

Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of May 17, 2020

Heroes In Hard Times: Gideon

Pastor Temple, 10:30am

Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15 min)

- Anything to share about personal events since you last met or about applying last week's message on *Fiercely Feminine*, Judges 4:1-15?
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

Opener Question: What about our current pandemic is most throwing you off mentally/emotionally?

Review the Sermon (15 min)

This week's message is based on Judges 6-7, selected verses from these two chapters are on the additional pages. Please read the scriptures silently and then discuss the questions below. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?
- Background info- For 7 years, the northern area of Israel where Gideon lived, was a dangerous area in which countless Midianite enemies could flood in anytime robbing and ruining whatever crops or livestock Israel could produce in the best areas for agriculture and threaten the lives of Israelites in the region. Israelites from the tribes of Manasseh, Zebulun, Naphtali and Asher fled to the higher areas where it was safer for them and easier to hide (6:1-6), but more difficult to produce food. What similarities do you see between Gideon's life challenges and ours today?
- How does this predicament of God's people compare with the setting of last week's message from Judges 4-5 with Deborah leading the general and people into battle?
- What were Gideon's reservations from embracing the call on his life from the angel of the Lord (6:11-24)?
- How did the angel respond to Gideon's underlying question (6:14 & 16)?
- What was the first task given to him from the angel (6:25-29)? Why do you think this is?



- In 7:1-8, when Gideon gathered people from Manasseh, Zebulun, Naphtali and Asher even though they were vastly outnumbered, why did the Lord reduce their number to just 300?
- How did the Lord encourage Gideon to push through his fear of entering battle outnumbered 440 to 1 (7:9-15)?
- Was arming them with only torches, jars and trumpets and with no real battle plan asking too much of them (7:16-20)? Why or why not?
- Why do you think they followed Gideon's instructions?
- What did Dr. Beck mean by Gideon and the 300 "served as an alarm clock" (7:21-25)?

- Like Gideon, we too sometimes ask the questions such as “Lord why aren’t you helping us?” and “Lord are we going to get through this?” What answers to these questions can we receive from Gideon’s story?

FYI- Dr. Beck’s published name is John A. Beck. His published resources are available at <https://ourdailybreadpublishing.org/> , his author page on amazon.com (https://www.amazon.com/John-A.-Beck/e/B001IXRXP8%3Fref=db_s_a_mng_rwt_scns_share) and other onsite teaching videos from Israel at his youtube channel which you can subscribe to - <https://www.youtube.com/user/N565VT>.

Other Related Readings (10 min)

- Would a volunteer please read aloud Psalm 83:1-18. Notice any familiar names or places here (83:11-12)?
- How do the past courageous acts of God’s faithful ones and past victories in God’s power to deliver, help generations to come in their walk with the Lord?
- How are prayers such as this Psalm, an appropriate channel of expression and means of help against those who say “Come, let us destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more. (83:4)?
- How do you think being in a time of war influences our intentions and prayers as God’s people?
- To what higher purpose does this prayer conclude (83:18)?
- To what extent in our own prayer lives do we weave in Biblical references and the higher purposes of God beyond our immediate circumstances?

Personalizing and Applying The Message (10 min)

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the scripture readings above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- What kind of metrics of life challenge in today’s world are causing many to cry “out to the Lord for help” (6:6)?
- How might this setting be a backdrop to highlight God’s power to deliver?
- As with Gideon, what in house idols is God calling us to cast down that God may be glorified exclusively in victories to come?
- Who are the people through whom God’s help is being offered today?
- Some have created a false dichotomy today between praying and taking practical actions of help. Why is it some think you have to choose one over the other?
- What responsible steps of faith can we take this week to be an instrument of God’s deliverance?

Witness and Closing Prayer (5-10 min)

- Are there people you know who are not yet Christians, without the benefit of Christian hope and struggling with the Covid 19 world we are living in?
- Would you mind sharing their names with the group that they may be prayed for?
- A volunteer may lead the group in prayer about the concerns shared earlier in the meeting

Judges 6:1- The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. ² Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. ³ **Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country.** ⁴ **They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys.** ⁵ **They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it.** ⁶ **Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.**

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¹¹ The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹² **When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."** ¹³ **"Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian."** ¹⁴ **The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"** ¹⁵ **"Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."** ¹⁶ **The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive."**

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²² When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Alas, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!" ²³ But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die." ²⁴ So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

²⁵ **That same night the LORD said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it.** ²⁶ Then build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering." ²⁷ So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the townspeople, he did it at night rather than in the daytime. ²⁸ In the morning when the people of the town got up, there was Baal's altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar! ²⁹ They asked each other, "Who did this?" When they carefully investigated, they were told, "Gideon son of Joash did it."

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³³ Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. ³⁴ Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. ³⁵ He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them.

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7:1 Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. ² **The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, 'My own strength has saved me.'** ³ **Now announce to the**

army, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’” So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained. ⁴ But the LORD said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out for you there. If I say, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go; but if I say, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ he shall not go.” ⁵ So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, “Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink.” ⁶ Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. ⁷ The LORD said to Gideon, “With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home.” ⁸ So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites home but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley. ⁹ During that night the LORD said to Gideon, “Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands. ¹⁰ **If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah ¹¹ and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp.**” So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp. ¹² The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore. ¹³ Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. “I had a dream,” he was saying. “A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed.” ¹⁴ His friend responded, “This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands.” ¹⁵ When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down and worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, “Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands.”

¹⁶ **Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside. ¹⁷ “Watch me,” he told them. “Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. ¹⁸ When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, ‘For the LORD and for Gideon.’” ¹⁹ Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. ²⁰ The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!”**

²¹ While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled. ²² When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath. ²³ Israelites from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh were called out, and they pursued the Midianites. ²⁴ Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, “Come down against the Midianites and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them as far as Beth Barah.” So all the men of Ephraim were called out and they seized the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah. ²⁵ They also captured two of the Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan.