

Anything is Possible

Gideon: Judges 6-8

Midianite Destruction

The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. 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. 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. Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.

Judges 6:1-6

The Prophet

When the Israelites cried out to the Lord because of Midian, he sent them a prophet, who said, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. I said to you, ‘I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.’ But you have not listened to me.”

Judges 6:7-10

Gideon Called

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. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.”

Judges 6:11-12

Gideon's first task

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. 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." 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.

Judges 6:25-27

God shrinks the army

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.’ 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. 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.” 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.” Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

Judges 7:2-6

Conclusion

- Gideon: the encouragement
 - Human weakness is no barrier to God
 - Through weakness we can depend more on God for strength
 - God is patient even in our fear
- Gideon: the warning
 - We are in the idol smashing business
 - Never forget our weakness- danger of complacency

Resources

- Jackman, David. *The Communicators Commentary: Judges, Ruth*. Dallas, Texas: Word Books Publisher, 1991.
- Wilcock, Michael. *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Judges*. Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992.
- Stott, John. *A Reluctant Champion*.
- Gledhill, Alistair. *Gideon: The Reluctant Leader*.
- Palmer, Hugh. *Gideon: Hero with a weak finish*.