



Mustard Seed Children's Lesson Summary for September 13, 2009
Released on Wednesday, September 9, 2009

"Gideon: God's Chosen Leader"

Lesson Text: Judges 6:1-3, 7-16

Background Scripture: Judges 6-8

Memory Verse: "The LORD...said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites" (Judges 6:14)

Judges 6:1-3, 7-16

1 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.

2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strongholds.

3 And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them.

.....

7 And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites,

8 That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage;

9 And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land;

10 And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.

13 And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

15 And he said unto him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

16 And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man

THE OBJECT IN VIEW:

Show the children that God is faithful to save His people.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

1. The people of Israel were suffering because they had turned away from God.
2. They had to turn back to God before He could save them.
3. God chose a leader and helped him rescue His people when they were in trouble.

TEACHER'S NOTES:

Time: 1191 B.C.

Place: Ophrah

Under Joshua, the people of Israel conquered Canaan, but they did not expel the occupants. Following Joshua's death, the Israelites began worshiping idols. Instead of obeying the laws of Moses, each person did what was right in his own eyes (Judg. 17:6).

In response, God brought hordes of Midianites, Amalekites, and other tribes from the south and east to sweep over the land at harvest time for seven successive years. The Israelites were so impoverished and devastated by fear that they moved up into the rugged hills of central Palestine and hid in caves and mountain strongholds.

Every year just when the Israelites were about to harvest their barley, wheat, grapes, olives, and other crops, swarms of Midianites would sweep across Israel and steal the crops, destroying whatever they could not carry away. They killed the sheep, oxen, and donkeys that the Israelites depended on for food and farm labor. These nomads came with camels, a powerful and speedy weapon that made them invincible.

When the starving Israelites had lost all hope, they begged God to save them. Although there is no evidence of the people's repentance, the Lord heard their cries and sent a prophet to prepare their hearts for deliverance.

The Lord's message through the unnamed prophet was a reminder that they were God's covenant people. The Lord had brought them out of slavery in Egypt, had given them victory over the Canaanites, and had given them their land. Because the Lord was their God, they were not to worship idols, but they had not obeyed.

Israel was suffering because of their sin. They had no right to expect help until they turned from their sin and started to obey God.

Sometime later an angel —perhaps God Himself—came with another message. This angel sat and watched an Israelite named Gideon threshing a little bit of wheat in an out-of-the-way place to keep the Midianites from finding him.

The angel's words were laughable under the circumstances: "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."

Gideon began to complain: "If the Lord is with us, why has all this trouble happened to us? Why has He not done any miracles like those our fathers told us about when they said He brought them out of Egypt? Now the Lord has deserted us and left us alone to suffer under the Midianites."

In spite of Gideon's protests, the angel told him to go save Israel from the Midianites. He promised to supply the necessary power and performed a miracle to help Gideon believe (cf. Judg. 6:17-21).

PLANNING LESSON AIDS:

For Helping to Remember, draw a hopscotch pattern of ten squares on a half sheet of paper for each child. Print the following words from Judges 6:14 in order,

one in each square: "GO" "IN" "THIS" "THY" "MIGHT," "AND" "THOU" "SHALT" "SAVE" "ISRAEL." Bring colored markers or crayons.

For the Lesson Activity, make a copy of the Word Search for each student.

BEGINNING THE LESSON:

Rondelle was excited. "Mom, you said that if I got some other girls to stand up to Jenna and do good to her instead of bad things, she would stop being a bully. Shelly and I got three other girls to join us. When Jenna started to pick on Julie, all five of us told her to stop. Then we asked her to play with us."

"What happened?" Rondelle's mother asked.

"Well, Jenna left Julie alone and began to play hopscotch with us," Rondelle replied. "You were right about loving our enemies and doing good to them (Luke 6:27), but someone had to be the leader."

The nation of Israel really needed a leader when some bullies were making them miserable.

TELLING THE LESSON:

God had promised that He would always be Israel's God and that they would always be His people. If Israel obeyed His laws, He would bless them with everything good; but if they disobeyed, He would remove all His blessings.

God brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt. With Joshua as their leader, the Israelites conquered the land God had given them, but they did not chase out the people who lived there. After Joshua's lifetime, many Israelites started worshiping the idols that those people worshiped. They also did many other bad things. They completely forgot God.

Now that the people of Israel were not keeping His laws, God let the enemies around them take their possessions and hurt them. The Midianites came riding their big, fast camels from the east and attacked the Israelites year after year. The people of Israel were so afraid that they moved out of their towns and hid in caves.

This made it very hard for them to plant and harvest crops. When the Israelites were about to bring in their wheat or other crops each year, thousands of cruel Midianites would come like a swarm of bees and chase them away. They took the crops from the fields and destroyed everything that was left. They took as many sheep and other farm animals as they wanted and killed the rest. The Israelites were completely helpless. It was terrible!

When the Israelites were starving and had lost all hope, they begged God to save them from the Midianites. The Lord heard their cries and sent a prophet to deliver a message.

The prophet told them that God said, "I brought you out of slavery in Egypt. I gave you victory over the people living in the land that I had promised you, and I gave you your land. I told you not to worship their idols, but you have not obeyed Me."

God was telling them that all their suffering was their own fault. They had no right to expect any help from Him until they turned from their sin and started to obey Him.

Then another messenger came from God. It was an angel that looked like a man, although it may have been God Himself. This angel went into the hills and found an Israelite named Gideon separating grains of wheat from the hulls and stems. He was doing it the hard way to keep the Midianites from seeing him and taking what little wheat he had.

The angel said to him, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." Gideon must have felt like laughing at this, for he certainly did not feel mighty. He said, "If the Lord is with us, why has all this trouble happened to us? Why has He not done any miracles like those our fathers told us about when they said He brought

them out of Egypt? Now the Lord has deserted us and left us alone to suffer under the Midianites." Perhaps, Gideon was angry with God.

The angel gave Gideon an order. He told him to go in the power that God would supply. He said that Gideon would save Israel from the Midianites. God was sending him.

Gideon thought he was a poor choice for God to use, but when the angel performed a miracle (see Judges 6:17-21), Gideon became God's man to lead Israel in battle against God's enemies.

HELPING TO REMEMBER:

Give each child a sheet of paper that you have prepared. Have the children color the squares in the correct order.

TELLING HOW TO LIVE:

God loves us and wants to give us all that would make us happy, healthy, and wise. He knows that we cannot be happy if we do things that would harm us. That is the reason for all the rules for living that we find in the Bible. Obeying those rules will keep us from doing stupid things that cause us and others pain and suffering for the rest of our lives.

Some people dare us to break the rules or promise to be our friend if we do something for them. They say it will not hurt anyone. We have to think about whether they are really friends and whether we should follow them.

Other people follow the rules and do unselfish things. They may try to get others to join them. Sometimes there seems to be little reason to follow them, especially when doing what is right only helps other people – not us. Why should we work so hard when there is nothing in it for us? When we do good, it helps everyone.

When you have a choice to follow someone who does what is wrong or someone who does what is right, the choice should be easy. If you do not see anyone leading others to do something good, you can be the leader – even if no one follows.

EXPLAINING THE MEMORY VERSE:

"The Lord . . . said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites" (Judges 6:14).

God chose Gideon to lead His people Israel and help them defeat their enemies the Midianites. Gideon was sure that he was not able to do this job and that no one would follow him, but God gave Gideon the power to gather an army together and do what needed to be done.

It was a very big job and also very dangerous, but Gideon decided to obey God. Because of his obedience, many people were saved from terrible suffering and many returned to faith in God.

CONCLUSION:

Gideon was a humble man. He did not even pretend to understand everything God was going to do, but he was willing to obey God's Word.

You should read in the book of Judges what happened next to Gideon. God used one weak man and a pitiful army of three hundred men against thousands of Midianites. What God did through Gideon was exciting! The Lord gave Gideon the encouragement he needed and with God's directions, Gideon became a victorious leader.

PRAYER:

Dear God, thank You for the examples that You have given us in Your Word. Help us to be what you want us to be. May we obey You and encourage others to do the same, in Jesus' name. Amen.

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON:

The next lesson is "Ezra: God's Chosen Leader" and tells how Ezra the priest helped the people of Israel turn back to God. Study Ezra 9:1-15.

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WORD SEARCH:

"Gideon: God's Chosen Leader" (Judges 6:1-3, 7-14)

Find these keywords from the lesson:

PROPHET

WINEPRESS

ANGEL

ISRAEL

CHOSEN

MIRACLES

MIGHTY

LEADER

DISOBEYED

GIDEON

MOUNTAINS

CRIED

VALOR

DELIVER

WHEAT

MIDIANITES

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