



Week of June 10, 2019: Judges Series: Gideon (Judges 6-8)

Discussion Questions Set #1

“The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country... Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.” (Judges 6:1-6)

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

1. By my count, this is the fifth time that the Judges cycle – Israel consuming pagan culture to the point they ceased creating and cultivating Godly culture and found themselves oppressed by a foreign nation and in need of deliverance – has kicked off in the book of Judges. Why do you think we see this consistent pattern?
2. Why do you think the people of Israel were unable to break this pattern?
3. What do you think it was about pagan culture that was so intriguing to the people of Israel that they were willing to risk significant oppression in order to pursue it?
4. What specific aspects of our present culture do you think often hold sway over followers of Jesus, pulling them into patterns of oppression and a need for deliverance?
5. Why does the consumption of culture so regularly lead to a failure to create culture?

Discussion Questions Set #2

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart” (Jeremiah 1:5)

“The Lord is with you, mighty warrior”, exclaimed the angel, “go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand” (Judges 6:12,14).

“Not by might nor by power, but by [God’s] Spirit” (Zechariah 4:6).

In sermon, we understood that, much like the other judges we’ve encountered, Gideon was another unlikely hero. He was a farmer from a small family in the weakest clan in all of Israel, only in a covert way defying the Midianites. One of the interesting things that the angel’s address tells us is that God knew Gideon as a mighty warrior, even before he had ever acted as a warrior. God knew Gideon’s true nature even before he himself knew it.

1. How does it make you feel to know that God knows you even better than you know yourself? Is this comforting or frightening?
2. In our text, God seems to know what Gideon will one day become and uses language that calls him into this future. What might it mean for us if the same is true for each one of us?
3. Gideon is told to “go in the strength [he had] and save Israel”. Gideon professedly comes from the weakest of the weak, so how can he possibly save Israel from the Midianites in the strength he had? What is the key to “Gideon’s strength”?
4. Though some suggest that Gideon’s fleece tests show a lack of faith, in sermon, I suggested that they show Gideon’s desire to know that the plans forming in his heart were of God and not of his own making. Why is it important to “test” for confirmation of the source of plans that form in our hearts? Have you ever “placed a fleece before the Lord” to test if a thought, idea or plan were of His making?
5. God whittles Gideon’s army down from 32,000 men to 300 men in preparation for an attack on the Midianite army. What does this whittling show us about Gideon’s strength?
6. When you think of the “strength” of the church in Canadian culture right now, what comments might you make? Think of the “strength” of Hillside in relation to the rest of Mount Albert. What does it look like to go in the strength we have and accomplish God’s purposes for us?



Discussion Questions Set #3

“The Israelites said to Gideon, “Rule over us—you, your son and your grandson—because you have saved us from the hand of Midian.” But Gideon told them, “I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you.” (Judges 8:22-23)

“All Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family” (Judges 8:27).

Gideon refused the Israelites’ suggestion that he become king over them, instead directing that God ought to be king over His people. This shows that not only did Gideon understand his insignificance in the circumstances, but that all credit for what happened ought to go to God. Up to this point in Gideon’s story, we see his continual obedience to the call of God, yet in the very next verses, we learn that Gideon created an ephod – an idol-like object – from the plunder taken from the Midianites. This ephod becomes trouble for Gideon’s family, eventually leading to another installment of the Judges cycle.

1. Why do you think that after such obedience, Gideon lets down his guard permitting disobedience to seep in? What does this teach us about the power of oppositional culture?
2. Think of the culture we are creating. What does our obedience look like and what snares might we be setting for future generations? Can you think of any cultural snares set for us by previous generations of Christ-followers?
3. In sermon, I suggested that this reality ought to encourage us to pursue 100% obedience, knowing that grace and mercy await us if we fall short. What practices ought to be present in our lives that assist us in pursuing 100% obedience, rather than settling for a 99% obedience?