

Week #2 | “God Will Be With You”(Judges 6:11-24)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Well, Israel’s here, under the oppression of Midian. Once again, they’ve left God, and served the gods of earth, and the Lord has handed them over to the Midianites. 7 years of oppression, hardship, terror, and no end in sight. It’s stripped Israel of everything, leaving them impoverished, living in the caves, and in the cracks of the mountains.
- B. But, in Israel’s pain, they cried out to God, like they’ve done historically, and God has heard them. But instead of sending them a deliverer right away (*like He’s done in the past*), He sends them a prophet, with a condemning message about their sinful ways.
1. The prophet says, “*HEY, God brought you up from Egypt, He brought you out of the salve barracks, He rescued you from your oppressors, He removed the others who inhabited the land and gave it to you, and committed Himself, forever, to be your God...but you have not obeyed God, and instead you’ve done your own thing (Judges 6:8-10).*”
- C. If Israel’s story would’ve ended here, it would be just, it would be right. They were wrong, and God is holy. But this isn’t where Israel’s story ends, not with Israel/humanity’s sin, God’s story ends with His mercy towards Israel/humanity...that’s the where the story ends!

II. GIDEON’S UNEXPECTED VISITOR (JUDGES 6:11-16)

1. **Judges 6:11-16** *“Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak tree...while...Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord said to him, The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor! 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 the 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. Then the Lord said to him, Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you? 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. And the Lord said to him, surly I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.”*
- B. Well, what an unlikely/likely move from God. I mean first He sends the prophet to criticize them, to correct them, to remind them why they are under the oppression of the Midianites, and from that point, we are expecting God’s hammer of judgement to drop! BUT IT DOESN’T!
- C. Historically God’s accusation of Israel is often followed up with judgment (**Jer. 11:9-11; 25:1-11**). But instead of judgment for Israel, God sends mercy, GOD COMES TO THEM, to Gideon (**Eph. 2:1-4**).
- D. What Do We Know About The Angel of The Lord—In Judges, this isn’t the first appearance of the angel, he also appears in **Judges 2:1-3; 13:3-21** and here in **Judges 6-8**. In the Old Testament He appears in **Genesis 18; 32; Exodus 3; 34** and **Joshua 5:13-15**.
1. The Angel isn’t too overwhelming when he appears to Gideon, because Gideon talks to Him like a normal person (*He’s not glowing, or shinning, but is human-like*).

2. In **Judges 6:12, 20**, He is called the Angel, but were also told that it's the Lord in **Judges 6:14, 16, and 18**. He might be like a prophet, speaking on behalf of the Lord, but in verse **14** we are told, "...The Lord said...", which isn't thus saith the Lord.
 3. As confusing as this is, the New Testament helps us understand our Trinitarian God, that though He's in heaven, He can also be with us at the same time. We call this a theophany (an appearance of God), it's an appearing of Christ in His pre-incarnate form. This is God, in a human appearance, prior to the incarnation when He took on flesh.
- E. This is a far more graceful response than we would ever give our creation in their present state, which is why He's God and we are not. They've sinned against Him, He's sent His prophet to expose the error of their ways, but instead of judgement, He gives Himself.
- F. Well, Gideon is down threshing wheat, in the winepress when the Angel of the Lord appears to him. But he's not alone, all of Israel is hiding out. Gideon is an angry young man, hating life, not thriving, simply trying to stay alive, working hard for the basics, feeling like nothings ever gunna change...he's surly not expecting deliverance!
1. **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..."
- G. Look, the central concern for Israel's story is, WHERE IS GOD WHEN YOU NEED HIM MOST? Beloved, He's in the winepress! "*Gideon, I'm here, I'm near, I'm with you, I've been leading you, even through Midian. You think I've left you, but I'm as close to you as I can get. I'm with you!*"
1. **Judges 6:13** "Gideon said to Him, O my lord (sir), if the Lord was 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 from Egypt? But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." (adoni—used for a man, and Adonai—used for God)
- H. This is why I think Gideon's angry, because his heart comes flooding out of his mouth. Gideon doesn't even hear that God's speaking to HIM. The Lord uses personal words with Gideon, "...I'm with YOU..." but Gideon responds with words in the plural, "...US...US...OUR...US...US...US...US..."
- I. Gideon's words tell us that captivity, discouragement, hope deferred, depression, all cloud out our ability to see and hear God! We no longer see Him, we can't hear Him, we can't find Him, even when He's right in front of us (**Gen. 28:10-7; Jn. 11:17-44**). But Gideon's anger and doubt, doesn't drive God away, in fact it pulls Him closer!
1. **Judges 6:14-16** "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?" 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." "And the Lord said to him, Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man (as if Midian was a single man)."
- J. Gideon's first response of anger didn't drive God away, so he try's another tactic; he reminds God about his upbringing, but this doesn't move God either! God further doubles down on Gideon!

- K. Beloved, God’s election of Gideon, and His election of you is in spite of your family. It’s not because of your education, it’s not because of your economic status, it’s not because of your family name, it’s not because of your looks, it’s because He wants to choose you!
- L. God has chosen Gideon, even though Manasseh wasn’t a strong tribe, and he’s the least in his father’s house. Gideon’s not lying about his family...BUT GOD DON’T CARE! He’s chosen him...And HE’S CHOSEN YOU!
- M. Beloved, if all we have ever known is our human abilities, we will never see God move in power through our lives. Gods not limited by what your limited by. God’s not bound by what your bound by. Gods not restricted by what your restricted by. You’ve got to look beyond yourself and see God!
- N. Friends, this is all the commissioning that Gideon will ever need. God has sent him. This is Gideon’s authority. This is Gideon’s grace. This is Gideon’s divine enablement. Gideon needs nothing more.
 - 1. Beloved, when God sends you, He equips you. God doesn’t call the equipped, He equips the called. To equip means to be furnished, meaning your given everything that you need for the task that God’s called you into. It doesn’t matter what’s in front of you, if God’s called you, there’s no devil in hell that can stop you!
- O. How will Gideon do this? Just like every other person that’s been used of God...GIDEON WILL BE TRANSFORMED BY GOD’S PRESENCE!
 - 1. Everything that Gideon would need has come in the form of God’s words to him, “...*Surely, I will be with you...*” This has always been God’s assurance to His people either in their fear to move forward, or in their resistance. Friends, we too can walk through a crap-ton with that promise!

III. GOD’S PEACE IN THE TROUBLE (JUDGES 6:17-24)

- 1. **Judges 6:17-19** “*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. 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. So, Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah (ee-fuh) of flour. The meat he put into a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented them.*”
- B. Well, because Gideon’s human, like you and I, he wants assurance that his visitor (God) is able to deliver on His promises. So Gideon asks him to wait, to which the Lord agrees. Gideon, like us, wants to know two things;
 - 1. Is God’s favor really upon him—This is about Gideon’s smallness personally, and his family, and could this really be true.
 - 2. Will God really be with me, to defeat the Midianites—This about Gideon’s concern, will You really be with me, will you really help me?
- C. Well, this is no quick trip to Win-Co, it takes time in Gideon’s day to butcher an animal, make broth, and bake unleavened bread.

- D. Gideon seems to be creating something that makes sense to him, maybe not based on what God might want. It's as if Gideon is preparing a massive meal for a god, or the gods, which includes twenty-two liters of flour (*According to **Zachariah 5:6-10**, an ee-fuh container was large enough to hold a person*).
1. **Judges 6:20-21** *“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. 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.”*
- E. Well, Gideon is present, he's prepared a meal for this God/gods, he's brought it out, but God has specific instructions for how He wants it prepared. It's as if God is saying to Gideon, *“Gideon, we're not eating this together. This isn't a meal for Me. You've brought Me a sacrifice. This is an offering you're giving to Me. And I will accept it from you. Therefore, put out your hard work, put out your labor, put out the strength of your life before Me.”* And when he does, BAM, FIRE! And Suddenly God's gone!
- F. What's clear is that Gideon has found favor in the sight of God, not based on his offering, but based on God's election of him, back in the winepress (*When God consumes an offering, He's accepted it*).
1. **Judges 6:22-23** *“Gideon perceived that He was the The Angel of the Lord. So Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face. Then the Lord said to him, Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die.”*
- G. Well, what is Gideon saying when he says, *“I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face?”* “OH NO! I'm dead!” He's aware of Moses (**Ex. 33:17-23**). He's aware that nobody has seen God face to face, and even seeing His Messenger is equally lethal. Instead of intimacy with Gideon, which God intended by this, Gideon fears for his life. One commentator said, *“...He's scared witless...”* -Barry G. Webb, Judges and Ruth, Pg. 136
- H. Gideon has wrongly perceived God's nearness to him. This is why God has to say to him, *“Peace be with you, do not fear, you shall not die.”* God's addressing Gideon's present fears.
1. *“This assurance does not settle but alarms him. We western Christians do not understand Gideon's agony. Such talk is strange to us. We long to reach our warm hand through the pages of our Bible, pat Gideon's shoulder and soothe him with, Don't worry, brother Gideon, God's not really scary like that—if only you had a New Testament...this sort of talk is strange to us, because we have no real sense of the terror and awesomeness of God, for we think intimacy with God is a right rather than an indescribable gift.”* -Ralph Davis, Focus On The Bible, Judges, Pg. 96-97
 2. **Judges 6:24** *“So Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and called it The-Lord-Is-Peace (Yahweh-Shalom). To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.”*
- I. Well, remember, Gideon is still under oppression, the Midianites are looming, their nation is at war, there engrossed in devastation, anger, fear and frustration and a threatening future that's totally unknown, but Gideon has peace, not out of it, still in it, surrounded by it, BUT he's got peace.
- J. Beloved, this is God's promise to you during this season, but it's not only during this time, it's for all times sake. You can have peace, though hell is breaking out all around you. You can have calm, although chaos is everywhere you go. We get to choose where we live, in peace, or in peril!

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. We need an encounter with God, like Gideon had. Beloved, life ahead of us won't afford us the ability to live apart from the power of God, from the tangible presence of God at work in us, and equally important, at work through us.
- B. God had something He needed to do in Gideon first, because He has something that He wanted to do through Gideon. Gideon has a massive task ahead of him, and apart from encountering God, not once, but time and time again, he won't be able to walk it out.
- C. Gideon's story reminds us that nobody is born a hero, nobody is born or made in a moment, we are born, or made over lots of moments. When we see great men and women of God, true mothers and fathers in the faith, those that carry the anointing of God over decades what we should celebrate is God's patience, God's preserving work in the lives of these men and women.
- D. I hear many of you saying, *"But you don't know about my story, you don't know about my lack of education, you don't know what I've done, you don't know what I struggle with, you just know my church personality but not the real me, you don't know about my family, you don't know about my thought life, you don't know about my doubts, you don't know about my hurts, you don't know about my struggle"*
 - 1. *"BUT I SEE THE LORD TURNING TO LOOK AT YOU TODAY AND SAYING, GO!!!!!! I'll change you, I'll help you, I'm WITH YOU!"*
- E. Beloved, God has nothing else to offer His family, other than these words, "I WILL BE WITH YOU." This doesn't answer all your questions. Not the when, or the how, or the where, only the what, or even better, the WHO! Beloved, this is enough!