

Questioning God

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Date: 06 March 2024

Preacher: Pastor Steve Hersey

[0 : 0 0] Judges, chapter 6. Judges, chapter 6. Bonnie mentioned we were at that pastor's fellowship on Monday and part of what the gentleman Brad Kozad was talking about, discouraging things, he used Jonah, not Jonah, Gideon.

Gideon as an example. And I got to think about that. So go to Judges, chapter 6. We're going to talk about Gideon a little bit tonight. Follow along with me. Judges, chapter 6, beginning at verse 1.

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel, and because of Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves and strongholds. They were hiding out in those places. And so it was when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east.

Even they came up against them. And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till they come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor ass.

For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers from multitude. For both they and their camels were without number, and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.

[1 : 3 9] And it came to pass, the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites, that the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel that said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage, and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drove them out from before you, and gave you their land.

And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God. Fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell, but ye have not obeyed my voice. And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak, which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abizorite, and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites.

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, If the Lord be with us, then why then is all this befallen us? And there be all his miracles, where be all his miracles, which our fathers told us, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent thee?

And he said unto him, O my Lord, wherewithal shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least of my father's house. And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

Let's stop there. Let's have a word prayer. Father, pray that you would help us tonight to understand that sometimes we have questions. Sometimes we wonder why certain things happen. Lord, help us to learn to trust you. Help us learn to put our faith in you. Watch what you do. Lord, if we would just stop sometimes and watch.

[3 : 54] Stop and listen. And then do what you tell us to do. Use the gifts that you've given to us. Use the talents that you've given to us. And then, Lord, obey your voice. And Lord, may we see what great things will be accomplished. Lord, use us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

You know, the story about how God used Gideon is probably one of the most remarkable in the Bible. The way he used him and was able to take him and help him to accomplish great things for God and accomplish those things in ways that nobody would have imagined. It's just amazing when you look at it. Look at verse 13 there again. You know, Gideon is being honest with God. And he says there in verse 13, he says, Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles, which our fathers told us of, saying, did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us and delivered us unto the hands of the Midianites. And an interesting thing is, Gideon's questioning. God, if you're doing all these things and you're going to help us and we're your people and we're doing, why are we like this? Why do we not see you doing miracles? Why do we not see things happening? Why is that? And the great thing about it is, did you notice how God answered him? God doesn't get after him. God doesn't show resentment to his questions. God doesn't get upset with him of his questioning and his answers. Why is that? Because God has the answers. God has the answers to give. When we have questions about things, God has the answers. James 1.5, you all know, we've talked about it before when we were going through James. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. That give it to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. He says, you ask. You come to God, you ask for wisdom. He's not going to get after you. He's not going to get on your case. He's not going to go after you for asking those things. Look at verse 14. They're back in Judges 6.

Verse 14. And the Lord looked upon him and said, go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent thee? He says, you go. Get in. You have a burden for this.

Gideon, you understand what's going on here. You see all the things happening here. Gideon, you go, and you do what needs to be done to save Israel from here. I'm going to give you over this week and next week, probably three different things. Where is God when we need him? Where is God when we need him? Number one, he is above watching over us. He is above watching over us. You know, God's reply to Gideon here shows him, not only am I aware of the problem, but I'm also aware, Gideon, that you have strengths that can be used to solve the problem. You know, sometimes we want God to say, God, there's this problem. You need to take care of it. And he says, well, you know what? I will. Let's use you to do it. No, wait a minute, God. That's not quite what I had in mind. I want you to take care of things, but I don't want to get involved. I don't want to do things. I don't want to be part. And he says, look,

Gideon, you've got strengths that can be used. God's perfect knowledge of Gideon proved that he'd been watching over Gideon all along. He knows Gideon. He knows his strengths. He knows what he can do. He's been watching him all along. Instead of asking God where he was when he needed him, Gideon should have been going, why do you choose to use me in the process of delivering? What is it so special about me that you want to use me to do it? Don't ask what you're doing, God, and why aren't you doing this? How are you going to use me to do this? You remember Job? Job was one of the most tested people of all time. He went through all kinds of things. He had so many trials. But Job said in Job 42, 5, he says, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeeth thee. I've heard lots of things, just like Gideon saying, we've heard about this and this and this. God says, okay, get ready. Watch what's about to happen. Watch what I'm about to do. See, Gideon, you've heard. Now you're about to see things with your own eyes. You know, in Gideon's generation, they had heard about leaving Egypt. They had heard about crossing, you know, the wilderness and things. They'd heard a lot of different things. They'd heard about coming in and taking over the territory and everything. But now they're under the hand of Midian and Amalek. And God says, okay, Gideon, it's time for you to see this for yourself. You've heard about it, but you need to see how I work, what I do. You know, there are times we go through things and it's because God wants us to see what he does. He wants us to see how he handles things. He wants us to see how he's going to take care of us. You know, we go through some difficulties and some pain and some suffering and some loneliness and some fear and all those types of things. God wants you to see what he does and how he will fix it. God is above. He's watching over us. He doesn't keep us from difficult times in our lives. Sometimes we have to go through things to understand who he is and what he can do. We hear about it, but sometimes we need to see it for ourselves.

[10:19] We need to see God at work. Bill Bright, some of you may know that name. He was the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ. Used to be a big organization on college campuses. I'm not sure it is as much anymore, but we have a relative who was saved because of Campus Crusade on college campus. Bill Bright made this statement. Circumstances do not contribute to our misery. Listen to that for a second. Circumstances do not contribute to our misery. Oh yeah, they do. Let me tell you about the things that have been going on in my life. Let me tell you about this that happened. Let me tell you about that that happened. He says, nope.

Circumstances do not contribute to our misery. It is our lack of understanding of who God is and his wonderful holy purpose for us that frustrates so many. He says, it's not the circumstances. It's our lack of knowing who God is. It's our lack of watching him. It's our lack of understanding what a great purpose he has for us and how he wants to use us. Because we don't trust him, because we don't look at him, because we don't keep our eyes on him, that is why we get so frustrated at times.

We don't fully appreciate God for who he is. And you can't truly, truly appreciate him for everything that he does just by listening to me talk, listening to others talk, just sitting down and studying. We need to see God in action. We need to put our trust in him and let him do a work in our life. Our greatest understanding of his nature and who he is will come as we watch him work in the circumstances of our life. Gideon wanted to know, where are all the wonders that our fathers used to tell us about? You know, going through the Red Sea, manna coming down from heaven.

Where's all of those things? God's setting the stage for him. God's getting him ready. He's asking the right questions. What's going on here? Why is this happening? Now he's getting him ready to listen to the answers that he has. Judges chapter two, chapter seven, rather. Judges chapter seven, verse two. And the Lord said unto Gideon, the people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites unto their hands.

Lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, my own hand has saved me. Now, therefore go, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, whosoever is fearful and afraid, let them return and depart early from Mount Gilead. And there returned unto the people twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand. You know the story.

[13 : 15] Gideon puts out the plea to about four of the different tribes. He says, we need people to come help fight against the Midianites. Thirty-two thousand people show up. God says, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. That's too many.

That's too many? You read through the story, you find out that between the Midianites and the Amalekites, there's 135,000 out there in the valley. 135,000. Gideon's got thirty-two thousand.

Masson's in the Marines. Does that sound like good odds? 135,000 to 32,000? No. Those aren't the best odds. And God says, wait a minute, Gideon, you got too many. There are too many out there. God's not done yet showing Gideon what's going to happen and how God is going to work and do things. Verse five of chapter seven. So he brought down the people unto the water. Oh, by the way, the 22,000 left. He's got 10,000 remaining. So he brought the people down unto the water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, everyone that lapped of the water with his tongue as a dog lapped, him shalt thou step by himself.

Likewise, everyone that bowed down their knee to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men. All the rest of the people bowed down their knees to drink water. Gideon, I want you to take them to the water and watch what they do. He says there's three hundred that put their knee down, like one knee down, took the water, and brought it up their mouth so they could be looking around while they lapped the water up. All the rest of them, down just like an animal would, down on their knees and face down in the water, just lapping away, couldn't see anything else that was going on. It's like, we got water! Yay! Three hundred.

Did it this way. God says those are the three hundred we're going to use. You know, you stop and think about it. Who are they going to look to for victory?

[15 : 33] There's three hundred of them. A hundred and thirty-five thousand out there. Those odds just got a whole lot worse. You were like three or four to one. Now you're thirteen to one.

He says, look, if you try to understand God on a purely human level, you have missed the boat. Our God is so much bigger, so much stronger, so much, He can take care of anything in our lives. Don't allow yourself to fall in trap to believing that God isn't there when you need Him. He is there. He's walking with you day by day, side by side. One of the things that Brad pointed out as you read through this, and you know this, but they went out with a clay pitcher, an earthen vessel it says. They went out with a torch, and they went out with a trumpet. Swords aren't mentioned there. Now they probably had one attached to their side or something, but pitcher, torch, trumpet, to go fight a hundred and thirty-five thousand-man army. Our God is so good. He is so great. He just wants us to be willing to follow Him. Doesn't matter what He asks. Are we willing to follow Him? And Gideon's story here tells what happens when we do that. God is looking down from above. He sees. He's watching over us. He's taking care of us. Do we trust Him as

He does that? God, where are you? I can't see you doing anything. I can't. Now you're in the position that you can see what I'm going to do. Now you're in a position to watch what's going to happen. Now you're in a position to trust me and see what's going to happen in your life. We'll look at some more about Gideon next week. But God is above and He's always watching over us. We'll talk some more about that next week. All right.

Per request.