death – chapter 16

Summations of His Life / Wasted Potential

So if I/we were to summarize his life, what are some titles we could come up with?

- The Flame that Flickered
- The Light that Flashed
- Power without Strength
- Destined for Greatness, but Greatness Denied
- Wasted Potential

Next 4 Weeks – God does Something Tremendous in Each of Our Lives

Wasted Potential, to me is the ultimate summation of his life. I pray that over the next 4 weeks as we study the life of Samson, that God does something tremendous in each and every one of our lives. I pray that we will each make the next 4 weeks be holy ground in our lives, that we will separate ourselves, dedicate ourselves, cry out to our God and say “Lord whatever you have for me, I want it all; may I not come up short in anything you have destined/determined for me, I want the fullness of all that You have for me”. May that be your prayer regardless who you are and what you are currently doing (be that in your golden years, your middle years, or even you youth in your beginning years), Lord let me leave nothing on the table, I want to meet and live to my fullest potential of what You have for me. I will be preaching over my head, meaning I will be preaching to a calling that I have not yet reached, as I myself know there is so much more that the Lord has for me, and wants for me, and I know I have not attained it yet. As the Apostle said (writing in his late years as a Christian is should be noted):

Philippians 3:12–14 (NKJV) ¹² Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Just 1 Verse Today

Today we will just look at one verse, as today we make this a time of communion, starting with Jesus, not Samson, looking unto the Author and Finisher of our faith, spending time reflecting on Him as we make this commitment to Him from our hearts, Lord we don't want to leave anything left on the table, we want to live this life You have given to its fullest potential, Lord we press towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. *Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV)* ¹ *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,* ² *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

So our verse for today in this communion service, verse 1.

Judges 13:1 Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

Again – Yet Again

Again, so we read the word Again. How many times have we read this word Again? The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.

Judges 3:12 (NKJV) ¹² *And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.*

Judges 4:1 (NKJV) ¹ *When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD.*

Judges 8:33 (NKJV) ³³ *So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god.*

Judges 10:6 (NKJV) ⁶ *Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him.*

Judges 13:1 (NKJV) ¹ *Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.*

The Sin Cycle

We see this continual cycle through the book of Judges which is a reflection of about 450 years of history of the nation of Israel and we follow this sin cycle through them. It's a picture so often of our lives and the cycle that we continually go through again and again and again.

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are enslaved by sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they cry out to the Lord and are saved from their sin.

How About You – How Many Times

How about you? How many times have you said, "I can't believe I did that again?" So many times maybe you've lost track of how many times you've said that word, *again*. Or maybe it's only been a couple times you've said the word *again* but you know them in every detail of it because it was so impacting. You remember every detail of it because of the weight, the burden that came upon you. That word Again, it can be a haunting word can't it? The Lord wants you to know today as many "*again*" as you have, He has an equal number of "*forgiven*" to match them.

This Bread & Cup – More than Covers

This Bread and Cup you hold in your hand today, more than covers any and all of your "*again*".

His Mercies are New Every Morning

His Mercies are New Every Morning

Let's turn to Lamentations 3:22-23, and see His mercies are new every morning.

Lamentations 3:22–23 (NKJV) ²² Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

Jeremiah – the Weeping Prophet / Weeping from A-Z

Jeremiah, wrote the Book of Lamentations, and he is known as the weeping prophet, he weeps from A to Z literally as this Book of Lamentations, every paragraph starts with the in sequential order of the Hebrew alphabet equivalent to our A to Z. He's weeping in every paragraph. He starts with a letter of the alphabet because Jerusalem has fallen. The Babylonians have destroyed it and he overlooks the city and he weeps over it. Sound familiar, as we saw Jesus weep over Jerusalem, we see Jeremiah exemplifying the heart of God. Oh the wasted potential of Jerusalem.

Lamentations 1:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ How lonely sits the city That was full of people! How like a widow is she, Who was great among the nations! The princess among the provinces Has become a slave! ² She weeps bitterly in the night, Her tears are on her cheeks; Among all her lovers She has none to comfort her. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; They have become her enemies.

Luke 19:41–44 (NKJV) ⁴¹ Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

But Right in the Middle – Great is Your Faithfulness / Sure as the Sun Rises

The amazing thing as he gives this A to Z weeping of what he is seeing, in the middle you can see and sense an overcoming of great confidence in the Lord, and there at Lamentations 3:23 where he says, "Great is your faithfulness, your compassions and mercies fail not, they are as sure as the sun rising".

Lamentations 3:22–23 (NKJV) ²² Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

God weeps with your Tears / He weeps with Your Again – and Again

God wants you to know that he weeps with your tears. Jeremiah the prophet, the weeping prophet, is just a picture of God, God's heart for you. He weeps from A to Z. He weeps from beginning to end and everything in between of all the hardship and pain and suffering that you've gone through whether brought on from the outside of a fallen world or brought in from the inside of our sin nature. He weeps with our Again, and Again, again.

He says – Remember my Mercies and Compassion / This is a Promise From heart to Your heart

Lamentations 3:22 and 23. God will say to us, "Remember my mercies." Not meaning not getting what we deserve. He says remember I am compassionate. I can't just sit by and watch. There's no way I can just watch you go through this, I have to get involved. And he goes on to say, and I fail not. Which is to say what I give you is a promise from my heart and it is sure and true that I'll bring it to pass. As sure as the sun rises and sets, are his mercies being new every morning.

He is Faithful to you – never Changing / You will Never Exhaust my Mercies and Compassions

He says to us, "I am faithful to you." Our faith as we studied last week, is believing in things not seen. God's faithfulness as he sees it means "full of faith" towards you, I change not, you will never exhaust my mercies and compassions

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

This Bread & Cup – More than Covers

This Bread and Cup you hold in your hand today, more than proves His mercies and compassion fail not.

Can't Run if You Can't Walk

Can't Run if Can't Walk / If Paralyzed by Guilt and Shame / Get Up – and the Clock Resets

Why is this important for you to know, because Christian, you are never going to run if you can't walk. If you're paralyzed by fear, guilt or shame, you can't move on. Proverbs tells us the righteous man may fall seven times but he gets up. Seven is the number of completion not perfection but you can feel like a complete failure but every time you get up the clock resets to zero. God wants you to know as many as *Agains* you have he has more, for his mercies are new every morning. His compassion is new every morning and great is his faithfulness to you every morning. You have a fresh supply of *Agains* every morning as it's a new day.

Proverbs 24:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For a righteous *man* may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity.

Why does He Tell Us That today – Because His Kindness leads to Repentance

Why does he do that for us? Why does he tell us that? Because Romans tells us it's his kindness that leads to repentance. When you can settle that he forgives all of your *Agains*, then you can settle, that you can come to him even after that next *Again* and call to him and find help from him in your time of need Hebrews 4:16 tells us.

Romans 2:4 (NKJV) ⁴ Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

What “Again” do you need to Confess Right Now – Believe you are Being Cleansed

What Again do you need to call out to him for today? Confess it right now. Believe you are being cleansed right now. Forgiveness means to send away. Know that it's being sent away.

1 John 1:9 (NKJV) ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Lamentations 3:24-25 / The Lord is Your Portion

Lamentations 3:24-25 we're told to hope in him and to hope for his portion and to wait on it, and know that it will come.

Lamentations 3:24–26 (NKJV) ²⁴ “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I hope in Him!” ²⁵ The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. ²⁶ It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the LORD.

This Bread & Cup – More than Covers

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Don't Let Good Enough be the New Normal

Judges 13:1 Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

Sin Cycle / 40 Years – Never Cry Out / Oppression & Bondage is the Norm

Remember that sin cycle we read of, there is a very unique difference as we study the Nation Israel during the time of Samson judging, and that is we read of them being delivered and under the bondage and oppression of these carnal and deplorable Philistines for 40 years! 40 years it says! But we won't read of them being sorry for their sin, nor will they cry out to the Lord to be saved from their sin. What we see is, they live as those this is normal, oppression and bondage is just the norm for our lives, it is what it is.

- First, we see the people of Israel serving God.
- Next, we see them surrendering to sin.
- Then they are enslaved by sin.
- Fourthly, they are sorry about their sin.
- And finally, they cry out to the Lord and are saved from their sin.

Christian – Don't let Good Enough be the Normal

Christian this cup you hold in your hand is God screaming out from Calvary again, don't let good enough be the normal of your life. Break free from all the ‘*agains*’, live on a higher calling, good enough is not good-enough.

Be Holy

A call to holiness, may we not let anything that is not of the Lord “hang around”, as we reach for the high-calling, may we lay aside every weight that ensnares us.

1 Peter 1:13–16 (NKJV) ¹³ Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, “*Be holy, for I am holy.*”

Hebrews 12:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

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Ephesian 1:19-20

He says to us in Ephesians 1:19-20, "The same power that rose Jesus from the dead is available for us today."

Ephesians 1:15–23 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Settle Today to Walk Worthy

Walk Worthy

Our brother Paul will go to say in chapter 4, that he beseeches us (encourages us, exhorts us) to walk worthy of the/this calling with which we were called.

Ephesians 4:1–6 (NKJV) ¹ I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ² with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³ endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Walk Means

WALK (Hebrew)

- hālaḳ—‘go, walk’ (Gen. 24:65; Ex. 18:20; Lev. 18:3; etc.),
- sāḇaḇ—‘march around’ (Ps. 48:12 [MT 13], ’
- āšar—‘walk straight (ahead)’ (Prov. 9:6),
- šā’ad—‘step, march’ (Jer. 10:5),
- tiphel of rāgal—‘teach to walk’ (Hos. 11:3), ’
- āḇar—‘go by, pass’ (Zeph. 3:6);

WALK (Greek)

- peripatéō—‘go about, walk around’,
- poreúomai—‘go, proceed, travel’ (Lk. 1:6; Acts 9:31; 14:16; Jude 11),
- stoichéō—‘hold to, agree with, follow’ (Gal. 5:25; 6:16),
- proágō—‘go before, lead, precede’ (Mk. 10:32)];

AV also GO, PASS BY, etc.; NEB also FOLLOW, BEHAVE, CONFORM, GO, etc.

Knapp, G. L. (1979–1988). Walk. In G. W. Bromiley (Ed.), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised* (Vol. 4, p. 1003). Wm. B. Eerdmans.

This Bread & Cup – More than Covers

This Bread and Cup you hold in your hand today, more than covers any and all of your “*again*”, and gives you the power to stop, defeat, overcome all the “*agains*” that come your way tomorrow, and to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called (so that we may live to the fullest potential of what He has desired/destined for us).

Cross-References on “Walk Worthy”

Here are some passages that speak for themselves on this calling to walk worthy.

Colossians 1:9–14 (NKJV) ⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

1 Thessalonians 2:10–12 (NKJV) ¹⁰ You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; ¹¹ as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, ¹² that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Revelation 3:1–6 (NKJV) ¹ “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, ‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. ² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. ³ Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. ⁴ You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. ⁶ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”’

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Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 13

Judges 13:1-25

Introduction

So today we begin a 4 week, 4 chapter, study on the life of Samson. Let's jump in on verse 1 and begin this fascinating, exciting, and if we allow it, life changing study on Samson. Why do I say life-changing, because at some point in these 4 chapters, these 4 weeks, we will see a picture of ourselves because I doubt there is anyone in this room that doesn't somehow, someway, relate to Samson in his strengths and in his failures.

Judges 13:1 Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

These Philistines, we read of them through the scriptures.

- They were men of great strength (1 Sam 17:4-7, 2 Sam 21:16)
- They seem like giants (1 Sam 17:40-50).
- They continually came back to fight another fight (Judges 3:31, 10:7-8).
- They would come and steal the presence of God as they seized the Ark of the Covenant, which was a representation of the presence of God among the nation of Israel (1 Sam 4:3-11)
- They make us do things that are embarrassing. As we look at King David's life, as he acted like a madman, how embarrassing (1 Sam 27).
- We see sometimes they just come in like a flood and overflow us (1 Sam 28-29).

Philistines – Picture of the Flesh

For these next several chapters, we'll continually be reading about these Philistines, but you know they're not anything new in this scriptures that we read. We see them all the way back in Genesis, Joshua, Judges 3, in Judges 10, and we'll read about them for hundreds of pages to come, through the history of Israel (1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles), because these Philistines never go away. They're the enemies of the flesh, they're a picture of the flesh, and they never go away. Like old enemies, they're always coming back, and we'll continually read about them.

Comfort & Pleasure

Historically, we know why Israel didn't want to battle it out against the Philistines.

- It's because the Philistines had developed and mastered the metallurgy skill, and so they could make some really nice farming equipment that Israel had no way of making themselves or fashioning themselves. Of course, the Philistines, they would have superior weaponry. The Israelites would have to buy their swords, or grab their swords from defeated foes, but it was the Philistines who mastered the metallurgy, and so that is a great advantage that the Philistines had over the Israelites, but is also something that kept Israel from rising up and causing a battle with the Philistines, because we don't want to cut ourselves off from this great tools that we can buy, because these tools make our lives better, easier. We're willing to put up with the differences that we have with them, especially their idolatry and pagan practices in order to make our lives easier. It'd be the equivalent of us putting up with China if they were being aggressors or oppressing us because we didn't want to lose our smartphones, because they make our lives so comfortable, and easier.
- Secondly, how the Philistines continually had a stronghold, a foothold on the nation of Israel was intermarriage. The Philistines had no moral code as the Israelites did, so they had no issue with intermarriage, so when the Israelite saw that handsome man or that gorgeous girl and wanted them, as we see Samson will in our next chapter, Israel didn't fight hard against saying, "No, don't do it." It became acceptable, and so of course now the Israelites, they're not going to cause a ruckus or some issue with the Philistines, because now they could literally be battling family to family.

Christian – Any Resemblance / Compromise

We see two things that was used to keep Israel in 40 years of not seeking God for all that God would have, and it was comfort and it was pleasure. The question for the Christian today is there any resemblance that we can see today in the life of a Christian? Is there anything in your life personally that reflects this, because we see here is a reason that Israel for 40 years did not rise up, because a battle to rid the Philistines out of their land, even though God has commanded them to separate from them, and to not have communion with them. Not a shot was fired, but they came under absolute domination because of that one word that we continually see through this whole book. The word is called "compromise."

Israel was Assimilated – became Common / God is Holy (Uncommon)

So you have the nation of Israel literally assimilating into the Philistine's culture, as they were called to be holy, to be set apart, to not be common, not to be like the rest of the nations around them. They are a spiritual picture of the church and each individual Christian where God calls us. Not to be assimilated into the culture. Not to become identical to the culture, to be set apart, to be uncommon. That's what holy means, "not common, to be uncommon", that when the world looks on, they say, "You're not from around here, are you?" A call to holiness, may we not let anything that is not of the Lord "hang around", as we reach for the high-calling, may we lay aside every weight that ensnares us.

**1 Peter 1:13–16 (NKJV)* ¹³ Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

**Hebrews 12:1–2 (NKJV)* ¹ Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Philippians 3:12–14 (NKJV)* ¹² Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

These Next 4 Weeks / Ephesus – Remember, Repent, Repeat

This whole book of Judges, these next four weeks in the study of the life of Samson, I pray again, God, giving us a very special calling. Set ourselves apart. Readjust ourselves. Re-baseline ourselves. Refresh, revive us to examine, and look, and say, "How much of the world is in me? How close to the world am I? Is it assimilated into me and I into them," and for us to cry out to the Lord, "Lord, set us apart. Help me to be set apart. Show me. Remind me. Make clear to me what you want me to set apart, to separate from, so that I can be wholly dedicated on to you." I pray these next four weeks, the spirit of the living God just continues to move in a great way in you, and that we have personal revival in our lives. There in Revelation, the church of Ephesus. What's the calling? Remember, repent, repeat. May we say, Lord is there anything I have left, is there anything I need to change, speak it now and do a great work in me over these next 4 weeks.

**Revelation 2:4–5 (NKJV)* ⁴ Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

Judges 13:2 Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children.

Manoah Stayed While Other Ran

The significance of Manoah staying where he's at is we're shown he did not leave when the rest of the tribe of Dan did and move north into a place that was more comfortable for them, a place of less war, but they stayed, Manoah and his family, where God had given them, promised them, the land that was appointed to them, even if it meant more hardship, and harder soil to toil, and more fighting with the locals. That's something to be said about the character of this family. May that be something that's said about us, that we stay where God's promised us, where God's called us, and not seek to go find the easiest place, but seek to find the called place, the chosen place for our lives.

Joshua 19:40–46 (NKJV) ⁴⁰ The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. ⁴¹ And the territory of their inheritance was Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, ⁴² Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Jethlah, ⁴³ Elon, Timnah, Ekron, ⁴⁴ Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, ⁴⁵ Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, ⁴⁶ Me Jarkon, and Rakkon, with the region near Joppa.

**Judges 1:34 (NKJV)* ³⁴ And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley;

Certain Man – God is not Random

Verse two says a certain man, which means a specific man a very specific man, then God says, I know and I know your heart, and I have specifically chosen you for this test. Christian, may you know, God does not randomly select anyone. You have not been and are not a happened chance along the way for your ministry and calling. God doesn't do a, let's see how it all works out, let's see how this goes, but God selects very specifically, certain men, certain women for certain tasks. That's how your calling in life goes, nothing is by a random chance.

Christian, don't take a, let's see how this goes approach, and don't look at the results along the way. Listen for and look for your calling, and don't waste the potential by wondering if God has chosen you as the certain person. He has, you're a specific choice, so fulfill that calling, fulfill that ministry that he has in your life, and don't buy the lie that it's randomness. God is anything but random, he's very certain, and he is very detail-oriented.

Judges 13:3 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.

The Angel of the Lord is Jesus

The Angel of the Lord is none other than Jesus Christ. Look at the descriptions give to Him (awesome and wonderful). When Manoah will ask Him His name, the Angel of the Lord answers by saying “it is wonderful”, and that immediately takes us to Isaiah 9. This is what we call a Christophany in the Bible, it is a physical manifestation of the Son of God (Jesus), Second Person of the Trinity, in the times of the Old Testament.

**Judges 13:6 (NKJV)* ⁶ So the woman came and told her husband, saying, “A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name.

**Judges 13:17–18 (NKJV)* ¹⁷ Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, “What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?” ¹⁸ And the Angel of the LORD said to him, “Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?”

**Judges 13:22 (NKJV)* And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, because we have seen God!”

**Isaiah 9:6–7 (NKJV)* ⁶ For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Tells Her What Already Knows / Barren was to be Looked down upon

The Angel of the Lord tells Manoah's wife what she already knows. She's barren, has no children. The word of God can be like that. He tells us what we already know and sometimes the things we already know hurt us. They're not something that we like to hear as they remind us of something or some things that we wish were different in our lives. To be barren in that day and cultural was to be looked down upon, to be outcast, that there was something wrong with that person and their relationship with the Lord, they must be in some type of sin and therefore God is judging them. Surely not the life she must have envisioned years ago. The Jewish historian Josephus records that her beauty was matched by no one in her surroundings. Imagine her life, oh what a wonderful life I live, my beauty, my husband, and next a family. But days turn into years, and maybe decades, and how her heart desires but one thing, a child, but beauty can't change that.

She Doesn't Cut Him Off / He is Awesome & Wonderful

I love the next word, that 3 little letter word that changes everything, **but**. When the Angel of the Lord speaks to her and says, "But you shall conceive and bear a son." I love when God speaks those words that pierces through pain, pierces through hopelessness, pierces through all those things. God brings us a word of power, of hope. He's such a good God.

What I like here is that Manoah's wife doesn't cut the angel of the Lord off and say, "I've heard enough. I don't want to talk to about this. Leave me." She has ears to hear what this messenger would say. Because she can wait, believing that there's more, therefore she can hear these promises. I can think of so many people I've met in my life. God hasn't delivered, (so to say), of what they were expecting. They become hardened, bitter, upset with Him. When He says something that they don't like they say, "Enough. I don't want to talk about this no more." They cut the Lord off and they shut the Lord down. They go away into their wallow of pity. They miss that God wants to say something more, something next. They miss that God wants to say, "**But**," and then present and give some marvelous news, some hope that is yet to come, but is sure to come.

Maybe that's you today. You say, "I don't read my Bible anymore. I'm distant from God. I don't talk to him anymore." I would encourage you to open up your conversation and your communion and your communication with Him again. I will promise you this based on the character and nature of who we see that this angel the Lord is none other than Jesus Christ. He's going to identify himself with 2 things, *awesome and wonderful*. An awesome God has awesome things for you. A wonderful God has wonderful things for you. I pray you shut Him down no longer, but have an ear and heart that's open to Him. I pray today, by the working of the Holy Spirit upon your heart, that you'll open your heart and ear to him again. I know if you do He's going to speak to you and you're going to hear something awesome, you're going to hear something wonderful. It will be awesome and wonderful just for the very fact that God Himself has revealed himself to you; but know this he will have more as amazing as that is.

Judges 13:4 Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. Judges 13:5 For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

Nazarite – Separated One

The Hebrew word, Nazar, means "separated one." Nazarites were men who took a vow to separate themselves from the world in order to be fully consecrated to God for a given period of time—usually six months to a year. Samson, however, was unique in that he was to be a Nazarite all the days of his life. From Numbers 6, we know that a Nazarite was one who was consecrated to serve God in three specific ways: He was to touch no wine—not even grapes. He was to let his hair grow. And he was to stay away from anything that had died.

Numbers 6:1–21 (NKJV) ¹ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, ³ he shall separate himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. ⁴ All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin. ⁵ 'All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. ⁶ All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. ⁷ He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head. ⁸ All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD. ⁹ 'And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. ¹⁰ Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting; ¹¹ and the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned in regard to the corpse; and he shall sanctify his head that same day. ¹² He shall consecrate to the LORD the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb in its first year as a trespass offering; but the former days shall be lost, because his separation was defiled. ¹³ 'Now this is the law of the Nazirite: When the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ¹⁴ And he shall present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb in its first year without blemish as a burnt offering, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish as a sin offering, one ram without blemish as a peace offering, ¹⁵ a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their grain offering with their drink offerings. ¹⁶ 'Then the priest shall bring them before the LORD and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering; ¹⁷ and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer its grain offering and its drink offering. ¹⁸ Then the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering. ¹⁹ 'And the priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, one unleavened cake from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put them upon the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated hair, ²⁰ and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD; they are holy for the priest, together with the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering. After that the Nazirite may drink wine.' ²¹ "This is the law of the Nazirite who vows to the LORD the offering for his separation, and besides that, whatever else his hand is able to provide; according to the vow which he takes, so he must do according to the law of his separation."

Don't Even get Close

This Nazirite vow in Numbers 6 we see that not only did you not drink wine, you didn't even drink anything that got you close to it.

- You were not to drink vinegar, which is also made through the fermentation process.
- You were not to eat the grapes, which is the basis of wine.

We see the separation of absolute separation, not how close can I get and still be separated, but how far away can I be from anything that could defile me and/or ensnare me.

Wine is a Mocker / Forget Law – Pervert Justice

The Book of Proverbs tells us that God's leaders were not to drink wine. They weren't to be anywhere near it. Kings, prophets, priests, none of them were to come near it because why? Because it says because they might pervert the justice of God, meaning the influence of alcohol would make them mishandle and misapply the word of God as they were leaders (the word princes in Proverbs 31 means "rulers"). You can take that, and you can take a look at, and read 1 Peter 2 ... We are called to be a royal priesthood (the word kings in Proverbs 31 means "royal"). We have to ask ourselves, "Is there application here for me?" Well, we're going to see continuously, that wine is a mocker and a brawler, and it definitely makes people make foolish decisions with ramifications, not just in their life, but all the way through the lives of those that they intersect, and especially the lives of those that they lead. Are you a part of a chosen generation, are you part of a royal priesthood, then you should seek the Lord and ask Him, is it for me to drink intoxicating drink.

**Proverbs 31:4–5 (NKJV) ⁴ It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, Nor for princes intoxicating drink; ⁵ Lest they drink and forget the law, And pervert the justice of all the afflicted.*

**Proverbs 20:1 (NKJV) ¹ Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.*

**1 Peter 2:9–12 (NKJV) ⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹² having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

Jesus did not Take Nazirite Vow

Just for clarity Jesus did not take a Nazirite vow. He was from Nazarene, but He did not take a Nazirite vow. We will see Him drink wine and we'll see Him touch dead things. Jesus did not take a Nazirite vow.

Shall Begin – Sad Statement / God's Sovereign

Verse 5 - and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines - We see the sovereignty of God. He destines a man for greatness. Giving every opportunity to be great, but He still gives a man free will to choose if he's going to be great, and do great things. And so Samson's life, all the way before his birth, the sovereignty of God knows, he'll begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of Philistines, but he won't finish the work because his personal flesh, his free-will, will yield fruits of unrighteousness, and not bring about the full completion of all the greatness that he could have done

Mother Receives same Vow

Notice she receives the same calling as her son. She receives the same calling to take the same vow as her son. See parents, you can't expect your kids to go further than you have gone, nor can you expect your kids to sacrifice more than you're willing to sacrifice. God here gives a model and an example here in Manoah's wife, Samson's mother, that we will never take our children further than we have gone ourselves, and the calling for us to make the sacrifice that they can look upon and see an example to live by and not be stumbled by any of our liberties.

Judges 13:6 So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name.

Judges 13:7 And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.' "

Judges 13:8 Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."

Judges 13:9 And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her.

God will Always Hear this Prayer / Wise is Mom/Dad who Pray this Prayer

The Scriptures are declaring to us, "God will always hear a prayer, and answer a prayer when you ask." How do you want me to raise this child? And, if things are not going well in our childrearing, we have to examine and ask ourselves, am I invoking God's help to lead me and guide me on how to train up my child. Wise is the parent who prays this prayer. Pray for your child in the womb. "Lord, how would you have me to raise this child," and then when that child is born, pray for that child all the days of that child's life. "Lord, how do you want me to raise this child," and then when that child becomes a parent themselves and you are now a grandparent, then you start the prayer cycle all over again praying for your grandchildren. "Lord, how do you want my children to raise their children?" Let this prayer cycle never be broken.

Judges 13:9 And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her.

Judges 13:10 Then the woman ran in haste and told her husband, and said to him, "Look, the Man who came to me the other day has just now appeared to me!"

Judges 13:11 So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, "Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?" And He said, "I am."

Be Humble / Beauty of Confirmation & Unity

Manoah prays, but the angel of Lord comes not to him but to his wife. Husbands, the Lord will answer your prayers through your wife. Be humble enough to hear what God has spoken to your wife. And see here what a beautiful confirmation it is when he confirms your prayer request through your wife and vice-versa, because he wants to unify the two of you together to be on the same page for what he wants to do in your life.

Judges 13:12 Manoah said, "Now let Your words come to pass! What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?"

Judges 13:13 So the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful.

Judges 13:14 She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe."

Angel of Lord doesn't Answer Manoah Question

The Angel of the Lord does not answer Manoah his question. His question was what will my son's work be? The Angel of the Lord does not answer him, rather the Angel of the Lord reaffirms what He had told his wife and what the wife was to do (as in the same obedience to Nazarite vow), and thus reaffirms the instruction regarding Samson to be separated from the world and to be dedicated onto the Lord through his Nazarite vow. I find that interesting as what the Lord shows us there through this word, a word for all of us. I think we can wonder, maybe even worry, what will my child grow up to be? What will his/her vocation be? How will he/she earn a living? What ministries will he/she be involved in? The Lord will simply speak to us; Raise your child. Dedicate him/her to me. Raise your child, separate him/her from this world, and I'll take care of the rest. You just need to worry about which way to train him up. You just need to worry about which way and how to dedicate this child onto me.

**Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.*

It's a good word for us parents. It's a good word. It tells us what we need to be investing in the most. I'm not saying ignore school. I'm not saying that higher education is meaningless. What I am saying is the most important thing you will do as a parent is to train your child up in the ways of the Lord. Teach, model, exemplify that this child is to be separated onto the Lord. The world has nothing to offer the child that can supersede the personal relationship with the Lord and a life dedicated and set apart. When we do that parent we've done the greatest thing we can for our child. We've led the child into the arms of the Lord and into a life that is dependent upon the Lord. When we entrust our children to the Lord we can be sure the Lord's going to see them through to his perfect will. They will have His ear and He will have their heart. He will be able to lead and guide them for his perfect will in their life.

Notice Manoah Doesn't get Command to Nazarite Vow

Notice that Manoah, he doesn't get charged to take the Nazarite vow. His wife is commanded to it, his son has the command to, but he neither gets a calling nor a command. What do you think? Do you think he, himself, took the Nazarite vow? I think why that question is left open for us, is that we get to ask ourselves, "What would I have done? Would I have taken the vow to make it easier for my son and my wife to follow, or would I have flaunted my liberties to partake of the fruit of the vine?" Ate what Levitical Law considers unclean (which was standard calling for everyone – which made it a default calling for everyone). Would he have ate pork chops and shrimp, scallops. And say, "Boy, you guys don't know what you're missing." I remember several years ago I was doing a 7 day fast, and considering I can barely make 7 hours without food, 7 days was huge. Well I am on like day 3 or 4, and that is when your body is really detoxifying, it is beginning to rebel against you, and Renee and her mother show up at the house with 3 dozen steamed crabs, that aroma fill the whole house, my senses are going crazy as my body thinks it is getting food. It was not a very good thing to do to me as I was trying to do something spiritual here (haha).

Everyone Gets to Choose Liberty or Sacrifice

I think God gives everybody that calling today. It's your choice. You can exercise your liberty. That's part of this salvation. It's a free will choice. You get to choose, but at the same time, you get to choose between greatness or mediocrity, and God will give you whichever you desire. I believe He destines us all for greatness, but so many times we end up with wasted potential, and settle for mediocrity because we're not willing to make what seems like a large sacrifice, but after you do it, you'll find that it was such a small sacrifice when you see the reflection of the glory that comes from that sacrifice. But God gives you your choice, but He does say, "Don't let your liberty cause your brother to stumble," and so now we see the command elevated. If that Christian liberty is going to cause your brother to stumble, then it's not liberty. It brings death. Cultural snares for us today, alcohol, drugs, sex, carnal television shows, gossip, disobedient to parents, judgmental, and the list goes on and on.

**1 Corinthians 8:9 (NKJV) ⁹ But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.*

**Galatians 5:13 (NKJV) ¹³ For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*

Romans 1:28–32 (NKJV) ²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, ³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Judges 13:15 Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, “Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You.”

Judges 13:16 And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD.” (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the LORD.)

Judges 13:17 Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, “What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?”

Judges 13:18 And the Angel of the LORD said to him, “Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?”

Judges 13:19 So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on—

Judges 13:20 it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground.

The Burnt Offering – Total Separation

Manoah says eat with us, the Angel of the Lord says no, but you can offer me a burnt offering. The significance of that is that the burnt offering as prescribed in the Mosaic Law was an offering that represented “total separation unto the Lord”. The person was wholly giving themselves unto the Lord. We see the NT principal (Romans 12:1-2) in the OT picture (Lev 1:3-9).

Leviticus 1:3–9 (NKJV) ³ ‘If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD. ⁴ Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on

his behalf to make atonement for him. ⁵ He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ⁶ And he shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. ⁷ The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire. ⁸ Then the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; ⁹ but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

**Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Gospel

Have you done that in the terms of salvation? Have you given yourself to the Lord? Have you asked Him to forgive your sin against Him, to burn up and completely consume your sin? That can only be done through trading places with Jesus who took your sin, so you could go from an enemy against God (for breaking His Holy Law (10 Commandments), to becoming family, a son or daughter, just like Jesus. Have you done that today? If not than do that today!

John 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

**2 Corinthians 5:17–21 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸ Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Judges 13:21 When the Angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the LORD.

Judges 13:22 And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, because we have seen God!”

Judges 13:23 But his wife said to him, “If the LORD had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have told us such things as these at this time.”

Referencing Exodus 33

She is quoting Exodus 33 when Moses asked to see the Lord. What the context is that no man can see the full glory of God apart from the finished work of the cross. So when man sees God in the Old Testament, they are only seeing foreshadow of Him, and not His full glory, else they would die and be consumed.

Exodus 33:17–23 (NKJV) ¹⁷ So the LORD said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.” ¹⁸ And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.” ¹⁹ Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” ²⁰ But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” ²¹ And the LORD said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. ²² So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. ²³ Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”

Jesus is God

By the way, here is an Old Testament passage that declares that Jesus is God, because we know the Angel of the Lord is Jesus, and we see it clearly said, we have seen God.

Judges 13:22 (NKJV) ²² And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, because we have seen God!”

God has Accepted the Offering – Jesus / He desires no Evil Upon You

The basis of the faith of Manoah's wife was that she knew that the Lord had accepted their offering to Him. The same principle works for the Christian believer today: If the Lord wanted to do you evil, He would have never accepted an offering on your behalf—the offering of Jesus on the cross. So many, too many Christians think God is angry with them, that He is judging waiting to pounce on them, but again if that was the type of God that He is then He would not have sent His Son for our sin, He would have just pounced on us back then. Christian God loves you, and remember last week's study, His mercy and compassion are new every morning for you..... regardless of how many “again” you have.

**Lamentations 3:22–23 (NKJV) ²² Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.*

Judges 13:24 So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him.

Judges 13:25 And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

So Begins the Life of Samson

So begins the life of Samson, a fascinating life, and we will pick up here next week.

You Need the Holy Spirit

Christian you need the Holy Spirit; please read Pastor Chuck Smith's book on the Holy Spirit called "Living Water".

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 14

Judges 14:1-4

Introduction

In our last study we saw the calling and separation on the life of Samson. We saw the calling that all the days of his life he was not to drink alcohol, touch anything dead, nor cut his hair. He was destined for greatness, and greatly gifted, but first it began in the home with his parents and if you missed that study the notes and sermon are online. So let's pick it up in chapter 13 to get a fuller context of our study today.

Judges 13:24 So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him.

So Begins the Life of Samson

So begins the life of Samson, full of the favor of the Lord and great potential. His name means, "shining" or "like the sun", Samson was meant to be a light in a dark place, for the times of Judges (approximately 450 years) the Nation had dark times, and currently at this time are in dark times as they are being oppressed and assimilated by and into the Philistines. It was a time where we read, everyone was doing what was right in their own sight. Shining like the sun, so full of potential, but before His life is over he will be blinded by and because of sin, and not see the sun. the thing he was to be, he will never see.

**Judges 13:1 (NKJV) ¹ Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.*

**Judges 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*

How Bright do You Want to Shine Christian

How bright do you want to shine? Our study over these next 4 chapters will be polish the lamp, trim the wick, and fill the reservoir with oil (of the Holy Spirit) so you will and can shine brightly. So much to learn, be reminded of, and adjust as we look at the life of Samson and consider our own.

**Matthew 5:14–16 (NKJV) ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Raised in godly Home

So Samson is now of age, old enough to make his own decisions. Samson has been raised in a godly home. His parents stayed in Zorah while others in the tribe were heading to the hills where it was easier to live rather than fighting for their inheritance given to them by God when Israel entered the Promised Land. They lived out the Nazarite vow in front of their son. By all accounts we see they raised their son in the way of the Lord. But now it is his choice, and he will choose poorly. Parents, don't live a life of guilt should your children go wayward, for it is called free-will. Don't blame yourself and beat on yourself wishing you would have, could have, should have done this or done that. It is done, you raised them, and the same Holy Spirit that moved upon you to receive and live for Jesus is making the calling to them, and they have their choice to receive or disobey. And parents remember this, Adam and Eve had the perfect parent, but they still chose to go wayward, so don't beat yourself up so bad. And although we don't want to see our kids suffer, I believe that the word of God is true, and we train them up the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6), they will return even if wayward. We will see that truth in the life of Samson, as his last words and last actions, will be for the glory of God, and the action of what God had purposed for his life. Parent take great comfort in the life of Samson, take strength in it, Samson's parent trained up a child in the way he should go, and though he went wayward, in the end he returned. So too shall yours I believe because believe Proverbs 22 is a promise.

**Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.*

**Judges 16:28–30 (NKJV) ²⁸ Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!" ²⁹ And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which*

supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left. ³⁰ Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.

Judges 13:25 And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

You Need the Holy Spirit

Christian you need the Holy Spirit.

Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God. When we read the Spirit of the Lord moved upon Samson or anyone else, simply read it as, God began to move upon the person. Not some mystical force, but God Himself. When we pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we are praying/asking for God to enter into the work (whatever that work may be). Jesus calls the Holy Spirit our Helper, so we don't have to do it alone, whatever it is we are asking Him to help us with (whether personal holiness or practical ministry). God help me with this thing in my life, help me to do this thing you God called me to do. We read through the Scriptures what God does for us, such as He is our teacher of God's Word, then He reminds us what we are to do (so when we feel that nudging in us saying don't do this, or go do that, that is God) – John 14:26. He helps us witness the truth of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world, we don't witness alone – John 15:25-27 (and Acts 1:8). And just another thing (just to name a few), the Spirit gives us gifts, supplies us, for the work of the ministry (such as wisdom, knowledge, teaching, special dose of faith) – 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12).

**John 14:26 (NKJV) ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

**John 15:26–27 (NKJV) ²⁶ "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*

**Acts 1:8 (NKJV) ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

1 Corinthians 12:4–11 (NKJV) ⁴ There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: ⁸ for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Romans 12:3–8 (NKJV) ³ For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. ⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; ⁷ or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

You Need this Spirit – Just Ask

How do you get the Spirit of God, God Himself, by simply asking:

**Luke 11:11–13 (NKJV) ¹¹ If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

**John 7:37–39 (NKJV) ³⁷ On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

Samson does Great Things

Samson does great things, separate from the weakness of the man, or better consider the weakness of the man and his flesh, and still that He still does great things, he is a deliver/rescuer/judge of Israel (for 20 years), and it is because the Spirit of the Lord was his helper in the work of the ministry. Christian do you want to do great things for the Lord? You need the Holy Spirit, the Helper, thus you need to get to know Him in a deeper more intimate way.

Judges 15:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

Read Living Water by Pastor Chuck Smith

An excellent book to help you get to know God the Holy Spirit better is Pastor Chuck Smith's book on the Holy Spirit called "Living Water". Read this book to get a great in-depth, but extremely easy to understanding, understanding of the Holy Spirit – God.

Judges 14:1 Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.

Sad – Israel Gave Ground / Have you Lost Ground

Sad statement when you consider it, as Timnah is now a Philistine city. Timnah was part of the Promised Land that was given to the tribe of Dan, and now it is in the hands of the Philistines. Hey Christian, is there something God once had promised you, but by your own doing you let the enemy take it over, then reclaim it today, go fight for it, go say this is mine and you must leave. Get nasty, don't fight nice, go claim what is yours as given to you by the Lord. And come here Tuesday, or grab someone after service today and say this something was once mine and I want it back, will you pray with me for it. Listen, God wants you to have it, even if you lost it, He wants you to have it back because He gave it to you for you, not another.

Joshua 19:40–48 (NKJV) ⁴⁰ The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. ⁴¹ And the territory of their inheritance was Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, ⁴² Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Jethlah, ⁴³ Elon, Timnah, Ekron, ⁴⁴ Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, ⁴⁵ Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, ⁴⁶ Me Jarkon, and Rakkon, with the region near Joppa. ⁴⁷ And the border of the children of Dan went beyond these, because the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem and took it; and they struck it with the edge of the sword, took possession of it, and dwelt in it. They called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father. ⁴⁸ This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

**Judges 1:34 (NKJV)* ³⁴ And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley;

First Recorded Words

These, Samson's first recorded words, are telling indeed.

- *I have seen a woman*

Summation of Samson's Life

Here lies the summation of Samson's life: He went down. He saw a woman. As has been rightly said, "Samson saw a he-man with a she-weakness." He will repeat this 2 more times.

**Judges 14:1 (NKJV)* ¹ Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.

**Judges 16:1 (NKJV)* ¹ Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.

**Judges 16:4 (NKJV)* ⁴ Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

Went Down – Always the Direction

Went down it says in verse 1, and that will always be the direction life goes when we go against the word and will of God.

Will You go Down Today?

Samson went down – I think that is a good question to ask ourselves every morning: "will we go down". I believe there isn't a person exempt; as for me I know my sin nature, and I should ask myself continually, will I go down in sin and shame today, is there anything I am doing today that could set me up for defeat? Then now is the time to make a course adjustment, change my path, rearrange my day, establish my commitment before the Lord before

the day begins, I am not going down, I will not be taken down, I commit myself a living sacrifice, to be holy, uncommon, to be set apart to the Lord this day.

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

1 Peter 1:13–16 (NKJV) ¹³ Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

Luke 9:23 (NKJV) ²³ Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

Speaking of Getting Nasty – Sin is Nasty – Sin is Serious / Sin Cost Jesus His Life

And speaking of getting nasty, get nasty with sin, and don't give it a foothold, and that starts by not letting it through the eye gate, utterly be ruthless about it; Jesus says be so nasty with sin in your life treat it as if you have to pluck out your eye if need be (not literally) in order to have dominion over it, and not it over you. And if that isn't enough for us on how serious sin is, and how destructive and deadly it is, the we need only to hear those words from 2,000 years ago, Father why hast thou forsaken me, and see the Savior there upon the cross.

***Matthew 5:29–30 (NKJV)** ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

***Matthew 27:46 (NKJV)** ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Samson Saw a Woman – What do you See

Samson saw a woman, that was his thing. What is your thing? could it be money, material possessions, praises of man, not the looks of others that catch your eye but the enslavement of how you look consumes your thoughts.

There is nothing new under the sun, and we are bombarded by these thing that draw us away.

***Genesis 3:4–7 (NKJV)** ⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

***1 John 2:15–17 (NKJV)** ¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Even Spirit Filled

Even a person with the Spirit upon them, just as Samson is, can be drawn into sin, because being Spirit filled or Spirit supplied doesn't remove our free-choice to choose, because everything you see is a choice.

Judges 14:2 So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, “I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife.”

Judges 14:3 Then his father and mother said to him, “Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?” And Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for she pleases me well.”

Marriage Customs.

A number of customs and steps were involved in finalizing a marriage in Old Testament times. The first was agreeing on a price to be given to the father of the girl. The payment was compensation for the loss of a worker. The sum was mutually agreed upon (Gen. 34:12; Ex. 22:16–17). It could consist of services instead of money. For example, Jacob agreed to work for seven years for Rachel (Gen. 29:18–20). The giving and receiving of money was probably accompanied by a written agreement. After this agreement was made, the couple was considered engaged.

In biblical times, a betrothal for marriage was a binding agreement that set the young woman apart for the young man. The agreement was voided only by death or divorce; one could not get out of the betrothal in any other way. When Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant, he did not want to make a “public example” of her; instead, he decided to divorce her secretly. However, he did not carry out the divorce, because an angel of the Lord convinced him that the baby to be born to Mary would be the Son of God (Matt. 1:18–25).

During the engagement period, the bridegroom had certain privileges. If war was declared, he was exempt from military duty (Deut. 20:7). He also knew that his bride-to-be was protected by Mosaic Law. If another man raped her, the act was treated as adultery; and the offender was punished accordingly (Deut. 22:23–27). This was considered a more serious crime than the rape of a girl not yet betrothed (Deut. 22:28–29).

Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., & Harrison, R. K., Thomas Nelson Publishers (Eds.). (1995). In Nelson’s new illustrated Bible dictionary. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.

She Looks Good to Me – Doesn’t matter How it looked to God

She pleases me well is literally, “she is right in my eyes.” What Samson really cared about was how things looked to himself, not how they looked to the LORD. The NIV’s “she’s the right one for me” renders the idiom בְּעֵינַי יֵשֶׁרָה (yāšerāh bē’ēnāy), which is literally “she is right in my eyes.” Another version of the same idiom is found in v.7: “he liked her.” The same Hebrew words are behind the last verse in Judges: “Everyone did as he saw fit.” Samson was conforming to the undisciplined life-style of his age.

Judges 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Do Not Intermarry (Nation) / Do Not be Unequally Yoked/ WHY? Because He is a Good Father

The nation of Israel was commanded not to intermarry with the surrounding nations (or any other nation for that matter – such Egyptians, etc). Why? Because they will draw you away to their gods and their ways. God says get nasty with the very thought of playing around with them, entering into union with them, for they will take you down. He gives the same command to us a believer, He says do not be unequally yoked.

Deuteronomy 7:1–8 (NKJV) ¹ “When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. ³ Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. ⁴ For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. ⁵ But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. ⁶ “For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷ The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸ but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

**1 Peter 2:9–12 (NKJV) ⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹² having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

2 Corinthians 6:14–18 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” ¹⁷ Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” ¹⁸ “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.”

Why this Regulation

Why does He say that? I know as youth we can say why do you put that regulation upon me Lord? Listen young Christian, because He is a good Father, who cares for us and knows what is best for us. He calls you his special treasure (Deuteronomy 7:6).... And see what He says about His people, verse 8 of Deuteronomy, because He love you, and He knows what is best for you. I know it can be hard, I know you may be lonely, I know that boy or girl may be the nicest person in the world to you, but God says eventually they will lead you away from me, all my goodness, and they will not lead you to the abundant Christian life I desire for, because they don’t know me, not do they care about me, and thus they can never lead you to your fullest potential that I for you. It isn’t because

those who are not Christians are not lovable—they are sometimes more lovable than believers. It is not because they aren't good enough, or worthy of our love, or that they are somehow inherently incapable of being a good marriage partner. It is simply because to be a Christian means Jesus Christ is the most important thing in your life; and when a Christian and a non-Christian get together, you have two people who disagree on the most important things in life. Case in point, this girl from Timnah. Watch what happens when you are unequally yoked.

Judges 14:4 But his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD—that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

Wait A Minute – Here is an Exclusion

Wow wait a minute pastor you might say, here is an exclusion, look it is God's will for Samson to marry this girl because God has something special He wants to do. I too believe my situation is unique, and a special exclusion, and I should be with this nonbeliever because God is going to do something great. Listen Christian, Samson is not the exception, and neither are you. 31,102 verses in this Bible, and God never contradicts Himself, and never will.

God Will However Use our Mistakes

God will use our mistakes to do a work in us and the world. God will use the ills and fall of this world to do a work in the world, as we see that in the life of Josephus being sold into slavery (his brother's mistake), and Joseph's pain.

**Genesis 50:19–21 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰ But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. ²¹ Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.*

All Things Work Together for Good You Say – Samson Eyes Plucked Out

You may say well all things work together for good for those who love God, and if I date/marry this person God will make all things work together for good. Do you think eyes being plucked out and grinding grain turned out to be a good life?

**Romans 8:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

No Missionary Dating

Christians, don't enter into missionary dating, for in the end, you will go down.

Yes God Uses Mistakes – Greater Glory Being Obedient

Yes God uses our mistakes, but there is a greater glory to be had, and that is being obedient.

**Luke 22:41–44 (NKJV) ⁴¹ And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” ⁴³ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

Have you Failed?

Have you failed in something in your life, and you are beating yourself up about it, days, weeks, months, maybe even for years now? Just ask Him, and believe Him, and say “Lord please somehow someday, turn this mistake of mine into something good”. If you need to repent and turn away from it, then do it today, for down is the only direction it will take you if you don't repent. But once you repent, confess, request Lord turn this into something good as only you can.

You are In Him

And Christian remember this, as the evil one comes to tear you up, beat you down, remind you of all your failings, remember you are “In Him”, your life is hidden in Him. Let me illustrate; take a piece of paper (and that is you). Grab your Bible (and that is Jesus). Now put that piece of paper in the Bible. Where are you? You are in Christ. Now when God comes to handle you, what does He have to do to handle you, He has to handle Jesus because you are in Christ. How much does the Father love Jesus? Would He handle Jesus roughly, no! When was your punishment for sin? 2000 years ago, that was when your sin was judged. Jesus rose from the dead on the 3rd day,

and you are now hidden in Him. God loves you, God loves His Son, God is not going to handle you roughly or in anger, for you are in Jesus, and He sees Jesus every time He sees you, and thus you are covered in Him. God loves you, He is not angry with you, He only wants to take you to higher ground, not down but up, oh heed the calling of the God who loves you and only wants the best for you.

Colossians 3:3-4 (NKJV) ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)* ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 14:5-11

Judges 14:1 Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.

Judges 14:2 So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife."

Judges 14:3 Then his father and mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well."

Big 3 – Lust of Flesh, Eyes, Pride of Life

So we see in verse 1 that Samson saw (Lust of the Eyes), and then verse 2 he said get me (Lust of the Flesh), and then in verse 3 he refuses the godly counsel of his parents to not intermarry which is disobedience to the command of God (Pride of Life – no ears to hear, because I know better than God what is best for me). So there we see the summation of 1 John 2:15-17 right here in the first three verses of Samson's life.

**1 John 2:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

Written for our Example

We are told that these things written in the Old Testament were written for our example, so we know how to deal with them when we face them personally in our lives. Now I am so glad that the Bible is complete and God is not writing any more chapters and books, because I am glad I can say let's turn to the Book of Judges and read about the life of Samson, and not having to say let's turn to the Book of Judges 2016 and read about the life of Ray.

Whew, we would have enough sermon material to last a lifetime. Not a person in this room who doesn't battle the Big 3, and so today God will give us real life example of a real life person, with real-life, everyday applications **Romans 15:4 (NKJV)** ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

1 Corinthians 10:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Judges 14:4 But his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD—that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

Judges 14:5 So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah. Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him.

Judges 14:6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

No Grapes / God Puts a Vineyard in His Path – Then A Lion

So Samson under his Nazarite vow is to have nothing to do with wine, nor the grapes that make the wine, and here before him is a vineyard. Do you see this Christian? God puts a vineyard in his way. Samson, here is a reminder of your calling, and the path your on is the wrong path, you are heading the wrong way, this is not my plan for you, here I put a vineyard in your way to remind you of your calling. But Samson keeps going, and get this (he is surprised by a lion attacking him); so not only does God put a vineyard in his way, God sends a lion. Then God sends Samson His Spirit, three things to scream out to Samson this is not the destiny I have for you. The Spirit comes upon Samson to stop him and to stir him up. Samson I am not calling you, I have not set you apart, I have not gifted you to assimilate into the culture around, to intermarry and become like them, I have gifted you and set you apart to set a whole Nation apart, to lead the people out of darkness into My marvelous light.

Samson, here is My Spirit upon you, here is a taste of what I can do in your life, I am showing you the victorious and exciting life you can live if you follow my will for your life; what we have here is truly God's great grace, His heart crying out and pleading with Samson you don't want to trade the temporal for the eternal, the present for the great future.

Satan wants Mission Accomplished / John 10:10 – Ultimate Goal to Destroy

Some commentators say this is a picture of Satan, for he is the roaring lion who seeks whom he may devour. Maybe, but personally I don't think Satan wants to kill Samson, I think he wants to Samson to accomplish his mission. I think he wants Samson to intermarry, assimilate, have the great hope of Israel become a nobody full of wasted potential. In John 10:10 we read the thief wants to steal, kill, and destroy. I think they are in the order of importance for Satan; first goal is to steal their joy, let them become depressed Christians so people will look at them and say what is so great about Christianity, I see no joy in them, no hope, just a bunch rules, no wonder they are so depressed. But if you live for Jesus, are a light unto the world, storm the gates of hell, then if death is the only way to shut you up then that is what he will do, but he would rather not because then you become a martyr and witness, and bring attention that there is something worth giving for that is greater than this world has to offer and you were willing to die for it. Ahh, the ultimate goal, destroy you, have you live for the world, enter into sin, blow your witness, be viewed as a hypocrite, say one thing and live another, totally destroy your witness as a follower of Christ, and oh that will be Satan's greatest victory. I believe Satan wants Samson to get to Timnah and get married, and assimilate into the pagan culture of the Philistines.

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Don't be Surprised if Lion / But be Surprised if Not (grave warning)

Christian, don't be surprised that should you be on your way to sin, that God puts a vineyard in your way, and surprises you with a lion. Recognize it, and rejoice over it, and then repent (which means to turn around). But let me say very sobering words to anyone here today, be surprised, be fearful, that you can go into sin and God not put a lion in your pathway. Ask yourself, why is it that I can so easily and freely follow this path of sin and rebellion and my Lord isn't upset. We are told that judgment begins in the house of God, to those that are called His. So if you can freely sin, you should be very concerned right now.

1 Peter 4:12–19 (NKJV) ¹² Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴ If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. ¹⁷ For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ Now "if the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

Don't Say You Cant Turn – You Turn and God will Supply

Before moving on, let me also say this. If you are in the middle of sin, or on your way to sin, a rebellion and disobedience you already know is wrong, don't pray that prayer "Lord if this is not of You, please block this". Or that prayer, "Lord I don't have the strength to turn from this, so please remove it (him/her, that thing) from me". Listen, the moment you turn, God will strengthen. Don't deceive yourself that you don't have the power to turn. God sends His Spirit upon Samson, clearly showing him that he has the power to turn, and that he should turn. God promises you the Holy Spirit, the helper, to help you turn. Ask and you shall have the help, but God will not violate your free-will and take something away that you don't really want taken away. The same power that rose Jesus from the grave (Ephesians 1:19) lives in you! You have the power to overcome!

John 14:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ "If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

Ephesians 1:19–21 (NKJV) ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Judges 14:7 Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

Marriage Customs.

Samson's parents are with him because, a number of customs and steps were involved in finalizing a marriage in Old Testament times. The first was agreeing on a price to be given to the father of the girl. The payment was

compensation for the loss of a worker. The sum was mutually agreed upon (Gen. 34:12; Ex. 22:16–17). It could consist of services instead of money. For example, Jacob agreed to work for seven years for Rachel (Gen. 29:18–20). The giving and receiving of money was probably accompanied by a written agreement. After this agreement was made, the couple was considered engaged.

Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., & Harrison, R. K., Thomas Nelson Publishers (Eds.). (1995). In *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.

They Talked – She Pleased Him

It says they talked; so check this out, Samson hasn't even talked to this girl before, but he is ready to marry her based on one thing, "Samson saw a woman". And it says she pleased him, and the wording means "to please with the eyes". Samson was pleased with her looks. I doubt Samson heard a word of the conversation, all that he hears – is her looks. But I can only imagine how this shallow conversation must have went. I love you hair Sammy it is so long, to which he replies I love your hair too "it is so blonde" (ohh that is a blonde joke isn't it). What type of shampoo do you use? I love your muscles, you must work it. Well yea, I just killed a lion with my bear hands. Ohh wow, you are so strong. Yea I am. What is your favorite tv show, wow me too, did you see what happened on last week's episode? What is your favorite app, oh wow me too, maybe we can do Pokemon Go together. Hey - let's do a selfie. Wow I think we were made for each other. I can imagine on the way home, Samson to Manoah, hey dad did she say her name was.

Blind Date

Joe sets up his friend Mike on a blind date with a young lady-friend of his. But Mike is a little worried about going out with someone he's never seen before. "What do I do if she's really unattractive?" says Mike. "I'll be stuck with her all evening."

"Don't worry," Joe says, "just go up to her door and meet her first. If you like what you see, then everything goes as planned. If you don't just shout 'Aaaaaauuggghhh!' and fake an asthma attack."

So that night, Mike knocks at the girl's door and when she comes out he is awe-struck at how attractive she is. He's about to speak when the girl suddenly shouts:

"Aaaaaauuggghhh!" Help I am having an asthma attack.

Why God says to Wait

Youth and young adults, do you know why God says to wait, to not have physical relationships before marriage. because the eyes can be very deceiving. and the physical can overpower all the other senses. God does not want you to enter into the physical aspect of the relationship before marriage, so you can see the person as a whole, not just the looks part. When you are dating/courting consider the person for body, spirit, and soul. Where are they at in their spiritual walk, will they take you closer to the Lord or away from the Lord. Do you believe the same thing about God, Jesus, and Word of God. Soul, the thing you are interested in. You don't want to love the outdoors, while you mate hates them, because eventually you to are going to have a problem as you want to do this, as they want to do that. But see if you are having physical relationships, they body part will be the whole focus, and you will never really know all the things of the person because the physical will be the overpowering bind. I like to say, when all you have to do is talk, then you will talk, and you will find out what that person really is about. When you get in a disagreement, a fight, a strong disagreement, you will talk it out, or you will separate; but if you are physical, then the physical will smooth over the fight, but never solve it. Then somewhere down the road, whether that is 2 years, 4, or 7 the physical will have worn off and the spirit and soul will take equal ground, and you may find that you really don't have anything in common, and you really don't believe the same things. And you will have serious problems.

Playing the Customs – Doesn't Make it Right / I Do is a Very Long Time

And look at this in that Samson is going through the customs if Israel by having dad come down and go through the whole bride price and all the other customs that come with it. Samson could have been saying, well she goes to the Promised Land, she is one of us. Or as it is said today, he/she goes to church. Hey, you can even go through all

the religious rituals, like get marriage in the church, or go to church together, but it doesn't mean that it is God's will. But, let me say this very clearly, once you say "I do", it just became God's will for your life. And let me add, "I do" is a very, very, very, long time. And people will later say, well we are getting divorced because it was never God's will for our lives, to which God say that is not so.

1 Corinthians 7:10–13 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. ¹¹ But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife. ¹² But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. ¹³ And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.

Judges 14:8 After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the lion.

Marriage Customs.

The length of engagement varied. Sometimes the couple was married the same day they were engaged. Usually, however, a period of time elapsed between the betrothal and the marriage ceremony. During this time the young man prepared a place in his father's house for his bride, while the bride prepared herself for married life.

On the day of the wedding, the groom and his friends dressed in their finest clothes and went to the home of the bride. Together the couple went back to the groom's house. Their friends sang and danced their way back to his house.

Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., & Harrison, R. K., Thomas Nelson Publishers (Eds.). (1995). In *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Samson proud of killing Lion

So Samson turns aside to relive the victory. Too bad he didn't relive and remember the calling that is upon his life. God again is giving him a reminder to stop, turn back, you are not called to do this, but to do this (use your gift to deliver Israel out of the jaws of the lion). But like an ox lead to the grain, so he continues on to become enslaved by woman, lust, for the rest of his life.

Proverbs 6:20–29 (NKJV) ²⁰ My son, keep your father's command, And do not forsake the law of your mother. ²¹ Bind them continually upon your heart; Tie them around your neck. ²² When you roam, they will lead you; When you sleep, they will keep you; And when you awake, they will speak with you. ²³ For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life, ²⁴ To keep you from the evil woman, From the flattering tongue of a seductress. ²⁵ Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, Nor let her allure you with her eyelids. ²⁶ For by means of a harlot A man is reduced to a crust of bread; And an adulteress will prey upon his precious life. ²⁷ Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? ²⁸ Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared? ²⁹ So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her shall not be innocent.

Swarm Bees – Within 7 Days

Depending on the environment, the bee experts say a bee colony can form and produce a pound of honey within 7 days if the environment is right. One of the things that expedites the process is the availability of food. Ever have bees ruin your picnic, love your fruit and burger. Well here is a dead lion in a vineyard. My point, I don't think we are talking months from the bride price meeting to the wedding. Samson is driven by the flesh, and she is a Canaanite who had no moral bearings at all, so I would say this is days or a few weeks at the most.

Wait – Let the Physical Wear off

So, again youth and young adults, give it time, make sure you are not being driven by the physical.

Judges 14:9 He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

He knows He is Wrong

Why didn't Samson tell his parents? Because the lion was dead, and he was a Nazirite. He knows he's in error here—but it seemed so sweet; it seemed so right. A great tell-tale sign for each of on whether something we are doing is wrong, is that we won't want to share it with others, especially those closes to us.

Judges 14:10 So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so.

Judges 14:11 And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

Marriage Customs.

Once at the groom's house, the couple was ushered into a bridal chamber. The marriage was consummated through sexual union as the guests waited outside. Once that fact was announced, the wedding festivities continued, with guests dropping by for the wedding feast. Usually the wedding party lasted for a week (Gen. 29:27).

[Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., & Harrison, R. K., Thomas Nelson Publishers \(Eds.\). \(1995\). In Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.](#)

Not at Dad's

So here is something interesting to notice, and that is that the bridal chamber and the 7-day feast is not at Manoah's (dad's) house. That is where it was supposed to be. So here you see mom and dad are not allowing the sin into their home, but are accepting the decision Samson has made to marry against the will of God. Wow, ever been their parent? Hey I don't agree with what my child is doing, I can't allow their sin in my house, but I don't want to lose them for life. Here is one thing I am sure of, I am responsible for what goes on in my house as the leader of the home, and I cannot allow sin. Joshua lays that example for us very clearly. But I see the example in Manoah that even in their son's rebellion and disobedience to the Lord, they were able to still maintain a relationship with him, and not be alienated from him. What do I know, that every parent has to have an ear that hears what God is saying to them. All the way back before Samson was born, these parents had an ear to hear what the Lord had to say to them about their son, and they will need that same sensitivity for all the years of his life, not just a one time or a couple times. There is time when we have to accept the fact that they are their own free-will people, able to make choices on their own, even bad ones. To which we reach a place where all we can do is give them godly counsel. Whatever you do parent, be sure that every word you speak is anointed from God, once you say something you can never get it back, and make sure that word doesn't put you in a place to never get your child back. Speak words that you are sure are from the Lord, and thus not live in a life of regret. And I know this is extremely hard to hear, but if you have said something to them that you wish you could take back, then go tell them you are sorry for those words. And whatever you do, in these tough situations, if you have to make a hard decision with them, make sure you do it in such a way that you always leave the door open for reconciliation, however you handle it, however it plays out, always make sure that you leave the door open for reconciliation with your words and your actions.

[Joshua 24:14–15 \(NKJV\)](#) ¹⁴ "Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD!" ¹⁵ "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Vineyard – Dead - Booze

Now moving on in this story, at the seven-day wedding ceremony, Samson conducted the customary feast (lit., "drinking party") and was accompanied by 30 companions (typical "friends of the bridegroom," apparently provided by the Philistine family). So Samson has gone into the vineyard, touched a dead animal, and now here he is at a drinking feast.

Sow a Thought – Reap a Destiny

"Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny."

Samson Always Alone

So they have to go get 30 companions to come to the feast, they even have to get him a best man we will read in verse (20). Samson has no friends. What you will notice all through the life of Samson is that he is a loner, there is never a mention of male friendship, only female. He comes to the wedding alone, and they have to supply friends for him. No man can be an island, and if you are, it is because you are shipwrecked.

People will say I don't fit in, that is why I am a loner, that is why I don't engage and fellowship with the body of Christ. I will not even say be careful to you, because that would be wrong, I will say to you take a look at the life of Samson, and see the dangers of being a loner, and do not think you will fare better. You were not created by God to be a loner separated from the Body of the Lord, you were made to fellowship, to be one, to encourage, to be encouraged, to be accountable, and to help others be accountability. No one will ever fulfill their God given potential, by being a loner. Samson proves that.

Satan's number one goal is to always get you alone so he can have a way with you and work you over, and get you separated from God and keep you separated from God, and then he's got you right where he wants you – ALONE, with no one to speak to you the truths of God you need to hear. When did Eve go down, when she was alone. When did David go down, when he was alone (it was a time when kings went out to war but David is home sipping tea on his balcony watching woman bathe.). When did Peter go down, when he was alone warming himself by the fire of the enemy. Oh you can be with people, Samson was with people, Peter was with people, but not God's people who could help them walk the walk. Christian you need to be with the Body of Christ, you need to be part of the Body of Christ. You need to be engaged with the people of God. You need to be in a position where you are held accountable for your actions, and you can receive and give godly counsel. Let us be honest here too, there is a limitation that comes with only being accountable to your spouse. There are things you are afraid to say you are struggling with, there are things you are afraid to say to them because you don't want to cause a fight, therefore men need godly men in their lives, and woman need godly woman in their lives. You need to be involved in your church, and involved in the fellowship. Satan loves to get you alone, because then you are all alone and he can have his way with you.

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 (NKJV) ⁹ Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up. ¹¹ Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? ¹² Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)* ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Judges 14:12-20

Walled In

Wrunken / Roneses, Flanders (modern day Belgium) / 1500s

“I found one!” The Inquisitor held up the forbidden book as he called to his assistant. “Bring in the mayor and his family. Someone is studying the Bible in this house!”

In the 16th century, Philip II sent the Duke of Alba to Flanders to stamp out the Protestants who insisted on reading the Scriptures in their own language. Anyone found studying the Bible was hanged, drowned, torn in pieces, or burned alive at the stake. The Inquisitors had found the Bible while inspecting the house of the Mayor of Brugge. One by one, family members were questioned, but everyone claimed they knew nothing about how the Bible got to their house.

Finally the officials asked the young maid-servant, Wrunken, who boldly declared, “I am reading it!” The mayor, knowing the penalty for studying the Bible, tried to defend her, saying, “Oh, no, she only owns it. She doesn’t ever read from it.” But Wrunken chose not to be defended by a lie. “This book is mine. I am reading from it, and it is more precious to me than anything!”

She was sentenced to die by suffocation. A place would be hollowed in the city wall, she would be tied in it, and the opening would be bricked over.

On the day of her execution, as she stood by the wall, an official tried to get her to change her mind, saying, “So young and beautiful — and yet to die.”

Wrunken replied, “My Savior died for me. I will also die for Him.”

As the bricks were laid higher and higher, she was warned again. “You will suffocate and die in here!” “I will be with Jesus,” she answered.

Finally, the wall was finished, except for the one brick that would cover her face. For the last time, the official tried to persuade her. “Repent — just say the word and you will go free.”

But Wrunken refused, saying instead, “O Lord, forgive my murderers.”

The brick was put in place. Many years later, her bones were removed from the wall and buried in the cemetery of Brugge.

**Talk, D. (2005). Martyrs. Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House.*

Vietnam Persecution versus Obedience

A missionary tells the story – he was in the central highlands in Vietnam when someone remarked about how the Christians suffer there, and one Vietnamese Christian remarked, *“Suffering is not the worst thing that can happen to us. Disobedience to God is the worst thing.”*

Compelling Stories – Which will Be?

So we pick up our story of the life of Samson, so much potential, so much greatness bestowed upon him, yet so much wasted and lost because of his disobedience. We just read two very compelling stories, and now before us a text equally compelling, and we decide, which one will we be today.

Last week we looked at verses 1-11:

Judges 14:1–11 (NKJV) ¹ Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. ² So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, “I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife.” ³ Then his father and mother said to him, “Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?” And Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for she pleases me well.” ⁴ But his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD—that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. ⁵ So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah. Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. ⁶ And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. ⁷ Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. ⁸ After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the lion. ⁹ He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion. ¹⁰ So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so. ¹¹ And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

Samson’s Nazarite Vow

To recap we read in chapter 13 that Samson had a great calling upon his life with the gifting to go with it. He was called to live the Nazarite vow for life, which forbade the drinking of wine (and to not even touch anything of the fruit of the vine such as grapes or raisins), secondly not touch a dead body, and thirdly as we know to not cut his hair. The word Nazarite means “to be separated, set apart, consecrated, devoted one, untrimmed (regarding the vine) – as to not be trimmed by the world. Samson was to be set apart for God and the purposes of God. The vow was an outward display and action of the inward commitment of the heart.

Big 3 – Lust of Flesh, Eyes, Pride of Life

So we saw in verse 1 that Samson saw (Lust of the Eyes), and then verse 2 he said get me (Lust of the Flesh), and then in verse 3 he refuses the godly counsel of his parents to not intermarry which is disobedience to the command of God (Pride of Life – no ears to hear, because I know better than God what is best for me). So there we see the summation of 1 John 2:15-17 right here in the first three verses of Samson’s life.

***1 John 2:15–17 (NKJV)** ¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Judges 14:10 So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so.

Marriage Customs.

Let’s review the marriage customs at the time of Samson. A number of customs and steps were involved in finalizing a marriage in Old Testament times. The first was agreeing on a price to be given to the father of the girl. The payment was compensation for the loss of a worker. The sum was mutually agreed upon (Gen. 34:12; Ex. 22:16–17). It could consist of services instead of money. For example, Jacob agreed to work for seven years for Rachel (Gen. 29:18–20). The giving and receiving of money was probably accompanied by a written agreement. After this agreement was made, the couple was considered engaged.

In biblical times, a betrothal for marriage was a binding agreement that set the young woman apart for the young man. The agreement was voided only by death or divorce; one could not get out of the betrothal in any other way. When Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant, he did not want to make a “public example” of her; instead, he decided to divorce her secretly. However, he did not carry out the divorce, because an angel of the Lord convinced him that the baby to be born to Mary would be the Son of God (Matt. 1:18–25).

During the engagement period, the bridegroom had certain privileges. If war was declared, he was exempt from military duty (Deut. 20:7). He also knew that his bride-to-be was protected by Mosaic Law. If another man raped her, the act was treated as adultery; and the offender was punished accordingly (Deut. 22:23–27). This was considered a more serious crime than the rape of a girl not yet betrothed (Deut. 22:28–29).

The length of engagement varied. Sometimes the couple was married the same day they were engaged. Usually, however, a period of time elapsed between the betrothal and the marriage ceremony. During this time the young man prepared a place in his father's house for his bride, while the bride prepared herself for married life.

On the day of the wedding, the groom and his friends dressed in their finest clothes and went to the home of the bride. Together the couple went back to the groom's house. Their friends sang and danced their way back to his house.

Once at the groom's house, the couple was ushered into a bridal chamber. The marriage was consummated through sexual union as the guests waited outside. Once that fact was announced, the wedding festivities continued, with guests dropping by for the wedding feast. Usually the wedding party lasted for a week (Gen. 29:27).

Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., & Harrison, R. K., Thomas Nelson Publishers (Eds.). (1995). In *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Not Samson Way

Well we see this isn't the way Samson is doing it, as he is disobeying the Lord and His Word of not to marry with the heathen nations around them (see Deuteronomy 7), he isn't having a wedding at his father's house, and the 7-day feast is not their either.

Judges 14:11 And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him

Always a Loner – Has to be Supplied Friends / These Friends will show True Colors

As we had studied last week, all through the life of Samson we see him living as a loner, and here he is at his wedding and he has no friends of his own, he has no best man, such a loner is he that they have to provide for him a best man and 30 friends, which we will see are no friends at all, they are just there to get free food and drink. They are there for a free ride, they are there for a good time, and when that is over, they are gone. Reminds me of the story of the prodigal son, he had plenty of friends as long as he had plenty of money, but once the money was gone, so were the friends. The same will be true in our story today, they were having a good time until it will cost them something, and when it does, their true nature will come out. They loved taking advantage of the prodigal son, and they love taking advantage of Samson, until it was time for them to contribute to the party.

Luke 15:14–16 (NKJV) ¹⁴ But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵ Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶ And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

World Loves to Take Advantage of Christians

Be careful Christian, heed the words of our Lord, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. I am not saying don't have friends who are not saved (else how will they get saved if you aren't there to witness to them), but be careful about making yourself vulnerable to them, because they are not living from the same foundation you are. You live based on the Lord's Word and will; they live based on the world and their personal desires. If you put yourself in a place of trust with them, or a vulnerable place where you are sharing your heart with them, you have to recognize that they do not operate in the spiritual state you do, they operate in the fleshly state, and you may (like our story before us) burn you. Where your treasures are, there your heart will follow.

Matthew 10:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

Matthew 6:21 (NKJV) ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 12:35 (NKJV) ³⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

You Young Ladies

And I want to say to you young ladies especially regarding relationships with unsaved young men; the boys of this world will be drawn to you because deep down they want a girl like you, not doing the things all the other girls are doing. They want you as their girlfriend, because they want someone doesn't live like the world, they want someone they can trust who isn't out running around behind their backs. But, they personally don't want to live

like that themselves. They want an honest girlfriend, but they don't want to be the honest boyfriend. They will take every opportunity to satisfy their flesh, because they are driven by their flesh, but they are drawn to you because you live on a higher plain based on morals. I can tell you with real life examples, for I was a Christian for a long time before I got married, and I worked with unsaved men my age who said, yea when I am ready to settle down I am going to go to church and find a wife there. Recognize that you young ladies, and just wait on the Lord and He will bring you a godly man at His perfect timing for you. And for you single men who have committed your life to the Lord, as I always say, you want a godly woman, you have to be a godly man first. Don't expect God to give you a godly woman if you yourself are not living set apart for Him. Case in point, Samson, he is living for the flesh, not the Lord, and the Lord doesn't bring him a godly woman, because he wasn't living set apart as a godly man.

Bible College – Buddy Taking Nazarite Vow

I am reminded of my buddy at Bible College who took a Nazarite vow for 6 months, to him it was an outward act of what was in his heart, just a time totally set apart unto God. He didn't drink and had no problem with the not touching dead bodies to start with, but he let his hair grow and did not date or even allow himself to give or have interests in girls. He just wanted a time set apart for the Lord to fellowship with Him in a totally separated way. So no haircut for 6 months, no shaving for 6 months, thankfully he still bathed, but after 6 months he became quite a sight, and not in a handsome way that was for sure. But I remember that day, there was a knock on my dorm room door, and there before me was this clean cut, clean shaven man, a beautiful handsome man with a beaming smile, and he just stood there smiling at me, and I was like can I help you, and he kept smiling, and I said yessssss, and then he spoke and I was like are you kidding me, is that really you. Then he said you will never guess what happened, I ended my 6-month vow, haircut and a shave, then went to work that night at the snack bar that was on campus, a girl came to visit a friend that night, they met, and he said Ray I know this is the one, and it was, and some time later they became husband and wife. Am I saying If you can't get a date grow your hair and don't shave, no, I am just saying – set yourself apart on to God, delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Single man, single woman, if you want marry a godly helpmate, you have to be godly yourself.

Psalm 37:4-5 (NKJV) ⁴ Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. ⁵ Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.

Judges 14:12 Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing.

Judges 14:13 But if you cannot explain it to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing." And they said to him, "Pose your riddle, that we may hear it."

Judges 14:14 So he said to them: "Out of the eater came something to eat, And out of the strong came something sweet." Now for three days they could not explain the riddle.

The Riddle – Turned His Calling into a Joke

We can look at this riddle and get caught up in how it results in Samson's wife betraying him, but let's not miss this, and that is that this riddle is part of his downward progression. It is more than him disobeying the word of the Lord and intermarrying with a Canaanite, it is more than him going into the vineyard where the grapes are, it is more than him touching something dead, it is more than him hosting a drinking party (which is safe to say he is probably drinking), but see this here..... Samson is making a riddle out of his calling. He should never have been in that vineyard for he was forbidden in his Nazarite vow to go anywhere near the fruit of the vine. He is making a riddle, a joke, turning his uncommon calling from God, into something as common as a riddle, a joke.

Numbers 6:3-4 (NKJV) ³ he shall separate himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. ⁴ All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.

Samson Should Repent – Lord Please Forgive & Renew

Samson feels like he got away with his sin. Remind you, your sin will always find you out, and here Samson will pay for his sin. Samson should be repentant, he should be grieved, he shouldn't be at a party he should be in the prayer closet confessing his sin and crying out to God, "Lord forgive me for drifting away, Lord please restore me,

renew a right spirit in me". But instead he is taking what was meant to be holy, and turning it into something common, a riddle, a joke.

Numbers 32:23 (NKJV) ²³ But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.

Samson not Making Honest Assessment of Himself

And here is one the biggest failing of Samson, if not the greatest, Samson is not making an honest assessment of sin in his life. When he is enticed by Delilah, he will say to her "I have been a Nazarite to God from my mother's womb". He believes at that very moment, as he lies on the lap of a woman who is not his wife, as his visits to a harlot, after marrying outside the Nation of Israel, after hosting a 7-day drinking fest, after touching a dead corpse, after going into a vineyard, as he lies on the lap of a woman he is having physical relationships with (some 20 years from this story we currently read), and he says I have been and kept Nazarite vow my whole life.

Judges 16:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

Judges 16:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.

Christian – You will never Achieve Greatness if Not Honest with Self

Christian you will never achieve the greatness that God desires for you if you will not be honest about your personal sin and compromise in your life.

Other Commentators Debate if Touching Lion a Sin

So pick up a commentary or listen to a commentary and you will most likely come across the debate of whether touching the dead lion was a violation of his Nazarite vow. They will say, by the letter of the law, it clearly says in Numbers 6 not to touch a dead person, therefore it might not necessarily apply to touching a dead animal. Now if you want to go to the letter of the law, Leviticus 11:27-28 says if you touch a dead animal you are unclean, so he was at least unclean and then he made his parents unclean by giving them honey to eat that was inside a dead carcass. So he is clearly in sin with that. But what do you think about touching a dead animal, do you think that was part of God's intent with the Nazarite vow or not? Do you think it could read, you shall not touch a dead body all the days of your life, but for clarity no problem touching a dead, several day old rotten flesh carcass that has been swarmed by vultures, has maggots crawling all over it, and smelling all the way to heaven after sitting out in the humid middle east land where temperatures swell into the 100's, that is ok just as long you don't touch a dead human. The Nazarite vow was to be a time of being set apart for God, it was not to be how close you can get to the world but how close you can get to God.

Leviticus 11:27–28 (NKJV) ²⁷ And whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on all fours, those are unclean to you. Whoever touches any such carcass shall be unclean until evening. ²⁸ Whoever carries any such carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It is unclean to you.

Christian – You will never Achieve Greatness if Not Honest with Self

Samson is not making an honest assessment about himself, he doesn't consider the things he is doing as wrong, in fact it appears he thinks he has the all the favor of the Lord upon him. Christian you will never achieve the greatness that God desires for you if you will not be honest about your personal sin and compromise in your life.

Things Missing from Samson's Life

Let me just point out some things that are missing from the life of Samson as we study it, things we won't read about. There is "No Mention" of:

- No Personal Devotion, and the reading of the Word
- No trips to the Tabernacle (which we can deduct from the Book of Samuel is in operation during the life of Samson)
- No attending the Feasts of Israel (where a man was to offer himself separated unto God and to ask for forgiveness of his personal sins)
- No witnessing/talking about of the greatness of God (rather at drinking parties with the world)
- No godly counsel (always a loner – and rejects his parents godly counsel)
- No fellowship (always a loner)
- No praise to the Lord (even after great uses and victories given to him by the Lord)

- No prayer (except when in a jam)

Anything Missing in Your Life

So I have to ask myself and you, anything on this list not on mine?

Guard this with All Your Heart

Oh Christian, may we guard and treasure this calling and relationship with all that we have. Proverbs 4 says to keep your heart with all diligence, and that word for keep means to guard, watch over like a watchman on the wall of the city, to put protection around. And then it goes on to say, for out of it spring the issues of life, and the word there for “springs the issues” means the going forth, and it gives the illustration of a bubbling spring of water breaking forth from the ground. I remember growing up in Western Pennsylvania, and we loved playing out in the woods, and we found, stumbled across, these springs that just were in the middle of the woods that were bubbling up with the freshest perfectly chilled water you could ever drink, if it was a 100 degrees that spring would still put out 40-50 degree water. And when you were hot and parched and you came upon that spring and you got down and just drank straight from the well, oh you were refreshed and revived, oh it was so good. Man did we protect those springs, we never let the bad kids in the neighborhood know where they were at, and we never blocked them of polluted them. God says God your heart, with all diligence, for out of it life bubbles, breaks forth, and overflows unto you.

Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV) ²³ Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

Proverbs 4:23 (ESV) ²³ Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Proverbs 4:23 (LEB) ²³ With all vigilance, keep your heart, for from it comes the source of life.

Don't Make Common

Christian, look at the life of Samson, look at him making common his great calling and relationship with God, making it as common as a riddle; guard this relationship with all your heart, protect it, invest in it, for out of it will flow rivers of living water that you can take in and live an abundant life. Sometimes we can make statements such as yes I a Christian, I work at the widget factory, and I am on the company softball team, etc – WHAT! It is like we lump being a Christian with our everyday life, just another thing we do, rather than what we are – we are God's, we have been bought by the blood of God, we have an eternal destiny, and a present presence of God in our lives. Being a Christian isn't some common thing, it is a calling outside of this world! Our brother Paul before he departed for heaven, said I want to remind you and stir you up, even though you already know, he said I want to tell you again, make your calling and election sure. Guard your heart and don't allow your faith to be something common.

John 7:37–39 (NKJV) ³⁷ On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

2 Peter 1:10–15 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ¹² For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. ¹³ Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, ¹⁴ knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. ¹⁵ Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

Beloved – Don't make it Common – For it will become Come

Judges 14:15 But it came to pass on the seventh day that they said to Samson's wife, “Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? Is that not so?”

Judges 14:16 Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said, “You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained it to me.” And he said to her, “Look, I have not explained it to my father or my mother; so should I explain it to you?”

Custom to give Gifts/Riddles

The custom remains today wherein the groom gives the groomsmen in his wedding party small gifts as tokens of his appreciation. With so many guys to buy for, Samson devised a way where he wouldn't be out the money for thirty gifts. And it was customary to give riddles as a form of entertainment over 7 days.

Like Betting 30 Air Jordan's

Now 30 changes of clothing is a big bet. They didn't live like we do today with closets full of clothes, they had maybe two changes of clothing. The stakes put into today terms would be like betting a pair of Air Jordan shoes which go for about 200 dollars, or betting 30 iPhones. This is a huge bet, and not something that anyone has readily available to give.

The Math Behind the Riddle

So we read the statement of (seven days) and it can get confusing on when was the riddle posed, how long did she pester Samson regarding it. Well verse 15 in some manuscripts say (fourth day). We can't be absolutely clear, but there are lots of possibilities and that is that on the fourth day they said if you don't tell us, we will burn you and your father's house down, and then on the seventh day they came back again and said it again, if you don't get us the answer we will burn you and your father's house down. So Samson posed the riddle on day one of the feast, for three days they couldn't figure it out, so day four they go to his wife to threaten her, then come back on day seven to remind her they are serious about their threat. So literally for the whole feast she is pestering Samson for the answer. Maybe first 3 days she is pestering him because she wants to know the answer herself, and then 4-7 because she fears these men.

Samson's Wife Believes their Threats

"If you don't find the answer to that riddle," the Philistines threatened, "we're going to burn you and your father's house." So Samson's wife cried to her husband. By her actions, we can tell she believed they would do what they said, so we can deduce a lot about the character of these men, they are the type of people God warned Israel not to make covenants and alliances with, because they are ruthless and rotten.

Samson not Ready for Marriage

Didn't even tell mom and dad, why would I tell you Samson says. Samson definitely should not be getting married for he clearly is not leaving and cleaving. He thinks his parents have an elevation over his wife, whereas the Scripture calls for man and woman to leave their parents and cleave (literally be glued together).

Genesis 2:20-25 (NKJV) ²⁰ So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. ²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. ²³ And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

She calls them her People

Notice, she calls the Philistine men, "her people". So Samson has allegiance to his parents, and she has allegiance to her family. Leaving and cleaving – and until you are ready to do that, you need to recognize that and slow down on the whole marriage thing.

Judges 14:17 Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted. And it happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people.
Judges 14:18 So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down: "What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?" And he said to them: "If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle!"

The Answer

This, of course, was the answer to the riddle.

The Heifer – Not a Wife

Samson calls her a heifer, as if she is just another thing to make his life easier and pleasurable.

Husbands will never Hear Holy Spirit if You always Talking

Your husband will never hear the Holy Spirit speaking to him as long as you are continually talking.

Anger Towards Wife / She won – But Lost Husbands Heart / Manipulation builds Anger

If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle: Samson's use of this proverb showed the anger and bitterness he felt at being manipulated. Samson's wife "won" what she wanted through manipulation, but she lost her husband's heart. When a man gives in to his wife's manipulations so as to keep peace, it almost always builds anger and resentment in the man—and guilt in the woman for what she did. The way of manipulation is tempting (because it works), but always brings real destruction.

Judges 14:19 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house.

Yet God still – Gives Samson the Holy Spirit / Show him Why Created / His Mercies are New Every Morning

The Spirit of the Lord comes upon him mightily! Even after all his failures, rebellion, disobedience, selfish pursuits, being shame to the Name of the Lord, God still pours His Spirit out upon Samson. The Lord gives him the strength to crush 30 Philistines. Even after all this, God is still crying out to Samson, "look at all the potential I have given you", look and see what I have made you for, I have made you unique and gifted you like no other man in the history of the Nation, so that you might set the captives free, deliver your nation, My people from the oppression of the Philistines. I have made you for greatness, and there is still time to be great and fulfill the destiny I have for you. I did not want you to marry the Philistine girl, this is why I say don't intermarry because they serve a different god than you do, that is why I said to be set apart from them. Through all this we see the promise of God, His mercies and compassions are new every morning, great is His faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22–23 (NKJV) ²² Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

The Promise is to you this Day

The same promise is available to you this morning, and I pray you say I receive that promise and I am turning to follow You Lord. No more world, no more self, I want to live for what you made me for, and I want all that You have for more, and I desire to live to the fullest potential You desire for me. Please Lord, no wasted potential.

Judges 14:20 And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

The Physical Wasn't Enough to Keep them

With Samson in a furious rage, his wife was given to his best man. Guess what, the physical wasn't enough to keep them together. Their hearts were not knitted together

The Path of Samson

So the path of Samson; walking through the vineyard, hey the grapes can't hurt me, then the touching of the dead carcass, but of course the vineyard didn't hurt me. I don't need to heed godly counsel, I know what I am doing, and sadly Samson gets burned. But more so, we see he is reaping a destiny.

Sow a Thought – Reap a Destiny

"Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny."

Vietnam Persecution versus Obedience

A missionary tells the story – he was in the central highlands in Vietnam when someone remarked about how the Christians suffer there, and one Vietnamese Christian remarked, *“Suffering is not the worst thing that can happen to us. Disobedience to God is the worst thing.”*

Wrunken

The story of Wrunken - Finally, the wall was finished, except for the one brick that would cover her face. For the last time, the official tried to persuade her. “Repent — just say the word and you will go free.”

To which she would not, for her, to live is Christ, and if need be die, and be with Him face-to-face:

[Philippians 1:21 \(NKJV\)](#) ²¹ For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

Response

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)* ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 15

Introduction

So Samson against the Word of God and godly counsel, marries a Philistine girl, thus becoming unequally yoked, and it was just a meter of time before they had problems, and they only made it 7 days in their marriage before they did. If you recall Samson gave a riddle at the 7-day wedding celebration to the 30 men who came for a free-ride of food and drink. Those men couldn't figure it out, so they threatened Samson's wife to give them the answer, she in turn manipulated Samson to get the answer, so Samson in a rage goes to another Philistine town, kills 30 men and takes their garments and gives it to the 30 at the wedding feast to settle his bet. Let's pick it up in 14:19 for some key principals for us for our "lessons in living".

Judges 14:19 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house.

Judges 14:20 And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

Samson Went Home / Ended the Way Parent's Expected

So here we read that Samson is at his parents' house, he is not with his wife. We see Samson, he's heading back home. What I want to take note here is Samson is heading back home pretty much just as mom and dad expected these things to turn out for him, marrying this woman who he was unequally yoked with. Samson falls for the big three: the lust of the flesh, he saw her and he wanted her, there also then then the lust of the eyes; then we see him coming to the pride of life in that he wouldn't heed the godly counsel coming from his parents who begged him not to do this. Samson goes ahead, does what he wants to against the word of God and against godly counsel. It ends the way that it always will end: in a heart break and in demise.

**1 John 2:15-17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

Please See – Samson Could go Home

I want you to see that Samson can go home, and I think that's something important for all of us parents to see who have prodigal children, is that the door was left open for their return. There was a relationship with his mother and father that even being wrong he still could return. As I say mom and dad, make sure that no matter how it plays out with the prodigal that they know they can always come home. I want you to see from the story of the prodigal, there in Luke 15, some key takeaways that should the day come, or better said when the day comes your prodigal returns:

- don't make them beg and don't make them grovel to come back in. We see that the father simply ran and restored the son with no begging.
- Notice, there was no saying, "I told you so".
- There was no lecture
- Notice there was no requirement of restitution

Luke 15:11-24 (NKJV) ¹¹ Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. ¹³ And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. ¹⁴ But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵ Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶ And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, ¹⁹ and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" ²⁰ "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'" ²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. ²³ And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴ for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

Samson Knows he can Come Home / Parent's Let them Know You want them Home

The same we see here with Samson's father and mother. Samson knows he can come home. As we see in the story of Luke 15 in the prodigal son that he knew he could return. Parents, can I say that to you? When you speak to that prodigal let them know "I want you home", and when they do come home let them know, "I restore you fully, 100%". Parents, let there not be a word unless they want to speak about it, of again the I told you so. Let it be forgiven and let it be forgotten.

Forgiven & Forgotten / How Many time have you Been Prodigal

I have to ask every one of you here today, how many times have you been a prodigal yourself with the Lord? Maybe it was for an hour, maybe it was for a day, maybe it was for a week or months on end. Yet the only person who knew you were prodigal was you and the Lord. Maybe you did all the religious routines of going to church and not losing your temper, but deep down you knew you were distant from God. You knew you weren't cultivating a personal relationship with him. You knew you were doing your own thing. How many times does he receive you back and has he received you back? That's how many times you receive the prodigal son or daughter back. When Peter would say, "How many times do I forgive, Lord? Seven times?" Jesus would answer, "No, seven times seventy", meaning more than you'll ever remember, more than you ever can record. That's the same word as the Lord for you when you personally were prodigal that he restores you and no record. The same application for you son or daughter, as many times.

Matthew 18:21–22 (NKJV) ²¹ Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

If you Are Prodigal Today – Come on Home / The Heavenly Father is Coming to You / Everything want in Father

If you're a prodigal here today or listening on the radio I want you to hear the heart of God and the heart of your father in heaven. He says, "Come on home. I've been waiting for you." The only time you ever see God in a hurry in all the scriptures is when the prodigal returned, and he runs to him to receive him back. That's what your heavenly father says to you today, "Come home. I want you back home. I want you home in my arms right now." I want you to see everything that the prodigal son wanted in the world was already in his father's house: riches, a party, the lavishing of love. All that was already in the father's house, he just couldn't recognize it because he was deceived that there was something better out there. Just like Samson, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. It's all a deception, and eventually the world spits you out after it has chewed you up and you see the world only promises emptiness and loneliness. Come on back home you son or daughter. Your heavenly father waits for you and your earthly mother and father, they want you home too. I can speak from the heart of a father. There's no place that I want my sons to be than next to me, enjoying home and fellowship together.

Judges 15:1 After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into her room." But her father would not permit him to go in.

Judges 15:2 Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead."

It is God's Will – Once said "I Do"

Verse one, Samson is coming back after a period of time to his wife. Just as a reminder and an FYI, whether we want to say that marriage is null and void, it's not because God is the same yesterday, today and forever. The minute Samson said "I do" it became God's will. This is his wife, so he has a responsibility to be the husband to his wife.

Samson's Wife Commits Adultery – Shows her Heart

Samson's wife, verse 2, she commits adultery and hence here we see this is the character that she was, and Samson has no idea of knowing, because he didn't spend time to get to know her, all he wanted to know was her looks, and the physical features, and he never got to know what's in her heart. Here they are, they're only weeks on the other side of marriage, and her true heart comes out as she here is committing adultery with Samson's best man of the wedding. When two people are unequally yoked, they are working from two different standards, and it most always goes badly.

Samson Comes with Peace Offering – What does Your Peace Offering look Like

Verse one. It says after a while. After a while would mean after the anger and rage subsided Samson returns. Can I ask you, Christian, what do you do after you explode? Here comes Samson. He's coming back to his wife. Notice what he does. He comes with a peace offering. That's what a young goat is. That's what it's meant to mean here. He comes with a gift. He comes with a peace offering. I want to ask every marriage in here, what does your peace offering look like in your life after you have your moments of rage, explosion, anger, loud voice or distant silence? What does your peace offering look like? Is it flowers, dinner, hugs and embrace, holding of hands?

It must Also Come with Words / No "BUT" in Apology

That's awesome, but I just want to let you know it also has to come with words. It has to come with those words "I'm sorry". Be clear, if needed, what you are sorry about. May your apology never have the word "but" in it, because once you say "I'm sorry, but", or "because", then you just literally wipe out and negate your whole apology because now you're giving reason why you acted the way that you acted and you're putting blame on the other person or putting partial blame on them and you wipe out the whole apology.

Can't Just Smooth it Over with Physical

Samson, he wants to come in and have physical relations, and that's much needed in the unity and bonding during the restoration (1 Corinthians 7:5), but it has to have words with it. You can't allow the physical to smooth over what happened because then the thoughts sit there and the person continually goes over them again and again and again. It gives the enemy a foothold to work. There's that stupid saying "love means you never have to say you're sorry". That's stupid. It's not biblical. We see through the scriptures forgiveness looks like something. It has an action and it has words. It's the asking for forgiveness and it's the action of forgiveness.

1 Corinthians 7:5 (NKJV) ⁵ Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Verse 2 – Do it Quickly / People Start to Draw Conclusions

Verse two. Do it quickly, because you know what happens? Here the father-in-law, here this wife, they draw their own conclusions. How long Samson was away, we don't know. We see the action, the explosion and then it's coupled with time, but we don't know how long, it made people draw their own conclusions. I thought you hated her. She must've thought it too. They go and she's given to his companion, because without the words and without the actions people will draw conclusions of what's in your heart and your mind of what just happened and why you just reacted the way that you reacted.

Can't Give Satan a Foothold / Be Specific why you Were Wrong

We can't let Satan get a foothold. We must speak. "I was wrong for", and you fill in the blank. Then you have to ask "Is there anything else that you want to talk about that I haven't covered in my apology?"

Forgive means to Send Away / If you Forgive – Mean It / Else Satan gets Foothold Again

I have to say this to those who receive the offer of forgiveness. You can't say nothing for the sake of peace unless you mean it, unless you truly mean it, there's nothing else that needs to be addressed. Forgive means to send it away. If you don't forgive and send it away, it will regain and take root and grow to become bigger than it ever was at the moment that it happened. Deal with it. Deal with it fully and then be done with it. Don't bring it up and don't use it in an argument six weeks or six months later, because that will just prove you never did forgive, and therefore you are a person who holds grudges. Now that will rest in the other person's mind for the time going forward. "I've been here. I know I'm a fool. I say I'm sorry. You say you forgive, but you really don't. You hold all these things over me." Whereas first Corinthians 13 says love keeps no record. That's no stupid cliché, that's the truth of God for any relation. You can't keep a record. If you say it's good, it's good. If it's not good then you need to discuss it. If you can't get past it, then put yourself into a place that you'll seek godly counsel to get through this.

Joke – 25th Wedding Anniversary

I once heard a story about a husband and wife who were celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary. At a gathering for friends and family, the husband stood up and proclaimed, "I love this woman so much." Turning to

his wife, he said to her, "Dear, because you have given me twenty five years of wedded bliss, I am taking you to China."

The wife was so excited. She exclaimed, "China! I have always wanted to go to China!" Then she said to her husband, "If you are doing that for our 25th wedding anniversary, I can't wait to see what you will do for our 50th wedding anniversary!"

The husband replied, "That is when I will pick you up."

Silence is Form of Manipulation / Walking on Eggshells / Knows not Forgiven

Silence can be a form of manipulation, whereas the person tries to reconcile and you just remain silent. Remember her with her weeping and manipulation, it ended in destruction? I will tell you silence will bring destruction, something will be destroyed along the way if you remain silent. If you remain silent because that's a way that you're going to manipulate, then what that does is put the other person to walk on egg shells, or they will grow in pent up frustration. "I humbled myself and asked for forgiveness. You said you forgave me, but your actions do not match your words. They will grow in frustration."

Listen, it's okay to be honest and say, "I forgive you, but I'm hurt by what you did. I forgive, but please recognize there's a wound there and I need you to understand that this hurts and it's going to take some healing." I am not saying to say those words in a form of manipulation, but you say them from your heart and the other person hears those words, they will learn to speak wisely. They will learn to think before they speak, and so too will you, because if the Spirit of God is upon them it will crush them like a ton of bricks of sorrow. "I can't believe I just hurt that person who means so much to me."

They will find that five minute morning devotions aren't enough. If that's you, you'll recognize you need the Lord more today than yesterday. You will see that you have things he needs to work on in your life. You won't just move on, you will work out a pleading of God to change you. Silence can be a form of manipulation and Satan can jump on that and get a strong foothold, so you need to talk these things through. The peace offering needs to have words, but take the words with a peace offering and show them that you care enough and it means enough and that you're truly sorry.

Woman you have Come a Long Way / Take Sister – just another Heifer

Moving on, verse 2, here the father says, "Hey, sorry about that so take her sister, is she not better?" That's how they treated women. Samson calls his wife a heifer. You're just a heifer to me, something I use for my pleasure needs. Here comes the father going, "Hey, take the other sister", you know? There's no big deal here. What's the difference? Women, you've come a long way. You've come a long way. I want you to see and recognize the history of the world, that women have always been treated as things or second-hand citizens except where the gospel of Jesus Christ has gone. You take a tour around the world today and you look in nations where the gospel is not the foundation of the nation such as China, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and you will see women suppressed. You will see them hiding behind veils.

You go to a nation of China where babies born as girls are thrown off of cliffs or aborted because there's a limit of how many children you can have and they choose the male. Everywhere in every nation women are treated that way except where the gospel of Jesus Christ has gone. You go and you look at the nations whose foundation are laid on the gospel of Jesus Christ, Europe, Australia, United States, the predominant portions of the Western Hemisphere, and you will see women who have been elevated to the rightful state and their right standing. Oh, yes, we will see ignorant men full of themselves still treating women as an object. That's the sin in the flaw of man but you look at a nation as a whole and you'll see women have their equal rights and are of equal importance as they should be. You've come a long way and you can thank the gospel of Jesus Christ for the nation that you live in that you get to live as you do.

Abortion - Hypocrisy

I do want to point out a prevalent hypocrisy in this Western Hemisphere where women have been elevated and been given their rights of equal status as they should. As a woman stands up, I am a creation equal with you. I should be respected and I have a right to life and an equal right to life and all that comes with it. Hypocrisy comes, is so much so, I've gained such equal rights and have been elevated and been given the right to life. Now I choose as if I'm God who lives and who dies as sixty million babies have been aborted in the United States of America all under the guise of the right to choose. It's hypocrisy. It's almost an insult coming to that place of equalness but then exceeding it to determine who lives and who dies. I will say any man who was part of it, you're equally as guilty of that hypocrisy. I create, I give women equal status but then I also join in in choosing who's not equal and who doesn't get to have the same opportunity.

If You have had an Abortion / Blood of Jesus Covers It

Let me add, if you've had an abortion as a female or you've been part of an abortion as a male in making the decision, listen. God loves you and God will forgive you. Just ask him. The blood of Jesus Christ covers all sin, past, present and future. It covers that one too. He wants to forgive you and I know that you're listening to me, you've been struggling with it because you're still listening to me and you haven't tuned me out. I want you to know based on this gospel of Jesus Christ, that when he went to the cross to die for your sin, he died for all of your sin. He has forgiven you and he will cleanse you. You can get up and move on.

*Luke 23:34 (NKJV)*³⁴ Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.

Where is my Child – In Heaven

You may ask where is my child, and I will tell you based on the scriptures we saw when King David's son died, when that child died, David got up and said, "Someday I will go to be where my child is", knowing that he would come into the heavenly throne, and that his child was already there before him. God is a just and fair God, and will only judge a person's sin who is of the age of understanding that they are sinners and their sin separates them from God, and they need to be saved from their sin. What is that age, it varies from person to person. A 3 year old may have the understanding, while an adult with a mental disability may never come to an understanding. God knows, and thus I don't need to try to make that determination. The Jewish people consider it at the age of 12 (see note below)

*2 Samuel 12:21–23 (NKJV)*²¹ Then his servants said to him, "What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food." ²² And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' ²³ But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

Bar/Bat Mitzvah - According to Jewish law, when Jewish boys become 13 years old, they become accountable for their actions and become a bar mitzvah. A girl becomes a bat mitzvah at the age of 12 according to Orthodox and Conservative Jews, and at the age of 13 according to Reform Jews.[citation needed] Prior to reaching bar mitzvah age, the child's parents hold the responsibility for the child's actions. After this age, the boys and girls bear their own responsibility for Jewish ritual law, tradition, and ethics, and are able to participate in all areas of Jewish community life. Traditionally, the father of the bar mitzvah gives thanks to God that he is no longer punished for the child's sins (Genesis Rabba, Toldot 23:11). In addition to being considered accountable for their actions from a religious perspective, b'nai mitzvah may be counted towards a minyan (prayer quorum) and may lead prayer and other religious services in the family and the community.

If You Thinking about an Abortion

And if you are thinking about an abortion today, please come talk to us, we want to help you in this time of need you are having. We can help you find resources if that is your greatest concern, we can tell more of the heart of God regarding the matter, and we want to share with you stories of others who have been in your place so you can see you will never forget it, and it will haunt you for the rest of your life, and God wants to protect you from a life of regret. So please, come let us walk this out with you.

Judges 15:3 And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!"

Judges 15:4 Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned the foxes tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails.

Judges 15:5 When he had set the torches on fire, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards and olive groves.

Samson recognizes he Wasn't Blameless

Verse 3, Samson recognizes that he was not blameless for the killing of the thirty as he says, "This time I'll be blameless." He's acknowledging, I got to take some blame. I was pretty foolish. That was pretty of the flesh for what I've done but this time I won't be, so he recognizes. That's something big, to recognize and not justify. When we sin against the holy God we can always justify for some reason and say, "Well, they did this." God, he doesn't agree with that. There is no justification. When we're wrong we have to just say we're wrong, accept it.

How do Catch 300 Foxes

Verse 4. How in the world do you catch three hundred foxes? I don't know. It's like herding cats. How do you tie them tail-to-tail, I don't know, without them biting you and tearing you up. How do you light a torch between two foxes and not have them rip you to shreds, I don't know but here it is and it is happening. I remember growing up in western Pennsylvania. We're outdoorsmen. We hunted, we fished and we were trappers. I'll tell you what, catching a fox, you had to be a master trapper because they're sly. They'll take your bait and they'll be gone. When you caught a fox, you've got to be careful because they're mean, they're nasty. If they get out of that trap, look out. They're going to do a world of hurt on you. I would love to see the video when we get to heaven how Samson did this. Somewhat childish but somewhat creative and brilliant at the same time because it's like herding cats. When these foxes run through the harvest they're going to light all the field on fire. The more you chase them the more they're going to run and freak out, the further the fire's going to spread. Childish but creative.

Hitting them in Pocketbook – It is Harvest time

Samson's hitting them very hard because as we started it was the harvest time and now he's hitting them right in the pocketbook. They've waited all year for the harvest. They'll take the harvest in. They'll store it and they'll be good for the leanness of the winter and Samson's hitting them hard. You hit people in the pocketbook, you'll know how much grace and mercy you get. You'll see how they respond when they're hit in the pocketbook. They're coming for Samson.

Judges 15:6 Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

Wording – Everyone

The way the wording of the sentence structure is, it is saying the house and everyone in it.

What a Stupid Best Man – Takes Samson's Wife

By the way, this man, some think it's the best man, he has to be one of the stupidest people in the world. Why you would take Samson's wife after he just slaughtered 30 Philistines and shows that he's a powder keg ready to explode, why you would take his wife as your wife. He just gave you a new set of clothes that were covered in blood. What a fool. There's never a lack of fools when it comes to the satisfaction of the flesh, because this man he's as foolish as Samson of "You look good, so that's good enough for me". I think it's going to cost him his life. In the end I think he is part of who the Philistines will burn down and kill, because he's going to be there with her when they do.

Manipulation will Burn You Eventually

Verse 6, here it is the very thing she feared and manipulated Samson to provide his answer to the riddle, she now reaps. She ends up getting burned. She ends up having her life taken. You know what? Beware of manipulators and one of the things you always find in a manipulator, they take away your ability to choose. You have no choice but to respond. Therefore also beware of being a manipulator because in the end this story shows us these women, you will get burned at some point.

Judges 15:7 Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease."

Look at the heart of Samson / Protector of the Weak

Verse 7. I see the heart that God saw when he looked into the heart of Samson. Look at him. He's a defender of the weak, one who will stand for those who can't stand for themselves. One who will speak for those who can't speak for themselves. He says, "This is how you treat people and let justice come upon you." By the Mosaic Law, Numbers 35:19, Samson had an obligation to avenge the death of his wife. It will come in my response to what you've done. Once I've judged you for your action, then notice he says, I will cease but you will pay a punishment for what you've done. I don't believe this is revenge of Samson even though it seems that's his nature. Revenge never quits. People who are vengeful and want to seek revenge, they never quit because what's in their heart is meanness and it can never be satisfied. Revenge will never be enough because you can never get enough closure if you have a heart that's one of revenge. Samson says, "I'm going to bring vengeance and then after I do, then I'll cease." He's literally giving them the opportunity, I'm going to deal with you and if you're smart, you'll stop after you've received your punishment. We're going to read on, if they don't and if they come back for their revenge because revenge can never get enough, they're going to lose one thousand lives.

[Numbers 35:19 \(NKJV\)](#) ¹⁹ The avenger of blood himself shall put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death.

How many want a heart Like this? - Ask God for It

Back to the heart of Samson, I see him one who stands in the gap for the weak and there's a place for that. How many want that heart? I want a heart that stands in the gap for the weak, for the orphans, for the disabled, for the widows. You ask God for that heart. I will promise you he will give you that heart but it's a heart that can't be taught. You can only be caught by spending time with the Lord.

Judges 15:8 So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

Judges 15:9 Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi.

Judges 15:10 And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us."

Judges 15:11 Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them."

Judges 15:12 But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines." Then Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves."

Judges 15:13 So they spoke to him, saying, "No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you." And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

Whipped them top-to-bottom

The idiom, "hip and thigh" means "top to bottom." In other words, Samson walloped the Philistines.

Samson well Positioned for a Fight

Verse 8, Samson positions himself in a cleft of a rock, and so what you have here is, he is protected from behind, you can't get him from behind, you can't get him from the left or the right. If you want him, you have to come face to face with him. He's in a well-fortified position for battle.

Look at the heart of Samson

Verses 9 through 13, here again we see a side of Samson that's really a noble side, which he often doesn't get credit for. He easily has the power, he's in the position in this fortified cleft of a rock, that he could easily kill these men of Israel who come to arrest him. Samson is going to willingly offer himself to be arrested, and to be delivered onto the Philistines, is really yielding himself to a possible death sentence. Here's the noble part of Samson, is he would rather be delivered into the hands of the Philistines, than take the life of his brethren of the nation of Israel. Samson is dying to himself for the sake of these others to live.

He says, "Swear to me you won't kill me." See he clearly, he's expecting death.

3,000 will fight 1 Brother – but Not the Real Enemy

It's a very pathetic passage when you get down to it, that Israel will muster 3,000 men to come arrest Samson. They'll come in force to come against one of their own, but they won't come in force in unity to go and fight the Philistines who are oppressing them for some 40 years now at this point. How pathetic? They said to Samson, "Don't you know the Philistines rule over us?" They accept it, and they yield to it that this is their life, that they have to submit to these Philistines. It doesn't even occur that this is a time to rise up and fight for their deliverance and their freedom. Samson, he doesn't answer in agreement that the Philistines rule over him. He has never lived that way, he's never allowed himself to have the Philistines rule over him. It's a sad passage that they can rally 3,000 men to come fight one of their own, but they won't unite 3,000 and 1 to go fight for the deliverance and freedom on the nation.

Judges 13:1 (NKJV) ¹ Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

Can we Overcome World – If Church is Fighting Itself / 2 Chronical 7:14

I just look at that and I say, I don't know how we can overcome the Philistines around us? If you would. The world that presses in when the church itself is just fighting against one another, and the church has no unity. The church doesn't rally together as one, but will come against each other and divide itself. In 2 Chronicles 7:14 the Lord said, "If my people," that's his church, "Who are called by my name," that's every believer, "Will humble themselves and pray I will heal their land." That word humble brings us to the place of humility, but there is no humility when Christians are fighting against each other. That's not being humble, that's being proud and lifted up, that someone has to fight for their rights, rather than laying down their life for the sake of others, or for unity. How sad for this picture of the nation of Israel, and how sad for the picture of the church today. Willing to pit sides against one another, but not unite against the greater cause that's come against the church.

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Judges 15:14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands.

Judges 15:15 He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it.

Philistines Most Advance Weaponry

This cracks me up. I mean, the Philistines had the most advanced weapon system of their day. But in Judges 3, Shamgar killed six hundred of them with an ox goad. And here, twelve chapters later, one thousand more are beaten with the jawbone of a donkey. Later on, Goliath—the greatest Philistine of them all—will be beaten with a stone and a sling. Isn't that just like the Lord to use the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak to show up the strong? Look at us—ox goads, jawbones, stones and all. We're perfect examples of the foolish things of the world confounding the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27). In your own personal battles, God can use whatever is in your hand. "That's nothing," the world will scoff. But with the Spirit of God—it becomes something mighty.

Fiery Trials – War / 1st Thing You need is "Peace"

I look at verse 14, and I see those ropes that he was bound in, they just break away like they were burned away, the scripture says, and reminds me of the 3 boys in the oven, not even a hint of smoke upon them. They had what they needed in their time of fiery trial and war, they had peace. They had peace because it says, those 3 boys in the fiery furnace that, "There appeared a fourth like the son of man," and that was none other than Jesus Christ walking amongst them in the fire. We need peace, first and foremost, when we get into war. God would say, "Be still and know that I am God." In Isaiah it will say, "He will keep you in his perfect peace who's mind is stayed on him, because he trusts in Him." When you go into war and a fiery trial, get yourself set away that you can find peace, and you'll find it in the presence of the Lord just sitting in him, and being still, and knowing that he is God.

Daniel 3:24–25 (NKJV) ²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.” ²⁵ “Look!” he answered, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”

Daniel 3:26–27 (NKJV) ²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here.” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. ²⁷ And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

Isaiah 26:3–4 (NKJV) ³ You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. ⁴ Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.

Psalms 46:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! ¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

Finds a Jawbone – God will Always Provide what you Need – when Need It / But 1st You Need Peace

Verse 15, it says that he found a jawbone of an ass, and you always find what you need when you enter into a spiritual war, because God will always provide for you what you need in the middle of that war. You're never left to fend and fight on your own, God will always fight with you and provide for you. Let me say, the first thing you need to find in war, is peace. Samson has peace. That's what it appears to me as he allows himself to be delivered into the hands of the Philistine. I believe he feels he is not being delivered to the hands of the Philistines, but into the hands of God. He has total peace of being delivered into the hands of God, and that God will take care of him. When you enter into a battle, and the enemy is pressing in against you, the first thing you need to find above all things, is peace.

Christian – You Need the Spirit of God Upon You / How do you Receive the Holy Spirit?

Verse 14 - **Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him** – Christian you need the Holy Spirit in your life.

How do you receive the Holy Spirit, you simple ask.

Luke 11:11–13 (NKJV) ¹¹ If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!

Recommended Reading – Living Water by Chuck Smith

Speaking of the Holy Spirit, I would encourage you to read Pastor Chuck Smith's book "Living Water" which gives a great breakdown on the Holy Spirit, the works of the Holy Spirit, in a person's life. It takes you to the depths that you get a great and tremendous understanding of the Holy Spirit, but it is not written so deep and so theologically that it gets laborious and overwhelming that you quit reading it after the first chapter. It's a rather short book considering that it's about the third person of the Trinity, but I think it's at just the right level for each of us.

Judges 15:16 Then Samson said: “With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!”

Judges 15:17 And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi.

Judges 15:18 Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the LORD and said, “You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?”

Judges 15:19 So God split the hollow place that is in Lehi, and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore he called its name En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day.

Jawbone of an Ass – I have Piled them in a Mass

Samson’s bold declaration of victory has a poetic touch that is difficult to render in translation. One effort goes like this: “With the jawbone of an ass I have piled them in a mass!”

Jawbone Heights

Ramath-lehi means “The place of the lifting up of the jawbone,” or, “Jawbone Heights.” Samson names this area after his great exploit.

Samson is off the Hook / Ray Lewis dance / Give God Glory in Victories – Not a Time to be Humble

Verse 16, Samson is totally off the hook here. You can just hear it and sense it as he's roaring after his victory over a thousand that had come against him. That's just the number that he killed, who knows how many had come, and run, and had said this is not going to end well for us. 1,000 are shot down, and here Samson, he is off the hook. It would make Ray Lewis's pregame dance pale in comparison, because he is fired up. Some people will say, Samson is puffed up, and I don't think so, because if you look at verse 18, he gives credit where the credit is due. He gives the credit to the Lord for the victory, so I don't think he's puffed up, I think he's just celebrating the great victory. You know Christian? When God brings you into great victories, and does great things, don't go into being so humble, if you would, that you're afraid to give him glory because people are going to think you're bragging or puffed up. Let people know what your God has done, and be proud of it, and be off the hook about it, so that other people will know that that God that he knows is the same God that I know, and I too can have those same victories. Don't hold back, proclaim the glory of the Lord.

Water Comes – God will Always Provide

Verse 18, here comes the water through the cleft of the hollow of the rock, because God will always give you what you need in your time of need, always, he will never leave you, nor forsake you.

Well of Him who Cried

Enhakkore means "The well of him who cried." Before, Samson christened the area "Jawbone Heights." But now it's "The well of him who cried." Let's be careful, folks. If the Lord uses us, let's always remember it's Him. Without Him, we couldn't last a moment.

Judges 15:20 And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

Segway into Chapter 16

So we are set for the infamous chapter 16 next week, which a vital verses to Segway into that chapter is here in verse 20, Samson judged for 20 years.

Response

Great Lessons for Living

This is a great study, lessons for life,

- The Prodigal coming home
- The peace offering in a Marriage
- Jesus elevates Woman
- Abortion – The Sanctity of Life
- Being a Defender for the Weak
- Samson won't Fight his Brethren
- First thing needed in a War – Is Peace
- Give Glory to God's Victories
- God will Always Provide what you Need in your Need
- You need the Holy Spirit

I want to Ask You – How are things between You and Jesus Christ

but I've just felt that I want to ask you a question today. I ask you, how are things between you and Jesus Christ?

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 16

Judges 16:1-31

Introduction

Well we come to the final chapter of Samson's life, in this Book of Judges, and in his life physically. It is a well-known chapter, one of the most well-known stories of the Bible. Samson and Delilah, love, deceit, greed, pride, and betrayal. Everything Hollywood loves in movie. But this was a real man, a real believer, a real person who had so much potential for greatness, yet a series of bad decisions, and Samson finishes in a prison, blinded and grinding. So I ask you today Christian, how do you want to finish? And How will you finish? How you want to finish and how you will finish do not necessarily tie to together. It will have to start with a purposed heart to finish well, and then a planned and protected life to ensure you finish well.

So before we even begin, tell the Lord right now, "I want to finish well, Lord help me to finish well".

Judges 16:1 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.

20 Years – Then a blowout

Twenty years Samson had judged and done well, and now here is the beginning of the blowout. Christian, you are never safe, and you have never made it, until you are in heaven. Any great streak can come to an abrupt end with just few bad decisions.

Judges 15:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

1 Corinthians 10:12–13 (NKJV) ¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Samson had No Right being in Gaza

Verse 1. Why did Samson go to Philistine country? Why he was he in a Philistine city, he has no business going down there. Unless he was going to fight. I don't read this that he was going down to find the harlot, he was just going down it appears and then he saw a harlot. What a foolish place to be, just going to check something out and how foolish it is for Christians who think they can go to bars to witness. That they can go and hang out in that environment and nothing's going to happen to them, at some point it's going to be like Samson, I just went to check it out and then I saw a harlot. It wasn't even on my agenda but here I am, falling. I remember when I was living in Florida and moving to Louisiana many years ago, I made it all the way to New Orleans right around dark. I got my hotel out by the Superdome and decided I would just take a walk down to the French Quarter and check it out. I made it not even a block, and I could literally feel the presence of darkness (evil darkness). I have preached on the streets of some of the largest cities in the world,, I have had a gun threatened against me, a knife threatened against me, a Billy-club, but I never feared any of them, I never turned back because I knew I was in the will of the Lord doing what He called me to do. But in New Orleans I sensed the darkness, I said if I am not going to do the work of the Lord and take light into the darkness, then I am not untouchable, and I turned around and went back the hotel and ordered room service. I remember first getting saved and gong to a bar one night with some friends, I wasn't there 5 minutes and the Lord spoke to me, "what are you doing here", "you don't belong here", and that was the last time I ever went into a nightclub. Even if it meant staying home all alone with nobody to hang out with. Remember, sanctified loneliness, a time where God has you all to Himself to do something special with and in you.

Dangers of Boredom

Here we see the dangers of rest and ease. I think Samson's bored and after 20 years his minds wandering and he has no more battles to fight it appears. No more attacks of the enemies or whatever it might be and he's just finding himself into this place of boredom and it makes the mind wander and it's a dangerous place because we can look at the life.

- When did King Saul fall? He should have been out fighting but he was resting and letting little men like David go fight the giant rather than being the giant slayer himself.

- When did David fall? It was when he was at rest and ease, he should have been out going to war but instead he's up on his balcony sipping cappuccino, looking out at his kingdom and his eye spots the young girl.
- Solomon's he's attracted to all the wives and concubines because he's never gone out to war.

War's a good thing, trials and struggles are a good thing, and if you're living and finding yourself saying every day seems to be a struggle and a strain and a constant battle then give thanks to the Lord for that. Because it keeps you close to him, it keeps you from entering into boredom, it keeps you from entering into too much time on your hand, it takes you to a place that you want and need the Lord and you'll call upon the name of the Lord. You'll find a way to make it to prayer, you'll find that spending time with him is a must rather than a something that's on your to do list. It's something that you can't bear to miss because you need that fellowship with him because you got so much going on you have to talk to him. It's okay to be in the battle because that'll keep you out of these places like Samson.

Guard with All Your Heart

Here we see again the reminder, guard this treasure in earthen vessels, Christ in you, the hope of glory guard it with all your heart. Don't let it settle in to become something common, don't let it settle in that it's something that you don't protect with every breath and being that you have because it's the last thing you'll ever want to lose. Fight the good fight, press on for the prize, attain what you've been attained for and run to win. Don't settle for anything less.

2 Corinthians 4:7–10 (NKJV) ⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. ⁸ We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

Colossians 1:27 (NKJV) ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Philippians 3:12–14 (NKJV) ¹² Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (NKJV) ²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

2 Timothy 4:7–8 (NKJV) ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Have You Lost that Cutting Edge You Once Had?

Have you lost that cutting edge that you once had? I'm reminded of the story of the school, the prophet. Where the young prophet lost his axe head and so he goes and tells Elisha and Elisha what does he do? He comes and he says, where did you lost it and the man takes him back to the very spot and you know the story. Elisha puts his stick out and the axe head rises from the water to the surface and the man picks it up. But the illustration is, go back to what you were once doing that was so powerful and strong. Go back to those things and start there, so that you don't lose your cutting edge, so that you can go back and be strong. Go back to the place where you were casting all your cares upon Jesus, and resting in him to take care of them, but now you have put them back upon yourself. Go back to taking walks with Him, go back to having morning devotions with Him (that were directed and had purpose and focus), go back to reading a good God-Read book before bedtime, rather than headline news, go back to going to bed early rather than watching the television, go back to working less, go back to going to church is non-negotiable, go back to serving, go back to eating right, go back to exercising. Go back to what you were doing when you had that cutting edge, and you will see going back to do those things will take you back to having that cutting edge again.

2 Kings 6:1–7 (NKJV) ¹ And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us. ² Please, let us go to the Jordan, and let every man take a beam from there, and let us make there a place where we may dwell." So he answered, "Go." ³ Then one said, "Please consent to go with your servants." And he answered, "I will go." ⁴ So he went with them. And when they came to the

Jordan, they cut down trees. ⁵ But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron *ax head* fell into the water; and he cried out and said, "Alas, master! For it was borrowed." ⁶ So the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw *it* in there; and he made the iron float. ⁷ Therefore he said, "Pick *it* up for yourself." So he reached out his hand and took it.

Judges 16:2 When the Gazites were told, "Samson has come here!" they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, "In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him."

Judges 16:3 And Samson lay low till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.

Hebron 38 Miles Away / 100's of Pounds on Shoulder

Verse 3. Hebron is 38 miles away but notice it says a hill that faces Hebron and that hill is about 4 and a half miles away, so not necessarily that he carried these gates, which the Philistines were known for their metallurgy, so I'm going to think these gates were made out of metal. These gates have to weigh hundreds of pounds, and he takes them and throws them on his shoulder and carries them 4 and a half miles at the minimum, so this is a tremendous feat of strength.

Devil Hates You

The Devil hates you, just look at his name – Devil

Take away the D and you have evil, and he is just pure evil. Take away the D and the E, and you have vil, and he is vile. Take away the D and the E and the V, and you have il, and he wants to make you ill. Take away the D-E-V-I and you have "L", and that is where he wants to take you, straight to L 😊

Barney Fife Guarding the Gates

It's interesting, here are these Philistines saying they're going to guard the city gates, but here comes Samson. He lays low, rips a hundred pounds of gates out of the ground, throws them on his shoulder. The noise that must have made, and he throws them on his shoulder and he walks away and nobody confronts him. It just has to make me wonder where are these guys and all I can come to is Barney Fife is guarding the gates, and if you can picture Barney Fife easily fooled, chasing after crickets and rabbits, and Samson just walks right by and throws the gate. We think the enemy is always game on. We think the enemy is so skilled, and he is, but I think it's interesting when the Spirit is upon someone, the enemy is confused and easily overthrown and beaten.

Enemy is Confused when Spirit Arrives

We've seen stories through the scripture of worship causes confusion. We see the story of Gideon and when the Spirit moved and they broke the pitchers with the lamps in them, the enemy is confused. The enemy is easily confused when the Spirit of God is present, so you know what? Put that into your life. Surround yourself with worship. Surround yourself with speaking thanksgiving. Surround yourself with speaking psalms as it says in Colossians. Surround yourself with those things. I like to leave worship music playing in the sanctuary so whoever comes in and turns the worship music off, if you would, you can please stop doing that. I turn this worship music on because I know it's going to make the devil flee. He can't stand to hear the name of Jesus. He can't stand to be where the presence of the Lord is.

Philippians 2:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Judges 7:21–22 (NKJV) ²¹ And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. ²² When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.

2 Chronicles 20:22–23 (NKJV) ²² Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. ²³ For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

Why Does God Tell us this Story? / Samson with Jokes and Riddles – Untouchable / Misses God's Grace

Verse 3. Why does God tell us this story? Samson carries the gate. Well, what God's telling us is Samson's coming into another riddle, if you would. Another joke. He's making a statement to these guys. "There you were guarding and I walked right by you and I ripped your gates out, threw them on my shoulders, and walked 4 and a half miles and you still couldn't touch me because you can't touch me because I'm untouchable," and he's mocking them, but what we see here again is it's his riddle again. He's trying to give them a riddle when they wake up and go, "Where'd the gates go?" He's giving them a riddle that you can't touch me. Look how superior I am to you. God tells us this story because it's a precursor to his final failure.

Samson, with his jokes and his riddles, he thinks he's untouchable. Samson should've stepped back and said, "Wow, Lord, you saved me out of that. That was a total grace on your behalf. I could've ended up with disease. I could've ended up being jumped and killed. I could've ended up being a drunk driver and wrapping my car around the telephone pole. I could've overdosed. I could've lost my job with that stupid act. I could've ruined my reputation," and all these things, and rather than saying, "Wow, that was a close one. In your grace, you've given me another opportunity." Instead, Samson, it just became another one of his riddles, and God tells us this story because it is the precursor to his final failure, and it leads him to a place where he thinks he is untouchable.

People Never Crumble in a Day – This Story sets up Story of Final Failure

Verse 3. People never crumble in a day. What Samson does here is just a predecessor to what's going to happen starting in verse 4 with Delilah. No one ever crumbles in a day. It's always a process, and Samson, instead of repenting and falling before the Lord, giving thanks for being delivered from his stupid action here, he heads down to another town, figuring let's go see what happens down there.

Christian turn back Now

Christian is you have been playing around in places you shouldn't, turn back now, before it is too late, before you find yourself ultimately in a place you can't get yourself out of.

Judges 16:4 Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

Sorek – Choice Vines / Delilah – to Impoverish

Sorek means "Valley of the choice vine." Sorek was a border town with the reputation of a border town. Again, Samson was to stay away from grapes, but he keeps toying with the things that he is supposed to avoid. He keeps lingering on the border, straddling the fence. Oh, Samson, her name should have tipped you off, for the Hebrew word delal means "to weaken or impoverish." Samson fell in love again, and fell for a woman completely wrong for him. This is another example of the pain and ruin that came into Samson's life because he did not guard his heart.

Judges 16:5 And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver."

Not Charles Atlas

Verse 5. It was not his big muscles. He's no Charles Atlas or else everybody would know, well, it's his muscles. Samson must have a body like everyone else or maybe even leaner. Can you say Barney Fife? They need Delilah to figure out what it is that is his great strength. If it was his muscles just destroy the weight room, cut off his protein drinks. So we know it wasn't his muscles.

Delilah is Cold-Hearted

Verse 5. It says to afflict him. Delilah knows what's coming. Affliction for Samson. Forget the Hollywood love stories. She's cold hearted. To her, men are a dime a dozen, but diamonds are a girl's best friend. She takes the money over the man. She takes the sure thing. She's getting at least 5,500 pieces of silver (as we are told there were 5 kings of the Philistines), which if you had one piece of silver today, she's going to live a good, long life. You

could live very comfortably on 1 piece of silver each day. She has 15 years of comfort offered to her. Or, consider you could buy a slave for 30 pieces of silver, so she could hire 185 slaves to work and make her life comfortable.

Delilah was lovable until a choice had to be made. Their relationship seemed so perfect. Handsome man, beautiful woman in love, until a decision had to be made, and she chose the decision for her best interest, and if you're in a fleshly relationship not based on the spiritual things but simply on the flesh, the bodily things of looks and laughter, then know this, the flesh will always choose the flesh when it comes time to choose. It appears that this relationship has some time in it. The Philistines recognize emotional connection. They don't do the ambush tactic. They know that doesn't work. They don't do the roaring lion. When they come to now, they come to get intel on him, so here they go, they go from being a roaring lion to like Satan, a snake, slithering along.

Satan Will Change Tactics

May none of us ever get too comfortable. May we all recognize Satan will change his tactics and you might be strong in one area and doing strong, but just know, Satan will change his tactics and he'll come with a whole different approach, and if you think you only guard this one area as the only place you need to guard, you need to be careful, because Satan studies you and he looks for different means to come against you, and yesterday's attack might not be anywhere near the same way that he'll attack you today.

But then Again

But then again, here we see the same approach used on Samson back in Timnah, the men pressured his wife for the answer, "she enticed him" and got the answer. So Satan will try new tactics on you, but as I always say, "Satan will always go back to the well" and use what once worked before.

Judges 14:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ But it came to pass on the seventh day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? Is that not so?"

Satan will Spend lavishly to Defeat you

5,500 pieces of silver, that is a lot of money, and let be proved here, Satan will spend lavishly on you to bring you down.

Judges 16:6 So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength lies, and with what you may be bound to afflict you."

Judges 16:7 And Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

Judges 16:8 So the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them.

Judges 16:9 Now men were lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

Judges 16:10 Then Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now, please tell me what you may be bound with."

Judges 16:11 So he said to her, "If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

Judges 16:12 Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And men were lying in wait, staying in the room. But he broke them off his arms like a thread.

Just Like Any Other Man

Verse 11. Samson says he'll be just like any other man. I think that maybe that's what Samson wanted to be, just like any other man. He didn't want all the commitment, he didn't want all the vow that he had to uphold, he didn't want all that came with being this chosen one of God. I think there was times that he just wished he could be like any other man and I think there's times that we want that too. We can feel that this calling is too hard, this calling is too high and we say, we just want to be like everybody else. We don't to have to go through all this struggle like we are and we look at the other people and we think their life is so great and so easy and we go, I'd just like to live

like them and not have all this pressure upon me. Samson can be a picture of us all at various times, but you know what? We'll never be just like any other man, any other woman, because we have been called, we've been chosen. We've been called out of this world, God's special treasure, his own special people. First Peter 2:9, and for us there isn't an option, there's not even an ability to go live like the rest of the world because we are set apart and chosen by him, we have all been separated unto Him from the foundations of the world, and therefore we can never be just like any other man, any other woman.

1 Peter 2:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Psalms 139:13–18 (NKJV) ¹³ For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. ¹⁷ How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! ¹⁸ If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Judges 16:13 Delilah said to Samson, “Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with.” And he said to her, “If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom”—
Judges 16:14 So she wove it tightly with the batten of the loom, and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.

When Friends Call to party – Tell them Why You won't Go – So they Quit Calling

Samson must have thought he was doing pretty well in not letting Delilah get to him. That can happen to us, too. We say, “I haven't really been honest with those who ask me the reason I am the way I am. I've kind of hinted at it, but I haven't come out and said, ‘The reason I'm not going to the party you're inviting me to is because I'm a believer. Jesus Christ has changed my life. I want to keep my life focused on Him. I want to be filled with Him. I want to be used by Him. I'm a Christian.’” The problem is, if you're not being honest, like Samson, you'll be invited again and again. Don't play games. Say, “This is who I am. This is why I am the way I am,” and you'll save yourself lots of heartache and heartbreak.

Another Liken

Another likening to this story of playing with fire is anyone who flirts at work, school, the gym. You know that person isn't a believer, therefore you should know they aren't on the same foundation as you are, and you may think there is a playful line, but listen, they don't have the same line as you, and although in all your heart and intention you never plan on crossing that line, Satan will wait for an opportune moment and put you in a position where the other person invites you over the line, and if you are in a weakened state, such as Samson is here, you will find yourself crossing over, and you will be impoverished, maybe even bankrupted.

Want to End it – Tell them the Vow

Hey you want to end it before it begins, tell them the secret up front. My power is not in my hair (as Samson so concludes), my power is in my vow unto God, I am dedicated to Him, and therefore – I am out of here! Don't call me know more, don't flirt with me no more, don't try to get close to my treasure, because my treasure is reserved for person only, My Lord Jesus Christ, and sold-out believer He brings me someday as a helpmate.

Judges 16:15 Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength lies.”

Judges 16:16 And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death,

Judges 16:17 that he told her all his heart, and said to her, “No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.”

Another Riddle - Untouchable

I don't think for a moment that Samson thought this could end in imprisonment or death. I think he's playing out another riddle. Untouchable.

Categorize

Samson did what we nearly all do when deceived by sin. He put his life into categories, and figured that some categories God cared about, and some categories God did not care about. Understanding that Jesus has claim over our entire life is a radical change of perspective."

Power not in Hair – But Vow

Verse 17. The power of strength was in the vow. It wasn't in his hair, and as we discussed in a few studies before, Samson doesn't give an honest self-assessment. He thinks that he has kept his vow all this time. All the way to this point, he totally misses how far he has fallen. I think Samson does what so many of us can do. He compartmentalizes and he puts certain things in certain compartments and he thinks, "As long as I keep this compartment taken care of then I'm in good shape. As long as I don't cut my hair then I'll always be in this good shape." But how wrong it is to compartmentalize. God is ... All of us. He wants all of us. He calls us to sacrifice and give all of us to him.

Judges 16:18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart." So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hand.

Judges 16:19 Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him.

Fatigue makes one Weak

Every time Samson is tied up, he's sleeping. Therefore, I can't help but wonder if Samson wasn't unusually vulnerable to this kind of stupidity because he was tired. Even for those who love God and serve Him, there is a danger in becoming fatigued, weary, tired. Be warned and be wise because that's when Delilah's voice suddenly sounds reasonable.

"Come unto Me, and you'll find rest for your souls," Jesus says. This story could have ended so differently. This giant of faith could have come out, could have kept on going—but he was lulled to sleep on Delilah's knees, rather than praying on his.

Judges 16:20 And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.

God's Rules – Maybe not that Strict

I believe what was happening in his mind was the same thing that happens in ours. You see, God had told him that, as a Nazarite, he must not touch grapes, must not touch carcasses, must not cut his hair. He touched grapes—and nothing happened. He touched a carcass—and nothing happened. So, he must have thought that if he cut his hair nothing would happen. We may also think Maybe the Bible isn't really as strict as it sounds. Maybe it doesn't really matter if I compromise a little here and a little there. Maybe I can get away with it. Maybe it's OK. But it's not, and we won't, for it doesn't work that way. What a shock it must have been to Samson when he suddenly found himself weak, helpless, and wiped out.

Didn't Learn from Timnah

Verse 21. He surely didn't learn from Timnah how being unequally yoked the danger of it, and the danger of being unequally yoked is you're basing your life on 2 totally different foundations. Yours is on the Lord and the other person who doesn't know the Lord has no spiritual foundation, no biblical foundation, and they're not working and operating to the same rules, and Timnah, she chose family, and here, Delilah, she's going to choose the sure thing, money, but Samson didn't expect her to betray him. That's what I believe. He must have totally believed she loved

him, but she didn't. Have you ever been heartbroken? God understands and he wants to minister to you in your heartbreak. He clearly thinks she loves him, but the actions speak louder.

Has your heart been Broken – God Sees

Verse 21. Have you ever been heartbroken, have you ever been betrayed? Samson was in the wrong place with the wrong person doing the wrong things but it still doesn't mean that his heart wasn't broken Delilah's betrayal. It says in verse 4 that he loved the woman. That word loved, is the same word that's used in Genesis chapter 22, when it speaks of Abraham and his love for his son. Samson loves this woman, I want to say that Samson lusted for this woman. But as Jesus would say, where your treasures are there your heart will be and Samson's heart was with this woman, he loved this woman. Verse 15, she says, you say you love me, Samson tells her that he loves her and we could say, Samson you got what you had coming. It's the law of reaping and sowing and that may be true. But that's so cold, and somewhat cold hearted at that. Let's not miss the point, Samson loved this woman and she betrayed him and I want you to know here today that God knows your heartbreak and he knows what you're going through. God stores your tears in a bottle, yes even tears reaped in disobedience. He knows your heartache and he will come minister to you. How do I know that? Because that's the heart of God.

Genesis 22:2 (NKJV) ² Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

Matthew 6:19–21 (NKJV) ¹⁹ "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Woman at the Well

I'm reminded of the story of the women at the well in John, chapter 4. She comes at noon because she doesn't want to be seen, she doesn't have girlfriends because none of the girls trust her. Because of the lifestyle that she's lived, that she comes and gets her water because doesn't want to hear the chitter chatter and the gossip about her. But it says that Jesus had to go through Samaria to see her, Jesus wanted to talk to her, Jesus wanted to have conversations about this and though she kept trying to change the subject, Jesus kept bringing it back around. Jesus puts his finger on it, you've had 5 husband and the one that you're living with now you're not even married to and imagine what this woman would be, her life would be like. 5 husbands, 5 heartbreaks and number 6 she's living out of wedlock because she probably doesn't feel that any marriage would ever work out again. She's probably feeling it's just a matter of time before this one leaves me too.

John 4:3–4 (NKJV) ³ He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. ⁴ But He needed to go through Samaria.

Jesus comes and speaks to her, he comes and treats her like a lady. He comes and ministers to her and all of her heartache and heartbreak and he invites her. He says, come to me and I'll give you living water. He want to come and give her fresh drink, he wants to come and cleanse her and give her a refreshing shower of his grace and his love. How much heartbreak had she experienced? All the things that people would said, you have what you have coming to you, but Jesus comes and he ministers to her and offers her refreshment and Jesus goes out of his way to meet and to minister to her and that's what he'll do to you and for you. He wants to minister to you in your heartbreak, regardless, even if your heartbreak was broken in disobedience. He still wants to come and minister and he wants to show you, just like we talked of the prodigal son. Everything that the prodigal son could ever want was already found there in the fathers house and Jesus is using the same story here. With this woman at the well he's offering her relationship with him personally and a love that will never fail and a God that will cherish her heart and hold it in his hand and a God that understands her and a God that has heard her cries and captured her tears.

John 4:5 (NKJV) ⁵ So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

John 4:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

Samson might go down as the tough guy and the strong man but let's not miss, Samson had a heart just like anyone in this room and his heart was broken by Delilah and yet God will still minister to him in the prison, in the tomb.

Judges 16:21 Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison.

The Big 3 – Become Samson’s Life

How interesting Samson's big 3 that he falls, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life, and here is, the lust of the flesh. He's in a prison cell all alone, not to have the touch and the companion ship again. The lust of the eyes, he's blinded now, and then the pride of life, here he is, he's going to be taken out and mocked before the people. All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

1 John 2:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Judges 16:22 However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.

Did God Once Use You Greatly – Your Hair Will Grow back

Verse 22. Maybe God wants to use you greatly, but you strayed and you sensed the power leaving you. May you know and see the story of Samson today, that the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable and every new testament principal is an old testament picture and Samson is that picture. That the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable and he will still use you and listen. If you've fallen, if you have failed, if you once walked in power but now have strayed and you recognize that the power is God. May you see this story and know the fact and the truth that God speaks to you. Your hair will grow back and power will return. You just now have to give it time and you have to do what Samson does, you have to just go back to a humble beginning and you have to go back to the beginning and repent and then spend time in his prescience and start letting him work on you and in you and I will promise you. Because the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable, that he will restore you and empower you again because your hair will grow back, because that is God's grace.

Judges 16:23 Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice. And they said: “Our god has delivered into our hands Samson our enemy!”

Judges 16:24 When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said: “Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, The destroyer of our land, And the one who multiplied our dead.”

Give Reason for Other to Mock God

One of the greatest tragedies of sin is that it gives the enemies of God a reason to rejoice.

2 Samuel 12:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. ¹⁴ However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die.”

Samson’s Fall is Also Israel’s Fall

Verse 23. Samson's tragedy isn't only Samson's tragedy. His tragedy is for the whole nation of Israel because he was their deliverer and now no longer. He's grinding it out, his power has been taken and therefore we see Samson's tragedy did just him but it affects all of Israel and so to it is with us when we fall and fail and when we miss the mark. It's never us alone, we are always affecting other people, dads are affecting sons, moms are affecting daughters, families are being destroyed. You can follow the string, no one person falls alone they always fall on top of others and cause an impact. Christian, guard your faith. Mom and Dad, I hope God is piercing your heart right now with a commitment to finish strong.

Judges 16:25 So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, “Call for Samson, that he may perform for us.” So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars.

Judges 16:26 Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, “Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them.”

Judges 16:27 Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there—about three thousand men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed.

Judges 16:28 Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!"

Samson's prayer

I love Samson's prayer, he says O Adonay, Yahweh, remember me I pray, strengthen me I pray, just this once, O' Elohim.....

Samson uses all these majestic names of God, reflecting His ownership over Samson, His Lordship (Master) over him, and God's all power (not Samson's). All these names were unique to Samson, they meant something in His heart that they had never meant before. In the pit blinded, bound, and grinding, God was forming a man, and man after His own heart.

And what we see is that for the first time Samson had sought and found the "presence" of God, for all his life we saw him seeking the power of God, the blessings of God, but not cultivating an intimate relationship with God, seeking one thing "Him". Now we can see in that prison cell, in those days of grinding, Samson knows the Lord in an intimate and personal way, Samson has been dwelling in the presence of God and was seeking only one thing (tho which he found) – Him!

Judges 16:29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left.

Judges 16:30 Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.

God will Use Your Failures

Verse 30. God will even use your failures to bring great victory for his glory. Don't quit. Don't go silent. Believe your hair will regrow and you can be reused. Verse 28. I heard a study that was done interviewing people of all ages, and interesting enough, the study says that people stop dreaming big after the age of 35, that they no longer think big dreams can happen. They kind of just put themselves in the place, "This is what my life is and this is the way it will always be." Christian, I pray that you will dream big always, regardless of your age, that you never stop dreaming big, because we have a big God and he can do big things in your life.

Ends in Hall of Faith

We can say that Chapter 16 was the last chapter of Samson's life, but that's not totally true. The last chapter of Sampson's life is Hebrews Chapter 11. He's in the Hall of Faith. Yes, all of his failings, all of the life that we read of that great potential wasted. Going down in shame, blinded, binded, grinding. Yet, he ends his last chapter in this Holy Book in Hebrews 11 in the Hall of faith. What was it that was his great faith? Was it his jawbone of the ass? Killing a thousand? Was it the bringing down the house? Killing three thousand or more? Or was it, what I believe, it was his faith in that pit, as he would pray, "Adonai Yahweh. Remember me this one more time Elohim."

That he, through faith, knew that his God would never leave him nor forsake him. That he knew that even as far as he has blown it, his God still called him his own. That's the great faith that I believe that Samson had. That's the great faith that we can have. It says in Romans chapter 10, Verse 17: Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. It doesn't matter what our situation is. It doesn't matter if we're on a mountaintop slaying a thousand, being conquerors for God, judging and serving faithfully for 20 years, or whether it's in the pit, blinded by sin, bind to a threshing wheel, grinding out day by day the wages of sin. The faith to believe that God's love never fails. His truth endures forever. His mercy endures forever and that he will never leave us nor forsake us.

God loves you. He's desperately passionate for you, regardless of where you're at, threshing or trashing the enemy, threshing in sin or trashing the enemy for his glory. He loves you just the same and he'll never leave you nor forsake you.

Hebrews 11:32 (NKJV) ³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

Judges 16:31 And his brothers and all his father's household came down and took him, and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had judged Israel twenty years.

Samson's Father Didn't See It

Verse 20, Samson's father didn't get to see his son's final act. He did not get to see his son finish strong. I wonder when his father died, we don't know for sure, did he die during Samson's 20 years of judging or was he still alive when Samson fell and then was imprisoned there and his eyes were plucked out. Imagine the grieving of a father to hear that's what happened to your great son, the one filled with so much potential and then to hear the details of how he ended up being captured. Oh the heartbreak of a father to see a son or daughter fall in such a way. Who once walked great was called of the Lord and had so much potential and yet failed in the end. But then redeemed and finished strong. I just want to speak to any youth today, young adult, I can speak as a father on behalf of fathers and mothers and I want to tell you mom and dad, they don't care about what you do for a living, they don't how successful you are in the workplace. All that every parent who's born again, who loves Jesus, all that they care for about you is that you walk with the Lord and that you know the Lord and that you are faithful to the Lord. That is our heart's desire for you above all else.

3 John 2-4 (NKJV) ² Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. ³ For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. ⁴ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

Samson's Brothers Come for Him

We can read right through it, but oh the power of the statement here in verse 20. Samson's brother's come down to get his body. Oh the power of that statement, that they would come and they would risk their own lives so that Samson's body could be recovered and not brutalized and disrespected by these Philistines. Can I just say that to us as believers, you know, the church has a tendency that when a brother or sister falls the church separates themselves from them and leaves them out there on their own, not willing to associate with them, not willing to be linked to them again. But may we be like these brothers, may we come to our own after they've fallen and may we be willing to come and say this one's mine, I stand with this one and that we identify, that they are still our family and we love them and we're proud of them.

Galatians 6:1-2 (NKJV) ¹ Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Communion / Victory - Recommitment

Let's close with communion. Know you are forgiven, and if you have fallen God says he restores you, and God says, "Go with my authority and you can live in a victorious life and your best years are ahead of you, not behind you."

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 17

Judges 17:1-13

No Rules – Just Right

Outback Steakhouse has a motto, “No Rules, Just Right”. Once, a friend told me, I asked an Outback waiter to let me substitute cheese fries for regular fries. You’d think I was asking to change the US Constitution. He couldn’t. It was against the rules. I said, “What about your motto - NO RULES, JUST RIGHT.” It seems the motto only applies when it works in Outback’s favor, and certainly doesn’t apply to something as important as French fries.

Well in our study today we get a background of what it was like in Israel during the time of the judges, and it was just that, “no rules – just right”. Everyone was doing what was right in their own sight, making up the rules as they go, making up rules to fit their personal desires. And of course, we can see the resemblance of that in the world around us today.

Judges 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

The reason for Israel and the reason for America is because the Word of God wasn’t their compass, the Word of God wasn’t their guide, the Word of God did not rule over their heart, the Word of God did not dwell richly in their heart. Read Colossians 3:15-17.

Colossians 3:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Title

The title for today’s message is, “Let the Word of God Rule in Your Heart”

- “Let the Word of God Rule in Your Heart” – In the Heart of the Individual (17:1-4)
- “Let the Word of God Rule in Your Heart” – In the Heart of the Church (17:4-6)
- “Let the Word of God Rule in Your Heart” – In the Heart of the Nation (17:7-13)

“Let the Word of God Rule in Your Heart” – In the Heart of the Individual (17:1-3)

Judges 17:1 Now there was a man from the mountains of Ephraim, whose name was Micah.

Book of Judges Covers about 450 year Period

The Book of Judges covers “about” a 450-year period of the history of Israel. From the time beginning right after Joshua, up until the coronation of King Saul (the first king of Israel). So somewhere around 1450-1350BC to 1050-950BC. Samuel will be the last of the Judges, and will be the one who anoints Saul to be King.

Acts 13:18–21 (NKJV) ¹⁸ Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. ¹⁹ And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. ²⁰ “After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. ²¹ And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

Not Chronological Order

Chapter 17, does not follow chapter 16 (the fall of Samson) in chronological order. The Book of Judges closes with two appendixes, the first in chs. 17; 18 and the second in chs. 19—21. They seem to be unrelated to the material preceding them and to each other. For instance, these chapters do not describe the cyclical pattern of sin, servitude, and salvation seen in the earlier chapters of Judges. While chs. 2—16 describe foreign threats to Israel, these last chapters show an internal breakdown of Israel’s worship and unity. Furthermore, the events in these chapters appear to have taken place early in the period of the judges. Note that Jonathan is the grandson of Moses (18:30, as you will see a note in your bible using the name Moses instead of the name Manasseh). The whole episode of the Danite migration (ch. 18) logically fits in the progression of events described in 1:34, during which the Amorites forced the Danites out of their allotted territory. Their migration in search of new land probably would have come soon after this, not some three centuries or more later. Thus, these chapters may have been

written independently of the book's earlier chapters. Yet there is a certain logic to placing them at the end of the book. Note that Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron who had figured in earlier events (Num. 25:6–15; 31:6; Josh. 22:30, 31), was still ministering before the ark at the time of the events of chs. 19–21 (20:28). For one, the structure highlights the theme of the disintegration of Israel. The last chapters emphasize that “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (17:6; 21:25). The general tone of these last chapters is satirical and understated. The many violations of Mosaic law receive only minimal comments. However, a muted note of disdain for Israel's wanton behavior is evident in places.

Judges 17:2 And he said to his mother, “The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you, and on which you put a curse, even saying it in my ears—here is the silver with me; I took it.” And his mother said, “May you be blessed by the LORD, my son!”

Judges 17:3 So when he had returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, “I had wholly dedicated the silver from my hand to the LORD for my son, to make a carved image and a molded image; now therefore, I will return it to you.”

Judges 17:4 Thus he returned the silver to his mother. Then his mother took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to the silversmith, and he made it into a carved image and a molded image; and they were in the house of Micah.

Good Start – Spiritual but not Relational

Verse 1, “Micah, his name means, ‘who is like Jehovah.’” So the mother and father name their son a spiritual name, sounds like we are off to a good start for a family that is dedicated to the Lord, but we will see they are spiritual, but not relational, as they make their own rules, and establish their own way to God.

Superstitious Son – Believes the Curse

Verse 2, “Stole 1100 shackles of silver, and so the mom curses whoever stole it, as she doesn't know who it is at this point. The son believes the curse, therefore we see his superstition, and he returns it. What a strange answer for her. She doesn't rebuke him, but she rewards him, and she gives him a godly blessing for returning what was rightfully hers.” It's a strange situation there. They are talking spiritual language, but we see that they are both thieves and doing what is right in their own sight.

Both Thieves

Verse 3 and 4. Why are they both thieves, because when it was taken, it's apparent, she said to the Lord, ‘When you return all the money, I will give it all back to you, so that my son can have carved images, and molded images, and build himself his own shrine.’ She makes a vow to him (even calls God by the name (Yahweh) in verse 2, but then, when it comes time to live up to the vow that she made, she only took 200 pieces of the 1100, and had images made. Now, get this, she's just pocketed the other 900 that she had promised God.

Ever Make a Vow in the Middle of a Jam

You ever do that? Lord, if you get me out of this jam, if you do this for me, if you deliver me from this, then I will give you, fill in the blank. I will give you 20% of my income this month, or I will go teach a Bible study at the nursing home, if you do this for me. Lord, if you get me out of this jam, I will never do this again. Then, we get out of that jam, and we get to that part that we remember the vow, and then we say, “I didn't mean every Sunday,” or, “I didn't 20% of my whole income, just Monday's income,” or, “I just meant this one time, I didn't mean all the time.” We find ourselves reasoning away the vow that we have.

Should you keep your vows that you make in a jam? Is it definitely, let your yes be yes? I think you should let your yes be yes. But....., if it isn't from your heart, God says He doesn't want it. God says he loves a cheerful giver. Now, which one do you obey? Let your yes be yes, and give something begrudgingly, or do you say, “I can't give it cheerfully, so I shouldn't give it.” Listen. God wants your heart, not your stuff. Step away with Him, after the thing is over, and have an honest talk with Him, and say, “Lord, I know I said this, I promised that. Yeah, it was somewhat of a rash vow. Then, just ask him, “What would you like me to do?”

[Matthew 5:36–37 \(NKJV\)](#) ³⁶ Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷ But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NKJV) ⁷ So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

He'll speak to you. He'll lead you, and He'll guide you. He may say, "Keep your vow. It was a good vow. It will be good for you." He may say, "Yeah, that was a stupid vow, it wasn't from your heart, and I really don't want something that isn't from your heart, or anything that you would give me begrudgingly." Get with Him, and speak to Him, share your heart. Just remember, God wants you. He doesn't want your stuff. God didn't answer your prayer because He needed the money, or was short on Sunday school workers. However, always be careful about making rash vows.

2 Corinthians 12:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

There's a specific vow I want to talk to you about, today, and that is the "I promise you I will never do it again". That's that vow when you say, "Lord, I'm sorry. I failed you again. I did that thing again, that I didn't want to do, again. Please, forgive me." Know that He does. Then, you say, "Lord, help me not to do it again," but then you find you do it again. You say, "Lord, please, forgive me," and He does. Now, you've done the same thing twice, maybe 3 times, or more, and then you begin to think, "God's not going to believe this, the next time." For you now believe His patience and His grace is running thin. It's time for punishment. You're thinking, "No more grace. It's judgement time."

Then, you come, this time, and you say, "I want you to know, I'm serious, and I am seriously sorry." Then, you say, "Lord, I really meant it all those other times. I am really ashamed of myself. I am so sorry. I hate myself, and how I have let you down, after all your grace. I still did it again. Lord, please forgive me this one more time. Lord, I promise, I will never do it again." You make that promise. I will never do it again.

Does the devil have you now? Oh, yeah, he does. For we have now put ourselves in a place where we are sure that we have to win God back. We have to earn His trust again, His favor, His blessing. They won't flow in my life again until I prove to Him that I'm serious, and that I'm sorry, and that I'm seriously sorry. I'm really going to show you, Lord, that I love you, and that I mean it. You know what? The devil got you, because you will fail again, and you will self-condemn. You might even quit. You may go hide or live in silence, that you are miserable, that you are distant from God, because you failed again, doing what you said you would never do again. All the while, Satan will keep reminding you, over, and over, and over again, of how you have failed.

Without realizing it, you have made your own shrine, complete with your own theology, you have shaped out how you "think" God "thinks" and is and deals with His people, rather than letting the Word, His Word define and declare who He is, and how He deals with His children.

Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8 and 9. "You can't add to His grace, nor can you work your way into His favor. He loves you. He gave his only begotten son, because you couldn't. He had to do what you couldn't, and therefore, you can't earn it, and you can't work your way into His favor and grace. All that you can do is receive it, and believe it, because He loves you."

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV) ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Claim/Proclaim the Word of God

Claim the promises of God, and then proclaim the praises of him. Don't let the devil get you into his darkness of guilt and shame. Start to praise the Lord again, even after your failure, yes, even in your sin, so that you can walk in His marvelous light. The way out of the darkness, and the guilt, and the shame, is to praise His name who called you out of darkness, into His marvelous light. Accept and claim the forgiveness even when you don't feel it. The feeling will come eventually, if not immediately, but it will come as you walk in the light, and you send and sing praises.

1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV) ⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Tuesday night, as we have our prayer time, we always start with a time of reverence, and we give opportunity to proclaim Him, and His marvelous works. I don't think that everyone realizes that sometime, you are giving a prophetic word, that you're exercising a spiritual gift of prophesy, speaking a prophetic word, when you speak and proclaim a praise about his wondrous work, because there's someone there who's feeling beat up, someone who's feeling beaten down. There's someone who feels that it's over, that God will never trust them again, and never show favor again. Then, you quote one of these passages, such as Lamentations 3:22-23, or you quote a passage, "I will remember their sin no more," or you just remind, First John, 1:9, and as they hear those things, they are reminded that God is just and true to his word.

Lamentations 3:22–23 (NKJV) ²² Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

1 John 1:9 (NKJV) ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jeremiah 31:34 (NKJV) ³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Psalms 103:12 (NKJV) ¹² As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Let the Peace of God Rule in Your Heart

Let the Peace of God Rule in Your Heart. The word translated "rule" is a Greek word that describes an official at an athletic event, similar to a present-day umpire. How do we know what is "safe or out", but through His Word (this is Scripture, the Holy Spirit inspired Scripture, the word of revelation He brought into the world). We are told to let it "richly dwell within you". "Richly" may be more fully rendered "abundantly or extravagantly rich," and "dwell" means "to live in" or "to be at home." Scripture should permeate every aspect of the believer's life and control every thought, word, and deed (cf. Ps 119:11; Mt 13:9; Php 2:16; 2Ti 2:15). This concept is parallel to being filled with the Spirit in Eph 5:18 since the results of each are the same. In Eph 5:18, the power and motivation for all the effects is the filling of the Holy Spirit; here it is the word richly dwelling. Those two realities are really one. The Holy Spirit fills the life controlled by His Word. This emphasizes that the filling of the Spirit is not some ecstatic or emotional experience, but a steady controlling of the life by obedience to the truth of God's Word. psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Colossians 3:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Ephesians 5:18–21 (NKJV) ¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Has The Word of God been Dwelling Richly?

So has the word of God been dwelling in your heart, abundantly and extravagantly rich? Does the word so soak and saturate you that the Word of God (who is the Spirit of God) controls and overflows your life? So much so the peace of God rules, leads, and guides you? I pray today's word moves you to seek and desire His Word in a richer and deeper way.

Apolo Ohno

How many of you remember the 2002 Olympics, when Apolo Anton Ohno was cheated out of the gold in the Winter Olympics. He was skating the 1000 short track speed skating event. He was thought as the one who would win. This kid has been in training from his earliest years. He is really talented. The race started. There was a young 16-year-old boy from Korea that was skating as well. As they took off, amazingly this young boy took the lead and was leading. But in the last two laps Ohno got into the first place position and was poised to be the first across the line when suddenly the young competitor from Korea lost his footing. He slammed into one of the other guys. Another guy hit Ohno and they all went flying all over the track. The Australian guy who was toward the back went across and got the gold. He liked that. Ohno still wanted to get across the finishing line and with a desperate lunge crawling on his hands and knees for the last two yards swung his injured leg over the finish line getting him the

silver. Ohno was interviewed. He made this statement afterwards. "I never ever take a race for granted until I cross the finish line. I was in a daze. It happened so quick. I just wanted to finish."

Christian – It is Not Over until You Finish

Christian it is not over until you cross the finish line, thus take nothing for granted, invest in this Word, for it will be what will have you to finish strong.

"May the Word of God Rule in Your Heart" – In the Heart of the Individual

"Let the Word of God Rule in Your Heart" – In the Heart of the Church (17:4-6)

Judges 17:4 Thus he returned the silver to his mother. Then his mother took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to the silversmith, and he made it into a carved image and a molded image; and they were in the house of Micah.

Judges 17:5 The man Micah had a shrine, and made an ephod and household idols; and he consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Thought Right – Not Wrong

Verse 6, "But they thought they were doing right, didn't say they thought they were doing wrong, they thought they were doing right. The reason they do is because there was no word to say it was wrong." Apart from the Word of God it is very easy for people to think what they are doing is right, even spiritual, all the while not realizing how far they really are from God.

The Church in Your Home

The church of God isn't just here at CCAAC, but the church of God is in your homes. Parents, your house needs to be considered as such. Dad's you are the pastor of your home, mom's you have great responsibility in your home church.

Philemon 1–2 (NKJV) ¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer, ² to the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

Romans 16:3–5 (NKJV) ³ Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵ Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ.

Micah's Mother warped Spirituality

Here we see this mother, "I want to set up a religion for my son that he's comfortable with. All that I care is that he believes something. It doesn't have to be that he believes the right thing, just as long as he believes something."

Every parent, even born again, believing parents, need to be on guard of watering down or ignoring biblical truths in fear that it will drive our children away. I've heard everything under the sun from parents who didn't want to just stand on the one firm truth, the Word of God: this is what it says, this is what it means. As Joshua would say, "As for me and my house, we choose to serve the Lord." I've heard parents say, "Well, we're just sticking our heads in the sand, acting like we don't see what's going on, knowing it's just a phase that they go through in their young adult, or when they go away to college." Then there's the, "Oh, they're just sowing wild oats," or "What can I say, I did it when I was their age. That's how I was."

Here's the fact, if anyone is brutally honest and if anyone has the spirit of God that has convicted them of their sin before Holy God. Romans 6:22 says, "What fruit did you bear in the things you are now ashamed of?" If we're totally honest, there was no fruit out of those things, and we carry those things with us, and those things come out of nowhere and we go, "Where did that come from?" Some of those things haunt us, or the stain is still there that we always see and remember, that we wish we could never have entered into those things.

Romans 6:22 (NKJV) ²² But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

Parents, the first line of truth must begin in the home, and just let the truth be truth, and let it just stand at that. If you want your child to live in freedom, then you have to believe the word of God that says, "And the truth shall set you free."

John 8:32 (NKJV) ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Micah's Warped Spirituality / Shiloh not far from Ephraim

So Micah is making his own version of how church should be, not based on the Law of God. For we know the command to make no graven images, we know the only place to worship was at the Tabernacle, we know the only priest was through the Tribe of Levite (specifically Aaron), and we know the priestly garments (such as the ephod) was only the ones that God had prescribed for the priest to wear at the Tabernacle. So we see Micah, no rules, just right, this fits me well. Micah should have been worshiping at the Tabernacle which was in Shiloh at that time. My estimate is that Micah isn't more than a day's journey from Shiloh since he lives somewhere in the mountains of Ephraim and Shiloh sat at the base of Shiloh. Not to mention, as for the teaching of the word, God at time of Joshua had set up Cities for the Levites, which were strategically positioned all around the Promised Land so no one was more than a day's journey away from one of the cities so they could meet with a Levite and hear and learn the Word of God. Micah was head of the home, but wouldn't make the journey, less than a day, to go worship the true way in the true place.

Exodus 20:4 (NKJV) ⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

Exodus 26:1 (NKJV) ¹ "Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine woven linen, and blue, purple, and scarlet thread; with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them.

Exodus 29:4–9 (NKJV) ⁴ "And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall wash them with water. ⁵ Then you shall take the garments, put the tunic on Aaron, and the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the intricately woven band of the ephod. ⁶ You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban. ⁷ And you shall take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him. ⁸ Then you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. ⁹ And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. So you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons.

Judges 18:31 (NKJV) ³¹ So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

Judges 17:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now there was a man from the mountains of Ephraim, whose name was Micah.

People Came to Worship at Micah's Shrine

We will see in the next chapter that people came and worshipped at Micah's shrine, they too would come to Micah's shrine rather than going to the Tabernacle at Shiloh, or one of the Levitical cities for instruction in the Word of God. Everyone is doing right in their own sight, and thus Micah's shrine made the feel good, no rules, just right, and thus they could do whatever they wanted without anyone saying, hey that is wrong.

Judges 18:14–15 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of Laish answered and said to their brethren, "Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod, household idols, a carved image, and a molded image? Now therefore, consider what you should do." ¹⁵ So they turned aside there, and came to the house of the young Levite man—to the house of Micah—and greeted him.

Relevant Churches in 2016

Well we see a resemblance of that today in many churches, where they want to make a church that is comfortable for the people, and is tailored for the people. Their goal is to conform the church to meet the desires and whims of the people, rather than conform the people into the desires of the God. So they make the church relevant, cutting-edge, fresh and exciting – so they say. Me and Renee have a saying, if the Word of God isn't enough, nothing will be. If the Word who became flesh isn't enough to excite people, then nothing will. Light shows and rock-concert type worship and feel-good messages will never change someone into the image of Jesus Christ. When churches make churches that conform the church to the people rather than the people into the church (Body of Christ), that church at some point will have to duct the truth, the heart of the word, and they will steer clear of offending people, calling sin-sin, calling people to repentance, calling people to a higher calling beyond themselves.

No Change Apart from the Word

Without the Word of God, man will never change from their current state and condition, because only the Word does holy surgery on the heart of a person, only the Word of God is like a knife that cuts, and reveals the intents of the heart, like an umpire say what is out and what is safe. That is for individual's personal time in the Word, and from the pulpit as God makes the Word (manifest) clear in a unique way as God uses preachers who preach the truth, and say things that you will never hear in your personal devotion, because God does something supernatural and very unique when the Word goes forth from the pulpit.

Hebrews 4:11–13 (NKJV) ¹¹ *Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.* ¹² *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* ¹³ *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*

Titus 1:3 (NKJV) ³ *but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;*

My Promise to You

My promise to you is that I will be relevant, I will teach you a Word that is relevant to your life; but I will never be a relevant church

“May the Word of God Rule in Your Heart” – In the Heart of the Church

“Let the Word of God Rule in Your Heart” – In the Heart of the Nation (17:7-13)

Judges 17:7 Now there was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah; he was a Levite, and was staying there.

Levite name is Jonathan

The next chapter tells us this man's name, it is Jonathan, and he is the grandson of Moses. Thus we can see that this story is early in the book of judges as compared to later. Probably very shortly after the dividing of the land by Joshua, and shortly after Joshua's death.

Judges 18:30–31 (NKJV) ³⁰ *Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh (Moses), and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.* ³¹ *So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.*

Critical Note: he is from one of the clans of Judah. The NIV rendering, “who had been living within the clan of Judah” is literally, “from a clan of Judah. Now he was a Levite, and he was sojourning there.” The expression *mimmišpaḥat yēhûdâ*, “from a clan of Judah,” could be interpreted in one of two ways. For legal purposes he could be considered a Judahite if he is the product of a Levite-Judahite intermarriage, however, the narrator deliberately highlights his Levitical heritage. On the other hand, he may have been a true Levite. Not having been allotted territory like the rest of the Israelite tribes, the Levites were assigned forty-eight cities within the territories of the other tribes. Since Bethlehem is not listed among these, it seems that some Levites had left their allotted cities and settled in unassigned towns and villages among their non-Levite countryfolk. Nevertheless, the narrator's circumstantial note that “he was sojourning there” suggests that this man's roots had not been firmly planted in Bethlehem. So Men of the tribe of Levi might connect themselves, as Aaron did (Ex 6:23), by marriage with another tribe; and this young Levite belonged to the tribe of Judah, by his mother's side, which accounts for his being in Bethlehem, not one of the Levitical cities.

Judges 17:8 The man departed from the city of Bethlehem in Judah to stay wherever he could find a place. Then he came to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.

Judges 17:9 And Micah said to him, “Where do you come from?” So he said to him, “I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am on my way to find a place to stay.”

Judges 17:10 Micah said to him, “Dwell with me, and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten shekels of silver per year, a suit of clothes, and your sustenance.” So the Levite went in.

Judges 17:11 Then the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man became like one of his sons to him.

Judges 17:12 So Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and lived in the house of Micah.

Judges 17:13 Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since I have a Levite as priest!"

Twice in wrong Place

Verse 9, "Bethlehem is not one of the 48 cities that were given to the Levites." So this Levite is now twice in the wrong place. He should be in one of the cities given to the Levites teaching the word of God, and then taking his turn serving down at the tabernacle (as who the custom they would cast lots and different Levites from one of the 48 cities would be selected to minister at the Tabernacle in Shiloh for a set period of time – around a month).

***Nehemiah 8:7–9 (NKJV)** ⁷ Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place. ⁸ So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading. ⁹ And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.*

***2 Chronicles 17:7–9 (NKJV)** ⁷ Also in the third year of his reign he sent his leaders, Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. ⁸ And with them he sent Levites: Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah—the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests. ⁹ So they taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the LORD with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people.*

***2 Chronicles 35:3 (NKJV)** ³ Then he said to the Levites who taught all Israel, who were holy to the LORD: "Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built. It shall no longer be a burden on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and His people Israel.*

But – Only Aaron a Priest

So the Levites taught and served at the Tabernacle, but only the lineage of Aaron could be priests. According to Judges 18:30, this Levite is through the lineage of Moses, who was Aaron's brother. My point, Micah says, close enough and good enough, I may not have someone through the lineage of Aaron, but I am close enough. So, it isn't absolute truth, but the truth, I Micah feel, is my truth.

***Exodus 40:12–15 (NKJV)** ¹² "Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. ¹³ You shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. ¹⁴ And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. ¹⁵ You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations."*

***Numbers 3:9–10 (NKJV)** ⁹ And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are given entirely to him from among the children of Israel. ¹⁰ So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend to their priesthood; but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."*

Levite Felt it was Good Enough Too

So this Levite thought it was good enough too. But why was this Levite on the move, why wasn't he ministering in one of the 48 cities he would have been given to inhabit? Well I think we can see, because he needed a job. The Levites were to live off the tithe that was given by the people when they came to the Tabernacle, but if everyone is doing right in their own sight, it is obvious that the Tabernacle is lightly attended, and hardly supported.

***Numbers 18:8–10 (NKJV)** ⁸ And the LORD spoke to Aaron: "Here, I Myself have also given you charge of My heave offerings, all the holy gifts of the children of Israel; I have given them as a portion to you and your sons, as an ordinance forever. ⁹ This shall be yours of the most holy things reserved from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering and every sin offering and every trespass offering which they render to Me, shall be most holy for you and your sons. ¹⁰ In a most holy place you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.*

In Next Chapter – This becomes the Religion of Danites / No Truth Permeated the Whole Nation

In the next chapter this Levite will be the priest to the whole tribe of Dan. Watching the Tabernacle in Shiloh fall into obscurity maybe even ruin because every man did what was right in their own sight, the truth of Word of God no longer matter, and thus most every man made their own truths, and defined what truth was, permeated the whole land, and thus why we continually read over and over through the 16 chapters of Judges, the people continually going into bondage and oppression and affliction at the hands of the enemy.

***Judges 18:30–31 (NKJV)** ³⁰ Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh (Moses), and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. ³¹ So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.*

We see it here in our Country today.

Relativism

It is called relativism (rel-uh-tuh-viz-uh m), and relativism is the concept that points of view have no absolute truth or validity within themselves, but rather only relative, subjective value according to differences in perception and consideration. The truth is only for that specific time and that specific situation. A truth in that specific time and situation may not be the same truth in another time or situation. The truth is never absolute.

There will never be absolute truth – without a standard for the truth. The only absolute truth is the Word of God, and when that is rejected, then there is no absolute truth.

Declaration of Independence

We see that in our Country today. The Declaration of Independence says, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”.

Let me say two words you are continually hearing in our Country today, especially during this time of election. Secularism and progressivism.

Secularism

Secularism is the principle of the separation of government institutions and persons mandated to represent the state from religious institutions and religious dignitaries. One manifestation of secularism is asserting the right to be free from religious rule and teachings, or, in a state declared to be neutral on matters of belief, from the imposition by government of religion or religious practices upon its people.[Notes 1] Another manifestation of secularism is the view that public activities and decisions, especially political ones, should be uninfluenced by religious beliefs and/or practices.

Progressivism

Progressivism is at the surface level about “equalizing” all things evenly to all people, so that no one is lacking. Those who have much will give to those who have less, so all live in equal grounds socially, economically, and technology. It is very close to the concept of socialism. However, an underlying principal underneath it all is the removal of conservatism, because conservatism comes with a basis of moral values and truths. Across America, progressive left-leaning liberals are at war with Christianity and our Judeo-Christian traditions upon which the founding fathers based the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The reason for the progressives’ atheistic battle is to establish that, there being no God, there could not be any God-given inalienable rights; hence all rights come from an imaginary Social Compact which is now represented by The State and is subject to be altered or modified by its member society as needed.

Socialism is a range of economic and social systems characterised by social ownership and democratic control of the means of production; as well as the political ideologies, theories, and movements that aim at their establishment. Social ownership may refer to forms of public, collective, or cooperative ownership; to citizen ownership of equity; or to any combination of these. Although there are many varieties of socialism and there is no single definition encapsulating all of them, social ownership is the common element shared by its various forms.

A Nation in Need of Truth

Oh how we see a Nation that is lost, aimless, and wandering because they do not have the Word of God to comfort and guide them. We see a nation that is leaning very far to the place, where every person did right in their own sight.

“Let the Word of God Rule in Your Heart” – In the Heart of the Nation

Conclusion

“Let the Word of God Rule in Your Heart” – In the Heart of the Individual (17:1-4)

Beloved, let the Word dwell richly, abundantly, extravagantly in you individually. And remember, never take the race for granted until you have crossed the finish line.

Colossians 3:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Ephesians 5:18–21 (NKJV) ¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

“Let the Word of God Rule in Your Heart” – In the Heart of the Church (17:4-6)

In us individually, in the home, in the church, may we let the Word of God do it's holy surgery on our hearts. May the Churches of God teach the Word of God in Spirit and in Truth.

Hebrews 4:11–13 (NKJV) ¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

“Let the Word of God Rule in Your Heart” – In the Heart of the Nation (17:7-13)

Judges 17, verse 6, is a summation of what it was like in the whole land, during this whole time, roughly 450 years. It says, "In those days, there was no king in Israel, and everyone did what was right in his own eyes." All the while, because of that philosophy, and that mindset, we've read about 450 years of history of Israel where they were constantly following the sin cycle. The word "judge" in the Hebrew means "deliverer, rescuer". Continually, God is looking for a man or a woman in this time who will be the rescuer, who will be the deliverer that will show the people, and lead the people to the way of the Lord. There is that personal application for us today, as the Lord is looking for a deliverer, a rescuer, to show people to the way of the Lord.

Judges 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

It's not as complicated as you might think it is, because you're probably thinking, "Here goes a sermon, here comes a plea for us to commit to sharing the gospel, a commitment that we won't go to bed until we've shared the gospel with at least one person. If we don't, then we should beat ourselves up, and feel guilty for being such failures, of not furthering the gospel." I want to tell you, it's not as complicated, and it's not as pressure-mounted as we make it. Because, we will read in First Peter, 2:9, in how fitting as in Israel, there's no judge. We never read anywhere through the passage, of all these chapters, there is no priesthood, there is no tabernacle, and there is no gathering for the holy feast. Here in First Peter, chapter 2, verse 9, notice the 4 callings there, the 4 identifications. Chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people.

1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV) ⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

There we are. This is who we are. This is what He calls us.

- We are the chosen, today, just as Sampson was chosen, and Gideon, and Deborah were chosen, so too, are we.
- We are a royal priesthood just like Aaron getting to represent God before the people, and intercede for the people before God.
- We are a holy nation, just like the kingship there, as the good kings of David, Josiah, and Hezekiah.
- Fourthly, we are His own special people, and that we are chosen by Him, before the foundations of the world, by Him through the precious blood of the Lamb. We are a special people, just like Jeremiah was, and Daniel was, and all the greats that we read about in the hall of faith.

Look at what our calling is, that we may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness, into His marvelous light. That's not a call to evangelize 10 people a day, and to beat yourself if you don't lead someone to

the Lord before the week's out, but it's just a simple, "Here's what your calling is." That is to proclaim the praises of Him. It's the literal translation, it means to proclaim the wonderful acts of God. Can you do that? Can we do that? How much do we have to proclaim of His wonderful acts?

- We can talk of the past. He holds you in your hand. We can proclaim the wonderful acts that God has done in our lives in the past, as He rescued us out of our sin, and restored us, and made us new, how He protected us, and how He guided us.
- We can talk about the present, the promises for today. We can proclaim His wonderful works in our present, today, as we tell people of what He's doing in our lives, in our families, in our ministry, in our church
- The future, the promises of tomorrow.. Then, we can proclaim, because we know the future is certain of His promises towards us, that He'll never leave us, nor forsake us, and that He'll forgive our sins, past, present, and future, and that He takes our sin and puts them as far as the east is from the west. We can proclaim the great, wonderful acts of God. That is who we are to be. We are to be a people of praise.

It'll just be something that we do. It's not something that we have to whip out, some action that we have to force, it's just something that will be a natural outflowing from us, as we proclaim the wonderful works of God. The more you proclaim, the more it just flows from you, the more we just want to tell people of how great and wonderful He is.

Then, there is just a natural response of our heart, as we just rest, and wait, and soak in the things of the Lord. Look at Colossians chapter 3, verse 15-17. As we just sit, and wait upon the Lord, and the peace of God rules in our heart, there will be nothing that will make us anxious. We will always find ourselves filled with praise when we are at peace. Then, as we look at the word of God and let it dwell richly in us, there will just be this natural praise that will come out of us, as we declare His amazing word. Then, as we speak to one another, and share these things, of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, as we sing in worship, the Lord, we will just find ourselves speaking naturally and outpouring of how good He is. Then, as we give Him thanks, notice there, we will be finding ourselves just giving thanks to the Lord for what he's done. Then, all those things will continually produce a natural praise out of our heart. As we do, that's what we will be declaring to the world around us. It's a world who wants, and needs, and wants the same things that we have.

Why?

Because the world's truths are not working for them, and they know it, hence why the world is so depressed and despondent. But our TRUTH, it can set a man free.

John 8:32 (NKJV) ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

John 8:33 (NKJV) ³³ They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?"

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 18

Judges 18:1-31

Introduction

So we studied chapter 17 last time and we saw the key verse that everyone was doing what was right in their own sight. There were no rules, just right. There was no absolute truth, because there was no Word of God. People weren't seeking the Levitical priests for the teaching of the Word of God, and it seems that the people weren't making trips to the Tabernacle that was in Shiloh to have communion with the Lord. We will see this theme carry through the whole 16 chapters in Judges which covers about 300 years of Israel's history. So we saw a man name Micah set up his own temple/shrine, hire his own priest, and so he had his own Outback Religion – no rules, just right. And there is where we pick it up today, as Micah and his false idols and false priest play a key role in our story today.

Judges 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Time Stamping Chapter 17-18

So here is some background math to help us figure out approximately what time frame chapters 17-18 occur.

Joshua's life:

- A slave in Egypt under the whip of the cruel taskmasters (how long we do not know, but if he was "about" the same age as Caleb, probably around 40 years, maybe older at 50)
- Wandered the wilderness with children of Israel, being a right-hand man to Moses, for 40 years
- We know he fought 7 years of war in the Promised Land, defeating 31 kings, not to mention he was part of the battles on the east side of the Jordan as he fought under the leadership of Moses, so that was 2 kings, thus he has defeated 31 kings – that is one tough dude (by God's grace and determination).
- He dies at the age of 110 (24:29). So for a "guess", 110 minus 80-90, means he was in the Promised Land "about" 20-30 years

Joshua 24:29–30 (NKJV) ²⁹ Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred and ten years old. ³⁰ And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.

Joshua 14:6–7 (NKJV) ⁶ Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: "You know the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. ⁷ I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart.

It says back in Joshua that the Children of Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and the elders that who outlived Joshua (so let's just say that was another 20 years).

Joshua 24:29–31 (NKJV) ²⁹ Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred and ten years old. ³⁰ And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. ³¹ Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

It also says that this Levite who they make a priest is a young man, and that word "young – naar" was generally used for someone who at that time was considered very young, but not a baby – so teenager or young adult (remember their life span is going out to 110 to 120 years old). So, as a guess, because that is the best we can do, this young man may be around 20-40 years old.

Judges 17:7 (NKJV) ⁷ Now there was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah; he was a Levite, and was staying there.

This priest is the grandson of Moses, so it can't be that far from life of Moses.

Exodus 2:21–22 (NKJV) ²¹ Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. ²² And she bore him a son. He called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land."

Judges 18:30 (NKJV) ³⁰ Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

Judges 18:30 (NIV84) ³⁰ There the Danites set up for themselves the idols, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land.

So, if Israel was faithful all the way through the elders of Joshua, and based on the age of this young man, and that Dan still hadn't taken their inheritance, our story is "about" only 50 years since entering into Promised Land (and Moses dying). That puts this around 1350BC.

Today – Dan heads North / Maybe that is You Today

So we pick up today with our story, and we will see the Tribe of Dan packing up and heading north to grab new land, for the land that God had given them as an inheritance was too tough to inhabit because the Amorites wouldn't leave and constantly fought against them. Maybe that is where you are at today, maybe you feel the lot in life you have been given is too hard, maybe you were expecting something different, and surely not all the struggles you currently are facing; then I pray that God speaks to your heart through this passage today. God knows where you are at, God understands how hard it is, and God of heaven and earth, wants to speak to you about it today.

So let's pick it up in verse 13 of chapter 17 and cover our chapter 18

Judges 17:13 Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since I have a Levite as priest!"

Idols have a Philosophy behind them

A person makes an idol because they have lost the consciousness of God, but also know every one of these idols that people worship all had a philosophy, a mentality, a belief system behind them. We won't go into the details of them, but here we see for this man, Micah, and the people to come, we see their idols was for gain, that God would bless them for material gain in their life.

Judges 18:1 In those days there was no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking an inheritance for itself to dwell in; for until that day their inheritance among the tribes of Israel had not fallen to them.

Judges 18:2 So the children of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory, men of valor from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and search it. They said to them, "Go, search the land." So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there.

Dan's Lot

In Joshua 19 we read the land given to Dan. There is an parenthetical addition to that chapter that fills in Dan moving to the north as read here in chapter 18, that is covered in Joshua 19:47-48). The land in the north was not part of their inheritance. We get further information on that in Judges 1, as we are told the Ammorites were too strong for them. In Judges 20:1, we read the saying "from Dan to Beersheba", as that is what the Nation of Israel's land will be known of in coverage from north to south.

Joshua 19:40–48 (NKJV) ⁴⁰ The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. ⁴¹ And the territory of their inheritance was Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, ⁴² Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Jethlah, ⁴³ Elon, Timnah, Ekron, ⁴⁴ Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, ⁴⁵ Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, ⁴⁶ Me Jarkon, and Rakkon, with the region near Joppa. ⁴⁷ And the border of the children of Dan went beyond these, because the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem and took it; and they struck it with the edge of the sword, took possession of it, and dwelt in it. They called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father. ⁴⁸ This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

Judges 1:34–36 (NKJV) ³⁴ And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley; ³⁵ and the Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim; yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute. ³⁶ Now the boundary of the Amorites was from the Ascent of Akabbim, from Sela, and upward.

Judges 20:1 (NKJV) ¹ So all the children of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered together as one man before the LORD at Mizpah.

64,400 Men of War

Verse 1, Numbers 26 tells us that the tribe of Dan counted sixty-four thousand four hundred men of war. That was only second to Judah who had seventy-six thousand five hundred. This is a more than able tribe to fight and take the land, but what we will see is they won't.

Numbers 26:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ And it came to pass, after the plague, that the LORD spoke to Moses and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying: ² "Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel from twenty years old and above, by their fathers' houses, all who are able to go to war in Israel."

Numbers 26:42–43 (NKJV) ⁴² These are the sons of Dan according to their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These are the families of Dan according to their families. ⁴³ All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those who were numbered of them, were sixty-four thousand four hundred.

No Man – Government – Program Stop God / God's Calling comes With Enabling

This picture is for us, as every New Testament principal, has an Old Testament picture, and we see a principal and a picture that God wants us to claim all our spiritual inheritance, but ChristianThese Danites, they didn't take the land of God, because they lacked faith. You know all the promises of God are yes and amen, but sometimes you do have to take them by faith. **Know this, no man, government, or program can stop the work of God in your life. Only you can by lack of faith, or personal disobedience to the word of God, whether that's sin, or just choosing not to obey and exercise the faith.** Being that God gave them the land, God then also gave them the ability to take the land, possess the land. God's calling always comes with God's enabling.

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

Ephesians 1:18–21 (NKJV) ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Men of Valor – who Quit

Verse two, it says men of valor, but they're not so valiant that they are willing to fight Amorites down in the land that was allotted to them. Instead, they're going to be willing to go kill and steal innocent people so that their life can be made of ease. That's not a man of valor. That's a coward. Since they are men of valor, that would mean that they know war, most likely battled next to Joshua in the conquest of the Promised Land. But they are done fighting, they want to relax, done with war even if it means leaving the place that God has called them, and given them, they are looking for the easy way now.

Judges 18:3 While they were at the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite. They turned aside and said to him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What do you have here?"

Judges 18:4 He said to them, "Thus and so Micah did for me. He has hired me, and I have become his priest."

Judges 18:5 So they said to him, "Please inquire of God, that we may know whether the journey on which we go will be prosperous."

Judges 18:6 And the priest said to them, "Go in peace. The presence of the LORD be with you on your way."

Never find Peace Running Away

Verse six, you will never find peace running away from the place God has called you

A Hireling Never Gives bad News

This young priest, he doesn't seek the Lord, we can see, he immediately answers, and it wouldn't matter because he doesn't have a relationship with the Lord. This man is a hireling and he will say what makes people happy even if it's not the truth and it can jeopardize them because a hireling doesn't know the truth and they make their own truth up to fit the needs and pleasures of the people, and therefore they have no absolute truth, because they do not have the word of God.

We know this isn't the will of the Lord for the tribe of Dan because back in Joshua 19 we've already been told what Dan's lot is and where they're supposed to be, and so we can clearly see this hireling is giving false words on behalf of God, even though they represent God. We can see that again in the relevant churches for today, the hirelings, they'll tell the people what they want to hear just for the sake of church growth and numbers and to have a crowd. Jesus said, be careful of the hireling, in John chapter 10 verse 12 through 13, because they don't come to feed the sheep, they come to feed off the sheep.

John 10:12–13 (NKJV) ¹² But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

Samson's Parents Stayed – Extraordinary Family

Samson came from the tribe of Dan. As we studied the life of Samson, which is probably close to 300 years later from the time of this chapter that we read here, and what that speaks to us about Samson's parents is that while everybody else was bailing and going to the north where it was lush and ease and comfortable, Samson's family, his mother and father, they stayed in the land that God had promised them and allotted them, and they stayed and lived it out where God had placed them, and hence why they would have such an extraordinary son, as they did, and hence why we see there will be no judges that will come out of the tribe of Dan in the north, if anything, completely the opposite. Rather than being rescuers and deliverers, they do the opposite and they bring people into bondage and oppression through the disease of idolatry.

Judges 18:7 So the five men departed and went to Laish. They saw the people who were there, how they dwelt safely, in the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure. There were no rulers in the land who might put them to shame for anything. They were far from the Sidonians, and they had no ties with anyone.

Judges 18:8 Then the spies came back to their brethren at Zorah and Eshtaol, and their brethren said to them, "What is your report?"

Judges 18:9 So they said, "Arise, let us go up against them. For we have seen the land, and indeed it is very good. Would you do nothing? Do not hesitate to go, and enter to possess the land.

Judges 18:10 When you go, you will come to a secure people and a large land. For God has given it into your hands, a place where there is no lack of anything that is on the earth."

Laish (Renamed Dan) – Beautiful Land

It's a beautiful area up there. I've been there, lush and green, and the reason being is it's the headwaters of the Jordan River, because the snow melting off from Mount Hebron flow down into this starting point, and there are multiple underground springs that feed it. To this day, millions of gallons of fresh, clear water run from this place and flow all the way down through all of Israel to the Dead Sea. It is great farming. It is a fertile valley, and the Jordan River literally is a compound. If you notice, Jor-Dan, it means, "Out of Dan." They come, and this is how it got its name.

Killing For Gain – Right in Sight

They will kill all the inhabitants to take this land, so they're killing for gain. They're killing to make their life easier, because everyone is doing what's right in their sight.

Judges 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Look before you Dive In

Sometimes just because it looks so good, doesn't mean it's so right. Seek the Lord before diving into the water just because it looks so good, because that water may be shallower than you think, and you may find yourself in for an injury of a lifetime.

Yes there is a Lack – Of God's Presence and Word

Verse ten says there was no lacking, so they thought, but there was a lacking, because the word and the presence of God isn't there. Can I say, if you ever move, relocate, make sure there's a good Bible-teaching church where you are going, and that you can make sure that you won't find yourself moving farther away from the word of God. Here, Dan, they think this is bountiful, it's lacking nothing, but they don't realize, nor do they take into account or care, there was a great lack. There was no Levitical city there for someone to teach the word, and they even made themselves further from Shiloh, hence they won't make the trip to Shiloh.

Psalms 16:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Questioning Our Lot

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Let it be known that the lot that fell to Dan was not by chance. The people of Israel knew that it wasn't by chance, they knew this wasn't some randomness, but the way that the Lord spoke on how the promised land was supposed to be divided. We see in the Proverbs, the lot falls on the lap but it's God who decides. These inheritance that we read there in Joshua 19, they fall in place exactly as how was prophesied in Genesis 49 which is fascinating. We see that everything is in accordance to God's will and his ways.

Proverbs 16:33 (NKJV) ³³ The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.

The Danites don't want to fight the Amorites, so they are looking for something easier, and they see it up here in Laish, and boy does it look good and better to their eyes. There's always that problem, when we look at someone else's lot and say, "I want what they got", and to not be content with what the Lord would have for us. This tribe of Dan, they want someone else's land, not theirs. People can be like that, they want someone else's. They don't want what God has given them. They don't want to subdue the land, the lot that was given them. They look at the fruit that someone else is bearing, the life that someone else has and they say, "That's the fruit that I want and that's how I wanted it to be." Never coming to the understanding that they need to bear their own fruit where God has them.

There is no mistake of the lot that we have been given, whether that be your location, your employment, your spouse, your ministry, your special needs child, your health, your finances, your in-laws, your neighbors, whatever it may be, there's no mistake of the lot that has been given to you. This is what God has purposed for you.

Dan will leave where God has placed them and we will read that they will become the center of idolatry, not just for whole tribe, but we will see the northern kingdom when the kingdom is split, it will become the center of idolatry. Because the coveted to have something else that wasn't there's rather than claiming and fighting for what was theirs, they were never healthy again from this moment, we will read. Whereas, if they would have stayed where God placed them and fought and subdued, they would have not doubt produced fruit, because God will always be true to his promise. In Genesis 49 it's prophetic that Dan will end up there. God was not surprised their ending because in God's sovereignty he knows where idolatry will lead anyone who takes that path.

Sometimes Dream Has to Die

Sometimes your dream and your dreams have to die before God can bring them to pass. I can think of Joseph. God had given him a great dream. He sees a picture of the sun and the moon and the stars all bowing down to him, but before that would happen, before he would be in Pharaoh's Palace and before he would be the number two man and before he would be used by God in this great way to save a whole nation from destruction and death during a time of drought and famine, Joseph had to go via the pit, as his brothers would throw him in the pit, and he would be sold into slavery. You know the story, then from slavery into the palace of Potiphar's wife, who then by her false accusations would place him in the prison there in Egypt for years before God would show up and do what he had promised in that dream.

Sometimes, Christian, you have a dream, you know it was from God. You were sure and absolute that this came from the Lord, but then you find yourself in any place but a dream, maybe even a nightmare, and you're saying, "Did I hear God right or wrong? Did I miss him? Was this all in my mind?" Just know this. God's word is true to you, and sometimes, there is just a period of time between the dream and the fulfillment of the dream, so don't leave the lot that God has given you thinking that you're in the wrong place and doing the wrong thing. You stay where God has you, and he will come true to the word that he spoke to you.

I can relate to this. I remember, because I'll never forget, I'd been saved about six months, maybe less, maybe a little more, and I was sitting in the upper balcony on the right hand side in Calvary Chapel. The pastor was teaching verse by verse through the Book of Job on a Sunday morning. That's how specific I remember these details, and God gave me a vision of a man teaching on a stage. It was a brief vision, a quick vision. It only lasted a couple seconds, and though it wasn't clear, I knew the man teaching was me, and I knew that was God's word speaking to me that someday, he would use me as a pastor teacher.

I sat on that vision, and that vision did help lead me in certain decisions, and I found myself at the bible college so I could learn this word more, and then I remember at the very end of my bible college that the assistant principal at the bible college was given word that there was a local church whose pastor had got up and left and they were a church that was in need of a pastor, and he had scheduled four students to fill in for the next two months doing two week set of time, and I was going to be the last one, as he asked me and I accepted.

I remember coming to the place and saying, "This dream is about ready to pass," and I was in awe, and I had pretty much felt a peace that if they needed a pastor to stay, then I would stay. What happened to the church, I don't know, but somewhere along the way in that period of time, they didn't need a pastor. I think possibly the whole church just folded up, and in a sense, so did my dream. That spoke to me to head east, and so I did, and then while I was here on the east coast waiting for the vision and dream to come to pass, it went the complete opposite. I went into a two year period of unemployment, couldn't get a job, no ministries opened for me, doors closed on me, and I remember just sitting there saying, "Lord, what is going on? Did I hear you right or wrong?"

I always knew in my heart that this was what God had purposed for me, and I had to come to a place in that pit that, "God, you were working out something in me that needed to be dealt with and worked out before you would allow me to step in and take such a responsibility. You wanted to shape and mold me more into your image of your son," and I must say, it was the longest two years of my life, but oh, the crushing and the breaking that God did in that time of my ego and my pride, my self-sufficiency, and though none of those things were completely destroyed, they were greatly crushed, as those things are always a constant battle for every person, as long as they're in this sinful body.

God, did it work, and now here I stand. I needed to go through that pit before I could come to this place, and so maybe that's you today. You're wondering why you're in this place, wondering why things haven't come to pass the way you thought that they should. Don't leave. Don't go looking for better ground. Don't go looking for something better. Just trust that the Lord is working, and trust the Lord that He is going to do something great, and I promise you that He will.

Believe Jeremiah 29:11

The first thing you must do is to believe and accept that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, Jeremiah 29:11. In the midst of your lot, it might not seem to be lush and bountiful. You have to accept that. Secondly, you have to accept that the word of God is absolute truth and that every word that you're reading, you can believe that it's true, and therefore the place that you're at is by God's design and divine will.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Stay – Don't Leave

Christian stay, don't leave, unless you hear absolutely God saying that was for a time and season so I could something in you that I couldn't do anywhere else. But know too, some places, some people, you are called there for life, so you must stay, leaving is not an option, you stay and know that God is staying with you.

Judges 18:11 And six hundred men of the family of the Danites went from there, from Zorah and Eshtaol, armed with weapons of war.

Judges 18:12 Then they went up and encamped in Kirjath Jearim in Judah. (Therefore they call that place Mahaneh Dan to this day. There it is, west of Kirjath Jearim.)

Judges 18:13 And they passed from there to the mountains of Ephraim, and came to the house of Micah.

Seems Everybody Goes to Micah's

It appears that Micah's house is the stopover area and everybody knows to go there.

- Micah's Feel Good Bed & Breakfast
- Micah's Outback – No Rules, Just Right
- Micah's Burger King – Have it Your Way

Judges 18:2 (NKJV) ² So the children of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory, men of valor from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and search it. They said to them, "Go, search the land." So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there.

No Word (Individual – Church – Nation)

Verse 11, Danites wanted something easier, something that brought the gain without the pain, without the work, or without the holiness. Man-made religion is what it is, and now we see how all three of the things from last week's message come together.

- The word of God did not rule in the heart of any individual heart, and therefore not one person, 600 soldiers, not one says, "This is wrong, this is not the land that God has for us."
- Notice the word of God did not rule in the church. They have this false teacher, this hireling. They won't go to where the truth is, so here they are, this man not saying, "No, this is wrong. You're in the wrong place."
- Look at the state of the nation, who all were doing what was right in their own sight. They are marching through 5 other tribes land, you don't think they came out asking where are you going and what are you doing, yet nobody says hey this is wrong what you are going to do.
- Now notice that the word of God didn't rule in the nation. There was no absolute truth. Everything was about right here, right now, this is truth, and the truth is we need this for our personal gain, and this will make our lives better. Let's do this, and let's let this be the inheritance of our children. Let this be our inheritance, and if you get it, do you notice, and they passed this on as a nation from generation to generation, that we're in the wrong place, but it's okay, as long as the personal gain was worth it. It doesn't matter about the other people.

Judges 18:14 Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of Laish answered and said to their brethren, "Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod, household idols, a carved image, and a molded image? Now therefore, consider what you should do."

Judges 18:15 So they turned aside there, and came to the house of the young Levite man—to the house of Micah—and greeted him.

Judges 18:16 The six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who were of the children of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate.

Judges 18:17 Then the five men who had gone to spy out the land went up. Entering there, they took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image. The priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men who were armed with weapons of war.

Hey Check Out Micah's idols

Verse 14 they say, "He got some awesome gods, man, you got to go check out his awesome gods in his house." So they go.

Grab them – Get God on Our Side

They're saying to these five spies, "You know what needs to be done Go and steal the gods." Why? Because they're all thinking back in verse 13 of the last chapter, "Get these gods, and we will have our personal gain."

Sad gods – If Can be Carried Away

Verse 17, if someone can take your gods away, your gods are pretty small.

Judges 18:18 When these went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?"

Judges 18:19 And they said to him, "Be quiet, put your hand over your mouth, and come with us; be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest to the household of one man, or that you be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?"

Judges 18:20 So the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved image, and took his place among the people.

Judges 18:21 Then they turned and departed, and put the little ones, the livestock, and the goods in front of them.

Took His Place – get His Gain

They say to this young priest, this hireling, "You know what needs to be done," and he says that he went and he took his place among the others. Why? Because just like verse 13 in the last chapter, everybody is in it for their own gain, and so here he is, going in it for his own gain. He fits right in with everyone else, because everyone else was only looking for their personal gain. They go kill these innocent people, and they go take a place that was not part of the Promised Land, but that's what they do for their own gain.

Wow – God Promoted Me

He really thinks that he's found favor with God because he's got promoted. Just because things are going well, doesn't mean that they're right.

Hireling Always Leave for Better Offer

Verse 20, the hireling will always leave for a better offer, for he has no heart in love for the sheep.

America Tried to Invade Canada in 1775

Did you know America once tried to take land, land that wasn't theirs? Yeah, 1775, they tried to go up in Canada and take land in Canada during the revolutionary war. It was called the Invasion of Quebec. You know what happened? Obviously, since we don't have a state up in the British Columbia, it's because they totally got whipped, because they were trying to take what wasn't theirs.

Risked Whole Family on Word of Hireling

Verse 21, here's the rearguard to protect the kids, and so we can see they're taking their kids, they consider this a slam dunk that this land is theirs and part of this is based on because of the word of this priest who is a false priest, just a hireling, which, all the while, they may have been walking into an ambush that they never saw coming, and their kids and all their possessions could have been destroyed, because they went and sought after this hireling who gives false words.

Teaching Kids – Always Look out for #1

Verse 21, they brought their kids, they were so confident of victory, but you know what else they're doing? They're teaching their kids, "Hey, number one is you. Whatever it takes to satisfy you, regardless of what you have to do to anybody. However you have to walk over them, if you have to stab them in the back, or even what we see here, kill them, you do it, so you take care of number one. Always be looking out for number one."

Judges 18:22 When they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men who were in the houses near Micah's house gathered together and overtook the children of Dan.

Judges 18:23 And they called out to the children of Dan. So they turned around and said to Micah, "What ails you, that you have gathered such a company?"

Judges 18:24 So he said, "You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and you have gone away. Now what more do I have? How can you say to me, 'What ails you?' "

Judges 18:25 And the children of Dan said to him, "Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry men fall upon you, and you lose your life, with the lives of your household!"

Judges 18:26 Then the children of Dan went their way. And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house.

Humerous Statement

Verse 24, it's a humorous statement, "I made gods and you took them."

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Watch Out for False Altars

Verse 26. Oh, the emptiness of false idols and false altars. I know this question may sound odd, but can we relate to an altar such as Micah had, an altar that when it was taken away from Micah, he had no place to worship because someone else had taken Micah's altar, therefore he couldn't worship there anymore? Can that happen to you? Can someone else take your altar that you will no longer worship God? You may say,

- "Lord, she left me. I can't worship you no more,"
- "Lord, that job meant so much to me, and now I'm laid off. I just can't worship you anymore,"
- "Lord, I didn't get that promotion, and I deserve it, and I needed it. I can't worship you no more,"
- "Lord, you didn't give me the child that I wanted. I can't worship you no more,"
- "That husband you gave me isn't working out the way that I hoped. I can't even bear to come in worship because I'm in such anguish and turmoil because of this relationship that I have."

You know what happens so often at that altar? You come to the altar to confess that other person's sin, but never your own. You never ask the Lord to alter you, but to them, and so we can see that we, too, can build altars in our life that we don't even realize that those altars are the things that we become dependent in and on for our worship of the Lord, and when they're gone, we feel we can't worship the Lord anymore, that He's failed us, and that's not true. He has never failed us.

And, how we react outwardly to other people, or that person, where we are not even acting like a Christian, totally in the flesh we are handling it.

The altar that we were worshiping at failed us, and we were worshiping at the wrong altar. Therefore, when these things are taken away, then praise the Lord so that you can see what they were to you and how they weren't the true altar of God in your life, but they were something that you were putting more trust in and substance in than they could ever be to you. God loves to take those altars away so that you can come to a place where you just see there's only one altar that will never leave me nor forsake me.

There's only one place that I can come, and I will always receive from that place, and that's the altar of the true and living God. It's in his presence where I will always find fullness and joy. When I look for my joy and my worth and my identity any other place, I always find myself lacking, and maybe even find myself in a place that I don't even have the heart to worship Him anymore because He failed me. I feel like He left me, and that's not the truth. You can see that in this story.

Judges 18:27 So they took the things Micah had made, and the priest who had belonged to him, and went to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire.

Judges 18:28 There was no deliverer, because it was far from Sidon, and they had no ties with anyone. It was in the valley that belongs to Beth Rehob. So they rebuilt the city and dwelt there.

Judges 18:29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel. However, the name of the city formerly was Laish.

Rename the City – Now it is Ours

So they rename the city from Laish, to Dan, as if that will cover up that they killed for and stole it.

Dan thinks They Have God's Favor / BUT They Left a Huge Void Down in South

They, the tribe of Dan, think they've found God's favor, but you know what? Because they are in it for themselves, they have no idea how their leaving leaves a void down where they were supposed to be. They put the other tribes of Israel at risk from being attacked, because now this whole land that was purposed for them, there is nobody there to fight, because they decided to take the easy route, and now the enemies of God can come and take that land, and they can roam freely, and then they can start to expand from there. You know, Christian, once you step out, and you leave that void, whether that be a void that you leave in the children's ministry, because you say you

need a rest, and hey, maybe you do, or maybe you need what you want is a break from this thing that you've been doing. Always count the cost, because you may be leaving a void, then, that nobody fills, and now the enemy can find his way into a place and start taking camp, and set up camp, and be able to start launching his counter-attacks, and movement.

When you leave your lot, you have no idea the impact it makes on leaving your marriage, or leaving your ministry, leaving your calling, you have no idea. Dan doesn't seem to care, and that's hence they're careless, they could care less about somebody else.

Judges 18:30 Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

Golden Calf in Dan

Verse 20, 1 Kings 12:25-33, when the kingdom splits a few centuries from now of this story, King Jeroboam the first, he will set up the golden calf in Dan, and Dan will always be the idolatrous center of the Northern Kingdom. *1 Kings 12:28–29 (NKJV)* ²⁸ Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" ²⁹ And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.

Land Was lacking – No Presence & Word of God

They say the land is not lacking, but they mistake it, for it lacked the presence of God, and hence they find themselves taken into captivity.

Judges 18:31 So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

Moved Further from Shiloh

Verse 31. They are more further away from the tabernacle than when they first started. They are moving away by doing what they think is right, rather than seeking and worshiping at the true tabernacle, rather than going to one of the 48 Levitical cities and getting a word regarding the word of God, of what He has. There's no Levitical city up here in Dan because it's not where God had established and desired anyone to go.

Are You Move Closer or Further Away

Christian, are you moving closer or further away from the Lord right now today? Is there anything in your life that is moving you further away, anything that's distracting you? Listen. Every decision you make counts. That decision of where you're going to work, you have to determine, is it going to move you closer or further away? That decision of that promotion, you have to decide, is it going to move you closer or further away? That sport or that hobby or that TV series or that staying abreast of the world news or the political processes, we have to look, because every one of them is a decision, and we have to say, am I moving closer or further away? We always have to guard it.

The Scene at Shiloh

Verse 31. Shiloh is right there at the bottom of a mount of Ephraim. It was less than a day's journey from Micah's house, a place where you could go and get true worship of the Lord and truly be in the presence of the Lord. It's a beautiful place when you see it, and just from the understanding of what went on there, but it's not that much this beautiful place in terms of lushness and greenness and abounding. Shiloh sits in a valley surrounded by hills with a plateau lifting itself up at the bottom of the valley, kind of like an elevated stage, and it was there that they would set up the tabernacle of God where the Shekinah Glory, the very presence of God, would rest.

It was a natural amphitheater in the sense that people would come for the feast, or just come to make a journey to have a fellowship offering or a burn offering with the Lord, one of the meal offerings with the Lord at any time that they wanted. Not just the feast, but anytime you could come and experience fellowship with the Lord and sense

and know that the very presence of God was right there. Even today, there's excavated archaeological ruins of a wall that had been built there around that plateau, no doubt to separate the court of the women and the court of the gentiles from the court of the men and the holy place, as we've read in times past in the Book of Exodus as it was laid out.

What's interesting, also, is when you would come to make an offering for the Lord, some were burn offerings totally consumed, and the person gave and it was a symbol of their life totally given to the Lord, but there were fellowship offerings. They were called meal offerings where you would go and you would bring your grain or your oil for that type of meal offering, or you would bring your animal for that type of meal offering, and the priest would sacrifice it there on the altar there in the courtyard where all could see. He would take that offering, the meat or the grain, and put it into a pot.

Leviticus 7:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ 'The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of it until morning.

People would go and they would go up on the hill and they would partake in the fellowship with the Lord, maybe as a family, maybe as an individual, all the while overlooking, because I always was to be on the tabernacle, always on the presence of the Lord, and we should take that to note how that's how our lives should be, I always on the Lord in the presence of the Lord, and they would eat their meal there. When they were done, the pot was considered a sanctified vessel because it was used in that ceremony with the Lord, and no sanctified vessel was supposed to leave that presence, and thus they would smash the pot and break the pot there on the ground.

The archaeological discoveries have pieces of pottery all around those hills, except in one place, in dips and valleys where you couldn't see the tabernacle because nobody would take and have their meal there in that place. Oh, it just proves archaeologically Shiloh existed, but it speaks of a greater story, the presence of God and the fellowship of God and worth making the journey to be with Him, keeping an eye on Him, so Shiloh became barren and rocky, and it does not compare. I've been up to Dan and I can tell you it does not compare. Dan is a beautiful place up there in Laish, lush and green, running water, beautiful, but you know what? I would rather have a barren, rocky place and the presence of God and His word of fellowship with Him and a fellowship with the saints than any of the greatest places on this earth. Give me His love and communion over anything this world could offer.

Regardless of the lot that I have been given, I do know one day I will see Him face to face, and one day He will embrace me and draw me into His arms and He will say, "Welcome. Well done," and I'm going to live for that, regardless of where I am and how my lot is playing out.

Are You Enjoying Presence of the Lord?

Are you experiencing and Enjoying the Presence of the Lord?

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 19

Judges 19:1-30

Bible Facts

The Bible:

- There are 66 Books in the Bible, 39 in the Old Testament, and 27 in the New Testament.
- There are 1,189 chapters in the Bible, 929 in the Old Testament, and 260 in the New Testament.
- There are 31,102 verses in the Bible, 23,145 in the Old Testament, and 7,957 in the New Testament.

Chapters 19-21 (The Sewer)

As the Book of Ephesians has been called the Swiss Alps of the Bible for its beauty and majesty, the next 3 chapters before us have often been called the sewer. Such depravity as we will read of things filled with shock such as rape, murder, de-limbing of a human, senseless killing, kidnapping, and all of it in the context of the people who God calls "His". I thought maybe today we could just talk about Tuesday's election, or catch-up on football, and World Series. Monday-Wednesday I prayed for the rapture, and then Thursday thought I better start to study for Sunday's message. Just crazy chapters and what a crazy story.

Nothing Hidden – 1 of 1,189 Chapters

There is nothing hid from His sight. And in our passage today, God just tells it the way it is. And, all Scripture is profitable, as God teaches through all 31,102 verses to shape and conform us into His image. There are only 1,189 chapters in all the Bible, and God preserves for us a chapter such as this.

Hebrews 4:11–13 (NKJV) ¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Power

But truly, this passage is pure power, as low as it takes humanity, equally and higher it takes us on the picture of God's unconditional love for each and every one of us. Maybe you feel your sin has taken you too far from God, so far the gap is too far to bridge, hang with this study and all the unpleasant details, and through it you will see a depth of God's love that proves He will and does bridge depth of any sin and separation with His great love.

Outline of Judges 19

- The Levite Goes after his Unfaithful Concubine (1-3)
- The Levite is Detained by his Father-in-Law for Four Days (4-7)
- The Levite Refuses to Stay in Jerusalem (8-12)
- The Levite is Taken-In by an Old Man in Gibeah (13-21)
- The Levite's Concubine is Given over to Perverted Men (22-25)
- The Levite's Concubine Dies (26-28)
- The Levite Cuts his Concubine into Pieces (29-30)

The Levite Goes after his Unfaithful Concubine (1-3)

Judges 19:1 And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.

Judges 19:2 But his concubine played the harlot against him, and went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there four whole months.

Judges 19:3 Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her and bring her back, having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him. So she brought him into her father's house; and when the father of the young woman saw him, he was glad to meet him.

Time Stamp

The timing of this event is probably close to the timing of chapters (17-18), because once again we read a specific detail that helps us get an approximate time frame of the events here in chapters 19-21, and that is that the grandson of Aaron is alive and serving at the Tabernacle in Shiloh. So approximately 50 years after the death of Moses (and the end of the wilderness wandering), and approximately 20 years since death of Joshua.

Judges 20:27–28 (NKJV) ²⁷ So the children of Israel inquired of the LORD (the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, ²⁸ and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days), saying, “Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?” And the LORD said, “Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand.”

Numbers 20:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.

2nd Class Wife

A concubine, she was a second class wife in the sense that she was not considered equal status with a wife (a first wife). She was limited in many of her rights and entitlements. Many concubines were actually slaves. Many times a man would take a concubine because his (first) wife was barren; so he would have children with his concubine, and then those children would be given to his wife and be considered her children.

Now if this Levite was a priest, and there is a possible indication that he was by the way that he cuts her up, as we will read before the chapter is over, it seemed that he had skill in these things as a Levitical priest would, but we can't tell for sure. If he was a Levitical priest he should not have had a concubine. He would be in violation. We're not sure of that, so we can't say for sure that he's in error by having a concubine, as a Levitical priest should only have had a wife in accordance with Leviticus, chapter 21, verses seven and eight.

Marriage Twisted – Whole Story Spiral Decline

So what we see is truly a twisting, a perverting of God's intent and design for marriage. Perverting means, “alter (something) from its original course, meaning, or state to a distortion or corruption of what was first intended”. The whole story will spiral downward, and it will be because this man, the Nation, is not upholding and honoring marriage as God intended it to be (one man, one woman, until death do them part – Genesis 2). Rather, we see what was the state of the whole Nation, every man was doing what was right in his own sight; in other words, they were making the rules and the ways, not honoring God's ways.

Genesis 2:21–25 (NKJV) ²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. ²³ And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.” ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Judges 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Why Important – Marriage is Picture of God's Love for is Bride

Why is this point so important, and why should we stand so firm on the sanctity of marriage, both individually, and as a church? Because marriage is a picture of God's relationship with his bride (That is you, and then corporately it is His church).

Revelation 22:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Christian Marriage – Is Greatest Witness

Christian your marriage is the greatest witness that you can have to the world around you of God's picture of his love for the world.

Ephesians 5

From the garden God created them man and woman it's always illustrate this picture of God and his bride.

Ephesians 5 unfolds the heart of God regarding marriage between a man and woman, and Jesus and His Bride.

Ephesians 5:22–33 (NKJV) ²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her

with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Jesus & His Bride

What we see about Jesus and His Bride throughout the Scriptures:

- Jesus loves His Bride.
- He adores His Bride.
- He cherishes His Bride.
- He washes and cleanses her with the word.
- He fights for His Bride.
- He walks with His Bride.
- He talks with His Bride.
- He praises His Bride.
- He encourages His Bride,
- and he goes after His Bride.
- His Bride is no second rank wife. His Bride is his life, and he will give his life for her in whatever it takes.

Our Marriage – Reflects God's Desired Relationship with Man

Our marriage, the way we love each other, is to be a reflection to the whole world of Christ's love for His Bride. As people look at us, they are to say, you mean that is how God loves me, that is the relationship that God wants to have with me? As they watch us adore our bride, they say you mean God adores me? As they watch us cherish our bride they say you mean God cherishes me? Please tell me more about this God who loves me like this and desires a relationship with me so close it is a marriage forever.

So Husbands – You Loving Your Wife? / Or is she 2nd?

So, husbands, are you loving your wife the way Christ loves the church? I don't think there's a man in this room that wouldn't die for his bride, but there is a question. It is so much harder to live for her. Do you live for her in such a way that she's no second rank bride?

- Does she know she's not second to work?
- Does she know she's not second to your hobby?
- Does she know she's not second to your sport team?
- or even your children?
- Does she know she isn't second to your ministry?

but that she's first and foremost in your life.

Ephesians 5:25–27 (NKJV) ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Only 2 Instructions on Marriage

Interestingly God really only gives two pieces of instruction on marriage, to which you can compare to the millions and millions of books on marriage. Husbands love your wife, and wives submit to your husbands. See a woman needs the security of unconditional love and acceptance. If a man loves his wife in this way, she will feel secure in him. The woman will say he may be a lug head, but I know he loves me and I will follow him to the ends of the earth. Now a man wants to be respected, he wants to know his wife respects him, and when she does, he now feels secure in the relationship.

Ephesians 5:22–27 (NKJV) ²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Submit – Not a Bad Word

Now I know woman can get uncomfortable about this word submit, but let's all understand what it means. It was a military term as used in the day of Ephesians 5, and it didn't mean the man was a dictator, and the woman had no voice; on the contrary, it was a military term and when going to war each head of the branch they were over and gave their recommendation, and then ultimately the General would take all those inputs and make a final battle plan. He would then give the battle plans to each branch, and they would "submit" to that plan, even if it wasn't their plan, and fight exactly as laid out by the General. The General had the final say, and equally so, the ultimate responsible for a successful battle plan (quite a responsibility). But a wise general listened to his Captain's inputs. So we see submit doesn't mean the woman has no voice. A wise husband will listen to his wife's input. And a wise husband should see, ultimately God will hold him responsible for leading his family, so a wise husband should lay out all things before the Lord and seek His guidance on how to best lead his family. King Hezekiah is a great example of doing that.

Isaiah 37:14–17 (NKJV) ¹⁴ And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. ¹⁵ Then Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying: ¹⁶ "O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. ¹⁷ Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.

Husband what Like to Submit to You?

But let's backtrack a step husbands. What would it be like if you had to submit to you? Would it be freeing and enjoyable and joyful, or would it be grueling and burdensome?

Wives when You Submit – Picture of Bride Submitting to Jesus

So wives how are you doing in the area of submitting? And so wives when you submit to your husband, or not, it's a picture of the bride of Christ submitting fully to the lord what a great witness, and if you don't submit, then a bad witness.

What is Your Marriage is Unequally Yoked?

You may ask, "What if my marriage not like this because my spouse isn't a believer, or my spouse is a believer but not in a good place spiritually"? The answer is, you stay and doo your half, and that will and is equally as great witness, because you are proving out the Word of God even when it isn't easy. Lots of people will say, well of course your marriage is great because your spouse is great, not like mine. But when you live it out when it is hard, you confirm the Word of God is real, you confirm that the Word of God is real to you, at whatever the cost is to you personally. You are still a believer, and you still act like a believer, even when the other person isn't.

What if Single?

Do you want to give the greatest witness to the world about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? You can do so through your marriage. If you are single, still marriage is your greatest witness as you obey His command, and you remain pure and chaste, as you say to the world I abstain so I can give myself fully to my Husband/Bride, for marriage is precious in the sight of the Lord, for it is his picture of His love for His Bride.

Church Must Maintain that Order

Hence why even the church can't lay down the order that God set for the teaching authority and the leadership authority of the church because the church is the bride of Christ and that order man and woman must stay as God has ordained it for the illustration before the world.

1 Timothy 2:1–7 (NKJV) ¹ Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, ⁷ for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

1 Timothy 2:8–15 (NKJV) ⁸ I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; ⁹ in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰ but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. ¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. ¹² And I do

not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. ¹⁵ Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

Homosexuality Destroys the Illustration

And obviously homosexuality destroys that illustration up and hence why you can see why the enemy is always so interested in the promotion of homosexuality because then it destroys the picture of man and woman and Jesus and his bride

The Levite is Detained by his Father-in-Law for Four Days (4-7)

Judges 19:4 Now his father-in-law, the young woman's father, detained him; and he stayed with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there.

Judges 19:5 Then it came to pass on the fourth day that they arose early in the morning, and he stood to depart; but the young woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way."

Judges 19:6 So they sat down, and the two of them ate and drank together. Then the young woman's father said to the man, "Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry."

Judges 19:7 And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged him; so he lodged there again.

The Father-In-Law Does Nothing

Verse 2. This concubine will play the harlot for 4 months while at the father's house and so we can see that her father, he had no rules, tells us he was doing what was right in his own sight, because he wasn't saying, "This is wrong," so everybody, through this whole chapter, is doing what's right in their own sight. Nobody is stopping to see what does the word of God say.

Judges 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Levite Appears to Care – But we Will See Doesn't

This Levite, he starts off what appears to be good. "I'm going to go get my wife," but we can read through the rest of the story, that he never elevated his wife to be number 1. Only good enough to be number 2, and then when it came time to fight for her, his actions of going to get her, we can clearly see wasn't anything to do with love because his actions demonstrated that he was doing what was right in his own site and what he was doing was for his pleasure. Nothing to do with her.

Judges 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Tenerife Airport Disaster

On March 27, 1977, two Boeing 747s passenger jets collided on the runway at Los Rodeos Airport (now Tenerife North Airport), on the Spanish island of Tenerife, Canary Islands. The crash killed 583 people, making it the deadliest accident in aviation history (9/11 being considered a terrorist attack – not an accident) . As a result of the complex interaction of organizational influences, environmental preconditions, and unsafe acts leading up to this aircraft mishap, the disaster at Tenerife has served as a textbook example for reviewing the processes and frameworks used in aviation mishap investigations and accident prevention.

A bomb explosion at Gran Canaria Airport, and the threat of a second bomb, caused many aircraft to be diverted to Los Rodeos Airport. Among them were KLM Flight 4805 and Pan Am Flight 1736 – the two aircraft involved in the accident. At Los Rodeos Airport, air traffic controllers were forced to park many of the airplanes on the taxiway, thereby blocking it. Further complicating the situation, while authorities waited to reopen Gran Canaria, a dense fog developed at Tenerife, greatly reducing visibility.

When Gran Canaria reopened, the parked aircraft blocking the taxiway at Tenerife required both of the 747s to taxi on the only runway in order to get in position for takeoff. The fog was so thick that neither aircraft could be seen from the other, and the controller in the tower could not see the runway or the two 747s on it. As the airport did not have ground radar, the controller could find where each airplane was only by voice reports over the radio.

As the accident occurred in Spanish territory, Spain was responsible for investigating the accident. The crash involved aircraft from the United States and the Netherlands, which both conducted investigations as well. The investigations revealed that the primary cause of the accident was the captain of the KLM flight taking off without clearance from air traffic control (ATC). The investigation specified that the captain did not intentionally take off without clearance; rather he fully believed he had clearance to take off due to misunderstandings between his flight crew and ATC. Dutch investigators placed a greater emphasis on this than their American and Spanish counterparts, but ultimately KLM admitted their crew was responsible for the accident, and the airline financially compensated the victims' relatives.

God Sees Everything – He Knows How to Guide Us

So one pilot, decides to takeoff even though he can't see what is ahead of him, is that not a picture of us so often, just taking off and doing our own thing? We can question why God says what he says, we can think His ways are old and obsolete, but God has a height advantage on us! And He sees everything, he knows all things, he created us and all man, so he knows what works and what doesn't, He knows and he gives us these 31,102 to lead us through the fog, and to prevent us from disaster.

Psalm 119:105 (NKJV) ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

The Levite Refuses to Stay in Jerusalem (8-12)

Judges 19:8 Then he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart, but the young woman's father said, "Please refresh your heart." So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate.

Judges 19:9 And when the man stood to depart—he and his concubine and his servant—his father-in-law, the young woman's father, said to him, "Look, the day is now drawing toward evening; please spend the night. See, the day is coming to an end; lodge here, that your heart may be merry. Tomorrow go your way early, so that you may get home."

Judges 19:10 However, the man was not willing to spend that night; so he rose and departed, and came opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). With him were the two saddled donkeys; his concubine was also with him.

Judges 19:11 They were near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said to his master, "Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it."

Judges 19:12 But his master said to him, "We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who are not of the children of Israel; we will go on to Gibeah."

The Servant – Our Helper

Verse 11, it says that he has a servant with him. I don't want to over-spiritualize things, I stay away from that. However, something that you will see through the scriptures is an "unnamed servant" as a type/picture of the Holy Spirit in the scriptures. We see some examples of that with Abraham sending his servant to find a wife for Isaac. We see a picture of it in Jonathan going to war against the Philistines, his armor bearer going with him as a picture of the Holy Spirit that is with us. I believe we have this picture here of a Holy Spirit that is with this Levitical priest, this Levite (interestingly the perverted men don't ask for the servant, but only the man). He's giving counsel, but the Levite is not hearing, he's not listening. If he would've listened to the servant, they wouldn't have entered into this town.

Christian, we need the Holy Spirit, and we need to have ears to hear. We need to be sensitive to what he says. Therefore, we need to be tuned in to have ears to hear. As you read through the book of Revelation, you'll see the letter to the seven churches. They all have warnings, except one. Then all those warnings it will end with "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit of God says". We need to have these ears that are sensitive to the Holy Spirit that speaks to us.

Verse 11, the servant speaks to the Levite, but he doesn't hear. There's a danger for us, that our preconceived idea how things should be and how things are. If it's anything contrary to that we don't even stop to think and hear and think that we need to hear, because in our natural ability or our intelligence we feel this is a no-brainer, this is what we do. We need to stop in all the situations and have ears to hear what the Spirit might say to us. We won't read in this chapter anyone stopping to pray, anyone asking the Lord. We won't read anybody waiting upon the Lord, hence is the disaster of this chapter, one of the worst in the whole scriptures.

John 14:26 (NKJV) ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

John 16:13 (NKJV) ¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Genesis 24:1–4 (NKJV) ¹ Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. ² So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, ³ and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; ⁴ but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

1 Samuel 14:6–7 (NKJV) ⁶ Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few." ⁷ So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart."

1 Samuel 14:12–14 (NKJV) ¹² Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something." Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel." ¹³ And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them. ¹⁴ That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land.

Revelation 3:22 (NKJV) ²² "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' ' "

If Only Would have Listened to Servant

Maybe to the Levite not going into a non-Jewish city made perfect sense. We can say to the servant, "I'm in charge here," and think that we have no need of hearing. If only this Levite would have listened to the servant, the whole story might have changed.

Proverbs 16:25 (NKJV) ²⁵ There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

The Levite is Taken-In by an Old Man in Gibeah (13-21)

Judges 19:13 So he said to his servant, "Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah."

Judges 19:14 And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin.

Judges 19:15 They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city, for no one would take them into his house to spend the night.

Judges 19:16 Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening, who also was from the mountains of Ephraim; he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place were Benjamites.

Judges 19:17 And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?"

Judges 19:18 So he said to him, "We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I am from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; now I am going to the house of the LORD. But there is no one who will take me into his house,

Judges 19:19 although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your female servant, and for the young man who is with your servant; there is no lack of anything."

Judges 19:20 And the old man said, "Peace be with you! However, let all your needs be my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square."

Judges 19:21 So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

Town Square

In those days there were no Hilton's or Marriott's. Most towns had a public square, so a traveler would stop there. When they came to town they would hang out at the public square. The expectation was somebody would offer hospitality, and that's how you would be brought into someone's house. Being in the public square was your statement, "Can I stay at your house?". This hospitality that we see here, we see the same hospitality in Genesis 19, and the story of Sodom and Gomorrah as Lot offers his daughters. This cultural condition is a longstanding cultural thing there in the Middle East. In fact, even still today hospitality is huge in that area of receiving people.

Opportunity to Share News

Gift hospitality gave opportunity to hear what is happening elsewhere. There was no television, no internet, no newspaper, so one of the main ways to hearing what was going on elsewhere was meeting strangers. Also, it was a great way to make partnerships as you would exchange specialties. Oh you are good at basket weaving, and I am good at woodworking, I will trade you a bowl for a basket. Our modern digital age has surely reduced our need for interaction with other people.

I Remember Hospitality Shown towards Me

I am reminded of a time when I was unemployed for 2 years, and I was young and single. After church every Sunday people were going out to eat and they would invite me, and I would say oh I can't make it but thanks for the invite. I wasn't going to say I don't have money, that would put people in an uncomfortable position. Partly it was because of money, the other was it was hard to hear about everyone's great life and dreams, and I felt all my dreams were dead, and to make some spending money I was cleaning out garbage shots in condominiums, not the most fascinating lunch conversation. So every Sunday I would hang out at church until they turned the lights out and asked me to leave (teach first service Children's Church, and then attend second, or vice-versa), and then go home and be alone. But oh I remember one family inviting me over for dinner. They took me for a boat ride in their modest boat, as they were a modest family themselves. Then we picked oranges in their back yard and I took home a whole bag of juicy fruit. Then they made me a simple, modest meal, but still to this day possible the best meal I have ever eaten. I can remember we stopped the boat in the river and got in the water and waded through water that was ankle high, just talking and walking. And Marty asking me, so how is it going Ray, to which I said well it has been kind of tough to be honest. I need a job. To which he said to his 10 year old daughter, Hannah lets pray for Ray right now, and so they did. They made me dinner that night, but they fed e a buffet to my soul. Oh the gift of hospitality.

Let hospitality be in this Church

And start your hospitality here in the church has agreed to strangers to come in you welcome them and in [*Hebrews 13:1-3 \(NKJV\)*](#) ¹ *Let brotherly love continue.* ² *Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.* ³ *Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.*

The Levite's Concubine is Given over to Perverted Men (22-25)

Judges 19:22 As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house and beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him carnally!"

Judges 19:23 But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act so wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage.

Judges 19:24 Look, here is my virgin daughter and the man's concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!"

Judges 19:25 But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought her out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.

Grammar

Verse 22, the grammar here is that they beat, and then they beat harder, and then they beat harder and harder until they are pounding fervently and feverishly to get into this house to get at that man.

Verse 22, Genesis 19 is shocking. It's the picture that people always go to, the shock of Sodom and Gomorrah. Here's what's as shocking, and gets overlooked so many times, is that these men are reflecting the exact same behavior that was demonstrated in Genesis 19 at Sodom and Gomorrah. The biggest difference is these people are Benjamites, these people are one of 12 tribe of God, and this land here is the promised land. It's the chosen land for the nation Israel by his own people.

Homosexuality Rises when Marriage Declines / Look at History

When marriage and the integrity of it declines, so does will a society, and homosexuality will always be on the rise look at every nation as they cycle through the sanctity of marriage or lack thereof and watch how it either rises or falls based on their view of marriage. This isn't an attack on homosexuality, but take away the picture of God's intent, twist it from it's original design, and soon every man will be doing what is right in their own sight. Notice, they think they are doing right, they think their way (everyone in this story) thinks they are doing right, not wrong. Reason is they have removed the absolute truth of God's Word, so now there is no absolute truth, only their own truth (that they have fashioned in their own mind – not based on God's Word).

Sons of Belial

Verse 22. The perverted men literally, in the original language, says, "The sons Belial," and that became a name and is a name for Satan himself in 2nd Corinthians chapter 6, verse 15. "The perverted and wicked men."

2 Corinthians 6:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

Judges 19:22 (KJV 1900) ²² Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him.

Cultural Pressures

Verses 23, 24, he says take my daughter because if you take this man that would bring me shame in this culture. In that culture it was the person who was hosting, the person who was giving the hospitality, they were to take full responsibility of the person's need, from food to safety. Here this man is saying, don't do this, that will bring me shame in my culture. According to the culture I am solely responsible for this guest that I have. Of course we are shocked and appalled that someone would think so lowly of their child, that for the sake of shame in the culture that they would offer their daughter to these ruthless men.

Let me ask the question, I know that no one here would ever sacrifice their daughter in such a way to remain culturally sensitive and to keep from the shame, but I want you to consider that the culture influences you more than you realize, mom and dad. This culture is pressuring you to yield to the manner that you daughter may be dressing. You may feel uneasy about the dress that she's wearing and the manner of it, but in order to not cause conflict or tension or have contention in the home you yield yourself and you let her wear things that you know are not modest in according with God's word that he speaks to the young ladies.

Mom and dad, we have to be on guard and be aware. There's a whole purpose behind the manner of dress in our culture today, and it is to be revealing, it is to be looked at. It is meant to catch eyes and to be attractive. That even goes for the competition of girl to girl wanting to be more attractive than the other. That's how the world and our culture promotes this, and it's even amplified so much so by the Madison Avenue and Hollywood that's leading the charge.

There's a problem behind this in that that cultural decline also then declines the standard of purity. That standard of purity and worth gets lowered, and so does abstinence. There's continual progression downward every inch that the dress gets shorter and the top neckline drops. Be careful, because you may be more influenced by the culture than you realize.

Let us not be surprised how Satan masterfully uses this dress and the revealing of it as he reverse engineers it, if you would, in that now the middle aged women are feeling the pressure to stay young and attractive all against the laws of aging. The battle is on and it's a continual pressure. Hence it spills over, not just from the youth but into all women of all ages.

Regarding the culture sensitivity to the manner of dress, we know that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and you know, that's what happens on Madison Avenue and that's what is happening in Hollywood. It's all about lights and shadows, and it can make anything look perfect, remove any flaws, and it is so far from the truth, and so, women, what you see on those magazine covers, you young girls, what you see in the movies, that's not real life. They Photoshop them. They angle light to remove flaws, and may you just know, your father in heaven

thinks you're beautiful, and you wait for the man of God that he will send you, and he will say he thinks you're beautiful and perfect.

The Levite's Concubine Dies (26-28)

Judges 19:26 Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, till it was light.

Judges 19:27 When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen at the door of the house with her hands on the threshold.

Judges 19:28 And he said to her, "Get up and let us be going." But there was no answer. So the man lifted her onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place.

Levites loves the Flesh

Verse 25. This Levite, we see he loves the things of the flesh and the personal satisfaction and pleasure.

- He eats at the father's house for 5 days, he's having a good time with the father in law.
- Then we see in verse 22 he's having a good time in this guy's house here in Gilbeah.
- Then we see he sleeps without a care in the world and yet here he says he's on his way to the house of God. That's where he works.

No Different Heart than Levite of Last Chapter

Truly, amazingly, this Levite is hardly any different from the Levite we studied in our last chapter. That Levite was a hireling, and he went to the highest bidder, and did not have the Word as his foundation, his absolute truth, and thus was fine leading people to false idols and false worship in order to make them happy, and himself, regardless if it meant the innocent slaughter of 100's of innocent people there in Laish. Well here is this Levite in our story today and he works, he so-call "serves" at the House of God, the Tabernacle in Shiloh, but we see his heart is as cold and callous as the Levite in the prayer story.

I am on Way to House of Lord / Be careful Religious Routine Doesn't Desensitize you

Back in verse 18, notice he says "I was on my way to the house of God". That's what I do, I'm a Levite. Here this man is, he's on his way to go back and do his religious activity, but look at the heart of him. He doesn't care about this concubine; he literally steps over her. Look at the carelessness and cold, callousness of his heart is that he can sleep while she is being abused by these men.

Judges 19:18 So he said to him, "We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I am from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; now I am going to the house of the LORD. But there is no one who will take me into his house,

Hey, be careful that religious activities can somehow desensitize us to sensitive things, that we think as we continue on in the religious activities that we are right on target because we keep doing these religious activities, such as going to church and bible study and reading our devotions or whatever it may be, going to the feeding ministry or even sharing Christ, yet all the while in our heart there's this desensitized place that we don't even look and realize things that have gone so cold and callous in our hearts. Hence is the danger of religious activities that are separated from the very heart of God.

That's what he does, and we can see religious activity never pierced his heart. People make this chapter about the appall of homosexuality; but look at the appalling condition of this man's heart who is a man who serves at the Tabernacle.

1 Corinthians 13 – Give Honest Assessment

We can go through religious activities, thinking all is well because we do so, all the while our heart is never changed. Can that be you, can that be me? How can I tell if my heart is cold, my heart is just in routine mode, it is easy, 1 Corinthians 13, I simply read it (should be regularly) and ask god an honest question for an honest assessment, how is my heart in accordance to these things that You call love?

1 Corinthians 13:1–13 (NKJV) ¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. ⁴ Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵

does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. ¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

The Levite Cuts his Concubine into Pieces (29-30)

Judges 19:29 When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.

Judges 19:30 And so it was that all who saw it said, “No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it, confer, and speak up!”

Civil War / Satan Loves to Divide

The Civil War cost 65,000 lives out of this one action. Satan loves to divide the body (no pun intended).

Appalling

What an absolutely appalling chapter in the Bible; possible the worse of all 1,189 chapters, 30 of the most miserable of the 31,102 verses of this Bible.

Let me Tell you Another Love Story

But let me close with another story about a husband and a wife, a true love story, but it's beginning may shock you.

Picture God's Love for Israel – Ultimately His Love for His Bride

The illustration is a picture of God's love for Israel, and ultimately God's love for His Church (His Bride).

Romans 9:23–26 (NKJV) ²³ and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴ even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? ²⁵ As He says also in Hosea: “I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved.” ²⁶ “And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ There they shall be called sons of the living God.”

1 Peter 2:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

The Story

The story can be found in the Book of Hosea.

- Chapter 1 – the prophet Hosea is told by the Lord to take a harlot as a wife (her name is Gomer). He gives her a home, he loves her, they have child together, but she is not content, and the second and third child is questionable if they are Hosea's (for the last two does not say “born to him” as the first one says).
- Chapter 2 – serves as illustration that his wife gives herself away unrestrained to many men.
- Chapter 3 – she leaves Hosea, and ends up on the slave traders block for sale. The slave trading block was a terrible and humiliating place; a woman who be put up there naked and totally exposed so the buyer could see what he was getting. So worn out by sin was she that she could not fetch the usual price for a slave, which was 30 pieces of silver. Hosea takes the chains off of her, restores her as wife, brings her back home, loves her, and she loves him back this time – for good and all time is the picture given.

Hosea 1:2 (NKJV) ² When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: “Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry And children of harlotry, For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the LORD.”

Hosea 3:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Then the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.” ² So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley. ³ And I said to her, “You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man—so, too, will I be toward you.”

Again - Picture God's Love for Israel – Ultimately His Love for His Bride

The illustration is a picture of God's love for Israel, and ultimately God's love for His Church (His Bride).

Romans 9:23–26 (NKJV) ²³ and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴ even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? ²⁵ As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved." ²⁶ "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God."

1 Peter 2:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Gomer is Picture of Us

So we can see in Gomer a picture of us. Created by God for a lifetime of love and fellowship with Him. But we are not content and we go and chase after the things of the world as lovers. The world leaves us empty, even ravished by sin, chained and bound as a slave. We have all sinned and chased after things other than God (Romans 3:23), sin became a cruel taskmaster (Romans 6:23). But God, who so loved us, came to buy us off the slave block. The price wasn't 15 pieces of silver but His own Son (John 3:16).

Romans 3:23 (NKJV) ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 (NKJV) ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

It is a Marriage Proposal from God to You

It is a marriage proposal, and invitation to never-ending love of God to you. Like Hosea to Gomer, is the picture of Jesus to you. Jesus extends a nail-scarred hand to you today, saying will you marry Me? I take you, I want you, I know all of your past, but I love you and I want you to be My bride. I will clothe you in pure white, as I will wash your sin away by My finished work upon the cross. I did for you what you couldn't do for yourself, I bought you off the slave block and cleansed you of your sin. And I want to take you to My Father's house, as My bride, and love and cherish you forever, for there is no death-do-us-part as we will live forever in heaven.

Your Response / Your Vow

Just as any marriage proposal, it is a choice that you get to choose. Romans 10:9-10, are your marriage vows back to Him.

- Confess (means to agree with), and you agree you needed a Savior to save you from your sin
- Believe – that Jesus raised from the dead, that He took your sin to the grave and left it there when he rose from the dead, and there is nothing you can do to earn it, but simply receive it.
- Follow Him – Everyone Jesus called in the Bible, he said to follow Me. Turn from your life and the way you were going and doing right in your own sight, but following after Him (that is what repentance means – to turn and follow). Married couples walk together.

Romans 10:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

Your Vow

Again Romans 10:9-10, there is a decision to be made, and that decision is made in the heart, and spoken by the mouth. You say Jesus I believe You died for my sin, you traded places with me, you took my punishment for sin, and there was nothing I could do to wash myself of my sin, but I believe You died for me. I accept your marriage proposal to be your bride, and I commit my life to you, to turn and follow You, and to walk with you as a Husband and a wife.

No Wedding/Marriage Ever Hidden

If you prayed that prayer, made that vow to Him today, no marriage is ever hidden. Come up and talk to one of our counselors and have them share in the joy of your marriage this day.

Closing Request of God

Lord help me:

- Reflect Marriage as You Intended
- Trust Your Word – You see through the Fog
- To know and hear the Holy Spirit (the Helper/Servant You send to Me)
- Let me exercise gift Hospitality
- Speak to Me about the Culture My Children Live In
- Lord, let's have an Honest Assessment of my Heart & Love

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Chapter 20

Overview Chapter 19

Well last chapter we read one of the craziest stories in all the bible. A man (he was a Levite) was traveling with his concubine (that is a wife who was not given full and equal status as a "main" wife), they were traveling together as the Levite must go get her as she was playing the harlot for four months, but now is ready to return home. They stop at a city (Gibeah) that was in part of the Children of Benjamin (one of the 12 tribes of Israel), and while staying at a man's home, a group of men from the city surround the house and demand the man be given to them so they can have sex with him. The Levite instead throws his concubine out to the men, who abuse her all night, which results in her death. The Levite then cuts her into pieces, and mails her to the other 12 tribes of Israel, and that rolls us into the craziness of chapter 20, as the madness continues in chapter 20, and keeps on going into and through the end of chapter 21.

Time Stamp

In the time of these events is approximately 50 years since coming into the Promised Land as we will see the priest at the Tabernacle in our chapter today is none other than Aaron's grandson. So how quickly the nation declined. These events are only about 20-30 years after the victory and conquest of the Promise land under General Joshua.

Background

But we were told why things were madness and chaos, because we were told back in chapter 17, every man was doing what was right in their own sight, everyone made up their own truths, their own lines, their own morals, and thus we see what we see.

[Judges 17:6 \(NKJV\)](#) ⁶ In those days *there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*

Outline of Events

- The Tribes Gather in Reaction to the News (20:1-2)
- The Levite Retells the Events at Gibeah (20:3-6)
- The Tribes make a Vow of Vengeance upon Gibeah (20:7-11)
- The Benjamites Respond with Defiance (20:12-17)
- Battle #1 – 22,000 Men of Israel Killed (20:18-21)
- Battle #2 – 18,000 Men of Israel Killed (20:22-25)
- Men of Israel Cry out to God at House of God (20:26-28)
- Battle #3- Israel Ambushes Tribe of Benjamin (20:29-48)
- The Realization a Whole Tribe has been Slaughtered (21:1-3)
- 400 Virgins Kidnapped at the Slaughter of Jabesh Gilead (21:4-13)
- 200 Virgins Kidnapped at Feast there in Shiloh (21:14-23)
- The Madness Ends – and All Return Home (21:24-25)

The Tribes Gather in Reaction to the News (20:1-2)

Judges 20:1 So all the children of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered together as one man before the LORD at Mizpah.

Judges 20:2 And the leaders of all the people, all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand foot soldiers who drew the sword.

From Dan to Beersheba

Verse 1. From Dan to Beersheba became the saying of the day because that was what they now considered the boundary from the furthest north to the southern most part which would be Beersheba. You know, nobody's saying, "Hey, that is not your land. That's truly not the boundary line. Why are you up there? You should be down here in Judah (see Map)," because everybody had their own line, not God's line that he had drawn for them and determined for them. People went and started to change the line. And that will be seen through this whole passage today, everybody is drawing their own lines, based on their own personal position, not God's

The Levite Retells the Events at Gibeah (20:3-6)

Judges 20:3 (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the children of Israel said, "Tell us, how did this wicked deed happen?"

Judges 20:4 So the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, "My concubine and I went into Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin, to spend the night.

Judges 20:5 And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and surrounded the house at night because of me. They intended to kill me, but instead they ravished my concubine so that she died.

Judges 20:6 So I took hold of my concubine, cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of the inheritance of Israel, because they committed lewdness and outrage in Israel.

Levite thinks He is Victim

Verse 6. The Levite has no conscious that he did anything wrong by pushing her out the door to these twisted and perverted men. He feels they crossed the line by ravishing his concubines, but he doesn't feel anything was wrong with him throwing her out to these perverted men to start with.

The Tribes make a Vow of Vengeance upon Gibeah (20:7-11)

Judges 20:7 Look! All of you are children of Israel; give your advice and counsel here and now!"

Judges 20:8 So all the people arose as one man, saying, "None of us will go to his tent, nor will any turn back to his house;

Judges 20:9 but now this is the thing which we will do to Gibeah: We will go up against it by lot.

Judges 20:10 We will take ten men out of every hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, a hundred out of every thousand, and a thousand out of every ten thousand, to make provisions for the people, that when they come to Gibeah in Benjamin, they may repay all the vileness that they have done in Israel."

Judges 20:11 So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united together as one man.

Everyone has a Line

20 verse 11: Everyone has a line, but not everybody's line is an alignment with God's, which is based on his word. If you ask anyone, you'll find they have a line somewhere. Some people will say anything goes and you ask them how about rape and they'll say "No, that doesn't go." They say anything goes and you say "How about stealing, and especially from stealing from you, breaking into your house?" You'll find no, they don't find that that's acceptable.

I say to them, "Do you have a line? Of course you do, it's just not the same line as mine." Some will say "My line is where people aren't willing participants." That's where I think there should be a line to which I say "I admire your heart to protect the weak and innocent, that's the heart of God," but babies in the womb are weak and innocent, but man has decided that that doesn't count. That's a different line.

Your line determines, also, who is the weak and the innocent. Your line is at individual level, but God's line is not just an individual level, but the society. God's law protects a whole society. If the whole society is protected, then so too is the individual.

God Gives Word to Protect & Provide

God is at the 31,102-foot level (that's how many verses are in the Bible). He sees everything. He knows everything. He created man. Therefore, he knows man. He knows men and that's you personally. God's word is never meant to be burdensome, but his word is always for two purposes, to protect and to provide. He wants to protect man from harm and he knows what harms man. He also wants to provide for man so that not only are they kept from something that can harm them, but they are taken into something that can bless them. God's word is perfect. He says His ways are higher than ours, and he promises a blessing to all who obey it, by saying it shall not return void (Isaiah 55:11).

Isaiah 55:8-9 (NKJV) ⁸ "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. ⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Everyone has a Line – Even Unbelievers

So everyone has a line, even those who don't believe in God, they have their own line. They call you legalistic because your line is higher than there, but if you engage them in conversation you will see they have a line themselves, and they actually feel pretty good and knoble about their line, but for their personal sin, they have to reject your line, which is God's line, because it convicts them of their sin.

The Benjamites Respond with Defiance (20:12-17)

Judges 20:12 Then the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What is this wickedness that has occurred among you?

Judges 20:13 Now therefore, deliver up the men, the perverted men who are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and remove the evil from Israel!" But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel.

Judges 20:14 Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go to battle against the children of Israel.

Judges 20:15 And from their cities at that time the children of Benjamin numbered twenty-six thousand men who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who numbered seven hundred select men.

Judges 20:16 Among all this people were seven hundred select men who were left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair's breadth and not miss.

Judges 20:17 Now besides Benjamin, the men of Israel numbered four hundred thousand men who drew the sword; all of these were men of war.

Nobody Seeking Lord

Verse 12, there is no seeking of God's counsel at this point. They chose war and they lay a challenge for war to the Benjamites.

Show Up with Swords – Expect a Fight

20 verse 14, they showed up, sleeves rolled up, swords drawn, cutoff sleeves (haha) all flexed up for a fight. You show up dressed for a fight, you show up with a tone of a fight, you're can be confident there's going to be a fight. If you confront with aggression, expect the other to become defensive. This applies in your marriage too by the way.

Proverbs 15:1-2 (NKJV) ¹ A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. ² The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.

If Only 1 Person Would have Stopped the Madness

If only someone would have stopped the madness, just one person, anywhere along the way, how this thing could have changed and would have changed.

Sharpshooters – Why Not Attack Enemy

Verse 16. With that kind of sharpshooting skills, why not drive out the squatters of the land such as the Amorites and the Canaanites. They had all the skill but they wouldn't use it to go fight the real enemy. You know we can be like that, sharpshooting with the Word of God but use it against a brother not the enemy. Not drive out the enemy in prayer, citing and claiming the Word of God instead of taking the Word of God and using it as a sword to cut off a brother or a sister.

400K – Why Not Attack Enemy

Verse 17 repeats again verse 2 making a clear statement. Hey, did I tell you? They came with 400,000 men who drew the sword. They will come to fight their brother but they won't unite as one to fight the enemy such as the Amorites and the Canaanites and drive them out of the land and take their inheritance as God had given to them instead of running and moving to where there was comfort and ease.

Why would they Defend the Guilty/Wrong

Verse 17. The 400,000 men will come and defend the wrong and the wicked, this Levite, this coward of a man. How could you come to defend somebody who did such a thing? What could you justify on why you would defend

him and this action? 26,700 men of Benjamin come out to defend the perverted men of Gibeah who were living unrestrained lifestyles of homosexuality and rape. What could defend such actions, why would they align themselves and protect these men?

Romans 1 – They are Now As Guilty

These 400,000 and 26,700, they become as guilty as the Levite because they now are defending him for his actions of the way he treated his concubine, his wife, and not willing to defend her and push her out and to be ravished by these men. These 400,000/26,700 now come to defend him and that now makes them as guilty as him because they're not judging or laying down discipline upon him. In Romans chapter 1 we are told that those who watch on as such things are as guilty as participating in them. This applies to every person personally. We can say, "Well, I don't do those things." If you're watching them on television, if you're watching things that are tasteless and immoral on the Internet or reading the romance books, whatever it may be, then you're as guilty as those who are participating because Romans 1 convicts you.

Romans 1:28–32 (NKJV) ²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, ³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Battle #1 – 22,000 Men of Israel Killed (20:18-21)

Judges 20:18 Then the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God to inquire of God. They said, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?" The LORD said, "Judah first!"

Judges 20:19 So the children of Israel rose in the morning and encamped against Gibeah.

Judges 20:20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin, and the men of Israel put themselves in battle array to fight against them at Gibeah.

Judges 20:21 Then the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah, and on that day cut down to the ground twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites.

Bless Our Plan

Verse 18. They basically say, "Bless our plan, Lord." They don't come and say what do you want us to do? They just say, "Here's what we're going to do. Would you come and bless our plan?" We can be like that, Lord this new job opportunity is surely from you so please tell me should I move there and rent a house or just buy one. Lord he asked me to the prom, should I wear a red dress or blue dress. Opps sorry for being short Lord, I should have also asked if I should wear my hair up or down? (James 4:2-6 you ask amiss). The Lord's prayer (as it is called),"Let Your Will be Done". We need to ask in all our prayers, what is Your will in this matter. I will not move until you tell me what Your will is on the matter. Good advice..... when in doubt, DON'T!

James 4:2–6 (NKJV) ² You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. ⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? ⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

Matthew 6:9–13 (NKJV) ⁹ In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. ¹³ And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

If Plan on Being Hand of God – You Better be Sure (May End up Bloodied)

20 verse 21: 22,000 are killed, and let it just be known, they think they're the good guys and they're doing the right thing, and they're bringing discipline as needed, and if you plan on being God's hand, an instrument on judgment on another brother and sister, you better be sure that God's called you to do that because you might find yourself bloodied and beaten up. You better

1. first be sure that God called you to do it.
2. Second, when you do it, you need to do it in the heart and manner of God's word as he would desire it.

Battle #2 – 18,000 Men of Israel Killed (20:22-25)

Judges 20:22 And the people, that is, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line at the place where they had put themselves in array on the first day.

Judges 20:23 Then the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, "Shall I again draw near for battle against the children of my brother Benjamin?" And the LORD said, "Go up against him."

Judges 20:24 So the children of Israel approached the children of Benjamin on the second day.

Judges 20:25 And Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah on the second day, and cut down to the ground eighteen thousand more of the children of Israel; all these drew the sword.

Gibeah Easy to Defend

You'd think 400,000 battle ready troops would overwhelm 26,700 Benjamites – but a couple of factors even out the battle.

- Gibeah was a remote, mountainous city that was easily defensible.
- And the Benjamites had 700 left-handed, sling-shot, sharpshooters. As the Israelites climbed the hilly terrain the snipers could pick them off one at a time.

Better Be Sure – You're Called to Be Hand of Justice

20 verse 25: 18,000 killed and they think they're the good guys. Be careful about being God's instrument of judgment. You better make sure that you are. God says, Vengeance is Mine!

Romans 12:18–21 (NKJV) ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Men of Israel Cry out to God at House of God (20:26-28)

Judges 20:26 Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

Judges 20:27 So the children of Israel inquired of the LORD (the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days,

Judges 20:28 and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days), saying, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?" And the LORD said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand."

Book of Judges – Written Long After Event

Verse 27, reference to the ark being taken by the Philistines. The book of Judges is written after this history so it's years later that as people would have their oral history of re-telling all the stories that took place as they would be passed down and finally somebody went and got a pen and wrote this all down. All the details that we read are literally tens if not twenty or thirty years after all the details of the book of Judges which was 350 years. This was guessed that it was probably written by the last judge, Samuel.

Praying in a Jam

Here they are, praying in a jam. Sometimes that's the only thing. We won't pray until we get in a jam.

God Wanted to Judge Gibeah

20 verse 28: God says, I will give you the victory. We clearly see God does want to discipline the Benjamites for their actions. Specifically, it would be those Benjamites who live in the town of Gibeah who participated and those who ignored and did not lay down God's word, that what they were doing was wrong.

Judges 20:35 The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel. And the children of Israel destroyed that day twenty-five thousand one hundred Benjamites; all these drew the sword.

Get to Communion Table before Correcting

But let me say this, when you want to judge, be the hand of judgment of God, before you do that, get to the communion table and take the cup and the broken body, to be reminded that they needed the blood of Jesus as much as you did.

AND – Get to Worship

And when you find yourself in a rush of madness, and things seemingly are just spinning more and more out of control – get yourself up on the mount for a time of worship. Worship lifts you out of this world and this moment, into the heaven, and into His presence.

Battle #3- Israel Ambushes Tribe of Benjamin (20:29-48)

Judges 20:29 Then Israel set men in ambush all around Gibeah.

Judges 20:30 And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in battle array against Gibeah as at the other times.

Judges 20:31 So the children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city. They began to strike down and kill some of the people, as at the other times, in the highways (one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah) and in the field, about thirty men of Israel.

Judges 20:32 And the children of Benjamin said, “They are defeated before us, as at first.” But the children of Israel said, “Let us flee and draw them away from the city to the highways.”

Judges 20:33 So all the men of Israel rose from their place and put themselves in battle array at Baal Tamar. Then Israel’s men in ambush burst forth from their position in the plain of Geba.

Judges 20:34 And ten thousand select men from all Israel came against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce. But the Benjamites did not know that disaster was upon them.

Judges 20:35 The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel. And the children of Israel destroyed that day twenty-five thousand one hundred Benjamites; all these drew the sword.

Judges 20:36 So the children of Benjamin saw that they were defeated. The men of Israel had given ground to the Benjamites, because they relied on the men in ambush whom they had set against Gibeah.

Judges 20:37 And the men in ambush quickly rushed upon Gibeah; the men in ambush spread out and struck the whole city with the edge of the sword.

Judges 20:38 Now the appointed signal between the men of Israel and the men in ambush was that they would make a great cloud of smoke rise up from the city,

Judges 20:39 whereupon the men of Israel would turn in battle. Now Benjamin had begun to strike and kill about thirty of the men of Israel. For they said, “Surely they are defeated before us, as in the first battle.”

Judges 20:40 But when the cloud began to rise from the city in a column of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and there was the whole city going up in smoke to heaven.

Judges 20:41 And when the men of Israel turned back, the men of Benjamin panicked, for they saw that disaster had come upon them.

Judges 20:42 Therefore they turned their backs before the men of Israel in the direction of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them, and whoever came out of the cities they destroyed in their midst.

Judges 20:43 They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them, and easily trampled them down as far as the front of Gibeah toward the east.

Judges 20:44 And eighteen thousand men of Benjamin fell; all these were men of valor.

Judges 20:45 Then they turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon; and they cut down five thousand of them on the highways. Then they pursued them relentlessly up to Gidom, and killed two thousand of them.

Judges 20:46 So all who fell of Benjamin that day were twenty-five thousand men who drew the sword; all these were men of valor.

Judges 20:47 But six hundred men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and they stayed at the rock of Rimmon for four months.

Judges 20:48 And the men of Israel turned back against the children of Benjamin, and struck them down with the edge of the sword—from every city, men and beasts, all who were found. They also set fire to all the cities they came to.

Textual Criticism

Verse 47. Just some textual criticism. It says 26,700 men of war. Verse 35, 25,100 were killed. Verse 43 gives us detail that 18,000 were killed in Gibeah, 5,000 were killed on the highway going towards the wilderness to rock of Rimmon. Another 2,000 were killed on their way up to Gidom, and so the other 100, it's not a miscount, they were just killed in various places, not in those main places. So there are 600 men left alive, the question can be asked that still leaves 1,000 that were not accounted for and the answer to that is they were probably killed in battles one and two.

Imagine the Scene – All the Dead Bodies

The purpose of the telling is to describe the mass slaughter and to visualize all the dead bodies just strewn along the way, piled upon one another. What a horrific battle. What a horrific sight. It all just keeps giving us the details so that we can picture this. This chapter is more horrific than chapter 19 when you consider all the death and all the blood and all the gore that goes with it.

If Only 1 Person Would have Stopped the Madness

If only someone would have stopped the madness, just one person, anywhere along the way, how this thing could have changed and would have changed.

Every City – 200,000 Killed – One Event

20:48 - from every city, men and beasts, all who were found. They also set fire to all the cities they came to. Verse 48. From every city it says, "So they killed more than the people of Gibeah." Just doing some raw math for estimating purposes, the Benjamites had 26,000 men of war and so I'm just going to go with there were 26,000 men who were too old for war. Then there was 26,000 wives and then there was 26,000 older women beyond the childbearing age. Then if you just give two kids, which is a very low estimate for that day for each married family of the 26,000 men of war, that's an additional 52,000. Then you take the 40,000 that were killed by the 11 tribes of Israel, then take the inhabitants of Jabath Gilead who were killed, women and children and men and let's just estimate that out to 4,000. That equals 200,000 people killed, senselessly murdered all because of this one event in Gibeah. (I would say that the kids are killed because if the kids were still alive then there wouldn't have been the fear of the lineage and the re-population). They were so ruthless that they killed all the children too.

Over-reaching Revenge / Utterly Destroy

20:48 - from every city, men and beasts, all who were found. They also set fire to all the cities they came to. - The fight was against Gibeah but Israel, they took it all the way to the other cities. Totally overreaching where it all began. It was "give us these men." Instead, they do on to the next city and the next city, and the next city with death and destruction. They killed 18,000, the rest are on the run. They chased to destroy. That's how they were taught when they were fighting the Canaanites. They were to utterly destroy. That's the mindset that they have.

Christians can Fight like That / Revenge

That is how many Christians fight, sadly, against each other. To utterly destroy. Yes, there is a place for the correction that was needed of that one thing, but after that we see people, I'm going after their character, I'm going after their family, and it will be over when I have utterly destroy them. Who will stop the madness and who will calm the chaos. It is called revenge, and we want to believe we are not capable of it, but if we weren't, why would Jesus have taught on it. Jesus says for us to love our enemies.

Matthew 5:38–48 (NKJV) ³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. ⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. ⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Who Will Stop the Madness Today (Your Marriage – Family – Church)

Who will stop the madness and calm the chaos in their marriage today, and their family's situation, in their church family, in their friendships? See, what we see from the story here in verse 48 is it never ends with the initial. This is what I came for, but these people, they extended out like a ripple in the water. When the rock hits it, it just keeps going on and on and on. The only way you can stop the next ripple is by putting the rock down.

Only way to Stop Sin – is to Remove Sinners (Completely)

Why didn't God stop it? Because this madness is part of sin. If He was to stop sin, the only way he can stop sin is to remove sin, and the only way to remove sin, is to remove sinners, because that is the source of sin. That would mean a final judgment, that would mean that none are left. That's why God didn't step in. But one day God will, and thus until then we live in a period where man still has the opportunity to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. So how about today if you have not done so, because we have no idea when He will judge the world, and you have no idea when you will die and face Him and be asked, what did you do with His Son Jesus, did you receive Him as your Lord and Savior?

Revelation 6:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

2 Corinthians 6:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Chapter 21

The Realization a Whole Tribe has been Slaughtered (21:1-3)

Judges 21:1 Now the men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah, saying, "None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife."

Judges 21:2 Then the people came to the house of God, and remained there before God till evening. They lifted up their voices and wept bitterly,

Judges 21:3 and said, "O LORD God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel, that today there should be one tribe missing in Israel?"

God How Could You!

21 verse 3. They violate all of God's word and process and then in the end they say how could you allow this? So too that's so much like us. We disobey the Lord. We do our own thing. We don't heed his counsel. We don't heed his word. We just go about it, say, "Here's our plan. Here's what I'm going to do." Then things go south on us and they blow up on us and we find ourselves in a mess. Then we turn to God and say, "How did you allow this to happen? Where were you? I thought you loved me."

400 Virgins Kidnapped at the Slaughter of Jabesh Gilead (21:4-13)

Judges 21:4 So it was, on the next morning, that the people rose early and built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

Judges 21:5 The children of Israel said, "Who is there among all the tribes of Israel who did not come up with the assembly to the LORD?" For they had made a great oath concerning anyone who had not come up to the LORD at Mizpah, saying, "He shall surely be put to death."

Judges 21:6 And the children of Israel grieved for Benjamin their brother, and said, "One tribe is cut off from Israel today.

Judges 21:7 What shall we do for wives for those who remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them our daughters as wives?"

Wrong Altar – Man's Wisdom

21 verse 4: They're at a wrong altar. They should be at offering sacrifice. This is not the wisdom of the Lord, this is man's wisdom, and they're still doing things man's way and what they think is the right way.

God Doesn't need Our Help

21 verse 7: God doesn't need our help. God could have easily have brought the wives to restore the tribes. He did not need the help of these men to bring this to past or restore the tribe. People say, "Well, we have to live together because of money." To which I would say, "You think your God isn't big enough to solve your money problem?" People say, "Well, I have to cheat on my taxes and tell some lies because I need help financially." To which I would say, "You don't think your God is big enough to cover the money?" People will say, "Here's how we reach the millennials and they come up with all these schemes apart from the ways of the Lord." To which I would say, "How about if we just pray for them and reach out to them and love them. If Jesus isn't enough, nothing will be enough." We don't need to help God to reach people. We just need to stick true to His word.

Want Freedom – Cast Cares Upon Jesus

When you can't figure stuff out, when you're bound up on which way to go and you want freedom, just release and say "You know what, Lord, your yoke is easy, your burden is light. This is too much for me to figure out on my own. Would you give me the direction, would you lead me? I submit to you and I will wait on you to lead and guide me." You don't have to put the burden on you to figure things out or to make things happen. That's freedom, casting all our cares upon Jesus.

Matthew 11:28–30 (NKJV) ²⁸ Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

1 Peter 5:6–7 (NKJV) ⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Judges 21:8 And they said, "What one is there from the tribes of Israel who did not come up to Mizpah to the LORD?" And, in fact, no one had come to the camp from Jabesh Gilead to the assembly.

Judges 21:9 For when the people were counted, indeed, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead was there.

Judges 21:10 So the congregation sent out there twelve thousand of their most valiant men, and commanded them, saying, "Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword, including the women and children.

Judges 21:11 And this is the thing that you shall do: You shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman who has known a man intimately."

Judges 21:12 So they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known a man intimately; and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

Judges 21:13 Then the whole congregation sent word to the children of Benjamin who were at the rock of Rimmon, and announced peace to them.

Sacrificing Others – To Cover Mistake

21:8, they're sacrificing others to cover their own stake.

Keeping Vows?

21 verse 7: Does God want us to keep our vows, even the stupid ones? As we have said in the past, seek him. After you make a stupid vow, maybe in some heat of the moment, seek him and repent of making a stupid vow. Ask him honestly, do you want me to keep this vow? Is this what you would have for me, because I can tell you here in our story, he surely doesn't want this vow. He surely doesn't want them wiping out a whole city of innocent people just because of their stupid vow.

Bring to Church to Make Right

21 verse 12: They bring these girls to Shiloh now and now they've kidnapped the girls from whom they had killed their families, and then they bring them to Shiloh which would be the equivalent of bringing them to church and somehow think that this is going to make everything okay, because now I've done all these and I'm going to start going to church, and God, you're going to bless my plan even though I'm not doing anything that is in accordance to your will or you way.

Imagine if People Would Have Sought the Lord – Stopped the Madness

21 verse 10: Just imagine it, if the Levite would have treated his concubine his wife, like a gift from God. The Levite went out and fought for, or if he would have been a true Levite and trusted in the Lord, imagine the difference. Imagine if Israel, all 11 tribes, would have sought out the Lord first before they went to start this war, how things could have changed. What if the Benjamites would have sought the Lord first rather than harbor these man, and they would have dealt with the sin in their camp, imagine how this would have stopped and changed. What if the Israelites would have sought the Lord before they would have went and destroyed the town so they can get those 400 women as wives, just imagine what would have happened?

How About you – Will Stop the Madness Today

Imagine what would happen in your life if you'll just sit, slow down and stop, and seek the Lord rather than act and speak quickly because you feel something must be done. Your emotions can't be controlled or you feel that you're called to be the vindicator or the justifier, when you step in there and then it just starts going, and it starts something that you can't stop. How many things would be different had you done that? How many things, still today, have ramifications because you didn't stop, and you didn't stop the madness? How about today? What's going on in your life today? What's going on possibly tomorrow where you can say "enough, today I stopped this madness." You watch the blessing of life when you do.

200 Virgins Kidnapped at Feast there in Shiloh (21:14-23)

Judges 21:14 So Benjamin came back at that time, and they gave them the women whom they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh Gilead; and yet they had not found enough for them.

Judges 21:15 And the people grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a void in the tribes of Israel.

Judges 21:16 Then the elders of the congregation said, "What shall we do for wives for those who remain, since the women of Benjamin have been destroyed?"

Judges 21:17 And they said, "There must be an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, that a tribe may not be destroyed from Israel.

Judges 21:18 However, we cannot give them wives from our daughters, for the children of Israel have sworn an oath, saying, 'Cursed be the one who gives a wife to Benjamin.' "

Judges 21:19 Then they said, "In fact, there is a yearly feast of the LORD in Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah."

Judges 21:20 Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin, saying, "Go, lie in wait in the vineyards,

Judges 21:21 and watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh come out to perform their dances, then come out from the vineyards, and every man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh; then go to the land of Benjamin.

Judges 21:22 Then it shall be, when their fathers or their brothers come to us to complain, that we will say to them, 'Be kind to them for our sakes, because we did not take a wife for any of them in the war; for it is not as though you have given the women to them at this time, making yourselves guilty of your oath.' "

Judges 21:23 And the children of Benjamin did so; they took enough wives for their number from those who danced, whom they caught. Then they went and returned to their inheritance, and they rebuilt the cities and dwelt in them.

Still 200 Short

Verse 14. 600 men were left, 400 were provided wives through this raiding of the city so they're still 200 short.

Looking for a Loophole

21 verse 22: They're looking for a loophole. Hey, we didn't give them, they took them. Which is utterly ridiculous.

Benjamite Mingle.com

21 Verse 23. They surely didn't need to give God help because God can more than figure these things out. He can take care of these things. All they would have had to do is set up a benjamitemingle.com and they would have had all the single daughters who couldn't get a date logging on. They would have been eloping left and right.

Glad no Dating Sites when I dated

21 Verse 23. I'm glad they didn't have a dating site when I was dating because then Renee would have never married me. She would have had too many choices. I would not have had a chance.

Some Pickup Lines

For you young me I've got some advice from my friend, Adam, and he gave me the top 10 lines he used on his wife to get a date. They might work for you.

- Did it hurt when you fell from Heaven?
- Nice Bible, would you like to meet at Starbucks later and have a Bible study together?
- My friend told me to come and meet you, he said that you are a really nice person. I think you know him. Jesus, yeah, that's his name.
- Would you happen to know a Christian woman that I could love with all my heart and wait on hand and foot?
- The word says "Give drink to those who are thirsty, and feed the hungry." How about dinner?
- Do you believe in Divine appointment?
- Is it a sin that you stole my heart?
- Excuse me, I believe one of your ribs belongs to me.

Come to Christmas party and Grab a Girl

If they don't work, just come to our Christmas Party and grab a girl, throw her over your shoulder and run out the door because, hey, we see it's biblical. It says it right here. You can say you did it in accordance with the Bible.

The Madness Ends – and All Return Home (21:24-25)

Judges 21:24 So the children of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family; they went out from there, every man to his inheritance.

Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Life Will be Confused – When You Have No King

21 verse 25, life will be confused and chaotic when you have no king in your life, and when you are doing right in your own sight.

Still no King in Israel

21 verse 25: Today, there is no king in Israel because they have rejected Jesus Christ as king.

But the King is Coming – War No More

21 Verse 25. There is no king but a King is coming. In His day when He returns the lion will lay down with the lamb. Men will know war no more. Swords will be broken into plowshares and that day is coming. But you don't have to wait, you can live with Him today. You can prepare the way today for the King to come riding into your life and have a personal relationship with Him.

Isaiah 2:2-4 (NKJV) ² Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. ³ Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

Isaiah 11:6-8 (NKJV) ⁶ "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.

City Gates – Can Only Enter by Grace and Mercy

The world looks on and says look at the "people of God", look at how they fight each other, look at all their rules yet look how they themselves fail at them, yet they call themselves Christians?" What they miss, and can't see from the outside, is God's Grace! God will build a new Jerusalem in heaven, and it will have 12 gates, and each

gate will have a name over it, and one of those names will be Benjamin – because each gate represents “Mercy and Grace”, for that is the only way man can enter into God’s presence, by His mercy and grace.

Revelation 21:21 (NKJV) ²¹ *The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

Revelation 7:4–8 (NKJV) ⁴ *And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: ⁵ of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; ⁶ of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; ⁷ of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed; ⁸ of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.*

God is Merciful

What mercy of God we see as we read these last 5 chapters, the whole book for that matter. God is and does all that He says He would in exodus 34 when He spoke to Moses regarding His very heart and nature.

Exodus 34:5–7 (NKJV) ⁵ *Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. ⁶ And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, ⁷ keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”*

We Are His – Given His Name

I AM as an eternal name raises a delightful side thought. Ephesians 3: 14 reveals that his whole family in earth derives its name from him, thus our family name is I AM WHO I AM. Whatever last name or family name I had before must now have an addition that is stronger and more significant – I AM. I must understand that my name is now Ray Bollas I AM as a member of His family. You must add I AM to your last name if you are to understand our family relationship.

Exodus 3:13–15 (NKJV) ¹³ *Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” ¹⁴ And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” ¹⁵ Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.’”*

Ephesians 3:14–15 (NKJV) ¹⁴ *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

The Thoughts of God Towards You

A little math refresher: (hundreds, thousands, millions, billions, trillions, quadrillions, quintillions). It has been estimated that the number of grains of sand on earth (7,500,000,000,000,000,000) that is 7.5 quintillion. God says that is how many thoughts He has towards you (Psalm 139), and in Jeremiah he says His thoughts are of peace and not of evil for you (Jeremiah 29:11). So if you live to be 100 years old that is about 75 quadrillion thoughts per year.

Psalm 139:17–18 (NKJV) ¹⁷ *How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! ¹⁸ If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.*

Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

Not Afraid to Call You His

What a God of grace we have. He’s not afraid to call us Benjamites and all of Israel his people. He will claim them even with all of this insanity that we just read. All of this depravity. He’s not afraid to call you His own with all your sin and all your baggage He calls you His own.

Make a Manger for Him in Your Heart Today

As the Christmas season comes, there born in the manger was the Lord, stepped out of heaven and became flesh. But that manger he was born in is the picture of our heart filled with sin and filth and the things that get left in barns. But God takes those things and He turns them into royal thrones. He comes and He will take your heart and

He will clean it up and He will take residence. As the glory of the temple there in the holy of holies, it will now be in your heart (1 Corinthians 3:16).

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*

It's a Decision

Romans 10:9-10. It's the decision and then it's a profession with the mouth that you have decided to follow Jesus.

Romans 10:8-13 (NKJV) ⁸ But what does it say? *"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"* (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, *"Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."* ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For *"whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*

Come to Throne of Grace

So now come to the throne of grace and spend time with the Lord, ask Him take this word and work it into your life.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)* ¹⁶ *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Prayer Guide

- Reverence – What do we see about our Great God?
- Response – How do I respond to all that He is?
- Requests – What can I boldly request from Him based on this?
- Readiness – What do I need to be on-guard against when I leave here today?
- Reverence – How great is Our God?

End of Study

Maps



