

### BACKGROUND:

After Joshua and the people of Israel conquered and settled in the Promised Land challenges continued to arise. Throughout the time of the judges they lived as a loose confederation of tribes. Neighboring nations periodically invaded and captured some of the territory, requiring God to raise up a leader to bring them back to freedom. The book of Judges attributes these invasions to the faithlessness of God's people.

God came to Gideon in a time when Midian ruled over some of their territory. God commissioned him to lead the people to victory over Midian. God's people would again be free. Gideon wasn't so sure, so he devised a test for God.

### SCRIPTURE:

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Then Gideon said to God, 'In order to see whether you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have said, I am going to lay a fleece of wool on the threshing-floor; if there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have said.' And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. Then Gideon said to God, 'Do not let your anger burn against me, let me speak one more time; let me, please, make trial with the fleece just once more; let it be dry only on the fleece, and on all the ground let there be dew.' And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.

- How do the people in the story hear God's call to them?
- How open are they to God's call?
- What might this passage say to our community of faith?