

Power Hour Lesson Summary for June 11, 2017

“Gideon’s Call”

Lesson Text: Judges 6:11-18

Background Scripture: Judges 6-8

Devotional Reading: Psalm 83:1-12, 18

Judges 6:11-18 (NIV)

¹¹ 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. ¹²

When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.”

¹³ “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.”

¹⁴ 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?”

¹⁵ “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.”

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

¹⁷ Gideon replied, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. ¹⁸ Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you.”

And the Lord said, “I will wait until you return.”

TODAY’S LESSON AIMS

Learning Facts: To describe the encounter between Gideon and the “angel of the Lord.”

Biblical Principle: To trust in the Lord, no matter if feeling unqualified for a task because of perceived inadequacies.

Daily Application: To allow God to lead you in building personal confidence.

INTRODUCTION

Against All Odds

The odds seemed to have been stacked against her, having been born into slavery in Maryland in 1822. As a child, she was often beaten and whipped by various masters. She received a head injury when a slave owner threw a heavy metal weight at another slave and hit her by mistake. The result was a lifelong struggle with epilepsy, dizziness, and pain.

Who would not expect such a person to live and die in obscurity? But that was not the case for Harriet Tubman! She escaped from slavery, but risked recapture as she returned to lead numerous missions to rescue approximately 70 enslaved family and friends. Against all odds and led by a strong Christian faith, Harriet Tubman overcame slavery, injury, abuse, and disability. History now knows her as an abolitionist, a humanitarian, and a Union spy who helped guide a raid that freed 700 slaves during the American Civil War.

Very few people who live in Western democracies will ever face the challenges of a Harriet Tubman. Even so, we all experience what it's like to have the odds stacked against us at one time or another. Today we will look at a judge of Israel who seemed to have little chance of success—until God stepped in!

LESSON BACKGROUND

Time: 1191 B.C.

Place: Ophrah

The lessons for this month feature four of the six major judges in the book of Judges. The previous lesson was about Deborah and Barak. This study moves directly to the next judge—Gideon, a member of the tribe of Manasseh. The final verse of Judges 5 states that Israel had rest for 40 years after Barak defeated Sisera and the Canaanites. During that time the memory of the previous oppression began to fade. A new generation arose and began to worship other gods.

Again God allowed others to oppress Israel—the Midianites, the Amalekites, and the sons or children of the east (Judges 6:3). The Midianites were descendants of Abraham and Keturah, his wife after Sarah died (Genesis 25:2). When Moses fled from Egypt he settled in Midian and married a daughter of a priest in Midian (Exodus 2:15, 16, 21).

The Amalekites had Esau as their progenitor (Genesis 36:10, 16). The Amalekites attacked the Israelites after they left Egypt and as they were approaching Sinai (Exodus 17:8-16). That was the battle when Israel would prevail only when Moses raised his hands. After the battle Moses stated that there would be war against Amalek from generation to generation.

These two groups, plus children of the east (a general name for eastern groups of Arabs), came against Israel in great numbers. For seven years they came and destroyed the crops and livestock of the Israelites (Judges 6:1, 4).

After seven years the Israelites cried to the Lord (Judges 6:7). The Lord sent a prophet to remind Israel of what He had done for them when they came out of Egypt and to rebuke them for their disobedience (vs. 8-10). This condemnation by God's prophet is immediately before the text for today. God then moved to prepare another judge to deliver his penitent people.

It had been 47 years since Deborah and Barak, with God's help, subdued the Canaanites: 40 years of peace (Judges 5:31), followed by the 7 years of oppression (6:1). The approximate date for the events of this lesson has been determined to be about 1191 BC.

What Do You Think?

- How can we resist thinking that God has abandoned us? What will happen if we don't?
- What have you found to be the most reliable indicators of God's will? Why?
- What are some ways to overcome feelings of inadequacy when sensing God's call to a task?

POINTS TO PONDER

1. God is always with us. (Judges 6:11-13)
2. We must always be obedient to God's commands. (Judges 6:14)
3. Rely on God for your strength, not your own. (Judges 6:15, 17, 18)
4. God will give us victory over our enemies. (Judges 6:16)

CONCLUSION

What's Your Excuse?

Gideon was called by God for a special task, and the man went to work to deliver his people. God had Gideon employ an unusual strategy (see Judges 7:16-25), and the sword of the Lord won a great victory.

If God were to tell you that He had special plans for you, how would you respond? Perhaps your excuses sound like some of these: I'm too weak; I'm tired; I don't know what to say; I can't do it alone; Everyone is against me; Nobody cares about me; This world is changing so fast; Satan is making my life miserable; I just feel lost; I can't do anything right!

Like Gideon, we may be tempted to answer a perceived call from God with excuses. But each of these excuses and more are answered in promises God gives to those who trust Him. When God calls, He also provides the resources for us to answer!

PRAYER

- Thank You, heavenly Father, for the promise of Your presence in the battles against sin and for giving the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ—regardless. We pray this in His name, Jesus. Amen.

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

- God plus you is a majority!

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

- Next week's lesson is "**Jephthah,**" where we learn that people who have had disagreements can unite to serve God's purpose. Study Judges 11:1-40.