

GOD CALLS GIDEON



Passages to Study: Judges 6:1-40.

Read with the class: Judges 6:11-24.

Texts for memorization:

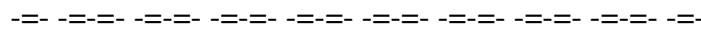
Younger: 1 Corinthians 1:27 "God hath chosen the weak ... mighty

Older 1 Corinthians 1:27



OBJECTIVES:

1. God is merciful when His disobedient people turn back to Him.
2. God uses suffering in the lives of people as well as difficult circumstances in order to speak to them.
3. God looks for and uses a person who does not trust in him or herself.
4. Besides trusting God, the person He uses must obey Him, despite his or her fears.
5. God is patient with His servants while He carries out His plans.

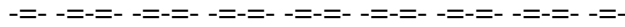


SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS: Figures of people hiding in a cave in the land of Israel.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Frightened and hungry, the Israelites hid in caves and places that were hard to reach.
 - Distressed, the Israelites observed how the Midianites settled in their territory and prepared to destroy their crops before they could reap them.
 - Israel was suffering the consequences of their sin, for they had left the Lord to serve the false gods of surrounding nations.
 - The Israelites were totally impoverished.
- Apl.** The Midianites represent the secular world concerned only with material things. People such as these have no concern for the feelings of others or what they need in order to live.
- The Midianites took advantage of the Israelites, a defenseless people, taking the fruit of their labours from them.
 - Not only did the Midianites take and keep for themselves all the Israelite's crops, but also destroyed what was not useful to them.
- Cns.** The evil resident in the human heart is seen in its selfishness. People think only of achieving their own objectives and do not take into account the needs of others.
- Cmt.** Selfishness is one sin practiced universally by children. Starting in childhood by not sharing toys, and moving on to undermining friendships in adolescence, depriving others of useful goods, and retaining helpful information, etc., proves 2 Timothy 3:1-2, "men shall be lovers of their own selves".
- Sug.** Discuss with the students the principle of selfishness and what it does to people. The opposite of love is not hate, but rather selfishness. Ask the students in what condition we would be today had God been selfish and not shown love.
- Israel had stopped serving God and did not return to Him the portion of their goods that they were required to give. They committed the sin of selfishness.
- Lsn.** It makes no difference who the person is; God expects that love, gratitude, obedience, goodness and concern for others be "given back" to Him. The principle is that of giving back to God that which belongs to Him.
- Lsn.** God was using the Midianites to call the attention of the Israelites so that they would become aware of their sin.
- Cns.** A person who does not give God that what is His due, loses his usefulness for God.
- Apl.** A selfish unconverted person does not give his will nor his life to God.
- Apl.** A selfish believer does not serve divine interests.

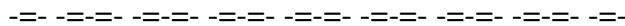
GOD CALLS GIDEON



SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS: The winepress. Figure of Gideon busy threshing.

DEVELOPMENT:

- With the land impoverished, Gideon was concerned about providing something for his own family to eat.
 - God took notice of this man who was doing whatever he could under difficult circumstances.
 - Gideon chose to secretly thresh wheat in a winepress, where it is supposed no one would look for him.
 - The winepress was used at a different time of year to extract the juice of grapes and one would not expect grain would be threshed there.
 - Besides being a hard worker, Gideon was concerned about the difficult situation of his people. (vs.13)
 - God was observing his activities and chose a higher service for him.
 - Gideon considered himself unimportant and was surprised that God had chosen him, so he asked for a sign. (v.17)
 - The sign was that the angel would wait while Gideon prepared an offering. (v.18)
 - He did not allow his fear of possible reprisals by the people to override his faith in God.
 - Gideon was willing to offer something to God even though food was scarce and much needed.
- Ctr.** In doing so, Gideon demonstrated that the spirit of the Midianites had not infected him, for he was willing to give a sacrifice to God, while the Midianites took everything and retained it for themselves.
- Cns.** With his offering, Gideon shows the essence of sacrifice; a willingness to give up something belonging to him in honor of another
- Apl.** In order to serve God, it is necessary first to know and worship Him.
- Cns.** God tests the heart of His servants to see if generosity is present, which is an element of willing service.
- Gideon became convinced that it was God who was speaking to him. (v.22)
 - The Lord encouraged him with the words "Peace be unto thee". In order to remind himself that "Jehovah is peace"; he built an altar there, a visible monument with the name Jehovah-Shalom. (v.23)





SCENE No. 3. VISUAL AIDS (In two parts) Figure of Gideon destroying the altar of Baal at night and figures of angry men talking to Gideon's father.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Gideon destroyed the idols, as God commanded.
- His natural fear did not cause him to be disobedient, even though he did not dare to do the work in the daytime. (v.27)
- Gideon paid attention to the will of God, even though he carried it out in secret.
- Because their idols were destroyed, the angry men of the city demanded Gideon's death the following morning

Cmt. Those who dare to obey God risk being misunderstood, and at times become the object of mockery and threats.

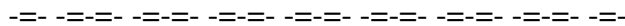
- Joash, his father, argued with the men in defense of his son
- He showed them that this was a test of the power of Baal, and Baal ought to defend himself. Joash used irony to state a great truth.

Apl. When nothing happened, Baal was seen to be what he was, a false god.

- Joash interpreted the situation as a struggle between the true God and Baal, the false one.
- By his works, Gideon demonstrated his faith in the true God.
- In order to serve God, "idols" in the life must be destroyed in order to **TRUST** and **OBEY**

Cns. The idea of "idols" in life will not be a particularly easy concept for some students to catch, so starting by defining an idol as anything that takes the place of God. Ask the students about their dedication to sports, music, even actors, actresses and other "heroes".

Cmt. Conversion is a turning **FROM** and a turning **TO**. See 1 Thessalonians 1:9. “.. ye **turned TO GOD from IDOLS to serve** the living and true God.”



SCENE No. 4 VISUAL AIDS: Figure of Gideon with the dry fleece and then with the wet one.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Gideon now knew the will of God, but he wanted God to confirm His Word.
- Gideon asked for a tangible sign, which shows the weakness of his faith.
- Since Gideon's faith was weak, God in His goodness and patience confirmed His promise of victory to him.
- One of the signs was the opposite of the other.
- Gideon observed the evidences of the test that assured him that God would fulfill His Word. (Ch.6:36-40).

Apl. In our day, also God strengthens our faith through answers to prayer.

Note: At times God answers the prayers of the unsaved so that they will recognize and know His kindness. See Rom.2:4. "Despise thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

Cmt. A Christian meteorologist commented that there is no scientific explanation of the fleece. It is a proof of the power of God to intervene in nature.

- Once Gideon received confirmation through the fleece, he moved ahead in faith to fulfill God's will and lead Israel to recognize the power of Jehovah, whose law they had forgotten.

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