

## Pastor Chris Carr: Sermon Title: The Places God Finds Us- Life Of Gideon Pt. 1 – June 14, 2026

**MAIN POINT:** Compromise & Self-Reliance were a problem in Gideons day and in ours! God's solution has always been the same: REPENTANCE & DEPENDENCE ON HIM!

- *"If dependence is the goal, weakness is a gain!"* (attributed to Jordan Barkman)

### A | Exiled At Home

<sup>1</sup> ***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***. Judges 6:1-6 (NIV)

- Judges is not a *faith-filled* book. It's rather bleak.
  - In fact, the repeated refrain throughout this time is... *tragically...* ***"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit."*** (21:25). God's people had come down with a bad case of **Moral Relativism** (*"morality" meaning right vs. wrong, is relative only to the individuals understanding of "truth"*). **It's a sickness we know all too well today.**
  - As a result, things in the **COMPROMISED** land are not faring well.

#### 6v1: ***"The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD..."***

- Israel does evil in the eyes of the Lord, God sends judgement (Fatherly discipline intended to turn His children back), they cry out, God sends a judge (i.e. deliverer). **Repeat**.
- You know, **this is actually the "pattern" we see throughout Scripture & human history.**
  - Within the nature of the fallen human heart lies the desire for independence & self-sufficiency. We're bent towards rebellion. We see it in Eden. We see it in the Wilderness. We see it in the Promised Land. We see it in Exile. **We see it in the Church.**
- ***"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit."*** Judges 21:25
- **Actually... its not entirely true. Israel did have A KING – God.** They just forsook Him.
  - Every time we try to *overthrow God*, we end up enslaved to *someone* or *something* else.

**TRUTH:** When we disregard created order & design, the results are DEVASTATING (for us).

- Israel had "no king" in those days, so what happened? **EVERYONE became "a king"**.
- **The Result? Everyone did what they thought was "right". Moral Relativism.** Each "king" begins to define truth according to what they think is best... how does that turn out? **NOT GOOD**.
- **Re: Judges 6...** It led the Israelites to a dead end, enslaved & cowering in fear. **Same is true today!**
  - **Paul spoke of this when he wrote:** <sup>20</sup> *When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.* <sup>21</sup> *What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? **Those things result IN DEATH!*** Romans 6:20-21 (NIV)
- **INDEPENDENCE leads to ruin.**
  - **TRUTH:** When we disregard created order & design, the results are DEVASTATING (for us).

The **kings** of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against **the LORD** and against his anointed, saying, ***"Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles."*** Psalms 2:2-3 (NIV)

- **The Israelites say:** BREAK THE CHAINS, cut the strings, we want to be FREE.
  - But what happens? They end up enslaved. They are exiled at home, hiding in mountain caves for fear of a foreign enemy. We're doing the same thing, church.
- We trade the **PROMISED LAND** for the **COMPROMISED LAND**.
- **Spurgeon:** *"I believe that one reason why the church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church."*

## B | The Lord's Mighty Warrior

Midian ***so impoverished*** the Israelites that ***they cried out to the LORD for help***. Judges 6:6 (NIV)

Solutions unfold when God's people begin **CRYING OUT**.

Look how God responds: <sup>7</sup> *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.***" Judges 6:7-10 (NIV)

- There can be **no revival** without **reformation** – "Nothing changes if nothing changes.", right?
- And when God can't get His **people** to listen, he often begins by speaking to a **person**.
- **In this case, Gideon:** <sup>11</sup> *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.**"* Judges 6:11-12 (NIV)
- **This is where God finds Gideon.** Hidden in the winepress, protecting what little they had left.
  - The obvious line which stands out in this section is, ***"The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."***
  - **Note The Paradox:** Where would you expect God to find a "mighty man"? Perhaps in a military barracks? Maybe on the frontlines defending the nation? **No, not Gideon.**  
**Note:** God looks & finds in places of "low visibility" (#UpsideDownKingdom)
    - **Jospeh** – found in a jail cell
    - **Moses** – found at the FAR SIDE of the wilderness
    - **David** – found in the pasture with the sheep
    - **Daniel** – found in courts of captivity, serving a tyrant
    - **John The Baptist** – found in Judean Wilderness

Now we come to this phrase: ***"The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."*** 6v12

- We know that Gideon is speaking to God personally and directly (not to be misunderstood with an ordinary angel) because the passage goes on to tell us.
  - <sup>22</sup> ***...Gideon realized*** that it was the angel of ***the LORD***, he exclaimed, "Alas, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD ***face to face!***" <sup>23</sup> ***But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die."*** Judges 6:22-23 (NIV)
  - This is also very similar to Isaiah Chapter 6 – ***"Woe is me!"*** Isaiah 6:5

***"The LORD IS with you..."***. Pay attention to the **VERB TENSE – "IS"; present tense**.

- This is followed by a spectacular pronouncement: ***"...mighty warrior."***
  - I love how the Lord is speaking this truth over the life of Gideon. This is prophetic in nature. We know from context & clues within the passage that Gideon doesn't quite live up to this title... so the question is, **WHY DOES THE LORD USE IT**, especially to start?

- I'd like to suggest, God is speaking to the man Gideon **CAN** become!

Isn't this so often the felt tension of the follower of Jesus? You find yourself caught between the person **you are** and the one **you're called to be** – Jesus called Peter “his rock”, before his failure.

- **“I AM” WITH YOU.** I have come to call this “The Chief Promise” of Scripture. It appears ALL THROUGHOUT the Bible, Old & New Testament. I mark it with a “CP” in the margin of my Bible.
  - **Judges 6:12, “The LORD IS with you, mighty warrior.”** Before Gideon is told **what TO DO**, he is told what **IS TRUE**. The Lord **IS** with him. It is not stated as a condition to be met, but as a statement of fact. God **IS** with you.

**Church, what were Jesus' final words in the Great Commission?** *“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* **Matthew 28:20 (NIV).** Consider that the Great Commission is bookended with **AUTHORITY & ASSURANCE.**

- *“All authority has been given...” & “I am with you always...”*

**Gideon's Response:** *“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.”** Judges 6:13 (NIV)*

**Lets Make a Few Observations:** Gideon's response is encouraging in the sense that it's relatable for us!

- **Observation #1:** Gideon doesn't yet know who He is speaking to. Note the *lower case* lord.
- **Observation #2: “BUT IF...”** The chief promise of God's presence has not broken through the fallow ground of his doubting heart.
  - **HE WONDERS:** How can I have **presence**, given the **present**?
  - **Don't we do this all the time?** When trouble or adversity strike, we assume God has abandoned us. We feel deserted in the desert.
  - **Funny though;** when we feel alone, do we ever consider that perhaps **we** have abandoned Him? Maybe **WE STRAYED & HE STAYED**? Remember, God is lovingly trying to draw His people back to Him.
- **Observation #3: “Where are all his wonders...?”** If we're honest, who hasn't asked this question? We read the Bible, a book overflowing with supernatural accounts of God doing GREAT & MIGHTY deeds... of seas splitting, miraculous provision and prison cells shaking... and we wonder, “Where is that stuff today?”  
**There can be no revival without reformation. See Judges 6:7-10, repentance required!**
- **Again:** *“I believe that one reason why the church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church.”*
- We want the kingdom of heaven while playing by the rules of this earth. We want the promised land with compromised hearts. Church, this is our invitation: **Repentance & Dependence.**

## C | Go In The Strength You Have

*<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.”* **Judges 6:14-16 (NIV)**

- **The Lord is not blind to Gideon's short comings.** He is keenly aware that he is unqualified, under-resourced and generally unprepared to do what he's being tasked to do. **And so are we!**

**YET STILL: “Go in the strength you have... Am I not calling you?”**

- **TRUTH: God does not “need us”, He wants us. There’s a big difference.**
  - **God is calling YOU.** He anticipates your weakness and wants you anyways.
  - **The “High Call”** – God doesn’t set the bar at a hard level, but at an IMPOSSIBLE height.
- **In other words, the task requires total dependence on HIM, not on ourselves.**
  - **MAIN POINT: Compromise & Self-Reliance were a problem in Gideons day and in ours! God’s solution has always been the same: REPENTANCE & DEPENDENCE ON HIM!**
    - *“If dependence is the goal, weakness is a gain!”*

**Gideon, just like Moses his forefather, objected (again)...**

- <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.”* Judges 6:15 (NIV)
  - **I wonder how many in this room are like me – well versed in the art of convincing God rather than being convinced BY God?**
    - **“Pick ME Lord, Pick ME!”** – an attempt to speed God’s hand and get His attention.
    - **“Not ME Lord... Surely NOT ME!”** – an attempt to slow or redirect Gods hand and divert His attention elsewhere.
  - **Both can be made to sound humble...** but God sees right through it. **It. IS. PRIDE.**
    - **Consider:** <sup>11</sup> *The LORD said to him, “**Who gave human beings their mouths? ... Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the LORD?**”* <sup>12</sup> **NOW GO; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”** Exodus 4:11-12 (NIV)
    - **This requires TRUST.** “Yes sir” is the humble answer.

**Those Whom God Convinces:**

<sup>8</sup> *Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.* <sup>9</sup> *But he said to me, “**My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.**”* Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my **weaknesses**, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. <sup>10</sup> *That is why, for Christ’s sake, **I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties.***

**For when I am weak, then I am strong.** 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 (NIV)

- **Conclusion:** Church, the Lord is calling today: **“Go in the strength you have...”** Judges 6:14
  - **Today, God is speaking to YOU. What is He asking of you?**
    - **To Repent?** (to turn from sin & compromise)
    - **To Respond?** (to obey & meet the call with faith)
    - **To Rely?** (to trust & depend on HIS grace, power, provision, etc)

**Weekly Challenge:** *take a picture or see sermon notes!*

1. **Read Exodus 3-4 & Judges 6 this week.** Meditate on the rich truth of God’s Word. Ask God to speak to you about His “High Call” to obey. What “qualified” these two men, and what is God looking for from His church today in light of the Great Call we have received?
2. **Ask God for one practical action step** you can take this week. Ask God to reveal anything He wants to address in these three categories: To **Repent** (turn from sin), **Respond** (obedience), & **Rely** (trusting in Him, not ourselves).
3. **Lastly, create margin in your schedule this week to CRY OUT:** Reflect on 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 & Matthew 28:16-20. Make time seek God and pray on behalf of yourself, your church, & beyond!
  - a. **PRAYER SUMMIT:** Wednesday @ 7pm