

3. Identity Crisis

Bloodlines – Series

Ps. Wareru – 24th September 2017

Sermon Notes



Over the next couple of months, we're going through a series called **Bloodline: Winning Freedom For My Family**. Most of us are also going through this experience together in our small groups. The reason we are doing so is because we realize that one of the biggest reasons that all our families have issues is because we or others before us have allowed the enemy legal entry into our families. Ephesians 4:27 warns us that we should not give the enemy a foothold. Think of someone who wants to enter your door – you are trying to close the door but you can't because their foot is keeping that door from closing! Through this experience, we are identifying the major doors where the enemy has a foothold in our families and then through prayer and with God's help, we are closing those doors. Last week, we learnt that the first doorway the enemy uses to oppress us is that of pride, and today, we want to look at doorway number 2.

In high school, I loved to play competitive sports. One thing that I learnt in competitive sports is that if you could psyche out your opponent, you could throw them out of stride. By taunting them, laughing at them or making them angry, you could mess around with their thinking. So for example I'd serve the ball in tennis and they'd hit it out and I'd laugh sarcastically. And I'd serve again and laugh again. Or if it was in team sports, we'd celebrate the goal and really make the other side feel bad. The plan was to intimidate and demoralize the opponents thereby causing them to lose their focus and lose heart. If this was done properly, then no matter how good they were, their thinking would shrink, panic would set in and confusion would reign. From that point on, they would commit errors that would deny them any chance of winning!

Stop judging me! But seriously, that's exactly how the devil works. One of the most effective ways that our enemy keeps us from being what we were created to be is by causing us to have a distorted view of ourselves. Many of the issues we carry around in our lives begin with believing the enemy's lie about the true nature of who we are. And so today, we want to look at what the bible says about our identity. Turn with me to **Judges 6:1-16**

READ

1-5 The Israelites had been under enemy occupation for 7 years. They had been forced out of their homes and become IDPs in their own land. They lived in caves, hiding for fear of enemy militia. Whenever they planted crops, the enemies would come with their livestock and turn them loose on their farms, ruining the harvest. The enemy's strategy was not just to defeat them but to completely demoralize them so that they would become helpless and hopeless. So intimidated so that they could not think or resist...

6-10 The Israelites tried to manage their situation until eventually things were too bad. After seven years, they finally gave in. Like many of us, their motto was, 'when all else fails, pray!' Here's the thing people, God will not force His solutions on us. He respects our free will. As long as we're committed to managing ourselves, then He will let us do exactly that. For many of us, we go through a lot of unnecessary pain because rely on our own strength and wisdom and only call on God when things have gone out of control.

11-16 And so we find one Gideon, son of Joash threshing wheat in a winepress. Now just in case you didn't catch it; a winepress is used for making wine and not threshing wheat. If you're threshing wheat, you'd rather

do it outside where there's wind to blow away the chaff. But Gideon was a demoralized man, whose life was ruled by fear. Not only had he grown his wheat in secret but he had to thresh it in secret as well. He was used to a life of fear and hiding. This had become a part of his psyche... **Note: God can find you wherever you are.**

When the angel (whom we later discover is God himself) greeted him, Gideon's response revealed his picture of himself and of God. *'If the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us?'* The painful circumstances of the past had left him feeling unfairly treated and asking 'why us?' Some here like Gideon have gone through extremely hard circumstances growing up and you've asked yourself this question... 'Why me?' 'Why our family?' 'What did we do to deserve this? If God was with us, why did it happen?'

Gideon's next question was also one that we sometimes ask; *'Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about?'* Gideon felt that God's blessings were reserved for other people and not for him. Have you ever looked at other people's families and wondered why God blessed them so much? Maybe it was your classmates family. Things seem so much easier for them. And you're asking why are God's blessings reserved for them and not for us? What is it we did wrong?

Gideon's third statement was *'The Lord has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian'* He felt completely abandoned by God. Have you ever felt played by God and having to fend for yourself? This is how Gideon felt and it affected how he viewed himself.

I believe this is one of the most effective ways that the devil uses to keep many people from living effective lives. He knows that if he can get you to believe a lie about your true situation, he can demoralize you so that you give in without a fight! But the true facts were completely different...

Fact #1: The reason for their situation was not God's unfairness; instead it was because when the Israelites chose to worship the gods of the people of the land, then God had simply allowed them to live with the consequences of their choices. Many times we blame God for things He had nothing to do with!

Fact #2: God's power was still available to them to fight their enemies. He was not God only of previous generations but their God as well. And he had never abandoned them. Despite their walking away from Him, he still loved them very much and longed to save them from their enemies.

Just like the Israelites, our enemy also tries to lie to us about our true situation. He does this for many of us by attacking us at our most vulnerable times. Through things said about us and actions done to us by people in authority over us, we come to believe certain things about ourselves that are lies; meant to demoralize us and discourage us. Some of us grew up listening to negative messages: 'You're just like your mother!' 'You will never amount to much'. 'You're not as pretty as your sister'. 'You're stupid/ugly/fat/thin and God is angry at you'. 'It's your fault your parents fought'. Some of us were shown conditional love where we were only appreciated when we performed in certain ways. 'Wow, you got an A! That's my son!' These may have been statements meant to encourage us to perform better, but the way they were framed only made us to feel we would only be worthy of life when we performed. Just like Gideon, we are held in captivity by our wrong thinking. Here are the four main lies about ourselves that the enemy uses to keep us in captivity...

1. The Performance Trap: The lie here is **'I must meet certain standards in order to feel good about myself'**. The person may look good on the outside but on the inside is driven by the fear of failure. Carol & I first witnessed this in graduate school with one of our friends who was an extremely beautiful and intelligent lady with great leadership and people skills (if I had a single brother, I'd have hooked her up!) We came to discover however that she could not even take her exams with everyone else because of the crippling fear that would come over her during exams! In other instances, I have had friends who are extremely driven at their

workplace because of the unrealistic standards they have set over themselves. Fear of failure means that everything needs to be done perfectly. In the process, they become workaholics, who can only feel good about themselves if they're sacrificing everything in order to get their work done. The sad thing is that we even cheer them (it's an acceptable 'weakness' at an interview). Now don't get me wrong; I am not advocating for mediocrity. But perfectionism and fear of failure means that even while they are a 'performer', their inner life is driven by fear and anxiety. This can lead to psychological & physical illnesses. It's also a very unhappy way to live!

2. Approval Addiction: *'I must be approved by certain others to feel good about myself'*. When I was in primary school I moved from 20's to top 10. My dad gave me a small transistor radio. I learnt that I could get the approval of adults in my life through performing academically! And I did that throughout my school life, projecting the picture of a perfect student even though I was a completely different person in my personal life. People with an approval addiction are people pleasers. They are extremely sensitive to criticism and react defensively because when you critique work they've done, they feel you are attacking them personally. They also are needy, constantly demanding compliments and awards from others to feel good about themselves. Some of you know this hunger for approval in your work and in your relationships.

3. The Blame Game: *'Those who fail are unworthy of love and deserve to be punished'*: A person who believes this lie lives in fear of punishment. Punishment for wrongdoing while growing up was probably very severe and involved withdrawal of parental love. The result is the person feels unworthy of love when they do wrong. They're so afraid of being 'caught' that they will blame others for personal failure and be afraid of trying out new things to avoid failure. They may even inflict pain on themselves as a means of punishing themselves when they feel they have acted badly. The Enemy truly works to mess us up!

4. The Shame Game: *'I am what I am; I cannot change; I am helpless'*. This happens when someone has been told over and over that they are worthless and they will not amount to much. They feel worthless at the core of their being resulting in feelings of hopelessness and inferiority. They lose confidence in themselves and do not think that their ideas or contributions are worthwhile. And that's why Gideon says when God sends him *'How can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family'*.

You see, your self-image is like a speed governor that controls your life. It doesn't matter if the car can go up to 240km/h. If the speed governor is set to 70, then the car will move at 70. Your self-image may be because of what others said about you, how your parents or peers regarded you, or trauma you experienced. But the question is, does the image of who you are line up correctly with who God says you are?

There's only one way to break out of the enemy's lies and live the life that God created you to live. You need to **see yourself as God sees you**. Listen to how God greets Gideon *'The Lord is with you, mighty warrior'*. The Amplified Version says – 'the Lord is with you mighty man of fearless *courage*' Believe it or not, that's how God sees you too! He sees you as a strong, courageous, successful and overcoming person. Gideon felt unqualified, God saw him as mighty man of fearless courage. Gideon felt weak; God saw him as strong. Gideon felt insecure; God saw him with enough confidence to lead an army into victory. Listen to me, God sees you as a champion! You may not think this of yourself this way but that doesn't change God's view of you one bit. You may feel insecure, unqualified, overwhelmed by life, fearful, weak, or insignificant but God sees you as the fearless influencer He created you to be.

In fact in vs. 14 God tells Gideon a shocking thing; *'Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand'*. Gideon already had what it took – He just didn't know it. In the same way, if you have accepted Christ, God has already given you all that you need to live the victorious life that He created you for. Regardless of

your past or what people have said about you. **2Pet.1:3** says *'his divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness'*. **Illustration: Pst Linda exhortation at All saints Cathedral**

Some of us may have been coming to Mavuno for a while now or might even be hearing this message and God stirs in you some hope, only to walk out of this place and you doubt if this message was really meant for you. It's interesting to note that God called Gideon a 'Mighty warrior,' not when he was leading an army but when he was hiding in fear. What is God calling you in the situation you are in? Listen to me Mavunite, God calls you *'fearless influencer of society'*. You are the one He will use to bring healing to that very messed up family you came from. You are the one He'll use to change your office/to bring change to our city and our nation.

Start by agreeing with God. Start seeing yourself as God sees you. Don't let your feelings of inadequacy stop you from being your best. Don't make excuses not to take a new leadership position or get involved in a ministry or serve the community. Don't focus on your weakness or your past. Focus on your God. If God chose to use perfect people only, He'd have no one to use! He loves to use ordinary people like you and me, faults and all, to do extraordinary things. When we are weak, he is strong. Don't allow yourself to be shaped by non-biblical concepts that are contrary to God's opinion of you. Today, the one point of my message is, **you need to see yourself the way God sees you!**

The good news is: God knows everything about you, both good and bad, and He still loves you and values you unconditionally. He may not always approve of your behavior, or be pleased when you go against His will. But here's a startling truth that you might not know; nothing you've done can cause God to love or value you less. **Illustration: 500 wrinkled note has the same value as the new one!** Imagine I am handing you a new, crisp, 500/- note. Would you want it? Probably! What if I crumbled it up so that it wasn't quite as good looking; would you still want it? Sure! But wait, what if I took it out in the parking, threw it on the ground and stomped on it until it was dirty, stained and soiled. Would you still want it? Of course. Why? Because it is still valuable despite the rough treatment it has experienced. It doesn't lose its value simply because it has aged, is not as pretty as it once was or has taken some bumps or bruises in life [\[i\]](#). **You need to see yourself the way God sees you!**

Listen to me: Your sense of value can't be based on your achievements, how well you perform, how someone else treats you, or how popular or successful you are. Your sense of value should be based solely on the fact that you are a child of the Most High God. As His unique creation, you have something to offer to the world that nobody else has or can. **You need to see yourself the way God sees you!**

If lies about ourselves is what the devil has used on us then the way to correct this is by acquiring the truth about ourselves. We do this by reprogramming our minds with God's word. We change the negative, defeated self image and start seeing ourselves as God's fearless champions. **Rom.12:2** says *'Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will'*. **Jn.8:32** says *'you will know the truth and the truth will set you free'*. We start our makeover by rejecting the lies we have come to believe about ourselves replacing them with the truth of who God says we are.

Here then is your defense...

If the enemy tell you are a nobody tell them 'I am a child of God' **John 1:12** – *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God!*

If the enemy tell you that God can't like someone like you, tell him 'I am Christ's friend' **Jn.15:15** *I no longer call you servants, but instead I have called you friends*

If the enemy reminds you of all the bad things you've done tell him remind him of **Rom.8:1** *therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

If he points to the bad things that have happened in your past, point out **Rom 8:28** *and we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose*

If he says you'll never change, remind him of **Phil 4:13** – *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!*

And if he tells you God has abandoned you, enlighten him with **Rom8: 35** *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Are we together? God can completely reformat our minds and turn us from hiding in winepresses of fear to leading armies of change across this continent. But it takes more than making a declaration. It takes making a conscious effort to allow God's truth to wash over us and soak in and replace the old scripts.

And so here are a few things to help us close that the door of lies about God and ourselves this week...

1. Identify The Lie – ask God to show you lies that you have believed about yourself or about him that have kept you from being the person He created you to be **Psa.139:23** says *'Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'* This is a prayer I pray often for myself.

2. Replace The Lie – Each morning this week, defeat the lie by declaring aloud what the word of God says you are. **Eph.6:17** tells us that the sword of the Spirit is the word of God. I love to memorize scriptures. This is how we defeat the enemy's lies. We do it in Mizizi and we do it in Simama. I challenge you to memorize those verses, but not as a religious exercise. Ask God for His grace to help you soak it into your inner self. Whenever the old lie comes up declare the truth in Jesus name and ask the lie to flee instead. I've also found it useful to listen to music in your car or on your phone as you take a matatu; Christian music that is uplifting and that helps reinforce the truth. The

3. Expose The Lie – share with your prayer partner or with a trusted friend. **James 5:16** says *'therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective'*

Illustration: mirror made dirty at the stage of shame/blame etc cleansed at the end of the sermon.

How do people come out? Men and Women affirmed?

Pray for

1. Someone who wants to give their lives to Christ... have believed the lie too long that God can't accept you
2. Someone who's struggled with performance trap, approval addiction, blame or shame...
3. All of us stand as we declare together...

BLOODLINES PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, I know that You desire truth in my inmost self and that facing this truth will set me free (John 8:32). I acknowledge that I have been deceived by the father of lies (John 8:44). I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that You, dear Father, will rebuke all deceiving spirits that have distorted my view of myself and of You. And since by faith I have received You into my life and am now seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph.2:6), I command all deceiving spirits to depart from me. I now ask the Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth (John 16:3). I ask You this week to “search me, O God , and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way” (Psalm 139:23,24). In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Link forward/ Week’s reading/ Life Groups processing/Prayer counsellors or tent/ prayer hotline??