

## WHEN YOU CAN'T FIND GOD

Judges 6:11-24.

April 15, 2007 Sunday a.m.

### INTRODUCTION

- A. Mark accidentally spilled his fruit punch on the floor. He decided to clean up the mess himself, so he ran to the back porch to get the mop. When he got there, he realized to his horror that it was dark outside. He really wanted to clean up the mess he had made, but he was afraid of dark.

Seeing his dilemma, Mark's mother did what every good mother does. She resorted to theology. She reminded Mark that Jesus is everywhere—even in the dark. The little boy thought about that for a minute. Then, putting his face to the door, he said, "Jesus, if you're out there, will you hand me the mop?"

- B. Gideon had trouble seeing God-Judges 6:11-24.
- C. We sometimes have the same trouble, don't we? During such times where can we find God when we have trouble seeing him? Notice where Gideon found God.

### I. FIRST, WE CAN FIND GOD AT THE CENTER OF OUR SUFFERING.

- A. When we find ourselves surrounded by problems we tend to think that God has abandoned us.
- B. This is what Gideon thought-6:11-14.
- C. When God seems distant we often question Him when in reality we should question ourselves instead.
  - 1. Gideon questioned God, but he should have questioned his own country instead-6:7-10.
  - 2. God is never far from those who seek Him, especially during times of trouble and suffering-Hebrews 10:5.

- D. One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me."

The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

Source: Unknown

### II. SECOND, WE CAN FIND GOD AT THE CENTER OF OUR WEAKNESS.

- A. Gideon thought he was too weak to do God's assignment-6:14-16.
- B. God, however, often works through our weakness to reveal His power.
  - 1. If we serve God from our strengths alone we will only see what we can do for God.
  - 2. However, if we serve Him in spite of our weaknesses we can see what only God can do-2 Corinthians 3:4-5.

### C. "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" Written in Trying Times

1527 was a bad year for Martin Luther. He had been fighting with the religious establishment of his day for a decade to recover the gospel, and had often feared for his life. Now he was in conflict with some of his friends because of theological differences regarding the significance of the Lord's Supper. He was suffering from health problems that produced dizzy spells and severe bouts of depression. The plague broke out in Wittenburg, and then Luther's own son became ill.

Yet during that difficult year, Luther penned what would eventually become his most famous hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." In it, he wrote these words:

Did we in our own strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing,  
Were not the right man on our side,  
the man of God's own choosing.  
Dost ask who that may be?  
Christ Jesus, it is he.  
Lord Sabaoth his name,  
From age to age the same.  
And he must win the battle.

### III. THIRD, WE CAN FIND GOD AT THE CENTER OF OUR WORSHIP.

- A. Gideon's confidence in God grew through his worship of God.
  - 1. Initially, Gideon had no confidence in God. This is why he asked for a sign of confirmation that it was really God who was speaking-6:17-21.
  - 2. Eventually he realized he was in the presence of God-6:22.
  - 3. It was then that God encouraged Gideon not to be afraid-6:23.
  - 4. Gideon responded to God's encouragement by worship-6:24.
- B. What should we do when we can't see God?
  - 1. Worship Him anyway!.
  - 2. Worship Him even when you don't feel like it.
  - 3. Worship Him even when you don't think it will do any good.
  - 4. It will-Jeremiah 29:13-14.
- C. When it comes to our attitude toward God in worship, I have often found Christians to be like the woman in the Lexus TV commercial. On Christmas morning, she finds a full-sized luxury SUV in her living room. The vehicle is topped with a gigantic, picture-perfect red ribbon. Turning to her husband with a look of astonishment on her face, all she can think to ask is, "Where did you get a bow that big?!"

She has a fully equipped SUV in her living room, yet she is transfixed by an ornament. A decoration has distracted her from the real mystery.

Is it possible that we can become focused on incidentals when we gather to celebrate all God has for us in Jesus Christ?

### CONCLUSION

- A. The Holocaust is one of the terribly traumatic episodes of modern history, yet it has also yielded some astounding stories of bravery and faith. In France a Jewish family were hidden by some concerned French nationals in the basement of their house. The Jewish family waited and waited for their deliverance. At the end of the war these words were found scribbled on the wall of that basement:

"I believe in the sun even when it does not shine.  
I believe in love even when it is not given.  
I believe in God even when he is silent."

Source: reported in Hans, *God on the Witness Stand* (Baker, 1987)
- B. Where can we find God when He seems absent?
  - 1. In the center of our suffering.
  - 2. In the center of our weaknesses.
  - 3. In the center of our worship.