

Remnant Life Church
June 7, 2026
Familiar Stories Retold:
Gideon-The Reluctant Warrior
Judges 6:1-6, 11-16

- The story of Gideon is a classic tale of God's power working through man's frailty
 - This is in fact the first truth of this morning from his story:
 - You do not need to be, nor can you be, perfect to serve God
 - I want to tell you something now that may surprise some of you: God knows you are not perfect
 - You know it; your husband or wife knows it, your kids know it, your boss knows it, and yes, even your pastor knows it – you are not perfect
 - And neither are any of them
 - But God does not require perfect to work in and through you – he only requires willing, surrendered and obedient
 - That is why we talk so much about surrendering your life here at RLC
- Background
 - The time of our story is between Joshua and King Saul
 - A time when Israel was a confederacy of tribes without a unifying leader
 - It was the time of the judges – individuals who God would periodically raise up to lead and deliver the people after they had, yet once again, backslidden away from God in their sin
 - Gideon is the 5th of 13 judges that the Israelites will see raised up over a span of 325 years...and certainly he the most unlikely of them all
 - The judges were the embodiment of God's mercy in response to Israel's cyclical pattern of behavior

READ – Judges 6:1-6, 11-16

- If you were ever to be depressed by the repetition of a cycle of sin in your life, you only need to look to the Israelites to understand how it impacts your life.
 - We cannot point a finger of accusation at them, for how prone are we also to the same pattern of behavior?
 - And if we feel any sense of frustration at their ongoing rebellion against God even though they have seen His hand of mercy and might demonstrated time after time...
 - ...can the question of how God must see our ungrateful and sinful hearts be overlooked?
 - Yet it is His very nature of justice and mercy that should continually drive us to our knees in repentance
 - But the lesson must be learned

- Repeated sin will always bring its justifiable consequences
 - Not because we serve a cruel or vindictive God
- In fact, quite the opposite...
 - We serve a good and loving God who has our best interests at heart and loves us too much to allow us to get away with our sins
- That is why we read in **Heb 12:5** that He disciplines those He loves

The pattern of this cycle of sin is a common one

- And it has not really changed from Gideon's time to ours
 - It begins with sin which leads to judgement
 - At some point we cry out for mercy
 - In His love God delivers us and then we enjoy the peace that only He can provide

That is exactly what we see in the story of Gideon

1. **6:1a** - ...*the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord* – turning away from God and worshipping idols
2. **6:1b** - ...*for seven years the Lord gave them into the hands of the Midianites* – punishment: by allowing a pagan nation to conquer or harass them
3. **6:7** - ...*when the Israelites cried to the Lord because of Midian* – they eventually turn back to God
4. **6:8** - ...*He sent them a prophet* – this is an unnamed prophet, but God used these special speakers to call the people to repentance which they finally did
5. **7:1-25** – *God delivers Israel* – always by His hand

In this particular time of Israel's history, the people are under a punishment of God involving the Midianites

- The land of Midian and the Midianites figure somewhat prominently in the judgment of God much in the same way the Philistines and Babylonians did
- The name Midian comes from the son of Abraham born to Keturah; his wife after Sarah died; 6 children listed (**Gen 25**)
- The Midianites were, among other things, merchants trader of goods, and shepherds
 - It was a band of Midianites who bought Joseph from his brothers and sold him into slavery in Potiphar's house (**Gen 37:36**)
- Midian is the same land that Moses fled to after killing the Egyptian (**Ex 2:15**)
 - Where he meets Jethro
 - Marries his daughter Zipporah
- If you read the entire story of Gideon in the 6th, 7th, and 8th chapters, you will see that for 7 years the Midianites have been attacking and pillaging God's people
 - The Israelites were apparently powerless to stop them in part because they were utilizing a brand new, state-of-the-art combat strategy – camels (**Jdgs 6:5**)

- The use of camels in warfare brought advantages that had never before been available
- Camels average around 6-7 feet in height at the shoulder meaning a rider would be 8-9 feet off the ground
- The male Dromedary camel (indigenous to that region) weighed between 880 and 1500 lbs
- They can sprint up to 40 mph

And so, at harvest time throughout the year, the Midianites would come in on camels and take everything they could carry destroying whatever they could not

- This was the land that God had given to His people
 - And because of their sin they were reduced to hiding out in caves and cisterns to even have a chance of survival
 - It was a hard lesson but one that needed to be understood
 - Without God the Israelites were powerless
 - And so too are we today in the face of increasing evil and godlessness
 - And this went on for 7 long years

Until they were finally ready to confess their sin and turn back to God

- It took a prophet of God to get them to understand that their sin had brought them to this place
- I don't think it needed to take 7 years for them to be delivered
 - I believe we often don't need to stay in the difficult places of God's judgment for as long as we do
 - Not if we immediately humble ourselves and confess our sin

- And so our "hero" now enters the picture, but this is not a man who would engender confidence in anyone
 - The Israelites had taken to hiding when they harvested and prepared their crops and in particular when they threshed their grain
 - Gideon is hiding in a wine press doing just that (6:11)
 - Normally the threshing of wheat is done outdoors so that the chaff would blow away from the grain
 - But Gideon is being forced to do this in a sunken winepress
 - It would have been a hole deep enough that Gideon would have been hidden from view
 - It is at this point that an angel appears and says, *Mighty hero, the Lord is with you.* (6:12)
 - The KJV reads *...you mighty man of valor*
 - God obviously saw something that no one else could
- And that brings us to the second truth of this lesson –
 - Like with Gideon, God sees you for who He has made you to be
 - Not for where you might be in that moment or was in the past
 - We see this throughout the Bible
 - He saw Moses as the leader of a nation, not as a stuttering murderer
 - He saw David as the king of His people, not as an adulterer

- He saw Paul as the first great missionary to the world, not as a tyrannical zealot
 - And he sees you this morning as, like Gideon, a mighty warrior to do battle against the evil of sin
- But Gideon's reaction is one that we can all certainly identify with from time to time
 - In essence he said, "Who, me?!"
 - My clan is the weakest in the tribe of Manasseh
 - I am the least of my family
 - Gideon tried to disqualify himself before he even got started BUT God saw Him differently than he saw himself!
 - What was God's response? I WILL BE WITH YOU (6:16)
 - Whenever God calls you to a particular task He will always go with you!
- Gideon is one of the gutsiest man in the Bible
 - He actually puts God to the test 3 times in order to prove Himself!
 - Read these in **Judges 6:21-40**
 - And God allows him to do it
 - The closest to this happening anywhere else in the Bible is Abraham bargaining with God trying to save Sodom
 - 50 down to 10 but only 4 could be found – (**Gen 18:22-32**)
- God's willingness to comply with Gideon's requests is a perfect demonstration of His patience with us
 - Longsuffering (KJV)
 - Slow to anger (NIV)
 - We need to remove from our thinking the image of an angry God just looking for a chance to zap us with a bolt of lightning
 - But was that not the picture for many growing up in churches that taught obedience to God was out of fear of punishment and not in response to His great love
 - No wonder so many struggle with **I John 4:8** *God is Love*
- Gideon is finally convinced
 - But God knows the hearts of His people (**Judg 7:2**)
 - Gideon rallies the people and 32,000 men reply (**7:3**)
 - God pared it down to 10,000 and then to 300
 - And just like at Jericho, God gave them the victory without a battle of men taking place – ONLY BY HIS HAND
- But watch how easily the Israelites fell back into that same destructive cycle again
 - In gratitude, the people want Gideon to rule over them (**8:22**)
 - He actually gives the right answer that God is the ruler of the people not man (**8:23**)
 - Instead Gideon asks for a tribute of gold (**8:23**)
 - 43 pounds of gold is given – today's market \$2.23 million
 - With it he makes a solid gold ephod

- Now this all sounds good but Gideon is putting himself in a place he does not belong
 - God declared in **Ex 28** that an ephod was a holy garment to be worn only by the high priest
 - And because of that, the Israelites started to worship the ephod (**8:27**)
 - They were still holding on to their past and their lack of faith in God that had plagued them since leaving Egypt
 - It remained a problem for Gideon and the people for the rest of his life (**8:27**)
- And yet, in spite of that sin God gave them 40 years of peace (**8:28**)
- Immediately after Gideon's death the people fell back into idol worship (**8:33-34**)
- Gideon was never able to fully embrace what God desired for him and his flaws remained prominent throughout his life
 - But he was certainly not alone
 - Not one of the "great men" of the OT were perfect
 - Abraham and Isaac lied about their wives
 - Moses was a murderer
 - David was an adulterer and murderer
 - Solomon allowed and even participated in idol worship
 - Samson, the 13th and final judge, could not control his lusts
 - And every one of Jesus' disciples continually struggled with doubt eventually abandoning Him in the Garden of Gethsemane
- But just like with Gideon, God still accomplished His will through them all because what was done was through the power of might of God, not the man
- After Solomon had finished dedicating the temple, God appeared to Him and spoke these words...

2 Chron 7:14-15 - *...if my people who are called by My name will humble themselves, pray, seek My face, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land. My eyes will now be open and My ears attentive to prayer from this place.*

I believe this mandate is not only for Solomon and the nation of Israel of that time, but for every nation and every church today

God will work through any person, through every church to heal any nation

- But how?
 1. If we humble ourselves
 2. Pray
 3. If we seek His face
 4. And if we turn from and confess our sin