

"The Walk of Faith"

Part 24

11:1-40

Introduction: Last week in our study of the book of Hebrews we looked at Hebrews 11:32.

Hebrews 11:32

³² And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

Our focus in this verse is on the 4 Judges which are mentioned here. They are Gideon, Barack, Samson and Jephthae. Last week we discussed why the writer points to these individuals. These Judges were men whom no one would pick to be leaders for they were men who had weaknesses, they struggled with their faith at times, their backgrounds were not backgrounds from which we would think that leaders would come from. They just didn't fit the "typical" mold from which leaders would emerge. But they were men whom God choose to use to deliver the people of Israel from the hands of the enemy.

Application: These 4 Judges were men whom the Hebrew believers were able to relate to. They were average men who had their weaknesses, their flaws, and their doubts but at the same time they were used by God in a mighty way because of the faith which they exercised. These 4 Judges are listed here as an encouragement to the Hebrews and to you and me also. None of us are perfect and we all struggle with faith at times. But from the account of the Judges we can see that even when our faith is small and frail, God can honor the faith we do have and use us to accomplish many things for Him.

The book of Judges takes place in the darkest time period for the Nation of Israel. There was no leader for Joshua had died and there was no king. There was very little accountability for the people of Israel.

Judges 21:25

²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

This verse paints the picture of what life was like in the days when the Judges ruled. Israel had failed to follow the military manual which God had given and so they allowed the people of Canaan to live and to live among them. This caused Israel to follow after the

gods of the Canaanites. They would forsake God and God would deliver them into the hands of the enemy, they would then repent and cry out to God and He would then rise up a Judge who would deliver them from the hands of the oppressor. After the deliverance Israel would eventually fall back into idolatry and the sin cycle would be repeated again. This continued time after time and every time Israel sunk deeper and deeper into sin and darkness.

Now the writer of Hebrews reaches back to the days of the Judges and he lifts up the 4 men whom we see in Hebrews 11:32 therefore we are taking the time to look at each of these Judges to gather encouragement from their lives.

I. Gideon

Notice Judges 6:1-6

We looked at these verses last week but there is something here that we did not see last week that is very important.

God had delivered Israel into the hands of the Midianites because of sin in their lives. This caused the Israelites to live in fear. They hid in the dens, caves and strong holds. The Midianites completely destroyed the increase of the earth until there was no sustenance for the people or for the livestock. Therefore the people of Israel were lacking nutrition and it was all because of unbelief. They did not believe the Word of the Lord when He had warned them of the dangers of the land of Canaan nor did they believe God's Word when He had promised to deliver the inhabitants of the land into their hands. All of this went on for 7 years and it was then that Israel repented and God began to work on the heart of a deliverer.

Now let me explain how this would apply to the Hebrew believers. They too were living in fear because of the persecution of the Judaizers. This was all the result of a lack of faith in the Word of God. God had promised them victory through Jesus Christ. Their lack of faith kept them from feeding upon the Word and applying it to their lives the way God desired for them to do so. Satan was using their fear to rob them of spiritual sustenance and they were not growing in their walk thus they were not gaining the victories which God had promised.

Hebrews 5:11, 12

¹¹ *Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.*

¹² For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Application: This is a picture of the life of many believers. They are fearful of living the Word of God because someone has threatened them. Because of the threat they are now living in fear. They are not growing because they are not applying the Word of God in their lives. They are struggling with LIVING FAITH, they have SAVING FAITH but they have little faith beyond that. They are fearful of what the family may say, or they are fearful of what their co-workers may say, or they are fearful of what their friends will say. Someone along the way has said, "You better just keep your faith to yourself or it will cost you greatly." For this reason there is no fruit in their lives and there is no growth in their lives.

Now as we come to the call of Gideon we shall see how to handle this fear.

I. Gideon's Call

Notice Judges 6:11-15

Now the Spirit of God zooms in on the life of Gideon. This now makes the story more personal for us. Gideon is living under the fear of the Midianites and he is hiding in the wine press threshing wheat. Gideon does not see himself as a deliverer for the Nation of Israel because he is from a poor family and he is the least in his father's house.

Application: When I look at Gideon I see a man who is hungry but he is fearful of the Midianites so he lives in hiding while he attempts to gather food. He has very little faith in God as **Jehovah Jireh** which means "My Lord will provide". This name of God comes from Genesis 22 where God called upon Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on Mt. Moriah. It was there that God provided the ram to die in the place of Isaac and it was there that Abraham called God by the name of Jehovah Jireh. Gideon should have known God by this name for God provided for Israel in the wilderness for 40 years. But that knowledge of God seems to have been buried or forgotten.

This is where the Hebrew believers were in their lives. They too had lost sight of the fact that God is "THE GREAT PROVIDER". They were fearful of living out their faith for they knew that there would be a cost. It was for this reason they were holding back in living out their new life in Christ. Maybe this is a picture of you in your life right now. You have lost sight of the promises and the power of God and fear is keeping you from living out your faith. You have forgotten verses such as:

Isaiah 43:2-3a

² *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*

³ *For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:*

Romans 8:31, 32, 38, 39

³¹ *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

³² *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

³⁸ *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

³⁹ *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Now let me get you back to Gideon. God is saying to Gideon, "Get up and follow me. I will give you victory over the Midianites. It is time to move, Gideon. It is time to exercise faith and gain victory over the enemy." God says the same thing to any believer who is living the defeated Christian life. He is waiting to show His power if you will just walk by faith.

II. Gideon's Encouragement

Notice Judges 6:16, 17

Gideon needed to know that this message was from the Lord. Gideon did not know at this time that it was the Angel of the Lord who was speaking to him. Gideon wanted to be sure the message he was hearing was a revelation of the will of God.

Notice Judges 6:18-23

Gideon knew if God accepted His sacrifice then this was the will of God. When the Angel of the Lord touched the sacrifice then fire from heaven consumed it and Gideon was assured the message was from the Lord.

III. Gideon's Faith

Notice Judges 6:25-28

Gideon now knew the will of God and he knew God had called him. The first step to victory was to destroy the idols which Israel had gathered. It would start with destroying the altar of Baal which his own father had built. This was a difficult mission for this was taking a stand against his own family.

Application:

There are several lessons here which we need to see:

1. **It is our responsibility to seek the will of God and when it is known we MUST step through the open door of opportunity by faith.**

James 1:5-8

⁵ *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

⁶ *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

⁷ *For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

⁸ *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

2. **The victorious life in Christ starts by addressing sin within our own families first.**

Gideon would be used by God to defeat the Midianites but before that mission would be carried out Gideon had to destroy the altars of Baal which his own father had erected. Notice the Words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 7:1-5

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

² *For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

³ *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

⁴ *Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?*

⁵ *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

3. Addressing sin at home will often be met by anger and resistance.

Notice Judges 6:27-30

The men of the city desired to kill Gideon for what he had done. God however protected him and even moved the heart of his own father to stand with him in the face of the opposition.

2 Timothy 3:12

¹² *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

IV. Gideon's Fleece

Notice Judges 6:33-40

There is so much to consider here but we shall limit our study to the fleece. When it came time to prepare for the battle Gideon's feet became cold. He needed a sign and so he used the fleece. The fleece and his requests show how Gideon struggled with his faith. In verse 37 Gideon told God if the dew fell on the fleece only then he would be convinced it was a sign from God that he was to go to battle. Well, God soaked the fleece that night and Gideon doubted.

Gideon went on to defeat the Midianites with only 300 men and the people of Israel had peace under the leadership of Gideon for 40 years.

Judges 8:28

²⁸ *Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.*

Conclusion/Application:

Gideon would have been a great encouragement for the Hebrew believers. Gideon was an average man who struggled with his faith but God honored the faith he had and worked His power through Him to lead him and God's people in victory, freedom, and peace.

You may struggle with trusting God at times but if you are willing to stand against sin and follow His will God will honor the faith which you do have and through your stand He will work His mighty power.

It is the will of God that we live in 3rd day power/the power of the resurrection.

Romans 6:6-12

⁶ *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

⁷ *For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

⁸ *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:*

⁹ *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

¹⁰ *For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

¹¹ *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

¹² *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*