

# Gideon Pt. 1

## Judges 6

Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2024

1. Have you ever met a camel? Where? Have you ridden one – what was it like (the camel is the secret weapon of the Midianites in this story)?

*Judges 6:1-6 The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. <sup>2</sup>Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. <sup>3</sup>Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. <sup>4</sup>They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. <sup>5</sup>They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. <sup>6</sup>Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.*

2. Have you ever given up on someone? Why? The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and He gave them into the hands of the Midianites. The story of Gideon is about God bringing the people back. What would need to happen for you to forgive the people in your life?
3. When the Israelites were under attack, they hid in the mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. When you are under attack, where's your place of safety – it might be a room, a place, an environment. Why is this your go-to place?

**Judges 6: 7-10** *When the Israelites cried out to the Lord because of Midian,<sup>8</sup> he sent them a prophet, who said, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.<sup>9</sup> I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land.<sup>10</sup> I said to you, ‘I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.’ But you have not listened to me.”*

- 4. Why did the Israelites cry out to the Lord? God had given them their freedom and land to live on, but they did evil in the eyes of the Lord – they worshipped the gods of the Amorite. God has given us our freedom – do we do evil in the eyes of the Lord? What gods do we worship in the twenty-first century. Do we listen to God?**

**Judges 6:11-16** *The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.<sup>12</sup> When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.”*

<sup>13</sup> *“Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.”*

<sup>14</sup> *The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?”*

<sup>15</sup> *“Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”*

<sup>16</sup> *The Lord answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.”*

- 5. How does Gideon describe himself in verse 15? On a scale of 1 -10 would you describe yourself as weak or strong? What does Paul tell us about the ‘weak’ in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31:**

<sup>26</sup> *Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many*

*were influential; not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup> But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. <sup>28</sup> God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no one may boast before him. <sup>30</sup> It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. <sup>31</sup> Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”*

- also Philippians 2:12-13

**does this encourage you?**

**6. Read John 6:1-13. How does Jesus use the gift of the boy? We may feel that we are weak or have little to offer, but God transforms Gideon into a ‘Mighty Warrior’ and the loaves and fishes into a banquet. What can God do with the offering of your life?**

**Optional – The boy gave his loaves and fishes to Jesus. In Judges 6:17-24 Gideon makes a meal for the angel, which is accepted as a burnt offering to God. As an aside, what was your worse burnt offering? Did the people you make it for eat it?**

**Judges 6:25-27** <sup>25</sup> *That same night the Lord said to him, “Take the second bull from your father’s herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father’s altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. <sup>26</sup> Then build a proper kind of<sup>[d]</sup> altar to the Lord your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering.”*  
<sup>27</sup> *So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the Lord told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the townspeople, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.*

**7. Gideon is given his first task – to tear down his fathers alter to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it, and then to build an altar to the**

**Lord. Is it easier to witness at home to the people who know us the best, or to strangers?**

- 8. The meaning of the name Gideon can be chopper or hacker – Gideon hacked down the Asherah pole. Do you have a ‘nick’ name – what is it and why?**

*Optional – read Judges 6:28-35. The people are really angry and one of the 10 men that Gideon used to destroy Baals altar dubbed Gideon in. They call for Gideon to be brought out and be put to death. Gideon’s father tells the crowd that if Baal is really a god, he can defend himself. Go you think that Gideon’s father realised that worshipping Baal was wrong, but was too scared to speak up? Are we often too scared to speak out when we know things are wrong? What would strengthen you?*

**Judges 6: 36-40** *Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised—<sup>37</sup> look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.”<sup>38</sup> And that is what happened.*

*Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.*

<sup>39</sup>*Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew.”<sup>40</sup> That night God did so.*

*Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.*

- 9. In verse 34 we read that the Spirit of God came on Gideon, but then he starts to doubt and sets God a test by asking for a sign. How often, when God calls us to be a ‘mighty warrior’, do we have doubts? What would stop us being fearful? How can we encourage each other?**

- 10. Take time to pray and support one another to be ‘mighty warriors’. Are there any times in the coming week which you are worried about? Commit to praying for each other.**