

Success and Sin

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[0 : 00] Let's join together in a word of prayer. Lord our God, as we come again before you for this time of worship, we are so aware that we come again to a God who is unchanging.

Even from this morning's time of worship to this evening, perhaps our moods have changed, perhaps our outlooks on the day have changed, perhaps our plans and ideas of this day and this week have changed.

We come to you from eternal and to all eternity. You are unchanging in all that you are and all that you do. You are the immovable, unchangeable, sure rock of our salvation.

And because you are God and because you do not change, we know that we have a sure hope that your promises to your people do not change. You are the covenant-making and covenant-keeping God.

You are the covenant-keeping God who promises salvation to your people. And because you are eternally unchanging, that promise of ongoing salvation to your people, we can be certain and sure in its truthfulness.

[1 : 24] As to that reality, we come this evening, those of us who are part of this church family, those of us who know and who love our Saviour, who seek to serve Him day by day, we come this evening acknowledging that we are here only because of the finished work of our Saviour, only because in Him we have the freedom to worship you just now, knowing that you receive our worship.

It is received only because it is received in the Son. As we come before you just now, we who are your people, we come before you as cleansed and perfected by His finished work, clothed in His righteousness.

We come just now not in our own understanding, not in our own power. We come just now and appear before you in prayer, both public and private, not looking to ourselves, not putting forward anything that comes from within.

We come just now and we come boldly to the throne of grace, with a boldness that is not our own, but a boldness we find in the finished work of our eternal Saviour, the one who is at your right hand at this very moment, the one who is reigning and ruling, the one through whom all creation was made, the one who all things are sustained by the power of His hand, the one who at this moment, as He rules and reigns, all His enemies are being put under His feet until the final days when He will return.

He will return to judge. He will return to take His people home to be with Himself. He will return and we will see a new heavens and a new earth until these days of righteousness appear on the earth, until these days of glory come, until these days of newness are found here.

[3 : 20] Help us, Lord, we ask, to serve you well in this place. We do pray this evening especially for our community here. We do pray, Lord, for North Tolstah. We pray for all the villages, all the parts of this community.

All the various groupings of families, all the history, all the ways the families are connected throughout the years. And with that, we take in also our friends next door, all the family connections to them also.

We know, Lord, that very often all that separates the families of this community are two walls between these two churches. At an all but distance of a few meters, that we are connected in family.

But also there are many here this evening who are connected to many more next door this evening. And we're connected as one family in a greater sense, an eternal sense. We join together to worship our one Savior.

Yes, we may well have differences in our denominations and differences in our outlooks on certain issues and topics, but we come worshiping our one Savior with one heart and one mind, with one, as it were, calling and goal and purpose in our village here, to see the name of Christ known and worshipped, to see his wonder-working power known amongst all the homes in this area, to see sinners come to salvation, to see those heading to a lost eternity come to Jesus.

[4 : 52] Would you pray that once more for our neighbors, our friends, our family members in this community, those we love and even those we just interact with day by day. We ask that we would be witnesses so careful in our witness.

We'd be witnesses so joyful in our witness. We'd be witnesses who are willing to give of ourselves in order to see the name of Christ known and glorified in this place. Forgive us for the times we draw back from the chances and the opportunities you give us to share your word.

We pay for ourselves as a congregation of your people, as a family gathering here today. Help us, we ask, to do our jobs well, to fulfill our task well, the clear task we each have as brothers and sisters to be ambassadors, to be salt and light in this village, to be beacons pointing those around us to a saviour, one who can save them from their sin, one who can save them from the danger they are in, the danger they are heading towards, the eternal danger of a lost eternity in hell.

Lord, we ask as we pray that this evening, we bring just now before you especially those who are so heavy in our minds and so heavy in our hearts, our family members, those who are so close to us, who have no concern, no care for their souls, who at very best are apathetic towards the gospel, who at the very worst are haters of all that you have done and all that you are.

We bring them before you, Lord. We know that for many here, we were once as they are now. And that gives us hope that you, the God who transformed us and took us to a place of safety with you, can do the same in their lives also.

[6 : 47] We come this evening confessing that there is not one person, present nor absent, not one person, this whole community, who is too far gone, who is too lost in sin or waywardness, who is too far beyond the scope of your eternally saving power.

Help us not to limit the gospel power. Help us to bring that power, to share that gospel to all who will listen in our homes, our neighbours, in this community.

Lord, we ask just now once more for something that's beyond our ability. I know at times we feel as if we are, should not be asking it at all, but we ask it.

We ask to see days of refreshing and days of renewal and days of gospel revival in this area. But your word reminds us, transformation must first be seen and must first come from your very people.

So we ask first and foremost as a gathering of your people here, as a family gathering, you would revive us in our hearts, revive us in our service, renew us in our spirits, help our first love to be Christ and to be none other.

[8 : 00] And from that we ask, Lord, we flow out the gospel blessing in this district, in this community. We'd see hearts and minds transformed. We'd see both these buildings begin to fill up week after week, not for our glory, not for the ministry's glory, not for the three churches' glory, but for your glory and your glory alone.

We pray just now for those who have begun already the congregations, who have begun already their communion season. We pray for all who will lead the worship, all who will lead also the sung praise, all who will partake over the next few weeks in the Lord's Supper in various different congregations and across even various denominations.

we give you praise that though we may find ourselves separated by various reasons, we are united together in the one cup we partake in, the one spirit, the one baptism, the one saviour.

We pray for our own upcoming communion weekend. We pray, Lord, for the brothers who will be engaging in worship and who will be leading, Lord, your worship, who will be leading us into your word.

We pray just now, Lord, for Rory John Campbell and for Thomas Davis. We pray for them as men. We pray for them in their own personal, private walks with you that you would encourage them this week.

[9 : 24] Pray also for them in their role as ministering servants to this congregation that you would give them the words to say from your word. Lord, bless us, we ask, this evening.

Help us to lay aside the very many distractions that we bring to this place. I pray again just now for those of our number who are suffering physical and mental ill health.

Those of our number who are going through trials and complications and situations that perhaps none here apart from you and themselves know about.

We pray, Lord, for those here worried about loved ones, about ones close to them for various reasons. We pray for here, for those here who are praying for the salvation of our loved ones.

Those here who are worried about the physical or mental health of our loved ones. Those here who are bearing heavy burdens and heavy worries this coming week. Lord, we bring all these things and we cannot help, but you can.

[10 : 26] We bring these things to the throne of grace where we find that mercy and grace and peace and help in time of need. We ask you to bless our time of worship together this evening.

We would not be distracted by the thoughts which assail us and distract us so very easily. As we come to your word, we ask, Lord, you'd help us to listen to it carefully. Later on, as we come to study it, you ask you'd give us listening ears, but more than that, listening hearts.

We'd leave this place not just having grown, perhaps, in our knowledge and understanding, but having grown in our love and in our desire to serve our Saviour more, to live our lives more for Him in a way that will please and glorify His name.

We ask these things, asking for the ongoing forgiveness of sin. We confess we sinned before you, even since this very morning. We find ourselves in our words, in our actions, our very thoughts lead into sin.

Or keep us from that sin, we ask. We also ask just now for protection from the evil one this evening and also this coming week.

[11 : 39] We know, Lord, as we seek to serve you well, that the evil one often attempts to thwart these plans and to distract and distress. Lord, as your work continues, his work also does.

But we give you praise. We come this evening to worship a Saviour who has defeated evil, a Saviour who has stamped upon the head of this serpent and one who, as we said already, whose enemies one by one are being placed below his feet.

Lord, keep us safe, we ask. Keep us in your love. Keep us in your eternal arms. We ask all these things clinging on to a Saviour who we know holds on to his precious people.

It's in his name and for his sake we ask these things. Amen. Let's turn to read in God's Word. We are carrying on our series, the book of Judges.

We come this evening to an end of our time looking at Gideon. Judges chapter 8. Judges chapter 8. It's on page 194 of the Church Bibles.

[12 : 51] Judges 8 on page 194 of the Church Bibles. Let's hear the word of God.

Then the men of Ephraim said to him, this is Gideon, said to him, What is this that you have done to us, not to call us when you went to fight against Midian? And they accused him fiercely.

And he said to them, What have I done now in comparison with you? It is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the grape harvest of Abiza.

God has given into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb, and Zeb. What have I been able to do in comparison with you? And then their anger against them subsided when he said this.

And Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed over, he and the three hundred men who were with him, exhausted yet pursuing. So he said to the men of Sukkoth, Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing after Zeba and Zalumna, the kings of Midian.

[14 : 03] And the officials of Sukkoth said, Are the hands of Zeba and Zalumna already in your hand, that we should give bread to your army? So Gideon said, Well then, when the Lord has given Zeba and Zalumna into my hand, I will flail your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briars.

And from there went up to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way. And the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Sukkoth answered. And he said to the men of Penuel, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.

Now Zeba and Zalumna were in Karkor with their army, about fifteen thousand men, all who were left of all the army of the people of the east, for they had fallen a hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword.

And Gideon went up by the way of the tent dwellers east of Noba and Jogba and attacked the army, for the army felt secure. And Zeba and Zalumna fled.

And he pursued them and captured the two kings of Midian, Zeba and Zalumna. And he threw all the army into a panic. And then Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle by the ascent of Heres.

[15 : 25] And he captured a young man of Sukkoth and questioned him. And he wrote down for him the officials and the elders of Sukkoth, seventy-seven men. And he came to the men of Sukkoth and said, Behold, Zeba and Zalumna, about whom you taunted me, saying, Are the hands of Zeba and Zalumna already in your hand that we should give bread to your men who are exhausted?

And he took the elders of the city and he took thorns of the wilderness and briars and with them taught the men of Sukkoth a lesson. And he broke down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

And then he said to Zeba and Zalumna, Where are the men whom you killed at Tabor? They answered, As you are, so were they. Every one of them resembled the son of a king.

And he said, They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the Lord lives, if you had saved them alive, I would not kill you. So he said, Jephthah, his firstborn, rise and kill them.

For the young man did not draw his sword, but he was afraid, because he was still a young man. And Zeba and Zalumna said, Rise yourself and fall upon us. For as the man is, so is his strength.

[16 : 42] And Gideon arose and killed Zeba and Zalumna. And he took the crescent ornaments that were on the necks of her camels. Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.

And Gideon said to them, I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you. The Lord will rule over you. And Gideon said to them, Let me make a request of you.

Every one of you give me the earrings from the spoil. For they had golden earrings because they were Ishmaelites. And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a cloak, and every man threw in it the earrings of his spoil.

And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold beside the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple garments worn with the kings of Midian and besides the collars that were around the necks of the camels.

And Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city in Ophrah. And all Israel whored after it there. And it became a snare to Gideon and to his family.

[17 : 58] So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel and they raised their heads no more and the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon. Zerubbabel the son of Joash went and lived in his own house.

Now Gideon had seventy sons his own offspring for he had many wives. And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son and he called his name Abimelech.

And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father at Ophrah the Abazites. As soon as Gideon died the people of Israel turned again and whored after the Baals and made Baal bereath their God.

And the people of Israel did not remember the Lord their God who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side. And they did not show steadfast love to the family of Jerubbabel that is Gideon in return for all the good that he had done to Israel.

Amen. We give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word. Again singing to God's praise this time from the Psalter and from Psalm 83.

[19 : 19] Scottish Psalter and Psalm 83. That's on page 337 of the Psalm books.

Psalm 83 on page 337 and again singing from verse 9 down to verse 18. Psalm 83 verse 9 Do to them as Midian Jabun at Kishon strand and Sisera which had end or fell as dung to fat the land like Orib and like Zeb make their noble men to fall like Zeba and Zalumna like make thou their princes all.

Psalm 83 verses 9 to 18 to God's praise. Do to them ask to to love Like forever and I see him in the novel man to fall like to■■■■■ ombicmes on who said forever of the season

Where does God's house esteem? My golden light, Thou with us trow Before the moon and me.

But by costumes the world has been, The mountain set on high, She's on the bright, The world does through Mount Tempest all night.

[22 : 26] The Christmas tree, The Christmas tree, The Lord, What in Christ's tree, The Christmas tree, The Christmas tree.

The man he owned, the man he owned, had over her tailed.

Then he owned, the man he owned, had over her tailed.

Let's, for a short time, turn back to the chapter we had, Judges chapter 8. We'll focus this evening from verse 22 to the end of the chapter.

I'm taking a few verses of chapter 9 for some context later on. Judges chapter 8, verse 22 onwards. We'll take verse 22 for a text to help us.

[24 : 08] Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.

We're coming to an end of our journey with Gideon. As was said this week, I was talking to someone this week and they were saying, easily have been plenty more sermons, even a short series.

We could stretch this out for a whole study on Gideon's life and maybe I'll do that for the Lord's help later on in the future. Lord willing. Even this evening in chapter 8, I'm conscious we are skipping over 20 odd verses of Gideon's life.

That's not to rush us. But just to summarize, we read these verses together, verses from verse 1 down to verse 21. We do see these exploits of Gideon.

We ended last week with Gideon, of course, defeating the Midianites. And then way back in his pursuing of the Midianites, as he pursued them and he called the other tribes to come down and help him.

[25 : 20] We see Gideon then engaging with other tribes. Notably the account we have from 4 really to the end there of verse 21.

Where we see Gideon meeting two of his own tribespeople, two of his own section of tribe. And they ask for help.

Gideon asked if these two tribes would help him. And of course they do not. And why they do not is a whole different sermon. But just in short, the chances are they're terrified.

That they help Gideon. And if Gideon then doesn't actually do the job he's trying to do of killing these Midian princes. They're saying, well, if you don't do the job, Gideon, the Midianites will come and will destroy us.

We see that in the question they ask him in verse 6. Are the hands of Zabah and Zalmunna already in your hand? In other words, have you killed them? Is there danger still from them?

[26 : 19] And because he hadn't yet killed them, they were saying, no, we won't help you. And because of that, they're traitors to their own people. They are allowing the enemy to move through their land.

And we see that Gideon responds to that. Now, he responds in a way that perhaps makes us very uncomfortable. But he is a king. He's a king seeking. Well, not yet he's not.

He's a judge. We'll say more than that in a second. He's a judge who's been called to look after the nation. And he does that in a way that he thinks he should. And we see there's no judgment given to him from the Lord.

There's no ill comment about his actions from verses 1 down to verse 21. It's just describing what he does. Describing how he looked after his people as best he could.

But we take up a reading, as we said, from verse 22 to the end of chapter 8. It's in this final section of the final years, we could say the final section of Gideon's life, that we see something taking place.

[27 : 23] Now, supposing we hadn't already heard of the story of Gideon, there'd be no surprise if I was to ask you, what takes place in Gideon's life? How do you think Gideon's life ends?

What is the cycle that we see in the life of Gideon? It's the same cycle we see, isn't it? Every single week, the same cycle takes place in individual lives, in family lives, in the judges, or some of the judges' lives.

We start off, in Gideon's case, terrified on a run, seeking to do as best he can against an enemy. He serves at the call by the Lord.

He serves the Lord. He does well in serving the Lord. And we'll see this evening with a steady but sure decline at the end of his life. As we spend just a short time together looking at this final section of Gideon's life, for the Christians here this evening, this section, these verses, are a reminder for us, a solemn reminder to keep a watch on our sin, to keep a watch on our own lives, to keep a watch on what we are doing and how we are doing it, to keep a watch, in short, on our motivations.

What drives us as Christians? What drives us to serve the Lord? What drives us to be of service in our wider congregation but also community? Why do we do what we do?

[28 : 59] What is our motivation at its very deepest level? And for those here this evening, our friends here this evening, who as of yet can't say that you love or know the Lord, this chapter is a clear reminder to both Christian and not yet Christian alike.

But dear friends, you will find no sinless Christians. You will find no sinless Christians. You will find no sinless followers of the Lord.

Gideon was a hero, yes. A great man, yes. A successful judge, yes. But he is certainly not sinless.

You will find no sinless Christian. And if you look to Christians only, you will see that we are at times hypocritical. We are at times sinful.

We are at times awful example of the Saviour we are seeking to follow. In Gideon, again and again, you have a reminder.

[30 : 06] You are not called to look to other Christians or to Christians for your guidance. You are called to look to Jesus and him alone. And we strive as Christians to follow Jesus and we get it wrong.

He never gets it wrong. As we strive and follow him and as we find ourselves saying things and doing things, which we ourselves wish we'd ever said or done, he does not a single thing wrong.

He is the only perfect one, the perfect Saviour. The account of Gideon is a reminder. It's only Christ we have a perfect hope for Christians and for those who as of yet are not Christians.

Just three very general headings to help us cover these verses. First of all, we can see a good decision made by Gideon. A good decision.

And then we can see a questionable decision. And finally, a disastrous decision. So a good one, a questionable one, and finally a disastrous decision.

[31 : 09] First of all, Gideon's good decision. We can see that roughly from verses 22 and verse 23.

Where we see Gideon having finished his conquest of the Midianites. He's done his service. He has done what he's been called to do.

And he returns triumphant. And he's greeted with this cry from Israel. The men of Israel said to Gideon, verse 22, Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also.

For you have saved us from the hand of Midian. The people of Israel are so slow to learn. So slow to learn the mistakes they have not yet learned over the last few hundred years of constant oppression and backsliding.

They see Gideon do the job he was called to do by God. They see him be successful in the job. And they say to Gideon, we want you to be our king.

[32 : 16] To rule over us. Gideon, will you be king over us? It's important for us to understand just wider context for a second.

The people of Israel are geographically so spread out. The tribes are very fractured all throughout the book of Judges at this time. The tribes are all doing their own thing.

They're all worshipping various gods of various nations that they've been infiltrated by. It's hard to understand just how fractured Israel is. But they've managed always to come together behind Gideon.

Finally they have someone they can all get behind and say, This is a man we will follow. This is a man we will place our trust in. This is a man who is clearly the man for the job.

We'll make him king and all our problems will be gone. Note the wording here. You have saved us from the hand of Midian.

[33 : 22] Of course we then see the reality that takes place. But just before we get there. Note how quick the people of Israel are.

They cry out to the Lord for help. The Lord sends a prophet first of all. They keep crying out. The prophet tells them where they've gone wrong. And God then raises up the judge.

In this case he raises up Gideon. And the people know this is a man sent from God. That much is clear again and again. And yet the second they have their victory. The people then forget God altogether.

And turn straight to Gideon alone. We're not praising God in this verse. They are praising Gideon. For his strength.

For his ability. See the people of Israel. They're meant to have one king. And that king is God himself. They were meant to have God as king over them.

[34 : 22] And that was the structure they were meant to follow. But again and again they despise that structure. They hate that structure. And they go against that again and again. Because that structure means they have to actually do what we've been called and set apart to do.

If God is king there's no more room for their nonsense. If God is king there's no more room for their false god worship. Of course we know that the times of the judges ends around 1st Samuel.

Where of course we see that they have a king finally. And we'll get there someday with the Lord's help as we come to the end of our study. They're supposed to have one king.

That king is Yahweh. And Yahweh alone. Now the people are grateful. There's no sin in them being grateful. There's no problem in that.

They're allowed to be grateful for the good work that Gideon has done. He's saved them from their enemies. Being grateful is one thing. But they turn that gratefulness.

[35 : 29] And they turn it almost straight away to a type of worship. Brothers and sisters. We do the same thing. We do the exact same thing.

We're so quick I'm sure to judge the Israelites in Gideon's day. But we do the exact same thing. There is some great leader who comes and who goes.

Who has great words of wisdom. And we make that leader king over us. And it's in our culture isn't it so going back over the years. We've made many a minister.

Place them on pedestals. Often these poor ministers didn't want it. And certainly didn't need it. And certainly had no desire to be there. But we place these ministers. Indeed certain Christians.

In places where they have not been commanded to be. And as we'll see in a second. It almost always ends up the exact same way. When we place man in a place where only God alone should be.

[36 : 28] It ends almost always in certain disaster. Yes we respect the position of minister. Of course. We respect the calling.

And the authority that comes of the calling. But the second. We take our eyes on the fact. That those. Who may be over us in church leadership.

Are no higher than us in God's eyes. We're all brothers and sisters together. Gideon was called to be a judge. Yes but he was called to be no more than that. And the second the people try and make him king.

Try and give him something. A place he wasn't supposed to have. It ends in total misery. So quickly. But Gideon makes a good decision doesn't he? Look at verse 24.

Verse 23 sorry. Gideon said to them. I will not rule over you. And my son will not rule over you. The Lord will rule over you.

[37 : 28] Gideon initially at least. Looks to be refusing. This type of leadership. He's not called to be king. That is not something God has told him to be.

He's a judge. He's there to lead the people. At this time. In this way. And Gideon says no. It's not my place to be king over you. I won't be king.

Nor will my son be king. Over you. Again. The judge's role. It wasn't something inherited. It wasn't passed on father to son. It was given by God to each one of the judges.

Uniquely. The Lord will rule over you. Yahweh will rule over you. As we said.

We know that the period of the judges ends. With a king being placed over them. That is not a good thing. That is God giving the people. Exactly what they want.

[38 : 27] And from that ends. Disaster. Leads to disaster. After disaster. After disaster. They were meant to have one king. Yahweh himself.

The Lord himself. To be king over them. And anything else other than Yahweh. Ends in disaster. Gideon makes. A good choice. A good decision. He will not let the people.

Make him king. But. That then leads us. To verse 24. We see perhaps. A questionable.

Decision being made. Verses 24. Down to verse 26. So he says. No I won't be king. Verse 24. And Gideon said to them.

Let me make a request of you. Every one of you. Give me the earrings from his spoil. And so on. And they gather the earrings. Now.

[39 : 26] As the army commander. Who led his people to victory. Has actually biblically. At least. In this context. There's no sin in him taking a spoil.

That was. Effectively. The form of payment they received. There's no sin in taking a spoil. From the defeated enemies. That was permitted. That was okay. And if that was all he was doing.

Then. There's no problem there. That's why I'm calling it. A questionable decision. See what he's actually doing. He's not taking. As it were. A fair.

Share of the spoil. He deserves. Perhaps more than the rest. He deserves. Perhaps. A good quantity. Of the spoil. But look what he's actually doing. He is taking.

All of it. Now we say here. Every one of you give me the earrings. From the spoil. But most of the spoil they wore. Was earrings. We know from history.

[40 : 23] And we know. From scriptural context. That most of the jewelry they had. Was earrings. And here earrings. It's a loose term. For nose rings. Earrings. Any jewelry.

That kind of hung off their person. Was counted. In this term of earring. Gideon. So in essence. Gideon is saying. Give me most of your stuff.

And because they love Gideon. They are happy to listen to him. They think it's a reasonable request. So he. Then proceeds to gather up. Most of his spoil.

We see that. Verse 25. We will willingly give them. And they collect up. One thousand. Seven hundred. Shekels. Of gold.

Now. When you do the maths. Of one thousand. Seven hundred. Shekels. Of gold. I did the maths. To a conservative level.

[41 : 18] It could be almost. Not double. But slightly less than double. The amount. But at a conservative. Working out. And my maths. Wasn't that great. But. It works out. About five stones.

Worth of gold. Five stone. In terms of weight. Worth of gold. And five stone. Of gold. In today's. Well. Last Wednesday's.

Maths. Works out. At about two million. Pounds worth. It's not a few earrings. He's collecting. It's not a reasonable quantity. He's collecting. Gideon.

Is getting. Almost all. The spoils of war. For himself. He's amassed. Two million. Pounds worth. Of gold. This is no small army.

He conquered. He's conquered. This massive army. Each one of them. Decked out. And their earrings. And their nose rings. And so on. Two million pounds. Worth of gold. Are you noticing.

[42 : 13] What's taking place here. In one breath. Gideon says. I won't be king. In the next breath. The next. The next conversation. He has with them.

He is asking. For his treasury. To be filled up. He is asking. For the spoils of war. That a king. Would ask for. Our minds. Should go back. To Ehud.

As he. Brought. The people's. Spoils. To the king. And here. We see Gideon. Who says. He won't be a king. Then ask.

For the spoils. Of war. The majority. If not. Almost. The whole amount. Of the spoils of war. And the people. Give it to him. See the creep.

Begin to take place. The gentle. Slow. Creep. Of sin. In Gideon's life. Even the suggestion. That people. Might follow him. Might have him.

[43 : 07] As king. Outwardly. He says. No. I don't want that. Inwardly. A plan. Seems to have been. Hatched by Gideon. Of how he can. Progress himself.

This man. Who loves the Lord. Who has served the Lord. But we see. His decline. Into waywardness. Begin here. He takes the earrings. He takes this.

Spoil of war. He refuses. Outwardly. He refuses. Kingship. But he begins. Almost straight away. To act. Like.

A king. It's one thing. Outwardly. Showing ourselves. As being. Good Christians. As one thing. Outwardly. Acting as if.

There is no sin. In our lives. But if. Like Gideon. We hide that sin. Well. It means nothing. If we find. The slow.

[44 : 04] Creep. The slow. Rise. Of sin. For Gideon. It's greed. For Gideon. It's power. We'll see that. In a second. Whatever. Your sin. Or my sin. Might well be. Our pet sin.

To use that awful term. Our sin. We tend towards. As we find. That sin. In our lives. Begin to take hold. Whatever our outward.

Person is doing. We can all look the part. Talk the part. Dress the part. Pretty well. But inwardly. Only you and I. And the Lord.

Know truly. What's going on. And like Gideon. Are we seeing. That slow. And steady. Progressive. Creeping up. Of sin. In our lives. Gideon.

At this chance. At this point. Could have stopped. This. Very dangerous. Slope. He's on. But no. He doesn't. He demands. All this gold. He demands.

[44 : 58] A kingly. Amount. Of gold. Dear friends. Just because. We're successful. In our service.

To the Lord. It does not mean. We are sinless. It goes without saying. But also. It doesn't. Just because. We're doing well. In life. In terms of our faith. And our journey.

Often. When things are going well. For our faith. And our journey. Often. Then we begin to. Relax. And to rest. A bit too much. And we don't keep fighting. The spiritual war.

We're told to fight. At times of rest. At times of peace. Satan seems to get. A much easier. A foothold over us. When things are going well.

We do not stop fighting. We keep fighting. The spiritual battle. We keep killing. And mortifying. As a word. That sin. Within us. Bringing it to the cross. Again and again. As we see it. As we recognize it.

[45 : 55] Gideon. Does not fight. We see now. He's on a trajectory. It's going one way. That brings us. To the disastrous decisions.

Of Gideon. There's two really. Two major. Awful decisions. That Gideon makes. So he takes all this gold. Takes all this gold.

From the people. And what does he do with it? Verse 27. Down to verse 29. And Gideon made an ephod.

Of it. Of the gold. And put it in his city. In Ofra. He has made. A golden. Ephod. Ephod.

Was a different study. But just generally. There's two main functions. We see in scripture. As a garment type. In scripture. We see. In terms of gold ephods.

[46 : 48] Or of. Well worn ephods. Two uses. Two uses. For ephods. Which has gold. As part of it. Kingly use. And priestly use.

Now we see some prophets. Wearing ephods. But their ephods aren't. Full of gold. But for a gold. Jewel encrusted ephod. As Gideon has made here. Two uses.

Kingly. And prophetic. Gideon is neither king. Nor prophet. But he assumes. On himself.

Straight away. He takes the spoils. Of a king. To make the garment. Of a king. I won't be king. Over you. Says Gideon. Whilst beginning. To slowly.

Make himself king. Over them. I won't sin. Against the lord. We say. Whilst we slowly. But surely. Engage in sins. Which we know.

[47 : 44] The lord hates. I won't fall. At all that way. We say to the lord. Whilst we begin to fall. Down that slope. Which we say. We never fall down.

Gideon makes. His ephod. There's no more. Hiding it. For Gideon. There's no more. Pretending. He is now. Showing. Quite openly.

Who and what. He thinks he now is. And he puts it on display. It's on display. In his own city. In Ophir. He has made himself.

Has he not. This base of his kingdom. The city he is from. Like all good things. Like all good things.

That God gives us. We see. What's taking place. Well worship. Takes place. In what's. Almost a confusing reality. But. When we stop and think about it.

[48 : 42] It makes sense. He makes ephod. Put in a city. And all Israel. Hoored after it there. And it became a snare. To Gideon.

And to his family. Now the language there. Is strong for us. I'm sure. Israel hoarding after it. But the language there. Is very purposeful. God. God often describes. Is not. The false worship.

Of false gods. As adultery. That's the terminology. God uses. All the way through the scripture. But he is the one. Who is wed to Israel. And every time.

Israel goes against. The Lord. And worships other gods. They are committing adultery. Spiritual adultery. That's the terminology. God himself uses. So we must use it too. It's a painful terminology.

It's a visceral terminology. But it's one which fully captures. The truth. God says. I will make you as it were. My bride. I will look after you. I will love you.

[49 : 39] I will give you all. You want. And need. As my people. And Israel. Again and again. And brothers and sisters. We with them. Again and again. Say. I have all that.

I love all that. But I rather go after. These false gods instead. And we see. Israel. Going after. And worshipping.

The ephod. And we know. They worshipped it. The terminology. For Israel to hold after it. Only means one thing. It means. They are giving themselves.

Over to it. In terms of worship. They are worshipping. The thing. That Gideon's made. Why? Because it represents Gideon. I said this before. When the people of Israel.

And the surrounding towns. And tribes. When they worshipped Baal. When they worshipped. The idols and altars. They weren't stupid. These days. They weren't unintelligent.

[50 : 35] They were like us. In many ways. They had. Their own understanding. They had their own. Cognitive thoughts. They didn't think. These things were really alive. They were worshipping.

Stone. And idols. Because these things. Represent. The very real beings. Behind these things. As they worshipped Baal. As they gave their children.

And sacrifice to Baal. Baal would. In a sense. Answer their prayers. The demons. Or the creatures. Behind Baal. The evil spirit. The demons.

We would say. Behind Baal. Would. As much. As they could. Answer the prayers. Of Israel. And we'll see that. In a later study. We are dealing. Of course. Here. Not just.

Some. Slow to understand. Stone age. Bronze age. Worshippers. No. These are real people. Who are worshipping. Real entities. Via the stone. We see that with Gideon.

[51 : 28] We're not worshipping. The ephod. Because it's made of gold. And because it's shiny. No. We're worshipping it. Because Gideon. Is the one. They're worshipping. And through the ephod. They can worship Gideon.

He made it. It's his. He's worn it. Perhaps. Therefore. We'll go and worship it. And think of the wonder. Of who Gideon is. The man who saved us. Gideon makes an ephod.

But note. He also falls by it. Now scripture just says it. Very briefly. But it says it. None the less. It became a snare. To Gideon. And to his family.

The heartbreaking reality. Of Gideon. Gideon. The idol destroyer. Gideon. The one who at. Middle of the night. Goes and destroys. His father's idols.

Who goes and tears down. The stronghold. The spiritual stronghold. Shown in a physical way. Of Baal. Of the evil. In his own town. As a young man.

[52 : 25] He is now created. In the same town. He has now rebuilt. An altar. This time. To himself. How far. He has gone. From his place.

Of quiet. But strong. Glorious. Beautiful. Service. To his Lord. He has now created. An idol. Of himself. Quite on purpose.

Sadly. We see. At least one more. Sin. One more. Disastrous decision. From. Gideon. Very briefly.

It gives us. Very generally. Verse 29 onwards. Verse 30 onwards. Now Gideon had. Seventy sons. His own offspring. For he had many wives. And his concubine.

Who was in Shechem. Also bore him a son. And he called his name. Abimelech. Again. Just because.

[53 : 25] Judges. Describe something. It doesn't condone it. We keep saying that. But often. We might forget that. Description. Is not proscription.

But it's because. God tells us. It took place. Does not mean. God agreed. With it taking place. And here we see. It very clearly. Gideon. Had the money.

Of a king. Made the idols. Like the kings. Of the tribes. But also. Gideon. Lived. Like a king. He had. A whole harem. Of women. He had many wives.

And at least one concubine. If not many more. He lived the life. Of a pagan king. And we know. That God. From the very start. Of course. Is clear. It's one man. And one woman.

But there's no place. For multiple wives. That is the marriage ideal. And we know. In scripture. There's many accounts. Of even the heroes. Of our faith.

[54 : 19] Having many wives. But. As you'll note. More often than not. It ends. In complete disaster. For them. When they do so. Again.

Description. Is not proscription. When God. Tells us. Through his word. That Gideon. Had many wives. God is not saying. That's a good thing. In fact. We'll see in a second. It's clear.

It's not a good thing. He's living. The lifestyle. Of a king. The praise. Of the people. His own. Gold. Treasury. His own. Worship.

Being given to him. And a whole host. Of wives. And concubines. A life. Of luxury. A life. Of a pagan king. And look.

What takes place. From his own rebellion. His concubine. Gives birth. There are 70 other. Children. We see that. In chapter 9.

[55 : 15] What happens to them. But. From his concubine. We see. There's one son born. Abimelech. What does Abimelech's name mean?

What did Gideon call Abimelech? Abimelech. You almost couldn't believe it. It means quite literally.

My father. Is king. Gideon. Who is not a king. Who says no to be a king. He then falls so far down the line.

That his own child. Born to him by a concubine. Which God himself. Is clear. Is not how it should be. He names that child. My father. Is king.

There's Gideon. There's the reality of this. This young man. Who once was so good. In God's service. Once so. On fire.

[56 : 14] For the Lord. Who once was brave. And who would do anything. To serve the Lord. He's now naming his very child. Calling himself king.

The one who said. I won't be king. My son won't be king. He names his son. My father is king. That is the level of sin. To which Gideon.

Has fallen to. The temptation. Has as it were. Got to Gideon. He is living.

Like a king. In every way. Apart from the actual name itself. And he manages to fix that. By calling his son. My father is king. Dear friends.

When we see. Gideon's life. And we see how quickly. Things go from bad. To worse. We should rather than stand. A judgment over him. We should step back.

[57 : 08] From the account. For a second. And look to our own lives. Now we are not. War winning. Warrior kings. But we are. Servants to God.

Those of us here. Who know and who love Jesus. We are seeking to be. Servants to God. As Gideon once did. We perhaps have had. Very as many victories. As Gideon had. But Gideon.

After his victories. The success. The power. The glory. The adoration. The sin. It gets to him. He stops waging that war.

And he becomes himself. The very thing. He sought once to destroy. An idol. Worshipped by people. A king. Oppressing. His people. A king.

Stealing from his people. A king. Taking advantage of a woman. Of his people. Gideon has fallen. So far. Below. The calling. He once had. The person. He once was.

[58 : 05] The young. Glorious. Servant of God. He once was. We do not stand. In judgment. Over Gideon. It's not our place.

But more than that. We're not able to. Because. We ourselves. In our lives. We're the Christians here. Are there not times. In your life. And in my life. We look back.

And we see. Again. At this time of year. We look back. Over the last. Six or so months. It's a good time. To look back over. We think. Where was I then? And where am I now? And we see.

The destruction. Of Gideon. Because Gideon. Ends his life. In this way. He's buried. In this tomb. Of his father. And look. What takes place. As soon as Gideon. Died.

The people of Israel. Turned again. And whored after. The Baals. And may Baal. Bareef. Their God. It's interesting. We give a title. Of. We keep saying Baal.

[59 : 02] Baal was God. In that belief system. He was. I got small g. God. But really. It's a plural. It's complicated to us.

Because we don't really know. How they did it. We're so far removed from it. But Baal. Had many names. And perhaps many. Sub gods. To remain. Baal God.

As interesting here. We're told a name. Of one of the gods. They're worshipping. Baal. Bareef. The God. Of the covenant. Bareef. Is covenant. Bareef. A term for God.

Small g. The Cadenite God. The God. Of the covenant. Bareef. They. Turn their back. On the covenant. Making. True. Eternal.

Living God. Yahweh. Who has been their God. From the start. I'm going to turn. And face towards. Baal. Bareef. The Cadenite.

[59 : 57] Covenant God. They've seen. In the last few years. All God has done. For them. And yet. The second. The judge is gone. They turn around.

And go back to God. To their own gods. And go back to their own. Made up. Gods. Once more. The cycle continues.

As we'll see. The cycle only gets worse. And worse. And worse. And we find ourselves. We come to. Look at the life of Gideon. We say. How did he fall so far? We come to seeing.

The life after Gideon. The life of Israel. After Gideon. And we say. They've fallen again. The cycle gets worse. And Abimelech. And all the gruesome reality. Of his life. And so on. And so on.

As the book progresses. As things get worse. And more violent. And more evil. We say. How. What. We don't understand.

[60 : 55] What's taking place. Or how it can happen. As we come to the end. Of Gideon's. Ministry. Gideon's service. I want us to end. Our time this evening.

Reading. About. Another servant. Of the Lord. One who. Didn't fall. Like Gideon. Fell. I'll read the verses. To us.

Philippians 2. Verses 5. To 11. Verses we know well. But I'll read them again. Philippians 2. Verses 5. To 11. And contrast. This servant.

With Gideon. And brothers and sisters. Contrast this servant. With us. Philippians 2. Verses 5. To 11. Have this mind. Among yourselves.

Which is yours. In Christ Jesus. Who. Though he was in the form of God. Did not account equality. With God.

[61 : 49] A thing to be grasped. But. Emptied himself. By taking the form of a servant. Being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form.

He humbled himself. By becoming obedient. To the point of death. Even death on a cross. We don't come.

Trusting this evening. In Gideon's. Finished work. And praise the Lord. We don't come this evening. Trusting. In Donald's. Or your own. Finished work.

We come in Christ's. Finished work. Verse 9. Therefore. God. Has. Highly. Exalted him. And bestowed on him. The name. That is above.

Every name. So that. The name of Jesus. Every knee. Should bow. In heaven. And on earth. And under the earth. And every tongue.

[62 : 43] Confess. That Jesus Christ is Lord. To the glory of God the Father. That's the servant. We worship this evening. The true. Servant king. Who didn't make himself king.

But who gave up. All the privileges. Of his eternal. Kingly nature. To become. A servant. For the sake. Of his own beloved people. That's the one we turn to this evening.

We look to. That's when we have our hope. Based on this evening. Not in Gideon. Not in ourselves. But in our servant king. The Lord. Jesus Christ. It's about our heads now.

A word of prayer. So come once more Lord. Around your word. We are. So mindful. As to the sin. So mindful. As to the destruction. So mindful.

As to the sadness. Of that sin. And the reality. Not just in the life. Of your servant Gideon. But also in our lives. We give you praise. That you're a merciful God. A covenant keeping God.

[63 : 40] A true. Covenant keeping God. Who does not forget. Your love. Nor your mercy. Nor your care. Toward your people. From generation. To generation.

Lord. We ask you. Would. This very evening. For any here. Who as of yet. Do not know Jesus. You would show them. That love. That would come. And find their peace. And their hope.

In you. And in you alone. Lord. For your people here. This evening. Keep us from. Following into the. Following into the. The traps. That Gideon fell into. The trap of sin. And success.

The trap of. Of relaxation. In the face of the enemy. The trap of power. And success. And fame. And glory. Help us to find. All our joy. All our peace.

All our fulfillment. In Christ. In him alone. I pray once more. Lord. For the one who sings. And who leads us. This evening. In sung praise. We thank you. For your servants.

[64 : 35] Who lead the sung praise. We ask that. We do so. With hearts and minds. Full of understanding. As to the words we sing. Ask all these things. In Christ's name. And it's precious sake. Amen.

We can come to a conclusion. This evening. By singing. From a psalter. And Psalm 80. Scottish psalter. Psalm 80. Psalm 80. Psalm 80.

Scottish psalter. Psalm 80. It's on page 332. We can sing verses 1 to verse 3. And then verses 17 to 19.

So the first three verses. And the last three verses. Giving us a scope as to God keeping his people. Psalm 80. Here is your shepherd like a flock.

Thou that dost Joseph guide. Shine forth a vow that dost between. The cherubim abide. Down to verse 3. And then from 17. Down to verse 19.

[65 : 37] O let thy hand be still upon. The man of thy right hand. The son of man. Whom for thyself thou madest strong. To stand. Let's stand. Let's sing with verses 1 to 3.

Then 17 to 19. The cherubim abide. Let's sing with verses 1 to 3. Let's sing with verses 1 to 3. The cherubim abide. Let's sing with verses 1 to 3. Let's sing with verses 1 to 3.

Let's sing with verses 1 to 3. Movingulu plural. They are filled with verses 1 to 3. Yin, on acumen. In the cat, fresh wood, Let it be filled with fear.

And the cherubim abide. Let us see in verses 1 to 4. The cherubim abide.

Amen. Amen.

[67 : 24] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.