

Friday, June 8, 2018

Mighty warrior

Judges 6-7

When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

Judges 6:12

Once again, judgment is coming upon Israel. It follows the cycle in the book of Judges. Israel would serve the LORD and then would fall into sin, God would judge them and they would become slaves, then they would cry to the LORD who would raise up a judge and deliver them. They would respond by serving the LORD and then falling into sin and the whole cycle would be repeated (see 2:11-19). God has once again heard the cry of the people and He appears to a man who is threshing wheat in a winepress. Gideon was hiding. To thresh wheat would require throwing it in the air so that the wheat could be separated from the chaff. That would need to be done on a hill but that would have exposed him to the Midianites, whom he feared would then take the grain. His actions would not necessarily be the actions of a mighty warrior, yet that is what God saw. God saw Gideon as a mighty warrior. Not because of what he was doing at the time, but because of what he would do with the LORD's strength. God would use this man—whom He would make into a mighty warrior—to defeat the Midianites. I must learn to see myself the way God sees me. I must see that I am a mighty warrior as I walk in His strength, His power, and His purpose for my life. In Him I can do all things. I must come out of hiding and get into the battle.

Dear LORD, help me see myself the way You see me. Help me remember that You will give me all the power I need to do that which You have purposed for me to do. Amen.

Saturday, June 9, 2018

Snare

Judges 8-9

"Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which he placed in Ophrah, his town. All Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family."

Judges 8:27

When the battles are over, the mighty warrior does not finish well. It seems he does. When the Israelites ask Gideon to rule over them, he appears to give the right answer. "The LORD will rule over you" (8:23). And yet, his actions proved that he had already stepped into the role of ruler. He took spoils from the people, asking for their allegiance. He kept the spoils of the defeated kings. He made a shrine that people came to worship, as he sat and reigned over the city of Ophrah. Gideon had forgotten who gave the victory. When he was asked to rule because he had saved Israel, he did not give the glory to the LORD. He did not remind the people that it was God who had fought for them and had given them the victory. This was the start of his downfall and then the sadness that would snare his family. It is a snare to take any credit that belongs to the LORD for myself. I must remind myself constantly that, apart from the Lord, I can do nothing. If anyone sees anything in me that is to be honored, it is God working in me for His purposes. He alone must receive the honor. My pride must be kept in check at all times so that I do not set a snare for myself or my family.

Dear Lord, please keep me humble before You. Please keep me always submitted to Your will and always giving You—and You alone—the honor and glory for the victories that You make possible through my life, so that people will worship You. Amen.

June 4 - 9, 2018



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, June 4, 2018

Careful

Joshua 22-23

“Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left... But you are to hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have until now. The LORD has driven out before you great and powerful nations; to this day no one has been able to withstand you... So be very careful to love the LORD your God.”
Joshua 23:6, 8-9, 11

Joshua tells his people to be careful. They are to be careful to do two things. One is to obey. They are to be careful to obey intentionally, not veering to the left or the right—staying right on track. The other thing they need to be careful to do is to love the Lord. They need to be very careful to love the Lord. These two things cannot be separated. Jesus tells us that in John 14:21. Obedience is an indicator of love. Joshua reminds them of what the Lord has done for them so that they can see that they need Him and that He loves them. All that the Lord does for them is an indicator of His love for His people. No other puny manmade god has a love for his worshipers—only God in heaven. They must be strong so they can be careful to obey and to love. I must learn the same. I must rehearse in my mind regularly all that God has done and how that indicates His deep love for me. I must be very careful to love Him alone!

Dear Father, thank You for this reminder, yet again, of my need to love You with all my heart and soul and mind. Help me, please, to be very careful not to give my love to another, but to always be looking to You and You alone. Amen.

Tuesday, June 5, 2018

Undesirable

Joshua 24-Judges 1

“But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”
Joshua 24:15

If serving the LORD seems undesirable to you... Joshua knew the people he led. He knew that their actions revealed that it was not all that desirable to them to serve the LORD. They still had foreign gods in their midst (24:23) and were apparently tolerating them. Joshua told them they were unable to serve the LORD. He knew they would forget, so he found a stone and reminded them that the stone “heard” their promise to serve the LORD alone. He set the stone as a witness. He tells them it is a choice they each need to make for themselves—and their households. His example is that he and his house will choose to serve the LORD. Are there any ways in which serving the LORD is undesirable for me? I choose to serve the LORD and I declare that my household will serve the LORD, but I must be intentionally aware that I am prone to wander. Sin seems more desirable to my flesh. It is a battle—unless I wholeheartedly choose and declare that I will serve the LORD. The fate of my household depends on it.

Dear LORD, I choose YOU. I choose that You are desirable to me and that sin is not. I choose to despise sin and Satan and the evil that he longs to bring into my life and the life of my family. I choose YOU! I will serve You intentionally and completely. Amen.

Wednesday, June 6, 2018

Generations

Judges 2-3

“After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. They forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt.”
Judges 2:10-12a

Israel is stepping into a new season. There is a new generation and this generation does not know the LORD or what He has done. This is so hard to imagine. When I have been in the Czech Republic, I have seen the monuments and the statues that declare God and His goodness and His work. I have been in the churches and I have seen the heritage. I have seen the statue of John Hus in Prague. I have seen the Holy Trinity Column in Olomouc. And yet, the people of Czech know very little about the God that is represented in these things. I have seen this in my own country as well. Less and less is known of God and more and more is known of celebrities and sports trivia. When a generation does not share with the generation that follows, the next generation will wander from the truth. Judges stands as a declaration of that truth. God remains faithful when His people do not. Shame on me if I am not declaring the truth of God to the next generation. I must look for ways to intentionally mentor and teach and declare who God is so that they can know His beauty and worship Him.

Dear Father, help me tell of You to the next generation so that they know You and what You have done in my life. Let this help them trust You in theirs! Amen.

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Worship

Judges 4-5

“On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this song: “When the princes in Israel take the lead, when the people willingly offer themselves—praise the LORD! Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers! I will sing to the LORD, I will sing; I will make music to the LORD, the God of Israel.”
Judges 5:1-3

This text allows me to offer praise with one of the oldest songs in the Bible. It is a victory poem that is to be sung and has been preserved for centuries. This is one of the things that causes me to worship God. He has preserved for me a history of His involvement with people and their response of worship to Him. Deborah knew that it was the LORD who would deliver them and bring a great victory. He did and she proclaimed the victory with a song that started by declaring the greatness of the LORD and praising Him—especially important for all to know. I get a wonderful chance, in chapters 4 and 5 of Judges, to read the prose of the account and then the poem of the account—rich chapters indeed. In them I see that worship begins with praise and reciting the works of the LORD. Worship is about ascribing worth to God. It must not be about me; it must be about Him.

O Lord, You are so worthy of praise. You are worthy of my song. Hear me, all who listen, I will sing to the LORD. I will make music to my God, the Savior of my soul. I will declare His marvelous deeds in all I say and do. Amen.