



Judges: The Mighty Man of ... Doubt?

Lesson 4: February 3rd & 4th

Read Judges 6

Sermon Reflection Question: What captured your attention from Sunday's sermon?

Observation & Interpretation:

The story is familiar now. Israel sins; God sends oppression; they cry out; God rescues them. Not this time ...

1. How is the oppression worse than ever in 6:2–6?
2. When the Israelites cry out, who does God send instead of a judge? What does this messenger tell the people about God and Israel in 6:7-10?

Why does God send a sermon before he sends salvation? It seems it's to show Israel that regret is not the same as repentance. They were crying out because they were sorry about the consequences of their sin—the oppression. But they were not sorry for the sin itself—for how they had wrecked their relationship with God. They didn't want to change their loves or get rid of their idols. They just wanted to have peace to continue in idolatry.

3. Read 2 Corinthians 7:10. Where does worldly sorrow (i.e. regret) lead? Where does repentance lead?

Reflection & Application:

4. God does not wait for us to repent before He begins to save us (Romans 5:8). How does the knowledge that God is acting in grace even before we turn to Him motivate you to repent or listen to Him?

Observation & Interpretation:

Read Judges 6:11–24

Don't miss God's grace here. There is no sign that the people responded to the sermon in 6:8-10 ... but still God sends his angel to raise up his judge. He saves them before they turn back to him! God does not save us because we repent; we repent because he's begun to work in us and for us.

5. From 6:12-16, how does Gideon describe himself and how does the angel describe him?

In his own strength, Gideon will never be able to save Israel. In God's strength, he can do anything the LORD purposes.

6. Lord asked Gideon in 6:14, "Am I not sending you?" How does this sending compare with God's sending of Moses in Exodus 3:9-12?

Reflection & Application:

7. How does the reminder that "I am always with you" impact your everyday life, no matter the circumstance? Write a prayer of thanksgiving.

Observation & Interpretation:

God has called Gideon to be his next judge, despite Gideon's lack of courage. And to save the people, Gideon needs to defeat 3 different types of enemies in Judges 6:25-32, 33-35, and 36-40.

8. Enemy #1: From Judges 6:25-31, what does God tell Gideon to destroy and to build? Describe the interaction between Gideon, his father, Joash, and the men of the town.

Gideon's father has clearly taught his son about what God had done for Israel in v. 13. But he has also been worshiping Baal and Asherah. The people have not abandoned worship of God for idols. Rather, they have combined worship of God with idols. This is the enemy among the people.

He wants not to remove our problems from our lives, so much as to remove our idols from our hearts.

Observation & Interpretation Questions:

9. Enemy #2: From Judges 6:33–35, what is the enemy around Israel? How does God strengthen Gideon, and with what result?

10. Enemy #3: From Judges 6:36-40, What is Gideon still unsure of?

This is the third enemy within Gideon: doubt.

Reflection & Application:

11. When Gideon asked God to give a sign with the fleece, he was asking for a confirmation of God's character and purposes. Unlike Gideon, we have Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-2)! How does Mark 9:24 guide us to respond with our doubts?

12. How do you see God's grace and compassion in Gideon's faith journey with the aim for Gideon to actually know God Himself? What steps today are you taking to actively seek God's will with a whole heart?

Resources: Timothy Keller, "Judges," in *90 Days in Judges, Galatians & Ephesians*, Explore by the Book, 2017.

Fasting Reflection:

RELAX: Take a moment to relax. Close your eyes and breathe deeply - inhaling slowly, then exhaling slowly. Repeat this several times as you imagine yourself coming into God's presence. As you finish and get ready to read, pray something simple like "Lord, speak to me through the words of your gospel. Amen."

READ. Read this story about Jesus two times. Read slowly, pausing at the line breaks:

Matthew 14:22-33 (NIV)

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

REFLECT. After the reading, take some time to reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:

- What word or words in this passage caught your attention?
- What in this passage comforted you?
- What in this passage challenged you?
- What is God inviting you into?

RESPOND. Read the scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, questions, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

REST. Soak in the moment, rest in it, don't rush through it. Do you sense anything that Jesus is inviting you to know, see, believe, or do? Pray: Thank you God for meeting with me in this time. Give me courage and faith to follow you this day.