

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 6: God Chooses Gideon

Bible Text

Judges 6:1-6, 11-16

Memory Verse

“Be strong and take heart, and have no fear of them: for it is the Lord your God who is going with you; He will not take away His help from you.”
(Deuteronomy 31:6)

Word List

idol: something made by man that is worshiped and praised instead of God

scorched-earth plan: a fighting plan in which all the houses, crops, etc., in an area are destroyed so that the enemy cannot use them

In 2019, the Christian Song of the Year began with these words, “I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I’m not enough.” Perhaps Gideon and the people of Israel would have written words like that. People have always been tempted to do things our own way. Then hard times come when sin ruins our lives. Sometimes we feel hopeless in our own strength. We think we are helpless.

We all ask God “why” sometimes. We want to know where He is when we face hard times. We want to know why He does not rescue us. We wonder why He lets us suffer. The thing we need to know is that God is always with us. We can never go so far that God is not there. He is there even when we cannot see His hand or understand His plan. God’s ways do not change with time. If we believe what He says, we find the strength to obey and live for Him.

Israel Did Not Listen to God

(Judges 6:1-6)

- 1 Then the people of Israel sinned in the eyes of the Lord. And the Lord gave them into the hands of Midian for seven years.**
- 2 Midian was stronger than Israel. Because of Midian the people of Israel made big caves in the sides of the mountains where they could live which were safe places for themselves.**
- 3 For when Israel had planted seeds, the Midianites and Amalekites and the people of the east would come and fight against them.**
- 4 They would set up their tents beside them and destroy the food of the field as far as Gaza. They would leave no food for Israel, and no sheep, cattle or donkeys.**
- 5 They would come with their animals and their tents. They were like locusts, there were so**

many of them. There were too many of them and their camels to number. And they came into the land to destroy it.

6 So Israel became very poor because of Midian. The people of Israel cried to the Lord.

God had warned Israel two hundred years before. He said two bad things would happen if they worshiped **idols** and did not follow His commands. They would be under the power of strangers, and their homes would be ruined (Deuteronomy 28). But He also said He would bless them if they obeyed Him. But the people did not listen to God's warning. They did not trust God enough to obey Him. They did not trust His promises.

God did not ignore their sin. He used Midian to call the people back to Him. He wanted to teach them that blessings come from obedience, but sin brings ruin. The lesson was a hard one. Midian had more people than Israel had. Midian did not fight like other people. They planned to starve Israel and make them too weak to fight. This is called the **scorched-earth plan**. They destroyed all the homes so there was no place to live. Every year they burned the crops so there was no food to eat.

But the people of Israel did not return to God. They worshiped idols. They tried to live by their own strength. Every year they

planted again. And every year Midian ruined the crops and land. The people of Israel dug caves to live in. They became poor. Finally, they cried out to God.

God Listened to Israel

(Judges 6:11-16)

11 Then the angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak tree in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite. The angel came as Joash's son Gideon was beating out grain where grapes are crushed, to save it from the Midianites.

12 The angel of the Lord showed himself to Gideon and said to him, "The Lord is with you, O powerful soldier."

13 Gideon said to him, "O sir, if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all His powerful works which our fathers told us about? They said, 'Did not the Lord bring us out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has left us alone. He has put us under the power of Midian."

14 The Lord looked at him and said, "Go in this strength of yours. And save Israel from the power of Midian. Have I not sent you?"

15 Gideon said to Him, "O Lord, how can I save Israel? See, my family is the least in Manasseh. And I am the youngest in my father's house."

16 But the Lord said to him, "For sure I will be with you. You will destroy Midian as one man."

When the people of God call out to Him, He always answers. First, God sent a man to speak for Him (Judges 6:7-10). We do not know this man's name. He told the people what God had done for them. He told them how they had not done what God wanted them to do. He made it clear that the reason they were suffering was those idols and the sin in their lives.

Maybe Gideon was thinking about this as he tried to save a small crop of grain. He was down in a pit where there was no wind to blow the trash out of the grain. It would have been much easier to stand on a hill and let the wind blow the trash away. But Gideon was hiding in that pit.

Then the angel of the Lord came to him. This angel was God in human form. He sat down under an oak tree where Gideon was working. This little grain crop was precious food for his family. No one in Gideon's family helped him save this food.

Then the Lord said, "The Lord is with you, O powerful soldier." Gideon did not believe God was with him. And he did not believe that he was a powerful soldier. Sometimes, if we are honest, we are like Gideon. We ask the same two questions Gideon asked.

First, Gideon asked, "If God is with us, why do we suffer?" But God did not answer Gideon, and He does not explain Himself to us either. Even if God explained His plan to us, we would not believe it (Habakkuk 1:5). God's ways are so much higher than our ways that we cannot understand them. Even if God had told Gideon the end of the story, Gideon would not have believed it.

So, God said, "Go in this strength of yours." God had made Gideon strong, but Gideon did not believe it. His second question was, "Who am I?" We all think we are powerless against evil. Even Moses felt that way (Exodus 3:11). Gideon thought that he was an unimportant person.

God always surprises us. He called David, a shepherd boy, to be king of Israel. Jesus called twelve unimportant men to be His closest followers. He called Saul, who fought against God's people. He used Saul to become Paul and point the Jews to Jesus. And today, He is still surprising us. He puts strength in us we do not know we have.

Things to Think About

1. Have you been in a place of fear and hurt, hiding from God's call on your life?
2. Do you see yourself as God sees you? Do you believe what God says about you?
3. Gideon has two questions: "Why, God?" and "Who am I?" Have you asked those questions in your life?
4. How different would your days be if you believed God enough to do things His way?

Things to Remember

God did not directly answer Gideon's questions. His answer then and now is, "For sure, I will be with you." This was His answer to Moses, David, the first twelve followers, and Saul. And it is His answer to us today. We see ourselves as unimportant. God sees us as important enough to send His Son to die for us. We see ourselves as weak. God sees us as strong in the strength of the Lord. We see ourselves as sinful and unworthy. God has forgiven us and wants to use us to point others to Christ.

The victory is ours when we believe God. We must trust Him enough to trust His ways and His Word. We cannot have God's blessings unless we do things His way.

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