

Get Serious. About Serving. – Judges 6-7

MAKE SHORTER – IT’S 1 HOUR

LEAVE OFF LAST POINT AND MAKE “GOD WITH YOU” SHORTER

Turn to Judges 6-7

We’re looking at the various SD’s these days

Those practices that are necessary/conducive to training ourselves for godliness

This morning it’s the SD of serving – **Get serious about serving**

To address the issues, we’re going to look at a series of events in the life of Gideon

Gideon was one of the judges or leaders in Israel around 1200BC

Well before King David by about 200 years

And well after the Israelites entered the land of Canaan (modern day Israel) by about 200 years

It was a time of national ups and downs – obedience and rest, followed by disobedience and oppression, followed by a return to obedience, and on and on

It’s during one of those times of severe oppression that we pick up the story in Judges 6

The bad guys are the Midianites (**map**) this time, and as the story goes, they oppressed Israel for 7 years (read 6:1-6)

As a result, God tapped Gideon to serve as their leader, and deliver them

But Gideon wasn’t real keen on the idea

He had plenty of doubts, hesitations, weaknesses, fears – he played them all

But God was patient with him and eventually used his leadership/obedience to defeat the Midians and restore Israel’s peace

That’s the story in a nutshell – Israel was disobedient and oppressed

God called Gideon to serve and deliver them; He didn’t want to

God was patient with his objections; And eventually used him in a miraculous way

It’s through Gideon’s example that we can learn some lessons about serving

The first of which is – get serious about serving . . .

Even if others aren’t (6:7-10, 28-30)

- So many of God’s people were just plain disobedient (read 6:7-10)
God had done so much for them leading them out of bondage and delivering them from oppression – and all he expected was their allegiance
But they couldn’t even get that right; They disobeyed and failed to serve the Lord

Except for Gideon – he stayed faithful even when others weren’t

He served the Lord even when it wasn’t popular (read 6:28-30)

28 – Baal was one of the main pagan deities at the time

The offspring of God and his wife Asherah, the fertility goddess

So *the Asherah* was a wooden pole or tree in this case, representing Asherah, and positioned next to the altar (continue reading)

Needless to say, it wasn’t popular for Gideon to do as God told him

But that didn’t matter – because once he was convinced of God’s will to serve, he was serious about doing it, even if others weren’t

Even if it was unpopular

When it comes to serving God, don’t be bashful about going against the flow

Get serious about it – even if you think you’re alone in it

Get serious about it – even if others aren’t

Even if you lack the strength (6:11-15)

Read 6:11-15

11 – *terebinth* a type of oak tree; *Ophrah* a town in N. Israel near Sea of Galilee (**map**)
Abiezrites were part of the people of Israel because they were descendants of Manasseh, one of the 12 sons of Jacob, and 12 tribes of Israel

Good guys, despite the fact that many of them were worshipping Baal (continue v12)

Two things going on here in Gideon’s heart and mind

1. He had given up – *the Lord has forsaken us* (13b)

2. He assumed he was too weak to do anything about it

Tribe of Manasseh was weak; His clan was weak

Looked like there was no use – why even try; I’m not strong enough

Just because things are desperate, doesn’t mean God has forsaken you

Just because you don’t “have what it takes,” doesn’t mean God can’t use you

He can and he will, if you’re willing and obedient

One of his favorite tricks – use weak, ordinary people, to accomplish extraordinary things

I love it when we hear people say they don’t have what it takes to serve or lead

We’re like “bingo, you’ve got the job”

That’s *exactly* the kind of humility in the face of weakness, that God uses most
Gideon found that out in a hurry

On the other hand, if you ever want to *avoid* serving around here, just give us the impression that now that you’ve arrived, we can get on with things

That real ministry, and real good ministry can start happening

In fact, that’s a sure-fire way to *never* be used by God, anywhere

Gideon was weak, but willing; If you are too, you’re in good company

Get serious about serving – even if you lack the strength; you might be surprised

Even if you’re not qualified (6:15)

Not only was Gideon’s tribe and clan weak, but he was a *peon*; a nobody (read 15b)

Implication – “I’m unworthy and incapable of leading an army against the Midianites”

Oh how quickly we forget the company we’re in

How quickly we forget those who’ve gone before us

Those whom God has used, despite their *lack* of qualifications

God’s not looking for PhD’s; Or a list of great accomplishments

Wealth of experience; Storehouse of knowledge

He’s looking for people who are ready/willing to serve him, *despite* their lack of qual’s.

Take a look at this **Video** (The March of the Unqualified; Igniter, vol 4) . . .

Get serious about serving even if you’re unqualified

Even if you’re afraid (6:25-27; 7:9-11)

Gideon was (read 6:25-27)

Gideon was afraid – afraid of the townspeople, and even his family (it was their altar)

So afraid that he did his work under cover of *darkness* – but at least he did it
That wasn't the last time
When God told him to spy on the Midianites, he said he could take his servant with him
if he was afraid – exactly what he did (read 7:9-11)
Gideon's life was on the line with this little reconnaissance mission
But despite the risks, and despite his fear – he went . . .
Because he was serious about serving the Lord

- You know what the comforting part about all that is? God *knew*
God knew he was scared to tear down altar of Baal – so provided 10 servants to help
God knew that Gideon was scared to death to spy on the Midianites – so he allowed his
servant to tag along
God *knew* that Gideon was afraid
And he knew the comfort, encouragement, and help he needed, at just the right time

God knew Gideon's fears, and he knows yours as well
He knows when you're afraid to serve him; When you're afraid to step in and step up
And you can trust that he will give you just the right encouragement and just the right
help, at just the right time – you can count on it

I can't tell you how many times I've experienced this in my life
Just when I think – the odds are insurmountable; the problems are unsolvable
The situation is impossible . . .
God gives me just the right thing, just the right thought, just the right encounter – to
encourage me and calm my fears
Over and over and over again – so much so I'm almost embarrassed about it before him

When you're serving the Lord, he'll take care of your fears
But he won't do it in me, won't do it in you, won't do it in us . . .
If we're not serious about it
If we're not serious about doing the right thing – even if we're afraid

Even if you have doubts (6:13,17,36)

Gideon doubted that God was at work (read 6:13a)
He doubted that God was speaking to him (read 6:17)
He doubted that God would actually use *him* to save Israel (read 6:36-40)

Gideon doubted that God was at *work*; was *speaking* to him; would *use* him
Ever have doubts like that? I have – far too many
And sometimes they've kept me from serving like I should
But not Gideon – he got confirmation with his fleeces and signs, and then stepped up

If you're thinking, "cool" . . .
"Maybe I'll put out some fleeces and ask for a sign next time I have some doubts"
"Is that okay?"

Sure – if an *angel* shows up at your house
In fact, I'd recommend it to confirm such an encounter
Especially if he's asking you to overthrow another country, like Gideon
But short of that, you're in the same boat as the rest of us when it comes to removing
your doubts, and confirming the will of God in your life

- You have to rely on the –
Spirit of God within you; *People* of God around you; *Word* of God in front of you
It's a series of checks and balances like a 3-legged stool – leave any one of them out,
and you risk of falling flat on your face
I've seen more people get this wrong and make bad decisions, than I care to count
Because they relied solely on what they *think* the HS is saying to them

We're still in the flesh – we're still shedding our sin nature
And the battle continues to rage between our flesh and the HS within us (Gal 5:17)
Which means it's possible to hear God wrong
It's possible to twist his impulses, deviate from his will *thinking* you're on right track

Which is why you *cannot* rely solely on "God told me to" or "God told me not to"
Stop saying that unless the people of God have confirmed it, and the Word of God
supports it – you need *all* 3, to remove *all* doubt

And *with* all 3, you have the means to overcome your doubts
The question is – are you going to apply yourself and get serious about serving . . .
Or sit around and wait for a lightning bolt or a phone call?
Don't do that – be proactive; ask your questions, address your issues, and then plug in ..

Even if it doesn't make sense (7:1-23)

Sometimes the opp's that God gives you to serve are either completely overwhelming or
entirely impossible – either way, they don't make sense

That was Gideon's situation
Here was his chance to be a hero; To set the captives free; To ride into town on his
white stallion (made that up); To save Israel from her enemies
All well and good if there weren't 135,000 of them! (read 7:12, 8:10)
That's not an opp to serve, that's a slaughter – so overwhelming it didn't make sense

But that's not the half of it – God wanted Gideon to do it with only 300 men!
Read 7:3-7 – 32k vs 135k; Of course they were scared; 22k left – no pride there
6 – 300; cool; at least I get to keep 9700
7 – What? You want me to save Israel with 300 men against 135,000?
Are you crazy? That doesn't make sense

If that wasn't enough, look at v16-18 (read them)
No swords or traditional instruments of war – that would make sense
Just trumpets, torches, and voices – and only 300 of them at that
That plan, by anyone's standard is ridiculous, preposterous, suicidal
It was a recipe for disaster, and didn't make sense – *except* to God . . .
Who's purpose was to make sure that he alone received the credit and glory

Read 7:2 – God is jealous for his glory; his exaltation
My glory I give to no other (Is 42:8)
God deserves the credit for our service, and he will stop at nothing to make sure he gets
it . . . sometimes even using a plan that doesn't make sense
Question is, are you going to do it?

Are you serious enough about serving the Lord like Gideon's 300 men, that you'll trust and obey even when it doesn't make sense?

Sometimes God calls you to serve him when it doesn't make sense for your schedule

When it doesn't fit your life; When the odds of "success" are nil

When the method of ministry is lacking; When the way doesn't seem clear

Or the leader doesn't seem capable (Launch Team example)

Sometimes God calls you to serve him when it doesn't make sense

The question is – are you serious enough to do it?

Don't go home scared like the 22k; Don't sit on the sidelines watching 300 do it from afar

Get serious about serving – even if it doesn't make sense

Even if you have doubts; Even if you're afraid; Even if you're not qualified

Even if you lack the strength; Even if others aren't . . .

Because God is with you (6:12,14,16,34)

If you confess Jesus Christ as Lord of your life

If you've repented of your sins and trust him by faith to save you

If your life bears the marks of your allegiance to him

Then God is with *you*, just like he was with *Gideon*

It's the trump card of all trump cards when it comes to serving God "even if"

Read 6:12,14,16,34

12 – same thing Gabriel said to Mary; funny how that happens with people who were serious about serving Lord

14 – *Do not I send you?*

Can you think of a better recommendation/endorsement?

If God sends you; If he's the impulse behind your service – nothing to worry about

He will take care of everything, "even if"

And you can be assured of success

16 – *as one man* means in their entirety

God was saying – because of my presence with you, success is certain

34 – *The Spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet*

God was with him; he gave him the boldness to act . . .

People followed; and he strengthened him along the way as we saw in 7:11

When God is with you – there's nothing to worry about

Success (according to his purposes) is certain

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts (Zech 4:6)

What more do you need?

As a follower of Christ, there's no excuse to sit on the sidelines – none

Because God is with you; God is for you; And . . .

If God is for you, who can be against you?

Get serious about serving, "even if," because God is with you . . .

And the opportunities are endless . . .

There are 8 main areas in our church within which you can serve

Service Teams – 75 needed

Worship Ministries – we need people in all areas, for all ministries

If you have a talent that way, line up an audition

We'll plug you into a place that fits your skill, and help you grow

Production Teams – unsung heroes of our church

If you're a behind the scenes kind of person with some technical prowess, this is for you

CM – a myriad of ministries; need about 40 to round out the current ____ who are serving

SM – adult leaders to build into the lives of students

WM – a wealth of opp's

MM – prison ministry and more

CO's – trying to make it as turn key as possible for you to get involved in the lives of the least of these

Truly the opp's around here are endless

Make this SD a part of your plan for godliness, and **Sign up to serve**

Close

Check out the Ministry Fair and the opp's to serve

Yearn – tonight

Even if others aren't

Even if you lack the strength

Even if you're not qualified

Even if you're afraid

Even if you have doubts

Even if it doesn't make sense

Because God is with you

And the opportunities are endless . . .