

1

(Series Overview Slide and Message Title)

STOMPING

When I think of “stomping,” I think of what happens at a basketball game and everyone stomps their feet on the bleachers.

-- But I also think of little kids, and sometimes adults who act like toddlers, stomping their feet in anger, so frustrated that they did not get their way.

-- What often lies behind this latter stomping? Behind the anger? I believe it often is pride.

TR: Our study today, mostly in Judges 8, is a sad ending to the fantastic encouragement we had last week as we pondered how to squash fear with . . .



3

... Gideon, the mighty man of valor.

TR: We learned that fear is not quashed as much by OUR faith as it is by GOD'S ...



GRACE
FEAR

4

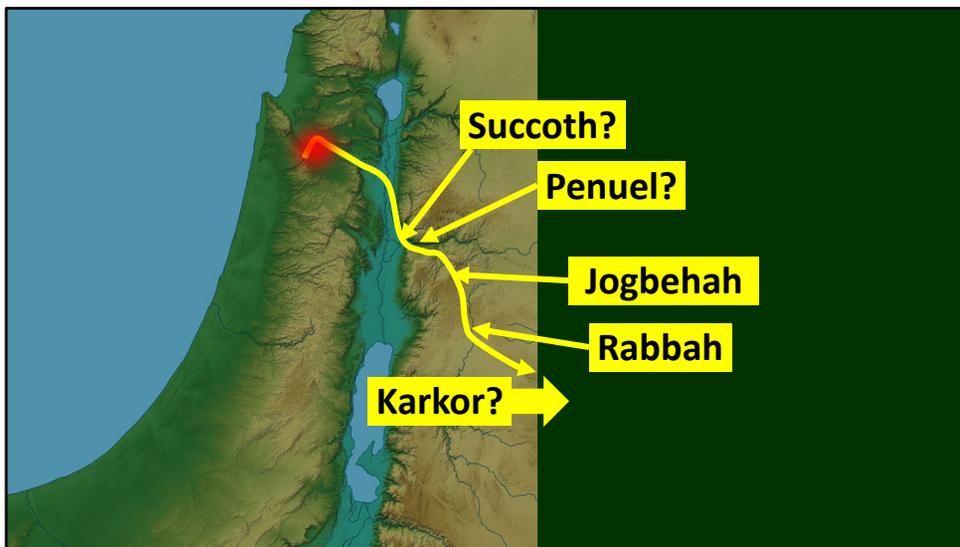
... grace.

-- We noted 6 instances of God's grace in chapters 6-7.

-- We saw how Gideon again and again worshiped the LORD in response to these gifts.

-- And we saw God give a mind-blowing victory of 300 against 135,000.

TR: Today we learn about what Paul Harvey used to say on his radio broadcast, "And now for the rest of the story."



5

The battle took place in the Valley of Jezreel. Other troops were called in.

- Many of the Midianites were headed off at the fords across the Jordan River.**
- Gideon and the elite 300 end up chasing the two principle leaders maybe 150 miles to their home territory, where they felt secure.**
- Gideon wins the war.**
- BUT something when very wrong on the journey.**

TR: Perhaps we can learn from this chapter a way to deal with the horror of . . .

**Are we losing
the grace of God's blessing
on the journey of life?**

6

- . . . losing the grace of the blessing of God on the journey of life.**
- Grace upon grace had led Gideon to worship and conquer fear to secure deliverance for the people of Israel. By the end of chapter 8 we see Gideon setting up something that would be a snare to the people.**
 - In Judges 2 there was the warning about the unconquered peoples, whose gods would become a SNARE. Here Gideon sets the SNARE himself.**
 - Chapter 2 also warned about how the people would "play the harlot" or "whore" after other gods. Gideon sets up such adultery.**
- TR: So, what went wrong? I think the key password that unlocks this question is a principle repeated in the Bible . . .**

James 4:6b, 1 Peter 5:5c

**“God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble.”**

ESV

7

READ SLIDE

- As we read the account, we must remember that the compiler made decisions as to what to include.**
- His purpose was not just “unedited history” but theological insight into why the time of Judges spiraled through the horrid cycles, ever downward as everyone did what was right in their own eyes.**

TR: As I read the passage, I heard STOMPING. Not the good kind. I heard at least 5 times the . . .

THE STOMPING OF PRIDE

8

READ SLIDE

- The temper tantrum of anger rooted in injured pride.
- Maybe it wasn't exactly a little kid throwing a fit, but it seems like adult versions of the same thing.

TR: It begins with men from one of the most powerful tribes. A tribe that had not been invited to join the initial enlistment of 32,000.

Judges 7:24e-25a

So all the men of Ephraim were called out, and they captured the waters as far as Beth-barah, and also the Jordan.
²⁵And they captured the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb.

ESV

9

**After the Midianites were on the run, the men of Ephraim . . .
READ SLIDE**

TR: We can guess why they were not initially invited or did not initially come, but what we know for sure is that capturing and killing these two princes did not stop their feet from stomping in anger.

Then the men of Ephraim said to him, “What is this that you have done to us, not to call us when you went to fight against Midian?” And they accused him fiercely.

ESV

Chapter 8 begins . . . READ SLIDE

-- They were mad . . . they accused Gideon fiercely.

-- He responds with some gracious words that may even drift into flattery.

-- Verse 3 says that “their anger against him subsided when he said this.”

-- This wasn't Gideon stomping his feet, but I think his having to deal with others behaving like spoiled brats may have made him more vulnerable to his own spoiled-brat stomping.

TR: The FIRST RHYTHM OF STOMPING FEET sounds like this . . .

THE STOMPING OF PRIDE

“Don’t you try to go around me!”

11

READ SLIDE

TR: What seems to have been at the root of the stomping anger?

THE STOMPING OF PRIDE

“Don’t you try to go around me!”

OFFENDED PRIDE

12

An . . . READ SLIDE

- Offended pride leads to jealous anger.**
- When we feel slighted because we were not invited to the party, or the meeting, or the wedding, when we have not been consulted . . . the natural moment of hurt turns infected when we allow ourselves to have our pride rankled.**
- Don’t go around me! Don’t you know who I am?!**
- It’s been said, “Jealousy is the foolish child of pride.”**

TR: This offended pride and jealous anger of the men of Ephraim may have slowed Gideon down in his chase. And perhaps it stirred up a bit of his own anger and pride.

Judges 8:5

So (Gideon) 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 after Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."

ESV

13

In any case, Gideon goes on the hunt again. READ SLIDE

- After crossing the Jordan he comes to the territory of Gad.**
- First to the city of Succoth.**
- These folks did not come to help Deborah and Barak.**
- And they offer no help to Gideon's exhausted men.**
- They seem to try to protect their status quo by saying that Gideon doesn't have the kings of Midian in hand yet . . . why would they risk making their lives worse?**

TR: We see some stomping when Gideon replies . . .

Judges 8:7,9

So Gideon said, “Well then, when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will flail your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briars.”

And he said to the men of Penuel, “When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.”

ESV

14

READ SLIDE

-- And when the same thing was heard from the men of the next city along the route, Penuel, Gideon’s threat becomes even stronger and more destructive.

TR: The account continues telling us that . . .

And Zebah and Zalmunna fled, and (Gideon) pursued them and captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and he threw all the army into a panic.

ESV

15

READ SLIDE

- Gideon had chased them all the way to Karkor, perhaps up to a 150 mile journey.
- This was so deep in their territory that they felt secure and Gideon surprised them.
- Again there was panic among the remaining 15,000 men and there was the great victory of capturing the two kings.

TR: On his way home, Gideon made good on his threats.

And he took the elders of the city, and he took thorns of the wilderness and briers and with them taught the men of Succoth a lesson. ¹⁷And he broke down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Going beyond his initial threat, Gideon even kills the men of Penuel.

-- While I can understand Gideon's frustration with the leaders of these two cities, I still hear a growing pounding . . .

TR: . . . I hear the second RHYTHM OF STOMPING FEET . . .

THE STOMPING OF PRIDE

“Don’t you try to go around me!”

“You’ll take me seriously!”

17

READ SLIDE

-- **“How dare you not believe in me!”**

-- **“You spineless cowards!”**

TR: What is at the root of this stomping anger?

THE STOMPING OF PRIDE

“Don’t you try to go around me!”

“You’ll take me seriously!”

FORGETFUL PRIDE

18

Perhaps . . . **READ SLIDE**

-- In the days leading up to the breaking of the pitchers, exposing the torches inside . . .

-- In the days before the blowing of the horns and the yell “For the LORD and Gideon.”

-- Was it not Gideon who was afraid?

-- Threshing wheat in a winepress?

-- Asking for dry fleece, then wet fleece because he was afraid?

-- Being given confirmation through the enemy’s dream and interpretation about the barley loaf crushing the tent?

-- **BUT NOW** the gentle flattery with the Ephraimites has morphed into a louder stomping.

-- On your journey, have you allowed pride to cause you to forget where you came from? That is what gives us empathy towards others.

-- **EX:** Racial tensions . . . why do “they” feel oppressed? But then I remember being different, not because of race but because of social status. And I have empathy and not forgetful pride.

TR: Having brought the two kings back just to vindicate himself with the people of Succoth and Penuel, he now questions them about who they killed, perhaps on an earlier raid, at Mt. Tabor.

Judges 8:19-20

And he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the LORD lives, if you had saved them alive, I would not kill you." ²⁰So he said to Jether his firstborn, "Rise and kill them!" But the young man did not draw his sword, for he was afraid, because he was still a young man.

ESV

19

**They say about the men they killed, "As you are so were they."
-- They looked like you, like a son of a king.
-- Gideon responds in verse 19 . . . READ SLIDE**

TR: In response to the young man's paralyzing fear, the two kings of Midian said . . .

Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, “Rise yourself and fall upon us, for as the man is, so is his strength.” And Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and he took the crescent ornaments that were on the necks of their camels.

ESV

20

READ SLIDE

- Perhaps the kings wanted a quick death by an experienced swordsman.
- Perhaps they considered it more honorable to be killed by the leader.
- Either way, it is clear that they are goading Gideon to anger with their statement, “as the man is, so is his strength.”
- As the NLT says, “Be a man! Kill us yourself!”

TR: Do you hear the stomping anger? The third RHYTHM OF STOMPING FEET rooted in pride pounds out with a snarl . . .

THE STOMPING OF PRIDE

“Don’t you try to go around me!”

“You’ll take me seriously!”

“I’m a real man!”

21

READ SLIDE

-- I am a man!

-- Gideon’s bringing the kings back was unnecessary other than to taunt the men of the two cities.

-- Telling his young son, probably a teenager, to execute them was an expression of his pride seeking to humiliate these kings . . . as well as pour out the vengeful anger for the death of his brothers.

TR: The anger seems rooted in Gideon’s . . .

THE STOMPING OF PRIDE

“Don’t you try to go around me!”

“You’ll take me seriously!”

“I’m a real man!”

CHALLENGED PRIDE

22

READ SLIDE

- On your journey, are you letting others challenge your pride so that you do foolish things?
- Has someone challenged you, your manhood, your womanhood, your personhood?
- Has someone challenged your racial heritage? Your identity?
- When our pride has been challenged, we usually respond by defending it.
- And then we remember, God opposes the proud.

TR: As Gideon makes it back home, it is like a ticker-tape parade.

Judges 8:22-23

Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, “Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.” ²³Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you.”

ESV

23

READ SLIDE

-- In the book of Judges we know that the conclusion of the matter is that this time of THEOCRACY failed because of the sinful hearts of people. They left so many blessings in the drawer of God’s storehouse.

TR: Moses had warned them about the dangers of having a king. He also gave guidelines for when the time came to have a king. In Deuteronomy we read . . .

Deuteronomy 17:17

The king must not take many wives for himself, because they will turn his heart away from the LORD. And he must not accumulate large amounts of wealth in silver and gold for himself.

ESV

24

READ SLIDE

- Gideon said the right thing . . . the LORD is to be the king.
- But then what he did was so wrong.

TR: He asked all the people to give of the spoils they had taken, specifically gold earrings.

Judges 8:26

And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian, and besides the collars that were around the necks of their camels.

ESV

25

READ SLIDE

- Some 42 pounds of gold by just the earrings.
- And then the rest of the spoil.

TR: The fourth RHYTHM OF STOMPING FEET I hear is, though the stomping is a bit more subtle . . .

THE STOMPING OF PRIDE

“Don’t you try to go around me!”

“You’ll take me seriously!”

“I’m a real man!”

“I’ve earned these spoils!”

26

READ SLIDE

-- In his pride Gideon selectively quoted Scripture . . . yes, the LORD is king . . .

-- . . . BUT it is OK if I live the extravagant lifestyle of the world’s royalty.

-- We learn from 8:30 that Gideon ended up having 70 sons by MANY wives. He even had a concubine, usually only the purview of royalty.

-- This concubine gave him a son, whom Gideon named ABIMELECH, which means “My father is a king”

TR: The text does not tell us specifically, but I think this is evidence of a . . .

THE STOMPING OF PRIDE

“Don’t you try to go around me!”

“You’ll take me seriously!”

“I’m a real man!”

“I’ve earned these spoils!”

SEDUCED PRIDE

27

... READ SLIDE

-- One person said, “Let us be as watchful after the victory as before the battle.”

-- If we win, there will likely be the seduction of flattery that comes from others.

-- EX: pastors who effectively lead ministries to great influence . . . and therefore believe they have earned 17,000 square foot homes, among other luxuries.

-- Is your journey leading you to pride that is angry when someone questions why you should have these things?

TR: This sequence of five foot-stompings of pride crescendos with a thud. The horror of what I alluded to earlier . . .

Judges 8:27

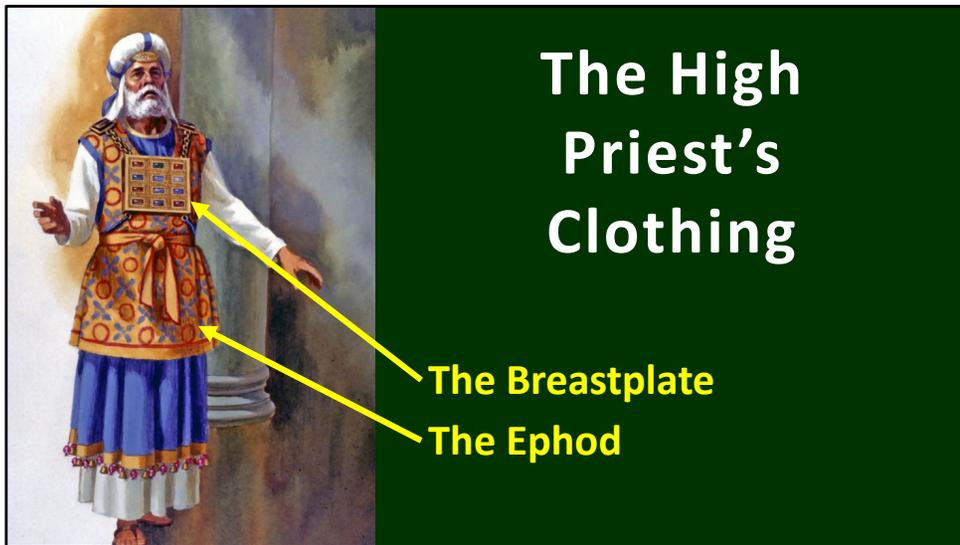
And Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah. And all Israel **whored after it** there, and it became **a snare** to Gideon and to his family.

ESV

28

READ SLIDE

TR: Was this a copy of the . . .



29

... High Priest's clothing?

- Was it something like the Ephod mentioned later in Judges 18?
- Was it an idol, even if it was originally rationalized as a memorial to the great victory?

TR: There are lots of unknowns, but I hear the fifth RHYTHM OF STOMPING FEET

THE STOMPING OF PRIDE

“Don’t you try to go around me!”

“You’ll take me seriously!”

“I’m a real man!”

“I’ve earned these spoils!”

“I’m special!”

30

It is hard for me not to hear our hero with clay feet loudly protest that he is SPECIAL.

-- Pride memorializes the wrong thing. We celebrate our faith or faithfulness, instead of God’s grace.

TR: At the root of this perhaps we would find an . . .

THE STOMPING OF PRIDE

“Don’t you try to go around me!”

“You’ll take me seriously!”

“I’m a real man!”

“I’ve earned these spoils!”

“I’m special!”

ENTITLED PRIDE

31

READ SLIDE

-- A pride that says that God appeared to us and we lived.

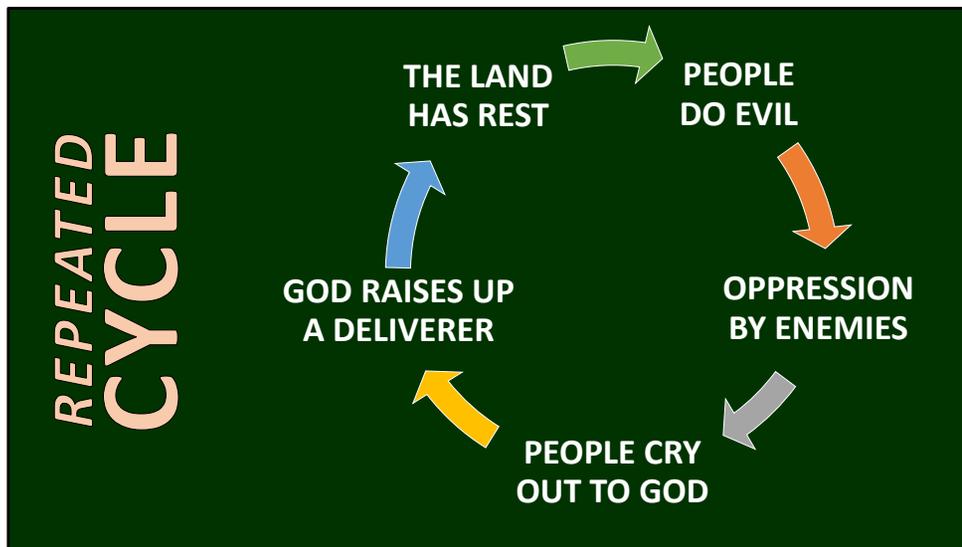
-- A pride that says God respected us enough to let us ask for a two-fleece assurance.

-- A pride that assumes the blessings of the past are the entitlements of the future.

-- On our journeys, have we allowed God’s blessings to be morphed into entitlements?

-- Have we allowed our spiritual victories to prompt us to leave our God-assigned role and grasp after the priesthood?

TR: It is true that through Gideon . . .



32

... the land would have rest for 40 years.
-- The back of the Midian oppression was broken.
-- But something sad happened on the journey between hearing the dream about the barley loaf and the making of an ephod that "all Israel whored after."

TR: What do we have to have ears to hear if we are to FINISH WELL? What is the contrast to the stomping of pride?

**THE STOMPING
OF PRIDE**

OR

**THE FORBEARANCE
OF HUMILITY**

33

It is the gentle forbearance of humility.

TR: Let me repeat . . .

**“God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble.”**

ESV

34

READ SLIDE

- It started with the Ephraimites but then Gideon seemed to catch the virus of arrogance.
- Several times it manifests as anger because a proud person usually becomes an angry person when they don't get what they think they deserve.

TR: Think back over the adjectives we added to the word “pride” . .

.

OFFENDED PRIDE
FORGETFUL PRIDE
SEDUCED PRIDE
CHALLENGED PRIDE
ENTITLED PRIDE

35

**An offended pride . . . did not Jesus tell us to take the lowest seat at the banquet rather than presumptuously taking the chief seats?
-- Certainly, pride has a hard time turning the other cheek.
-- It is not pride that remembers that they were not powerful, wise, noble birth (1 Cor 1:26-31)**

TR: Pride forgets what the Scriptures say . . .

Romans 12:3

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

ESV

36

READ SLIDE

TR: Later in that same chapter in Romans . . .

Romans 12:16

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

ESV

37

READ SLIDE

TR: Paul repeats a similar thought in Galatians . . .

Galatians 6:3

For if anyone thinks he is something,
when he is nothing, he deceives
himself.

ESV

38

READ SLIDE

TR: God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble . . . or as the Proverbs say . . .

Proverbs 3:7

Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD,
and turn away from evil.

ESV

39

READ SLIDE

TR: Or, as an appropriate summary of Gideon's journey gone bad . .

.

Proverbs 11:2

When pride comes,
then comes disgrace,
but with the humble
is wisdom.

ESV

40

READ SLIDE

TR: How could a worshiper of God's repeated unmerited favor, the LORD's grace, stoop so low as to foolishly create an ephod that would become a snare, something that the people would treat as an idol and worship?

What do we have that hasn't been given to us?

ESV

Perhaps he forgot . . . that everything we have, including life itself, is a gift.

-- EX: Sitting in our first apartment . . . almost everything was a gift. Now after almost 40 years . . . it still is all a gift.

-- Grateful people finish well.

-- Proud people imagine they deserve more . . . and they usually get angry when they don't get it.

-- The question God asked of Jonah as he sulked underneath the withered plant that gave him shade and as he in anger wanted God's judgment to reign on the Ninevites . . . **DO YOU DO WELL TO BE ANGRY?**

TR: Where on the scale are you?

**PRIDEFUL
ANGER**

**HUMBLE
GRATITUDE**



42

The stomping of pride OR the gentle forbearance of humility.

-- It doesn't take a long journey to make a wrong turn.

-- Perhaps we can blame someone else for seeding it in us . . .

-- . . . but our choices are ours.

-- Don't let the jealousy, the selfishness, the way they called you out, or even the way they flattered you lead you away from the true worship of God.

TR: God . . .

You save a humble people, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down.

ESV

. . . saves a humble people, but His eyes are on the haughty to bring them down.

-- Proud people build their own kingdom, or at least they want to live like a king.

TR: But only humble people really pray . . .



... Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

May God help us hear when our feet start stomping in pride . . . and quickly turn to Him and ask Him to clothe us in grateful humility.

What do you have that hasn't been given to you?