

Judges part 4 (Judges 6) Gideon part 1

I've shared with you before that I have a pretty healthy fear of snakes.....i believe it to be healthy b/c it keeps me alive

Phobias are fears that cause such stress that it interrupts normal life function.....we are familiar with some of these... (arachnophobia, ophidiophobia (snakes), necrophobia (death), glossophobia (pub speak),

And then there were some more non-traditional fears....lets see if you can guess some of them..

Octophobia (fear of 8), olfactophobia (foul smells), doraphobia (animal fur), coulrophobia (clowns), tokophobia (fear of pregnant women), ohphalophobia (belly buttons), arachibutyrophobia (a rak I butyro.....peanut butter sticking), newest one....nomophobia (fear of being without your phone)¹

As we continue in Judges we are going to look today at the person of Gideon.....

Gideon was a man of great fear....contrasting him with Deborah.....Deborah was courageous, fearless...

Even though he was a man gripped by fear, Gideon was a man that God uses....big idea...God calls us in spite of our fears....

We pick up the story of Gideon in the time following Deborah....

We are continuing to see an ongoing cycle of the Israelites.....Judges 5:31b-6:1....

The people of Israel did what was evil.....and the Lord gave them to the Midianites....

Stop and think about this for a moment....why is all of this happening.....why is this continuing and ongoing cycle keeping on repeating itself....

So often in our lives we have to suffer some of the consequences of our dis-obedience (careful, grace...covers the permanent consequence, we still suffer the effects)....

Lets talk about a few of them.....young people in the room, I implore you to not accept less than the best....ive had countless numbers of young people enter into a relationship with someone who didn't share their faith, orrr.....who perhaps didn't share the same fervor for faith.....the bible warns us about this by telling us to not be unequally yoked...

If you choose to be disobedient and become unequally yoked, you may suffer some of the consequences of that decision....

If you choose materialism....stuff.....debt.....there are consequences of suffering that are not pleasant
Parents....i can't stress to you the importance of teaching your childrent he value and importance of church over sports

Israel was continually facing the consequences of previous generations of disobedience....

Had Israel been obedient and conquered the promised land, had they laid waste to ALL of the cannanites as God told them....the Midianites wouldn't even be around to persecute them

So...how were the Midianites persecuting.....v.3-4. by stealing their crops....destroying their tools....

v.7....the people repent

¹ Gospel Project april 2016, Bryan Dembowcycks

and God raises up Gideon

read v. 11-14. Notes: angel of the Lord-theophany, gideons doubt (13).....GO.....

v.15. but Lord.....im not strong enough.....sound familiar.....

I used to have a buddy that I played FB with....he was a cocky little son of a gun....he would always brag about how strong he was, fast, he could out run anyone.....he was also the first one to puke when we were told to run....

you ever noticed how bold we are as humans.....we are the most self centered, self righteous, selfish, arrogant, people..

until the Lord shows up and asks us to do something.....we all of a sudden become the weakest, scared, frail....

Real quick....lets look at Gideons excuses....

v.13 – the Lords not with us

v.15 – im the weakest....not strong enough

v.16 – I need a sign

needing a sign from the Lord is a sign of weakness....im not saying it can't happen....but can you imagine your child....son....go clean your room.....but dad....give me a sign and I'll go....

We have our own individual ways of doing this.....God says go, and we like to sound all holy and righteous....well, let me gather a friend and study the bible about it.....can you imagine....son....go clean your room....ok dad, but first...let me get my friends together and pray about it, and we will do a Francis Chan or Priscilla Shirer study to help us figure out if we should really clean our room.....

But Gideon – out of fear – asks for a sign – he goes in, prepares some bread and a goat....brings them out to the Angel of the Lord.....the angel of the Lord (Jesus) reaches out a staff, and the goat and cakes are consumed in a fire that comes from a rock....

Now....wouldn't that be enough.....wouldn't that grab your attention.....it does Gideon....

Gideon figures out the Lord is on his side....and he goes and does what the Lord tells him.....he tears down the asheroth and baal altars.....

This almost incites a riot....these were seen as protectors...but the statement God is making here is....you don't need nobody but me.....

So...the people prepare for war, convinced that they will save Israel from Midian....

As they are preparing for war.....Gideon again is confronted with disbelief....he asks God for a sign, and this time its in the fleece....Gideon asks God to cause the dew to fall only on the fleece....

He is trying to back out – it would be impossible for dew to fall only on the fleece....but yet....God does just that..

He doubles down.....ok....(I have this picture of a person just trying to come up with something impossible....) ok God....let the dew fall on the ground but not the fleece.....he wakes up and its bone dry....

What do we learn from this....

1. Conditional obedience is not obedience -

Can we as Christians just stop trying to blame God for our selfishness.....when God speaks clearly and direct in the bible....we don't have to pray about whether or not to do it.....Just Nike that thing and just do it.

While God honors the requests of Gideon, we must remember that the truest form of faith is simple trust
Hebrews 11:1 – faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen

2. Put away the fleece

- a. I've heard Christians say before that they were going to lay out their fleece before the Lord....as if they will get some cosmic display of direction.....
- b. The fleece in this story was a display of fearful faith.....Gideon already had an encounter with the Angel of the Lord.....he already had the history of Israel on his side.....the fleece on the ground was nothing more than an attempt at bypassing obedience
- c. **John 15:14**.....if we love the Lord, we will obey his commands

3. In every area where Gideon was weak, Jesus was stronger

- a. Where Gideon said.....I need a sign, Jesus said in **Matthew 12:38-42**.....I am the sign
- b. Where Gideon did not trust God to spare his life.....Jesus gave his life freely on the cross