

11/3/19 - Judges 7:1-8:32 - "Gideon (pt. 2), The Substance & Sustenance of your Calling"

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[0 : 00] Please join me in a word of prayer. Father, at this time, let us zero in on this book.

Allow this book to speak to us through the power of your Holy Spirit that dwells within us. Help us understand this. Help us apply this. Help us hear you this morning.

Help us stay awake. Help me to proclaim your word with precision. With the precision that is already found in this book. Father, bring it to life in this church.

Speak to this church. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So we're quickly approaching the hinge point of the book of Judges.

And it lies within a great detail of accounts of an unlikely person that God chooses in verse 6, 7, and 8.

[1 : 00] We're going to be talking about God calling somebody to leadership. And leadership is often a learned process. The greatest leaders known in life are often ones that have failed in one way or another.

Somebody who has experienced extreme setback, extreme failure. Two guys that pop into my head immediately is Bill Gates, who, before he was even involved with Microsoft, Bill Gates put all of his resources into this failed company called Taffo Data.

Steve Jobs also, another big one. You all have the iPhone. You know who Steve Jobs is. When he launched Apple in 1976, he actually ended up having a failed product launch, which ended up getting him fired from his own company that he started.

Steve Jobs. But what did Steve Jobs do? He didn't just sit back and mope. He started another company. And it actually gave Apple a run for their money. And Apple, in 1997, they actually bought Steve Jobs' company back from him and put him back as the head of the company.

Leadership is often a learned process. And I believe, like these leaders, that qualities of good leadership are consistency, persistence, and adaptability.

[2 : 19] However, unlike Jobs and Gates, Christian leadership is actually something unique. And it requires the calling and equipping of God alone.

While these men were very talented, God gives Christian leaders, his church, special gifts and equipping. Through God's equipping of a Christian leader, he gives you a new identity that no human can take away, a calling so secure not in your personality.

Some personalities are attractive. Not in your stature. And not your gifting. But God's gifting. And God's anointing. The genesis of all leaders, whether you're a secular leader like Jobs and Gates, or if you're a Christian leader, it begins with nothing too significant.

You got a genetic code from a biological parent, and you get a name. All leaders have that. But it also begins with sinfulness, which is rooted back to the source of Adam and Eve's rebellion in the Garden of Eden.

All leaders, secular or Christian leaders, are exposed to these two factors. The spiritual, the physical creation, and the spiritual creation. This is not only true for us today, for Steve Jobs, for Bill Gates, for us, for me, for any of the elders, for any deacons, and you.

[3 : 39] And the same is also for Israel, the nation of Israel, the entire world, and also the judge today. We are all born into this sinfulness. There is something wrong. There is a malfunction within us.

And today we will meet a sinful, flawed, and timid leader named Gideon. And being one of the most popular Bible stories, we all know the story of Gideon, you know, being called out and going and his army getting whittled down.

We all know this story. If you don't, I'm sorry to assume that you do, but it is a very popular story within the Christian realm. And so with that in mind, I want to come under God's Word today. Come afresh with His Word. His Word is alive for us. And so when you go through these passages that you've read over and over, oh yeah, Gideon, okay, well done. You know, come under His Word.

Learn something new. Ask God to help you to see something new that you haven't seen before. And Lord willing, I will assist you in that through the power of the Holy Spirit. But Paul was a firm believer that God's power is made perfect in His weakness.

[4 : 47] And today we will see that firsthand. God's power, but also God's compassion. We will see His steadfastness. We will see His kindness, His patience, in which are all revealed calling such human rebels like Gideon.

Just to catch you up to speed, if you are new with us today, if this is your first Sunday checking out this church, let's see what's inside of this castle-looking church. You know, we are in the book of Judges.

And this is a part of the long narrative. The entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, has, if you could imagine, like a string that runs all the way through. Sometimes the string goes this way, that way.

It's a string, but it's a constant string. And that is the biblical narrative. And right where we're at in the book of Judges is the day of Judges. It's after the day of Moses, after the death of Joshua, and before the kings.

And definitely way before Jesus, before the New Testament. And in this, this book, Israel needed a leader. The purpose of Judges were God raising up a leader for this lost nation that so quickly and so often, whenever they didn't have leadership, they fell away from the Lord in disobedience.

[5 : 59] They served other gods. And God would actually put them under oppression of the enemy to bring them back to Him. And in this book, we will see today, they cry out in distress from that oppression.

And so God raises up a leader, a judge. And today, it's going to be Gideon. And the good news of Judges is that while Israel lost sight of God, God never lost sight of Israel.

That is the good news of Judges. So let's watch the author set up this sinful environment up in, we're going to be in Judges 6, verse 1. We'll be going towards the end of the book.

We'll stop a little bit before. Let's see the author set this book up in these first 10 verses. And we're going to meet, see the oppression a little bit, a little vividly in this passage between Israel and a foreign enemy because they have no leader at this point.

They are lost and they are worshiping other gods. Look with me in chapter 6, verse 1. We see the scene setting of this sinful environment.

[7 : 03] Verse 1 says, Pause for one moment.

We see that cycle continuing that I just talked about, of Israel turning from God, then turning back to God. Israel transgressed God's covenant here.

They did evil in this passage. In verse 1, Baal worshiped. They were worshiping other false gods and God disciplines them under the oppressive hand of Midian for seven years.

We clearly see the two parties involved. It's between Israel and Midian. And Midian actually has, the Midianites have an interesting history with the nation of Israel. They were friendly descendants of Abraham.

Back in Genesis 25, they were friendly descendants of Abraham. And then Moses actually dwelled with Israel, or with the Midianites, in Exodus 2.

[8 : 09] But in Numbers, Midianites became enemies, opposed to Israel in the Balaam incidents. Back in Numbers 25 and Numbers 31. And now we see the oppression still continues.

That tense relationship continues with Israel in the days of Gideon in Judges 6. So we got all the players involved. It's between Israel and the Midianites. Let's see how the author gets a little bit more detailed with this oppression.

He's kind of zooming in. He gave you a broad stroke of what's going on here. And he's zooming the lens in, the magnification, okay, what does this oppression really look like? Excuse me. Let's see in verse 3 as it continues.

For whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the east would come up against them. They would encamp against them and devour the produce of the

land as far as Gaza and leave no sustenance in Israel and no sheep or ox or donkey. For they would come up with their livestock and their tents. They would come like locusts in number. Both they and their camels could not be counted so that they laid waste the land as they came in.

[9 : 18] And Israel brought very low. Israel was brought very low because of Midian. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord for help. In verse 3 to verse 5, the author of this book provided a vivid snapshot of the oppression that was going on with this nation.

From ground zero, he's zooming in from this broad stroke of this cycle of the oppression going into what's really going on, in which we see even neighboring nations getting in on this action and taking advantage of their produce, of their livestock.

We see the Amalekites in this, the ancient enemies of Israel that dates back to even Exodus 17. And a few weeks ago, we talked about it in chapter 3 of Judges with the account of Ehud, the Amalekites, and also the people of the east, the desert people occupying marginal lands, east and south of Israel.

And we see some interesting description here. The author really drives home a plague-like image of locusts, too great in number to even count, devouring Israel's harvests.

Not only that, but Israel was robbed of their precious cattle that they needed, and they were in extreme limited supply. The suppression was so great, and Israel was forced to live like animals for seven years as they lived in dens and caves for just mere survival.

[10 : 48] These are the people of God, God's people living in caves, trying to survive. And just as I mentioned with the biblical narrative, the Lord brings this oppression upon them to bring about an effect, and that is to bring them out to come back to the Lord.

He brought them very low, and then in verse 6, and the people of Israel cried out for help to the Lord. It took them seven years of this. Think about that. And as verse 7 continues, God hears them. And normally, for anybody who's been tuned in for this past series, normally at this point, He would raise up a judge to lead Israel, but instead, He chooses in this point to speak to them.

The Lord sends a prophet to them. In verse 7, it says, it continues, when the people of Israel cried out to the Lord on account of the Midianites, the Lord sent a prophet to the people of Israel, and He said to them, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, I led you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of slavery, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land.

And I said to you, quote, I am the Lord your God. You shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell, but you have not obeyed my voice.

[12 : 21] In this account of judgeship, it begins with one of the most vivid depictions of oppression thus far. You get zoomed in. You see exactly what this oppression looks like. It's like you're landing from a bird's eye view down to ground zero of what was really happening.

And looking at that video of Voice on the Mars video, you know, you're landing in like North Korea where you're looking around and these people are just oppressed.

They can't escape it. So Lord sent the prophet. This man comes to communicate to them a message from the Lord, but a message which would cast doubt of any hope of how the message ends.

It ends as, but you have not obeyed my voice. It's a dual reminder that this man brings to this lost nation. The Lord has been faithful in the past to this nation.

So faithful to them. He's brought them out of Egypt. He's brought them through the wilderness. He's even split the Red Sea and they walked through on dry ground. His faithfulness was there, but they have been unfaithful to them.

[13 : 29] But you have not obeyed my voice. They have forfeited their deliverance. This is a covenant disobedience that we saw in Deuteronomy 7.

How often the Lord, even for us today, when He intervenes in our past, that we can forget so quickly, like even within 24 hours sometimes, that He can do some mighty work that really gets us moving and we're serving Him faithfully and then all of a sudden just something happens and then everything's thrown off.

We forget. How quickly we can forget just like Israel. Now, if we stopped here, church, the next move of God would be completely unclear.

But we know that the Lord is moved to compassion by their groanings. Remember when we talked about that in the introductory section between chapter 1 and 2. The Lord is moved to compassion by their groanings.

And so He raises up a leader for them and He is with the leader. And despite such wicked people, God is faithful to raise a deliverer. The Lord calls a deliverer. It's a young man named Gideon.

[14:46] He is resourceful and he's a little bit angry, I would say. Maybe that's not the best description. But He's a little bit frustrated in this scene as verse 11 continues in the call of Gideon.

Verse 11 says, Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abysseanite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites.

Now just pause a moment. An angel of the Lord enters the narrative think about that alone. The angel of the Lord enters the narrative and lands right in the midst of this sinful environment and quite a mess it was.

And this angel sits under this oak tree, a terebinth is an oak tree. For anybody in the open study on Tuesday, we were wondering about that. And he watches this young man beating wheat in a hole in the ground.

I mean, it kind of, the one thing that Scripture doesn't really give you is like an accurate timeline of how long these things were going on. All we know is that he sat under an oak tree and there's this young man in a hole in the ground in a winepress.

[16:04] I mean, you kind of wonder how long he was sitting there just like, like, oh, Israelites, come on. These are, you are my people. Just turn back to me. This angel of the Lord is just watching this man struggling and wrestling this wheat.

But do you ever get the feeling like somebody's watching you? You should, especially when you're at the grocery store after a Sunday that you miss church. I'm like standing in the aisle, like scoping you out.

I'll find you. You ever see that meme of Michael Myers when he's just standing like, like that, like in the sidewalk it says like, the look your pastor gives you when you, when you miss church and Michael Myers is standing on the sidewalk just, yeah.

You ever get the feeling like somebody's watching you? Well, it says in this passage and the Lord appeared to him. The Lord spotted the angel. The angel didn't even say anything.

He's just sitting there looking at Gideon. And then, you know, Gideon, feeling somebody like burnt and somebody's eyes burning in the back of your head. He appears to him and he said to him, the angel speaks to Gideon and the dialogue begins in verse 12.

[17:14] And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, the Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor. And Gideon said to him, please my Lord, if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us?

And where are all the wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us saying, did not the Lord bring us from Egypt? And now the Lord has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.

Say what? Gideon? This man is calling you a mighty man of valor hiding in a hole. And not only that, Gideon recounts, he knows the deliverance of the past.

Something's been translated to him. He knows about the historic accounts of deliverance in the days of the repression. In fact, Gideon was so young, he was probably, he was at an age where he was probably alive.

They've been under repression for seven years under the Midianites. He's probably been alive in their past deliverance between the current judge and the last judge. So we see that he knows something here.

[18:22] And notice the implications of each piece of dialogue. The angel identifies this young man as a what? Mighty man of valor. But I have a question.

What is so mighty about hiding in a winepress, barely getting by? How embarrassing for God's people to be doing this. What is so mighty about hiding in a winepress, barely getting by?

It clearly makes no sense to Gideon to be addressed in this way. It actually seems to set him off in this narrative because at this point, Gideon has no idea who's appearing to him. He doesn't know that this is an angel of the Lord.

He thinks it's just a mere messenger. What they call this is a Christophany. But simply at this point in the text, he thinks he's just a messenger. Someone who maybe had pressed a little bit too much

wine yesterday and still is recovering from that wine.

You know, I don't know who you think. Like, if the Lord is with us, like, this is really not the ideal situation. Obviously, you're a little bit drunk. But notice the sarcasm in his response.

[19 : 29] It seems like he almost scoffs at the messenger. Who did you say was with me? Oh, oh, that guy. Yeah, the Lord that our fathers told us, recounted, you know, who brought us out of the land of Egypt.

Yeah, okay. Yeah, this is clearly what he intended for us, right. Well, church, we often get, quickly get in this way.

when life works against us, when we barely feel like we're staying above the waterline in this life.

How often we can go back and almost scoff at God and saying, really God?

I've been faithful to you. I've been doing this and that and this and that and still this is happening to me. how often we can we can lose sight of God's faithfulness.

At times we too do things that provoke the anger of the Lord and discipline and when he disciplines us it's like we're like children sometimes. We're, he disciplines us and then we complain because of how everything is not realizing that it's our fault in the first place that he's disciplining us.

[20 : 38] It's like, come on people. at these times when we experience the discipline of the Lord when he brings, brings oppression into our lives we need to question him not saying why is this happening to me but we should rather ask what are you trying to teach me because he's trying to teach Israel something through this oppression.

What I want to speak to you today is do not waste your discipline church. When you feel that the Lord is coming against you it is a blessing. it is a blessing and a refinement process because you are his child and he desires to draw you back to refine you and to help you grow into the image of Christ.

Do not waste your discipline. So this messenger addresses this apparently sarcastic, frustrated and angry young man down in a hole.

Let's continue in verse 14 and see how this dialogue turns out. And the Lord turned to him and said and the Lord turned to him and said go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian.

Do not I send you? And he said to him please Lord how can I save Israel? Behold my clan is the weakest in Manasseh and I am the least in my father's house.

[22 : 00] And the Lord said to him but I will be with you and you shall strike the Midianites as one man. So Gideon fired back at this messenger just a moment earlier that God is the one that put him in the hole and notice now in this passage the body language in the second interaction the Lord turned to him now just think about that the Lord turned to him direct focus looking right at Gideon and he said to him go in this might and save Israel do not I send you.

What attention what body language saying right there Gideon I know you're frustrated but go in this might and save Israel do not I send you.

Gideon's frustration turns to doubt in this. He says me? me? My clan? We're the laughing stock in Manasseh. I'm the youngest in my family.

What's so mighty about a man hiding in a hole? Well this is the key church. The messenger's remarks were not based upon anything seen to Gideon but was unseen to him.

It was seen to the Lord. What was unknown to Gideon at that moment was known to the Lord.

Gideon lifts off all these excuses which would disqualify him from saving anyone almost saying who do you think you are?

[23 : 34] Clearly you had too much wine yesterday this messenger. Church isn't it interesting that this messenger is relentless calling Gideon.

Hello? This messenger is relentless calling Gideon. He's being no more moot by Gideon's excuses here in this passage nor with his anger previously.

He had a plan for Gideon and he called him. He was relentless with him. And God is relentless when he calls Gideon. He is relentless when he calls you church.

Gideon is called at this moment not based on anything that is in his power or control but solely based on who God is and what God can do through his life. In fact it has nothing to do with his qualifications at all which Gideon listed.

Rather Gideon was called based on his potential which God could only see. And we see like a burning bush calling here just like we saw in Exodus 3 with Moses.

[24 : 41] The Lord also appeared to Moses calling him I will be with you. And at this point Gideon begins to notice that this is no ordinary messenger here. There's something about this guy.

I know he's not drunk anymore. This is starting to speak to me. You ever get that feeling like your heart's burning like when the Lord is starting to do something in your life? When you're starting to confirm something your heart just starts beating.

You start noticing it's almost like you're awakening. The Lord is provoking Gideon to move out of his apathetic self, out of his anger, out of his doubt, and see his success rooted in obedience by the power of God alone, which the angel of the Lord reveals to Gideon, verse 16.

And like any faithful officer at a traffic stop, he's starting to question this angel's identity. He's essentially saying, okay, sir, I'm going to have you show me a proof of ID here.

Because you're starting to, I'm starting to question who you might be. Let me see some proof of ID. Because at this point, there's no reason to warrant that this is an angel of the Lord, that this is a Christoph, and that this is God appearing to him because literally he turned to him, he's looking at this angel of the Lord in the face.

[26 : 00] You know, people die from God's holiness being in his presence. So Gideon's like, okay, well, I got to test this because tradition would tell him to bring an offering to the Lord and present it to him.

So in scene three, we see that this is no ordinary messenger, as verse 17 continues. And he said to him, Gideon said to him, if now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak to me.

Please do not depart from me from here until I come to you and bring my presence and set it before you. And the angel Lord replied to him and said to him, I will stay till you return.

So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes with an ephoth of flour. The meat he put in a basket and the broth he put in a pot and brought them to him underneath the terebinth and presented to them.

In verse 17 through 19, Gideon prepares the offering. And you notice a little bit of faith. You can't really see this at face value, but you see a little bit of faith of Gideon, something that maybe the Lord is after in here.

[27 : 15] Because notice all the things that he prepares for this sacrifice, for this offering, for a presence to this angel, they don't necessarily have a fridge full of food.

They don't necessarily have all this abundance of supplies in their pantry. He's acting by faith and using what little sources they have and he's giving it back to God at this time.

He prepares quite a spread for the angel of the Lord. I wouldn't probably mind this spread. In verse 20, the angel of God said to him, take the meat and the unleavened cakes and put them on this rock and pour the broth over them.

And he did so. Then the angel of the Lord reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hands and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes.

And the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight. And Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Lord. In verse 20 through 22, the angel of the Lord gives instructions for the sacrifice and how to prepare it.

[28 : 25] And he accepted the sacrifice and visibly vanished from his sight. And the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight. And notice as this said, he perceived.

And Gideon, then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the Lord. Gideon's demeanor completely shifted from utter frustration, utter anger, to he perceived being a turning point in this passage.

He now has an intellectual understanding of what is really going on here, that he is being called. For any Despicable Me fans, he had a light bulb moment.

The light bulb went off. But, in verse 22, it ends, Gideon said, Alas, O God, for I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face.

It's like, this is not good. I've seen him face to face. I'm doomed. Where'd he go? Is this it? What did I tell my dad? Get me out of this wine press.

[29 : 32] You know, fire's going to fall down. I scoffed at this guy. This is the angel of the Lord. And I'm doubting him face to face. He turned to me. I'm looking at him in his face and I'm questioning him.

I'm questioning his faithfulness. What an emotional rollercoaster that Gideon's taken on from frustration to doubt, now utter fear.

You're starting to see quite a character being developed within Gideon. But there's a key in this passage. While the visible manifestation of the Lord has vanished, we see in verse 23 something interesting that the Lord actually vanished but he was not far at all.

He speaks through the Holy Spirit to Gideon. Verse 23 it continues, But the Lord said to him, Peace be with you. Do not fear.

You shall not die. Gideon didn't even have to speak anything. Gideon thought that was the end of his life down in that winepress. Verse 24, Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and called it, The Lord is peace.

[30 : 42] To this day it stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abysrites. Gideon memorialized this encounter church with the altar named Yahweh Shalom, meaning God himself is peace.

The source of his being is peace. Just like when we were back in 1 John, we learned that the Lord's essence is light. There is no darkness in him. He's also peace.

This is far from a mere attribute. This is his being. The Lord is peace. Now this young man has quite an intellectual understanding. He perceived now that this is the angel of the Lord.

This is no messenger. This is the angel of the Lord. And he knows that he has a unique calling from God at this point. And Gideon moves into his very first crucial mission.

For any James Bond fans, insert the theme music now of James Bond. The first mission is at hand for Gideon.

[31 : 45] The Lord calls back Israel as night falls. In verse 25, as we come to a close in this passage, that night, notice, I'm just going to stop there for a minute.

That night, there's no time for Gideon to waste. That very night, this doubtful, this fearful, this angry man, down in a hole, beating wheat.

That very night, the Lord calls him. The Lord said to him, through the Holy Spirit again, take your father's bull and the second bull, seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it, and build an altar to the Lord your God on top of the stronghold there, with stones laid in due order.

Then take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering in the wood of the Asherah that you shall cut down. So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had told him.

But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night. And we see dawn breaking here in verse 28.

[32 : 53] When the men of the town arose in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and Asherah beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built.

And they said to one another, who has done this thing? And after they had searched and inquired, they said, Gideon, the son of Joash, has done this thing. And the men of the town said to Joash, bring out your son that he may die, for he has broken down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah beside it.

Verse 31, But Joash said to all who stood against him, Will you contend for Baal, or will you save him? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by mourning.

If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been broken down. And as the passage concludes today, therefore, on that day, Gideon was called Jerobel.

Baal, that is to say, let Baal contend against him, because he broke down his altar. How lost, church, we're at the end of the passage today, how lost this nation was.

[34 : 09] When they found out, notice, this is the Israelites that are coming against Gideon. When they found out who destroyed the foreign gods of Israel, these people wanted blood.

I mean, I often get this from my toddlers, you know, at home, like, you don't take my monster truck, I swear I'm going to, you know. It's like you take something, it's like children in this passage.

I want blood! What a dependency on these false gods and these false altar. It reminds me of a scene of a toddler and his toys. And we meet Joash, a little bit more description of who Joash is.

Gideon's father, he's clearly a head in that town that they lived in, clearly holding a high office in the city, who has a power of life and death over citizens, even his own son. He also has quite an understanding that the Lord does not need defending at all.

And what an awakening moment for him as well. Because he says if the Baals were destroyed and Gideon lived to see the day, obviously they truly had no power, power. Hey guys, what's God communicating to us today?

[35 : 19] Look at these Baals, they're destroyed, they're burnt, but look what's standing, it's an altar of the Lord. And the citizens respond to this rebuke, apparently revealed more fear to Joash than their false gods.

And they abandoned their attack on Gideon from that day. And Gideon was actually coined a hero of waking this little city up. They named him Jeroboel. The narrative ends in this passage with the Lord delivering this small town back to himself.

And it's a small step, mind you. But it's an important step for this nation to come back to the Lord and fight the real enemy who is not Israel, but the Midianites.

There's something that we need to take away from the passage today. today is the substance of God's call. I want to talk about that for just a moment.

The beginning of this narrative of Gideon is always perspective shifting to me. Maybe I'm the only one, but when I read Gideon, I'm reminded of how fickle we can be. And it's a great reminder to us all.

[36 : 29] You know, all that we once were, you know, the choices we've made, the sin that we've committed, it is all in the past. All who we were is because of our sin, but all that we are is because of God, because He has justified us.

And all that we will be is because of God's power through our sanctification in His life. When God calls you to enter into His sovereign plans, He is more than likely never looking at who you are now, but rather who you are meant to be.

He is looking at you down the line a little bit more. What was so mighty about this man hiding, beating wheat in a wine press?

Absolutely nothing. But the Lord in His divine omniscience calls and qualifies the unqualified. Now, church, I love being a pastor.

I wouldn't trade it for anything. I love being a pastor, but not many of you know that several years ago, I did not want this at all, whatsoever.

[37 : 42] I heard stories, I heard horror stories of all this stress that pastors go through, all these crises, and sometimes rest, the only rest that they get is the time in between one crisis to another crisis.

Just like, this is drama. One of the things when I started dating my wife, I'm just like, please, I just, I can't deal with trauma. Can't. And she's like, well, that's good because I can't either.

So, you know, match made in heaven there. And we lived happily ever after. But the interesting thing is that God called me to the pastorate even when I didn't want it.

Even in my doubts of even being qualified for it. God's character is clearly revealed in this passage often by those he calls. In their calling, he's almighty in their calling.

That he's faithful in their calling. He's tender in their calling. He's full of compassion. He's unchanging and undying in that calling. Gideon was chosen to act as an instrument in the hands of God in doing the work.

[38 : 48] And shortly after, we see what God saw within his heart. was faith. Not anyone would have the faith to use limited resources for this offering to this foreign messenger at that point.

Let alone even prepare an offering at all. Remember, this nation was lost for seven years. Who would even think that maybe this is the Lord God almighty, Yahweh. But Gideon knew.

He had faith. There was something about Gideon. Gideon had something hidden within his heart church. That the Lord desired to tap into. And that was his devotion to God.

He knew the stories that maybe in the back of his mind that he's like, this has to be true. There has to be more than this. And because of that, the Lord called him. Church, the substance of your calling is devotion to God as well.

And upon this, everything in your life will fuel from that. It requires yielding to God and not getting caught up in your feelings. And the second thing, along with the substance of God's call, I want to look at the power of God's call.

[40 : 01] What is faith, church? Hebrews 11. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen. Seen.

Gideon had faith, wavering, questionable at times, doubtful, but faith nonetheless, similar to Barak that we read about last week.

But faith nonetheless, and what great things that God can do with just a little bit of faith that you might have. It was important to understand that God provides for Gideon with all the spiritual resources to fulfill his calling.

He says, I will be with you. This is not on you. This is me helping you. In Matthew 28, Jesus told his disciples before his ascension, all authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

[41 : 07] And what, church? And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Jesus' authority, when we're talking about the power of God's call, it is Jesus' authority.

All authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore. What's a therefore, therefore? Because all authority has been given to him to empower this mission of the church.

To go, therefore, because of his authority that's been given to him. And I will be with you to the end of the age. And guess what? The Lord is with his people always. And even us today.

Because he dwells with us. It's a grand difference from Gideon's day where it was sometimes upon this judge. He empowered this judge. It was come and go. But he is dwelling with us.

He's within us, his people today. And he equips his church. 2 Peter 1.3 says, Believers today are therefore fully equipped to do whatever God calls them to do.

[42 : 12] 2 Peter 1.3 says, His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. Through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.

Church, we have a sin problem. Remember the fundamental problem that Bill Gates, Steve Jobs all have. What Gideon struggled with. What the nation of Israel struggled with.

That we struggled with. That the disciples struggled with. There is a sin problem. A sin which holds us down. A sinfulness that grabs us by our ankles.

A sin that gives us paralysis in our lives. Spiritual paralysis. Which we feel deep within our hearts. When we experience this, it's often spoken in our minds at times.

I'm going to do better tomorrow. You know, I'll start being more disciplined when life settles down a little bit. You know, when things are less crazy.

[43 : 21] You know, once things happen, once this happens, things are going to change. I want to let you into a little truth and rebuke.

You are lying to yourself, church. You're lying to yourself. When God calls you, it's a relentless calling.

It demands devotion that drives you to repentance when you fall out of step with Him. When you're in your hiding. And when you're in your sleeping. No matter the circumstances in life.

Who is the real God? The circumstances in your life or the calling of God? The relentless calling of God? Don't worship the God of convenience in your life. Wait till things settle down.

Wait till your family kind of gets a little bit more solidified. The time is now. There's no tomorrow.

There's no other ideal circumstances circumstance. The time is now. Stop worshiping other gods and ignoring the almighty God who is over your schedule, over your convenience.

[44 : 25] It's ridiculous, church. You're lying to yourself. Church, the Lord is very, very, very persistent. How long will you delay what you know within your hearts God is calling you to do right now?

What does this look like in your own life? One of the greatest and most popular need in the Christian life is probably spiritual discipline. Getting in the word, letting your Bible not collect dust, is only by the power of God to bring us out of our hiding and to call us out of our sleeping.

How does this apply to you today? What's God calling you to do? Many of you have very, very awesome and great opportunities in a secular job field. I see doctors.

I see electricians. I see construction workers. I see retail employees. I see managers of fire alarm companies. I see underwriters.

Who is God calling you? He's surrounding you. He didn't just call you to faith to be church attenders. He's called you to a mission field that is within your job field, within your place of work.

[45 : 37] And the time is now to get serious about it. And also for us today as a church, Youngstown Metro Church, I see within our midst church attendees.

I see church members here. But where are the teachers? Where are the evangelists? Where are our prayer warriors? Where are men's leaders?

Where are women's leaders? Where are children's workers? We are the hands and feet of God. And we are in this together as a family.

Where are the laborers that 2 Peter 1.3 talks about that has called us to his own glory and excellence, this time, church, to come out of hiding and to come out of sleeping.

The moment we begin to compromise in our minds, I promise you, there is a still small voice in the back of your mind, I promise you, the minute you say, tomorrow I'm going to get better, there's a still small voice that says, I'm waiting.

[46 : 42] I trust me. The Lord is very persistent in calling His church. Accept that call immediately and turn back to Him today, whatever that looks like in your life.

I promise you, when this happens, you will want to memorialize that moment. The day you realize God has spoken to you and you have broken through your sinful tendencies, I promise you, you will want to memorialize that.

Let today, church, be the day that you memorialize that. Through repentance of your hiding and of your sleeping, the call of God upon your life is today. Because He is with us, church, let us live in a way that we believe what He says is true about this.

How is God calling you for a special purpose? Let's talk about it today. Stick around after service. Talk to one of our pastors here. You are His hands and His feet.

He is calling you with great purpose and with great power. Let's use it. Arise. Let's pray, church.