

The History Channel: The Message of Israel's Historians
History's Mysteries: Cycle of God's Deliverance
Judges 6:11-24

Intro: Janet and I have been reading through the OT books at night. We will soon be reading again the book of Judges, a rather bloody book about wars and heroes. Gideon is one of those heroes.

My father's conversion is chronicled in some of my previous writings. My grandfather, my mother's father, asked my father a pointed question when he was a boy: "Russ, are you saved?" That question actually made my Dad run from the job site where he was helping Mr. Reithmiller build his home. Dad was under great conviction, and that question from his future father-in-law really crystallized things spiritually for him.

Think of that moment in time. My grandfather is repairing a wall with plaster. He has hired a neighbor boy to help. Grandpa pauses in the middle of his work to ask only one question. And my father's future is forever changed. He is driven by that question to seek the Lord.

Think of the ripple effect of that question. My father is saved. He leads each of his many children to faith in Christ. Fifty years later, we are now in a dozen different churches teaching and preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Do NOT underestimate the power of your influence. You never know what God is going to do through you.

I. GOD KNOWS OUR LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL: V12: *The Lord is with you, mighty warrior*

- A. **God's greeting is a conviction.** You are mighty in his sight. You are a warrior in his sight.
 - 1. God made us full of potential.
 - 2. No one actually lives up to his potential completely. We all have improvements we can make.
 - 3. God knows our full potential because he is our Creator. He know what he designed us to do.
- B. **God's greeting is a prediction.** God speaks of us what is not yet the case. He speaks of who we will be not just who we are now.
 - 1. God knows the future. He knows what Gideon is going to do.
 - 2. His greeting is an indication of the great future that Gideon has among the people of God.
- C. **God's greeting is a direction.** Gideon would not have taken this tack without the encouragement and affirmation of God.
 - 1. God uses the greeting to get him moving in a leadership direction.
 - 2. God is actually giving instructions to Gideon through this greeting. We so often pray, "Oh God, show us your will." God is doing that with Gideon.
- D. **God's greeting is a motivation.** Gideon is now being prompted and pushed by the God who loves him to get into a leadership role among the people of God.

II. GOD KNOWS OUR HESITATIONS: v13: *If the Lord is with us, WHY has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders...?* Gideon's hesitations are found in two different comments he makes.

- A. **We feel abandoned**—*Now the Lord has abandoned us.* Gideon was wrong in thinking that God has abandoned Israel. God was still watching over his people as he said. But Gideon FELT that way, and the feeling was a

hindrance to him. He had heard of the deliverance from Egypt. But where was God's deliverance now? Where were all those mighty wonders?

- B. **We feel powerless:** v15: *My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.* Circumstances seem to contradict hope and faith. Israel is being beaten by the Midianites. They are stealing the crops. Gideon himself is hiding in the winepress so that the Midianites will not see him threshing the wheat.
1. Your circumstances may be discouraging to you.
 2. You may feel that you have suffered many defeats.
 3. You may even feel that God has abandoned you.
 4. We know that God is with us, however, and that our victory is certain because of this. Jesus died for us on the cross, settling forever the question of God's presence and concern. Even when the people of God were slaves in Egypt, God was listening to their prayers and hearing their cries. They were not abandoned even in that desperate time.
- C. **The INERTIA OF THE STATUS QUO presses us down.** Gideon says (v13), *But now the Lord has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.* Therefore, it must be God's will for them to be captive to their enemies.
1. We cannot assume that our bondage is the will of God simply because it is.
 2. We must remember that our God is the Liberator. If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

***I read this week that all of the nonprofits who are seeking to help rebuild our community are now on hold for receiving blighted properties. We don't know how long this will last, but it is a typical problem and of long duration. We have been pressing for a solution to this problem for months since the storm.

Sometimes it feels like we are stuck in the quagmire. When things are stuck it is very hard to get them going. In fact, the most difficult moment is that moment when you put your shoulder to the stalled car and first begin to push. It seems it will never roll.

We need a new inertia, not one of rest but of motion. If we can get things rolling, then keeping them rolling is a lot easier.

We have many objections and hesitations, but

III. GOD SENDS US ANYWAY v14: *Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?* After Gideon has explained all his hesitations, the Lord turns to him, as if he was not listening perhaps to all of these questions, and simply says GO.

- A. **GO in the strength you have.** Don't wait. You have enough strength to go.
1. Sometimes we need to wait for strength. That is very clear in Scripture.
 2. It is also very clear that sometimes we need to go in the strength we have.
 3. How do you know the difference? When you hear God say GO, it is time to move out regardless of your assessment of your strength.
- B. **GO and rescue the oppressed.**
1. This is the motivation for Gideon's motion. He is to go in order to rescue God's people.
 2. That must be our motivation as well. We will be impelled into the battlefield by our love for the lost and our desire to see them saved.
- C. **GO because God is sending you.**

1. What are you waiting on, Gideon? Am I not sending you? What more do you need?
2. Now God has a lot of questions for Gideon. Gideon has received his commission, but he is still in the winepress.
3. It is enough that God has given his marching orders. Gideon must find a way to obey and go in the strength that he has.

IV. GOD WILL GO WITH US v16: *I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.*

- A. God's presence is all that we really need. When we have his presence, we are perfectly equipped for any task. God will demonstrate this truth later to Gideon by defeating a mighty army with only 300 men. We do not need our own devices and inventions. We need the Spirit of God to be with us. God will win the victory.
- B. We never truly experience the living presence of God until we act in faith, obeying his command. In the very act of going, Gideon discovers the presence of God. And that is true with us as well. The Holy Spirit unleashes his power through us "as we go."

Conclusion: God is giving you many opportunities to serve him in this city and in our church. Do not underestimate the potential of your influence and your witness. You are likely to discover that God is literally reaching out through you to the people around you, that this is his intention for your life, and that you are being called now to go in the strength that you do have, trusting God will provide. And you will experience God's presence as you trust him and do what he says.