

Gideon: A Deliverer for the People

(Jg. 6:1-3, 7-14; 9/13/09)

Introduction:

A key idea in this lesson is God uses people to help His people, when they repent from their sins. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to repent from our sins and let God use us, in His service.

Body:

Read Judges 6:1-3

I. The People's Plight. The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. Consequently, they were under the authority of the Midianites. They built dens in the mountains for apparently some type of protection.

Questions/Applications –

What should believers do, in light of how our sins lead to punishment?

- Notice in vs. 1 that the cause of the seven years of oppression was the people's doing evil in the sight of the Lord. First, we should remember that God sees all that we do. Therefore, we should work on doing good, instead of evil, everywhere we go. Second, God determines what is good and evil. Some of the things that we think are alright, like not paying our tithes, God considers evil. Let's work on living according to what God calls right, by studying and obeying His Word. Third, God can punish us through social conditions. All social oppression may not be punishment of sin, but too much of it is. Let's work on stopping our evil doing and increasing our righteous living, so we don't have to experience God's punishment.

Read Judges 6:7-10

II. The Prophet's Rebuke. The children of Israel cried unto the Lord. God sent a prophet. The prophet reminded them of how good God had been good to them and how they disobeyed God.

Questions/Applications -

What should believers do, in light of how we should repent of our sins?

- Notice in vs. 7 that the people cried unto the Lord as an act of repentance. We should repent quickly, instead of waiting for seven years. When we find ourselves out of line, we should quickly get back in line with God's word. God's word speaks to every area of our lives. We don't have seven years to waste.

What should believers do, in light of the importance of learning from our history?

-Notice in vss. 8-10 the rehearsal of history. When we don't spend time learning from our past, we are subject to make the same mistakes and fail to appreciate the goodness of the Lord. Let's work on reflecting on the goodness of the Lord and learning from the mistakes that we find in our history. Specifically, Black history is noted for both the resiliency of a people and the reality that we would not have had slavery in America, if it were not for Black cooperation with Europeans. And we would not have gotten out of slavery, if it were not for some good White Americans who helped us (e.g., John Brown, Quakers, etc.).

What should believers do, in light of how our sins lead to all kinds of problems?

- Notice in vs. 10 that the root cause of the people's problem was their sin. It is an uncomfortable fact, but the reality is that much of what we go through in life is fueled by our sins. Evil people can distract us from this matter. For example, we can be distracted by the apathy of our country to provide quality public education for our young people. However, at the root of the problem is parents and communities who have not done the best that they could to raise well behaved children who value an education. Nor have we given our best in advocating for quality public education. Nor do we even give incentives, scholarships, and grants like we should to encourage our young people. Let's work on our sins, instead of simply blaming others.

Read Judges 6:11-14

III. Gideon's Call. An angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon. Gideon is not pleased with what appeared to be God's forsaking His people. The Lord chose Gideon to be the deliverer anyhow.

Questions/Applications -

What should believers do, in light of how we can overlook the part that we play in our own problems?

- Notice in vs. 13 that Gideon had some serious doubts about God being as loving as he had heard about. Notice in Gideon's comments, there was no mention of the people's sins. If we are not careful, we will make the mistake of thinking that we are alright and bad things should not happen to us. That is why God sends a prophet to remind us that a root cause of our hiding in the winepress, instead of threshing wheat in the open, is because of our own sins. Let's stay sensitive to hearing the word of God, even when things don't look right to us. We often have to remind ourselves that we walk by faith and not by sight.

What should believers do, in light of how we should be open to God using less than perfect people in His service?

- Notice in vs. 14 that the Lord still chose Gideon. Even though he was hiding and doubting, God had plans for him. It is amazing how God can take people with glaring problems and yet use them to do great things. First, we should not let our inadequacies stop us from saying "yes" to the Lord's calling us to serve Him. Second, we should be careful about discrediting those who claim to be called by God, based on the inadequacies in their lives. If God can use a hiding and doubting Gideon under the Law, what makes us think that God cannot use sinners today?

Conclusion: Let's repent from our sins and let God use us, in His service. God has much for those who obey His will.