

Hail, Mighty Warrior - Judges 6:1-40

Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

We begin the story of one of the most significant Judge stories this week, both in length and importance, the story of Gideon. A story lasting three chapters, Gideon is the fifth Judge in Israel, and his story represents a bit of transition in the overall story. So a reminder how to read this book. First, the theme verse for the entire book is the very last one in Judges 21 stating that, "There was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in their own eyes." We are supposed to read this as irony, because God was their King. Yet, they quickly abandoned Yahweh for the idols of the nations surrounding them, forsook the covenant with the One True God, and went on a trajectory that made them more and more like the Canaanites. That leads us back to the cycle that is on repeat throughout the book. The cycle begins as they **A**bandon the Lord, run to idols, and do evil. So God gives them over to **B**ondage. This time it is the Mideanites that oppress them. From their suffering the Israelites **C**ry out to God for help. While they deserve nothing but God's justice, what they receive is grace in the form of a **D**eliverer, a Judge who fights on their behalf, defeats the oppressor, and brings them back to the covenant blessings. This leads to a season of **E**ase that last the length of the Judge's lifetime. Yet from that prosperity and ease they run back to the idols of their neighbors. Each of these stories remind us that God is just, yet He is also faithful. And they show us how God saves His people, always through a deliverer.

The Mideanites, who link arms with the Amalekites and "Easterners" (v. 3) link arms. All three people groups are from modern day Saudi Arabia, but they see the Israelites as weak, easy pickings. So they move next to the agricultural fields of the Israelites, and as soon as the crops come they steal all the food, steal and kill all their livestock, and go as far as leaving their camels and livestock in the fields to eat up everything that is left. The terror is so bad that the Israelites run to hide in caves or up on mountains where they create holes in the hills for dwellings. They are left helpless and in poverty, and from their they cry out to the Lord.

It is interesting that the first thing God does again is to send a prophet (rather than a warrior). Before He sends someone to fight, God sends someone with His very Word to remind them how God had already rescued them from slavery in Egypt, gave them their inheritance, and continued to throw off their oppressors. The prophet also reminded them that God did not leave them, they left Him. Along with His Word, God also raises up a rescuer, in this case Gideon. And his story is interesting. Not enough time to completely recap the whole chapter, but the point is that this is how God works, He raises up servants who go into the broken world on His behalf.

When we meet Gideon he is actually cowering. Threshing grain in a winepress is a picture of being afraid. Normally grain is threshed on the top of a hill, a winepress is a hole in the ground. So he is hiding. But the Angel of the LORD finds Gideon calls Gideon and sends Him on mission. The Angel (who in reality is the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ) looks at this timid and fearful man and calls him a "mighty man of valor" (or mighty warrior in other translations). Doesn't look mighty, but God does not see Gideon in his failure, He sees the man the Holy Spirit will shape him into. Gideon asks, "If God really rescued us from Egypt, why are things so bad now with the Mideanites." God's answer is that Gideon is the one to save Israel from Midean. Now, pause to think about this, the picture the story paints of Gideon makes him the last person you and I would choose to be the deliverer. The point of the story is that God raises up people, equips them, and sends them. And when the story is over and rescue is secured God alone gets the glory and credit.

But before Gideon can go to war, God has to deal with the greater problem, the idols of his own heart and those of his family and community. When Gideon realizes he saw God face to face, he knows what his fate should be. Yet God spares Gideon and he builds an altar calling it God is my peace (Jehovah Shalom). Yet an idol to God cannot stand in the midst of idols to Baal and Asherah, and there is a shrine used by the whole city on his dad's property. So Gideon takes a couple bulls and tears down the shrine and idols, builds a new altar from the wood taken from this shrine and builds an altar to Jehovah, and then sacrifices his dad's bull used to pull down the shrine to God. Yet, out of fear, Gideon does this at night. The next morning the townspeople wanted to kill Gideon, our idols die hard. I love this moment, Gideon's dad steps in and basically says, "Hey, if Baal is God then he should be able to defend himself." But the point is clear, it is a

declaration by Gideon that Jehovah is now God of His life and these people. Now the story is ready for battle, a battle we will look at next week.

So the quick point. The world is still a mess, and lostness is the greatest problem in our neighborhoods, region, and in the world. People being closed to Christ and even hostile to those who bear His name seems insurmountable, and it feels easier to hide in a winepress than openly proclaim Jesus. Yet, God is always at work, and He is always inviting us to join Him. He gives us a new identity, calls us on mission, and sends us to our neighbors and the nations. And just like with Gideon, He is with us, His presence goes before us, and His purpose is unstoppable. We just need to hear His voice and destroy the idols that compete with Jesus so we can be used like Gideon.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Proverbs 1	Proverbs 2	Proverbs 3	Proverbs 4	Proverbs 5	Proverbs 6	Proverbs 7

Reading from this past week’s sermon: Judges 6:1-40

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Judges 7:1-8:3

Family Worship

Song - *Glorious Day*

<https://youtu.be/huW3vkEdZCo?si=1gdryhWHPITEoKMf>

Gospel Project

Unit: the Old Testament points to Jesus

Story: Jesus was Born

Big Picture Question: What is the Bible all about?

Answer: The Bible is the story of God’s plan to save people through Jesus

Scripture: John 20:31

New City Catechism

Question 8: What is the law of God stated in the Ten Commandments?

Answer: You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Honor your father and your mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. You shall not covet.

Verse: Exodus 20:3

Judges 6:1-40

- Do you find it frightening to be a believer living on mission? Why can it be so difficult to proclaim our faith and live on mission in the world?
- How is the sending of a prophet significant in this story, and what does this tell us about how God works among His people?
- How does the Angel of the LORD address Gideon in verse 12? How is this identity different from the way Gideon sees himself? How should we understand our identity in Christ?
- Why do you believe God has Gideon destroy the shrine to Baal and Asherah before he fights the Mideanites? What does this teach us about our service to Jesus?
- What does verse 34 state about God’s work through Gideon? How does this phrase prepare us for how God will shape the lives of His people after Jesus died and rose again?

Prayer

*Pray that we would see God at work and join Him in what He is doing in our city and around the world.

*Pray that God would raise up young leaders in our church who will help us reach the younger generations in Eureka.