

Month of Opportunity

Week 2

Gideon and The Opportunity to Lead.

The scenario.

Judges 6:1-16 (NIV2011)

¹ The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites.

² Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds.

³ Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.

⁷ When the Israelites cried out to the LORD because of Midian,

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.”

Introducing a new Leader

1. Sometimes leaders are found in the pits.

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."

- a. In a wine press so the Midianites couldn't take his food. Act of desperation, but sensible. V11
- b. Pardon me, Excuse me - - Hey what are you saying? V13
- c. The question – why is this happening if God is God? Why is there a drought if we are praying to God? V13

2. Sometimes leaders don't think they are leaders

Notice here: How can I? V15.

But notice to the answer is: "I will be with you v15"

It's not what Gideon can do but what God AND Gideon can do. It is the same with leadership in our own context. People don't want to be leaders for whatever reason, maybe it is a lack of confidence that they can do the job. But it isn't you doing it, it is you and God doing it.

3. Sometimes leaders do weird things.

Weird thing 1

Judges 6:36-40 (NIV2011)

³⁶ Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised—
³⁷ 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."

³⁸ And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.

³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew."

⁴⁰ That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Weird Thing 2

Judges 7:1-8 (NIV2011)

¹ Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh.

² The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, 'My own strength has saved me.'"

³ Now announce to the army, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.' " So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

⁴ But the LORD said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out for you there. If I say, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go; but if I say, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ he shall not go.”

⁵ So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, “Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink.”

⁶ Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

⁷ The LORD said to Gideon, “With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home.”

⁸ So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites home but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others. Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley.

Lesson from the first weird thing.

1. Expect the unexpected v37
2. Feel free to check on it v36-40

I think God expects us to check things out, we are told to “Test the Spirits” in the New Testament, Make sure we’ve got it right.

Lessons from the second Weird thing.

1. God’s instructions may not make sense. V2
2. The further you lead, the stranger some of it gets. V 4, v6
3. Not everyone is involved in everything. V8

4. Sometimes you just got to follow the leader.

Judges 7:13-14 (NIV2011)

¹³ Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. “I had a dream,” he was saying. “A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed.”

¹⁴ His friend responded, “This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands.”

When you know who the leader is – Follow.

Here is another thing – When the leader say do it – that is the time to do it.

Judges 7:17 (NIV2011)

¹⁷ “Watch me,” he told them. “Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do.”

Arrh, leadership leads by example.

That means leadership is more about character than perceived skills.

Gideon showed character.

1. Checked things out
2. Followed God's instructions
3. Trusted God's process
4. Allowed things to not be logical

Now, where do we fit in. One commentator put it this way.

"Are we in the wine press, pushing down altars and destroying armies or are we sent home."