

**JUDGES 6:11-16**  
**ARE YOU TALKING TO ME?**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 6, as we continue our study through the book of Judges.

As we have seen in our study of Judges, there is this cyclical pattern of sin, servitude, supplication and salvation.

And that is what we see here in Judges chapter 6. We are told in Judges 6:1-6 of what was going on. And keep in mind that this was not the entire nation at one time. Specifically, here in Judges chapter 6, and going through Judges 10:5, the focus is on the central region of Israel being affected by their sin.

And thus, we read here in Judges 6, beginning in verse 1, **“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which are in the mountains. So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord.”**

Judges 6:1-6.

What we see here is this cause and effect response. You see, the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, they ***SINNED!***

And then the Lord brought them into bondage because of their sin, in other words, ***SERVITUDE!***

Now we look at their behavior, we look at this cyclical pattern and it is easy to judge them and wonder how they could be so foolish.

We need to be careful here. You see, we are no different than the children of Israel. And these lessons are here for our learning so that we don't go down that same path, but how often we think we know better, and, in the end, we don't.

I have seen this with the spread of the Coronavirus or COVID-19. In Florida, during spring break, the beaches were filled with kids having a great time, even though they were warned that they were not to gather together in large crowds of people.

Some of these kids didn't care, others felt they would not get the Coronavirus, and thus, they did what was right in their own eyes, which has consequences.

We saw it in Chicago as people were told to stay inside, not to congregate and yet, at the parks and beaches, there were large groups of people gathering. They either don't believe there are consequences to their actions, or they just don't care! In fact, the mayor of Chicago closed the beaches and parks down because of their actions!

The same is true with sin, with turning from God. Some people just don't care, and others feel that it is not for them, they are above what God has said, and thus, they do what is right in their own eyes and there are consequences to their actions.

Remember as Moses was preparing the people to enter the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. And 2½ tribes, of the twelve tribes of Israel, wanted to remain on the east side of the Jordan River, outside of the promise land. They were Ruben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

And in Numbers 32 Moses is instructing them that they can live there but they must help their brothers defeat the people in the land of Canaan first, and then they can return home.

And this is what we are told in Numbers 32:20-24, **“Then Moses said to them: ‘If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before the Lord for the war, and all your armed men cross over the Jordan before the Lord until He has driven out His enemies from before Him, and the land is subdued before the Lord, then afterward you may return and be blameless before the Lord and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out. Build cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep, and do what has proceeded out of your mouth.’”**

The thing I want to focus on here is this, **“... be sure your sin will find you out.”** There is no doubt about that. You can’t hide anything from God.

And here in America, we are far beyond that as a nation. We no longer are trying to hide our sin, but we are proud to display it for everyone to see.

And the main thing here is that you can’t hide anything from God, even if you wanted to. He sees all, everything is naked and open before Him.

And in the end, there is always bondage as we involve ourselves in sin. And please understand that when we sin, we are moving away from God and we will see that when we get to the Judge, Samson. In fact, he had moved so far from God he didn't even realize when God left him! Be careful.

Let me share this with you, and you will see what I mean about how easy it is to get involved in sin and move away from God.

We are told,

***“Judah has gone into captivity, under affliction and hard servitude; she dwells among the nations, she finds no rest; all her persecutors overtake her in dire straits. Her adversaries have become the master; her enemies prosper; for the Lord has afflicted her because of the multitude of her transgressions. Her children have gone into captivity before the enemy.”*** (Lam 1:3, 5)

The people of Israel have lived through experiences unparalleled and unsurpassed by any other country of the world. They are a unique nation that was carved by God Himself, who redeemed them out of bondage and servitude from their oppressors (Egypt). Their hardship was due to no fault of their own but because they were ‘fruitful and multiplying’ (Exodus 1:9) as God had designed at creation (Genesis 1:28). In fact, they were subjected to tremendous suffering, and had cried out for deliverance. “Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage.” (Exodus 2:23)

After God had delivered the children of Egypt through many signs and wonders under the leadership of Moses, God had warned His people time and again that sin and disobedience would bring the bondage and affliction back in their lives. In order to drive the point home, God had Moses remind the younger generation of the children of Israel about this, the details of which are recorded in the book of Deuteronomy. Joshua, who succeeded Moses, also warned the Israelites in his farewell address and the covenant at Shechem (see Joshua 24). Many of the judges who judged Israel after Joshua displayed the need for serving God alone. Even the kings who ruled thereafter (especially David) emphasized the need to serve God and forsake sin through songs, proverbs and words of wisdom. Finally, God sent mighty prophets like Jeremiah who pleaded with the Israelites to turn away from their sins and back to God!

However, the Israelites continued to disregard God and His prophets by committing gross sins and living immoral lives. Due to their constant transgressions, God allowed foreign nations like Assyria and Babylon to take over the countries of Israel and Judah into captivity. For the people of Judah, the fall of Jerusalem was a time of terrible suffering and anguish. It was this fearful catastrophe that brought forth the book of Lamentations as the heart-cry of the prophet Jeremiah. In the book, Jeremiah laments the former excellency and the present misery of Jerusalem for her sin (vv. 1-11). This book was read publicly each year to remind the Jews that their sin had caused their captivity and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem where Solomon's Temple was situated.

Let us understand that sin brings bondage into our lives! Due to the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, we have been born in sin and trespasses. However, Jesus Christ, the Son of God paid the price of our sin with His own life. “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience . . .” (Eph. 2:1-2) Jesus had given us true freedom that we need so desperately. “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

If we go back into a life of sin and disobedience, we will again go back into bondage and affliction, just as it happened to the Israelites! Let us learn this very important lesson from their lives and stay close to God and His Word so that we do not slip back into sin and depravity in our lives. Pay attention to what Jesus Himself has compared His role with the role of Satan in our lives: “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

- <https://bit.ly/39sECes>

How true that is, and that is the warning in Judges. Don’t transgress the commands of God. He has warned us so we won’t go into bondage, but it is our choice, just as it was with the children of Israel.

Now, as we have seen here in Judges chapter 6, Israel sinned, and God brought judgment upon them by the hands of the Midianites. They would come in after the children of Israel brought their harvest in and take it from them. Keep that in mind because it will help explain what Gideon is doing in our study this morning.

In the verses we will be looking at here in Judges chapter 6 this morning, I have broken them down into six main points. They are,

***REST AND FEAR – JUDGES 6:11***

***THE CALLING OF GOD – JUDGES 6:12***

***THIS IS GOD’S FAULT – JUDGES 6:13***

***THE SECOND CALL OF GOD – JUDGES 6:14***

***THE EXCUSE NOT TO GO – JUDGES 6:15***

***THE ASSURANCE OF GOD – JUDGES 6:16***

And, as we will see here in Judges chapter 6, God raised up the fifth Judge in Israel, Gideon.

And I found this interesting. There is more spoken of this Judge than any other, some 100 verses and 3 chapters.

The only one who comes close is Samson and there are 96 verses dealing with Samson, and 4 chapters.

So with that as our background, let’s begin reading in Judges chapter 6, beginning in verse 11, and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we look at this topic, ***ARE YOU TALKING TO ME!***

**JUDGES 6****VERSE 11**

What I want you to see in this verse is two vastly different positions, two vastly different attitudes. And thus, I have called this – ***REST AND FEAR!***

First of all, let's deal with this "**the Angel of the Lord.**" Who is this person?

I believe this is speaking of God, specifically the second person of the Holy Trinity, the pre-incarnate Christ.

Keep in mind that no one has seen God the Father. It is what we are told in John 1:18, "**No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.**"

So let's think about this for a minute. If no man has seen God the Father and the Holy Spirit is without bodily form, this must be a Christophany or an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ! It just makes sense to me and hopefully to you.

Now some may argue that this could be just an angel, a messenger of God who is speaking to Gideon here.

And if this was all the information we had about this person, I guess I could see that.

But, because of the information we do have, I would have to disagree, I don't think this is just an angel.

In fact, I am 100% certain this is Jesus.

First of all, that phrase, "**the Angel of the Lord**" is used of Jesus in the Old Testament as He appeared in bodily form.



And secondly, in Judges 6:14 we are told, **“Then the LORD turned to him and said, ‘Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?’”**

And in Judges 6:16 we are told, **“And the LORD said to him, ‘Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.’”**

And even here in Judges 6:11 we see **“Now the angel of the LORD came and sat . . .”**

In other words, it is ***YAHWEH***, it is God, and thus, it must be Jesus that is speaking to Gideon here for **“LORD”** is in capitals and that means it is the name of God!

Now picture what is taking place here. The Lord comes and sits down under a tree, relaxed, no anxiety, no fear.

And here is Gideon threshing wheat in the winepress, why was he doing that? Because he was afraid that as soon as he finished threshing his wheat, if he did this high up on the threshing floor, the enemy would see it and come and take it away from him.

Thus, he is in the winepress, usually a low area and he was trying to thresh the wheat in an area where there was usually no wind, hiding from the enemy. You see, the wind would blow the chaff away and the heavier wheat would fall to the ground.

So imagine poor Gideon trying to thresh this wheat with no wind, maybe he threw it up in the air and then tried to blow the chaff away. More than likely he was crushing it with a wheel but again, without the wind, it is difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff! And Gideon was not relaxed, he was anxious, he was fearful.

Now let me share this perspective with you. If the Lord, the creator of heaven and earth, Almighty God is at peace, at rest, then why are we worried, why are we fearful?

That is a great question.

As I look at all the uncertainty that is going on in the world. As I look at all the problems that are taking place in this world. As I look at the immorality that is growing faster than I ever imagined. As I see the anxiety and fear that this Coronavirus has brought. It is very easy to get anxious, to get worried, to even hide away.

Now, perspective is everything. Think about it. Do you ever think God is in heaven looking down upon us and all that is going on and He is biting His fingernails, sweating like crazy, pacing back and forth? I know, we laugh at that, but think about it. If God is not worried, if He is not anxious or fearful, then why are we?

Listen to what Jesus told us in Matthew 6:25-34, **“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”**

Isn't that interesting. Jesus tells us not to worry about our life, what we are going to eat, what we are going to drink, our health, our clothes. And what do we worry about?

We worry about life, we worry about what we are going to eat, we worry about what we are going to drink, we worry about our health, and we worry about what we are wearing.

And then Jesus tells us why we are not to worry. He says that there is more to life than all of this. And I think He is speaking of eternity. We will spend eternity with Him, and we should be focused upon that. If we do focus on the Lord and eternity with Him, these other things will fade away.

But what if we have issues with these? Jesus says that God knows how to care for the birds, the plants, the flowers, and if He cares that much about them, don't you think He will care more for you? Of course He will and of course He does!

And I love how Jesus closes this section out. He says, **"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."** Matthew 6:33-34.

And here is the key once again. Keep your eyes upon Jesus. Why should we do that? Jesus answers that in John 16:33, **"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."**

In other words, everything around me can be falling apart, but I will not fall apart because my peace is not outward, it is an inward reality because my peace is found in Jesus and that peace will never change!

So the decision you have to make for yourself is this. Do you want to have the fear that Gideon had as he is hiding away trying to survive? Or do you want the peace that Jesus has, a peace that surpasses all understanding?

I can tell you right now, I want that peace that only Jesus can give. Lord help me to trust in You more and more!

So as Gideon is in fear, look at what we see next – ***THE CALLING OF GOD!***

### VERSES 12

So as the Lord looks at Gideon, this scared, this frightened man who is hiding in the winepress trying to thresh wheat, we then see that Gideon hears the Lord speak and say, “**The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!**”

I guess this is where I get the title for this message, “***Are You Talking to Me?***”

I’m sure at this point Gideon turned to see who this person was talking to, it couldn’t be him, could it? There is no way Gideon thought the Lord was speaking to him, no way!

I don’t know about you, but I don’t see Gideon as a mighty man of valor, maybe a scared little man hiding away, but not a mighty man of valor!

What are we missing here? What did God see that Gideon didn’t see and we surely don’t see?

The Lord saw the potential that was in Gideon.

In the book of Hebrews, we see men like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samson, Barak, Jephthah, David and-so-on. And here is what I find interesting. They are listed in Hebrews chapter 11, a section that is called the hall of faith!

And that sounds great, but when you read through the Scriptures, these men failed, their faith waxed and waned, they blew it. So how in the world can they be found or listed in the hall of faith?

Because if they were not in there, no one would be in there. But that is not the point. The point is this. In Hebrews chapter 11 God is showing us their faith, not their failures. And they are examples to us, that even with our failures, God sees our faith.

So when the Lord says to Gideon, “**The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor**” he is looking at his faith and not his weaknesses or failures.

That should encourage us because we too are like Gideon in many ways and yet God uses the weak things of this world to do mighty things through, as we will see.

And here we see ***THE CALLING OF GOD*** for Gideon. But, in saying that, look at Gideon’s response to what the Lord just said to him.

### VERSE 13

As Gideon looks at all that has happened to the children of Israel, all the bondage they are in, all the fear that is upon them, he basically tells “**the Angel of the LORD**” that ***THIS IS GOD’S FAULT!***

That does make me laugh because that is what we do so many times. We find ourselves in a mess, we find ourselves in bondage, we have this problem and that problem, and instead of looking inward we blame God!

Gideon is no different. He is basically saying that if God is for us, if God is on our side, then why is this happening to us?

Yes, God has worked with His people in times past, but where is He now? In fact, it truly seems like the Lord has forsaken them!

First of all, there are consequences for our sins, as we see here with the children of Israel. This was not God's fault, it was theirs. And remember that God had warned them over and over and over again that this would happen if they turned from Him, but they didn't listen and thus, this is what happens when you turn from the Lord.

Secondly, sometimes things happen in our lives because there is sin in this world and a lot of it. It may not be something we have done, but it just may be the effects of sin in this world.

Can a Christian get cancer? Yes, he can, and not because of sin, but these are the results of sin in this world, as I have said.

Please understand that. Job's friends tried to blame all of Job's problems upon some hidden sin in his life, and yet, God said that Job was a righteous man. It was not some sin; it was a testing by God!

Even the disciples of Jesus were taught and believed that sickness, problems were a direct result of sin.

In John 9:1-2 we see this played out for us. We are told, **"Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'"**

Now that is an interesting question. Why was this man born blind? Was it his parents that sinned and caused him to be born blind or did this man sin and that caused him to be born blind?

Think about that. If it was this man's fault, he had to sin in the womb, before he was born. Crazy, and yet, that is what they thought. And Jesus tells them that neither his parents or this man sinned, but he was born that way to show the power of God at work, and Jesus heals this man.

Why do we get cancer? Why do we see broken marriages? Why do we lose jobs? Why do we have all kinds of illness? Why do we have this and why do we have that?

I can't answer that specifically, each case is different, but what I can tell you is this. That through it all God is testing your faith and helping you to grow in Him.

On the other end of the spectrum, Satan is tempting you to sin.

Whoever you surrender your life to, will be manifested in your life! That is the key, surrender to the Lord and let your faith shine!

And let me say this. We in no way can understand fully all that God is doing in our lives. And it can be frustrating. We can blame God when in reality, God is using these things in our life for our good. He is not at fault here.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

In *The Case For Faith*, Lee Strobel records a dialogue between himself and author/philosopher Peter Kreeft:

"How can a mere finite human be sure that infinite wisdom would not tolerate certain short-range evils in order for more long-range good that we cannot foresee?" [Kreeft] asked.

I could see his point but needed an example. "Elaborate a bit," I prodded.

Dr. Kreeft (a philosophy professor for 38 years) thought a moment. “Look at it this way,” he said. “Imagine a bear in a trap and a hunter who, out of sympathy, wants to liberate him. He tries to win the bear’s confidence, but he can’t do it, so he has to shoot the bear full of drugs. The bear, however, thinks this is an attack and that the hunter is trying to kill him. He doesn’t realize this is being done out of compassion.

Then, in order to get the bear out of the trap, the hunter has to push him further into the trap to release the tension on the spring. If the bear were semiconscious at that point, he would be even more convinced that the hunter was his enemy out to cause him suffering and pain. But the bear would be wrong because his understanding is too limited.”

Kreeft let the illustration soak in for a moment. “Now,” he concluded, “how can anyone be certain that’s not an analogy between us and God? I believe God does the same to us sometimes, and we can’t comprehend why he does it any more than the bear can understand the motivations of the hunter. As the bear could have trusted the hunter, so we can trust God.”

- Lee Strobel, The Case for Faith, p. 32

How true that is. The pain we are going through, the difficulties we are facing, God will use them for good, somehow, someday. Do you believe that? You need to!

But here, for the children of Israel, sin brought them into bondage, and it wasn’t that God had forsaken them, forgot about them, wasn’t working in their lives any longer. Again, it was their sin!

Another point I want to bring up is this. The Lord said to Gideon, “**The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!**” And how did Gideon respond? By blaming God.

What is the point?



The point is this. Gideon lost faith in God and thus, instead of looking up and praising God, he is looking out and condemning God!

I am not sure how that fits in with what the Lord was saying and, in reality, it doesn't. But when our eyes are not focused on the Lord, we love to blame God for the situations that we are in!

Now, in saying that. How do you think God will respond to what Gideon just said –

***THIS IS GOD'S FAULT!***

Let's read on and see, because, I think many times, we think the response of God is going to be destruction, but that is not the case, God is in the business of restoration. Look at what He says to Gideon.

#### VERSE 14

Isn't that interesting. Instead of rebuking Gideon, coming against Gideon, we see ***THE SECOND CALL OF GOD!***

Now to show you how much God is encouraging Gideon, let me put these two statements of God to Gideon together. The Lord said to Gideon, **"The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor! . . . Go in the might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?"** Judges 6:12, 14.

Not only does the Lord call Gideon a mighty man of valor, but He also tells Gideon that he will save Israel from the hands of the Midianites, he is going to deliver them!

In other words, the Lord is telling Gideon, ***"If you want to see Me work a miracle, you go forth and deliver Israel from the Midianites. Don't worry, I am with you!"***

Now keep in mind that Gideon is hiding in a winepress and trying to thresh the wheat. How in the world is he going to deliver Israel from the Midianites?

Simple, the Lord told Gideon, “**Have I not sent you?**” That is the key. The Lord is sending Gideon and thus, the Lord is more than able to use a man like Gideon to deliver Israel!

And for us, we look at the situation we are in and we are overwhelmed. God tells us to walk by faith and we go, “*Are you kidding me?*”

Now, we are more spiritual than that and we can come up with all kinds of excuses why we can’t walk by faith, but that is the problem, they are excuses.

Let me share these encouraging words with you from Ephesians 3:20-21, where Paul wrote, “**Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.**”

Here we see this doxology or short hymn of praise unto God. Listen to what Paul is saying here.

God is able and He is more than able.

He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think!

Don’t limit God to what He wants to do in your life or in the life of this church.

God wants to work, and He is looking for people who are willing to walk.

And Paul concludes by saying “**Amen**” or “**Let it be!**” What else can you say?

Look at all that God has for us and how often we live as spiritual beggars. That should not be!

One writer put it like this, “When the Holy Spirit has empowered us, Christ has indwelt us, love has mastered us, and God has filled us with His own fullness, then He **is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think**. Until those conditions are met, God’s working in us is limited. When they are met, His working in us is unlimited.” (Source Unknown)

And Pastor Ray Stedman sums this all up for us like this,

That is the secret, isn’t it? You and I can do nothing - but God, living in us, filling us, working through us, is able to do abundantly more than we can even think to ask Him to do in our prayers!

What are your goals for this day, for this year, for this lifetime? God can exceed your wildest dreams - if you stop trying to manipulate, scheme, and bring it to pass in your own strength. Allow Him to live in you and through you, and the wildly unthinkable will become commonplace in your life, day after thrilling day, year after astonishing year.

We each have only one lifetime to live - so we dare not blow it. Instead of trying to run our own lives according to our own finite plans, let’s turn our lives over to the One whose plan is infinite and eternal.

When we are secure within His loving heart, we can never lose heart. Who could think of turning back, of giving up, when He has shown us a glimpse of the glory that lies before us? So don’t lose heart! The race is nearly won! Come on! Keep going! Don’t look back - look ahead! His love carries us forward - and His glory is almost within our reach!

- Ray Stedman

May we approach the situations we face, the call of God upon our lives, like that. Knowing that He is more than able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Now, if Gideon saw how this would all play out, this would be easy to just step out and walk. That is the same for us. But the problem for Gideon and for us is that the enemy is strong. And, since we only have the Word of God, and I say that sarcastically, we have a hard time walking.

That should be all that we need, but again, we don't see it played out before our eyes and thus, we have to trust, we have to place our faith in what God has told us, and that can be difficult, it can be scary for us!

You see, the strength of the Midianites was too much, and Gideon knew his weakness, and thus, listen to his response to the Lord, what the Lord told him, that he would have victory, but . . .

#### VERSE 15

Here we see ***THE EXCUSE NOT TO GO*** by Gideon!

Instead of trusting the Lord Gideon looked at his qualifications to complete this task and he came up short!

He was from the tribe of Manasseh, and keep in mind that only half the tribe of Manasseh entered the Promise Land. The other half of the tribe remained on the east side of the Jordan River, outside the Promise Land.

And Gideon was from a small clan in Manasseh, they were weak.

So Gideon had every right to question God here, right? Wrong!

You see, don't you think God knew Gideon's family, that his clan was the least in this tribe and that Gideon himself was the low man on the totem pole even in his own family?

Of course God knew these things.

Then why in the world did God call out Gideon to deliver the children Israel? Why would God say to Gideon, **“The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor! . . . Go in the might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?”** Judges 6:12, 14.

Here’s the thing we need to remember. God is not looking for powerful people to work through! He is not looking for an Arnold Schwarzenegger to work through. He is looking for your average Joe you might say! I fit the bill!

You see, God is looking for faithful people who love Him and are available for Him to use. He will give them the strength to accomplish the task He has called them to do, and us to do, we just need to walk by faith!

We are told in II Chronicles 16:9, **“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. . . .”**

God wants to show Himself strong as He works through us and not the other way around!

Let me show you what can happen as we learn to get out of our comfort zone and trust God. It is a walk of faith as you will see. Listen to what we are told,

There is something you know you need to do, but it means abandoning your comfort zone and stepping out in faith. You know that it’s God’s leading, but it’s hard. You don’t know what the outcome is going to be. You really don’t know where you will be standing at the end of it.

A whole book of the Old Testament is devoted to the story of Esther, a Jewish exile living in Persia. An orphan, she was brought up by her cousin Mordecai. She was lovely and beautiful, and she must have been quite young also.

When the royal decree was sent out that a new queen was to be found, and all the beautiful young women of the kingdom were to be brought to the royal palace, Esther left her childhood home and moved into the palace. Of all the beautiful young women there, King Ahasuerus set the royal crown on her head and made her queen. . . .

When you read the story you can see how perfectly timed everything was. God had set up the chain of events, and Esther and Mordecai were in position for God to be able to use them to save His people from this destruction.

You can't see the big picture in your life either, but can you trust that God is in perfect control? Jesus says about Him that not a sparrow falls from the sky without Him knowing about it. (Matthew 10:29)

It's impossible to believe then that anything that happens to us is not watched over and carefully measured and balanced to be exactly what we need to fulfill His plan for our lives. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Esther and Mordecai came up with a plan that involved Esther putting her life at risk. She would go to the king and plead before him for her people. The law stated that anyone who approached the king without being called would be put to death, and there was no knowing if he would welcome her or not. Mordecai convinced her however, saying, ***“Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”*** Esther 4:14.

And Esther's response was, ***“I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!”*** Esther 4:16. That is faith!

Esther was an orphan who became queen of a kingdom. It took boldness for her to fight for her people. It can't have been easy; it says that she fasted and prayed for three days before putting the plan into action. And then she was obedient, not knowing what the outcome would be. But it was more important for her to do what she needed to do. She trusted that God was in control.

The outcome of Esther's trust and boldness was that Ahasuerus welcomed her when she approached him, acquiesced [consented] to her pleading, and the Jewish people were saved from destruction. The wicked Haman was hanged on the gallows that he had built specifically for Mordecai.

Learn to trust in God unquestioningly. To believe that He loves you so much that you can rest in His perfect guidance and wisdom for your life. Esther did it simply, and it went more than well for her. You can trust just as simply and take that step of faith! Be obedient to do the things that God asks of you. To step outside of your comfort zone and live a life of faith.

- <https://bit.ly/2UPZ2Zt>

Now, what about us? What do we do when God calls us to take a step of faith? Do we say things like . . .

***“Are you sure Lord?”***

***“I can't do that?”***

***“Are you talking to me?”***

And we come up with all kinds of reasons why we can't do something, and the Lord tells us, **“Have I not sent you?”**

Folk's, if God has sent you then you can be assured that the work will be accomplished, not in your strength, but His!

And that is the last point we will be looking at this morning, ***THE ASSURANCE OF GOD!*** Let's read on and see what the Lord has to say next.

### VERSE 16

Notice what we see here. The key to victory was not going to be found in Gideon but the Lord who would work through Gideon.

Throughout the Scriptures we see God encouraging us in the work He has called us to do. He never leaves us alone. In fact, He empowers us by His Spirit to accomplish the work that He wants us to do.

That should be great assurance to each of us.

And let me say this, if it was easy, we would not need the Lord. If it was something we can accomplish on our own, how great would it be?

But we can't accomplish it on our own, we need the Lord if we want to bear fruit, much fruit in our lives. Apart from Him we can do nothing, at least nothing that He will accept!

And for some, they think, ***"If I only had more self-confidence, then I could accomplish this task."***

Please hear me out on this. We don't need more self-confidence we need more God-confidence!

We need to trust what He says to us and walk by faith because we know what God has promised us and that He is more than able to bring it to pass! You see, when God sends us for a work, He is with us in that work – don't forget that!



Let me share this with you because it is so important for us to have ***THE ASSURANCE OF GOD***. We are told,

Peter writes,

***He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature.*** - 2 Peter 1:4

God's promises are precious, magnificent, and have extreme value. The author of Hebrews admonishes us with these words:

***Do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.*** – Hebrews 10:35-36

Notice he says, “When you have done the will of God.” Promises are not given without a plan that involves faith and responsibility, though many times we have to wait for them to be revealed. A biblical promise is a declaration of God's intention to graciously bestow a gift upon an individual or a group of people. For example, Jesus said,

***In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.*** – John 14:2-3

He knows that at times we may feel tempted to wonder if He is really coming back for us, and so He gives us the promise of His sure return and also of His personal care to reassure us and calm our fears.

In 1 Kings, we read where Solomon has been praying. In fact, he has been blessing the Lord for His faithfulness. Then he makes this statement:

***Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised; not one word has failed of all His good promise, which He promised through Moses His servant. – 1 Kings 8:56***

God did exactly what He had promised to do, and Solomon was honoring the Lord by acknowledging it. He had a grateful heart, and he wanted the people to respond in gratitude also.

How many times have you prayed for something, asking God to meet a need that you have and to speak to you through His Word, and as you read the Bible, He provided assurance that He heard your prayers and will answer? This is a tremendous gift.

But instead of turning to Him with a grateful heart, did you pick up the telephone and call three or four people to tell them the news? So often we forget to thank the One person who provides the resources we need. I believe God's heart must hurt over our self-centered actions. We pray and trust Him and then forget to say, "Lord, thank You for answering my prayers. Thank You for being faithful to the promise You gave me in Your Word. Thank You for meeting my needs perfectly and on time." . . .

***He wants to develop our faith in Him.***

When we begin to trust God for simple answers to prayer, our faith increases. The more we read and study His Word, the more aware we become of His ability. One lesson learned at the feet of God builds on another until we have come to a point where we are talking through every decision we need to make with Him.

We also discover that if we ask Him to show us what we should do, He does it! He speaks to us through His Word. Then, when we meditate on Scripture, we begin to internalize His truth in our hearts. From this point, we express our needs and God responds by giving us insight and wisdom. He also promises to move in certain ways and provide for the needs we have.

Whatever God calls us to do, He will confirm it in His Word and He also will provide all that we need to accomplish the task. This is how our faith is built. He opens a door and we step through it. He opens another one, and once again we trust Him because we have learned that He is faithful, not some of the time, but all of the time!

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Please understand that God does not make mistakes. That means when He calls you, He is really calling you and you need to step out in faith and walk accordingly. It is that important.

I am not saying that it is not scary, it is. But can we trust in what God has shown us and walk by faith? We need to.

And it truly is a choice on our part.

We can have ***REST OR FEAR!***

And as we rest in the Lord, we can answer ***THE CALLING OF GOD!***

And I know things can get tough and we can say, ***THIS IS GOD'S FAULT!***

But our God is gracious and merciful, and we see that ***SECOND CALL OF GOD!***

Let us not make ***THE EXCUSE NOT TO GO!***

But may we trust in ***THE ASSURANCE OF GOD!***

Let me close with this story, and I pray it encourages you to walk by faith as God calls you. We are told,

When David Livingstone appeared at the University of Glasgow to receive the honorary Doctor of Law degree, he was received with silent respect. He was gaunt and weary from 16 years of exposure to Africa's hardships. One arm hung useless at his side because of an attack by a lion.

Livingstone asked, "Shall I tell you what supported me through all those years of exile among a people whose language I could not understand and whose attitude toward me was always uncertain and often hostile? It was this: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world'" (Matt 28:20).

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