Courage to Follow Where God Leads August 12, 2018

*Judges 6:36-7:8 Series: Courage to Lead*

*“Give me a hundred men who fear nothing but sin and love nothing*

*but God, and I will shake the gates of hell!”* – John Wesley

Intro: Why should I follow God when it scares me to death?

1. God works through second-string believers.
2. Gideon put a question mark next to God’s word.

vv. 36-37 *Then Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said … then I shall know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said.”*

1. Gideon tested the God who said not to test Him.

v. 39 *Please let me test just once more with the fleece.*

Deuteronomy 6:16 Y*ou shall not put the LORD your God to the test.*

1. God responded to Gideon’s doubts and questions anyway.

v. 38 *he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water*

v. 40 *And God did so that night.*

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 *But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;*

* How do you know that “putting out a fleece” in this passage has nothing to do with discerning God’s will?
* What are some ways that we can “test” God today?
* Why does God choose to use someone like Gideon?

1. God works through weakness rather than strength.
2. When we feel confident, we take credit for what God has done.

v. 2 *The LORD said to Gideon, “The people with you are too many for me…”*

v. 2 *lest Israel boast over me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’*

Psalm 33:16 *The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.*

1. God tests those who test Him.

v. 4 *And the LORD said to Gideon, “The people are still too many.”*

v. 4 *Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there.*

1. Our weakness is an opportunity for God to show His strength.

2 Corinthians 12:9 *But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

Isaiah 40:29 *He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.*

Psalm 73:26 *My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

Isaiah 30:15 *For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.”*

* Why is God so concerned that people not take credit for what He has done?
* How can you “boast” “gladly” in your weaknesses?
* What does it mean that your strength is “in quietness and in trust?”

1. People who are too afraid to trust Him, miss out on the victory.
2. God gives the fearful an education.

v. 1 Harod means “trembling;” Moreh means “teacher.”

v. 3 *Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away.*

1. Fear undermines faith among God’s people.

Deuteronomy 20:8 *And the officers shall speak further to the people, and say, ‘Is there any man who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go back to his house, lest he make the heart of his fellows melt like his own.’*

G. Campbell Morgan: The trouble today is that the fearful and trembling man insists upon remaining in the army. A decrease that sifts the ranks of the Church of men who fear and tremble is a great, a gracious and a glorious gain.

1. Faith in Christ casts out fear.

Psalm 34:4 *I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.*

Romans 8:15 *For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”*

1 John 4:18 *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.*

John 14:27 *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*

* Why did God send 22,000 able-bodied but fearful men home?
* What will happen in a church where fear guides the decisions?
* What can someone do to deal with their fears?
* Where do you most need prayer to deal with your fears?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll look at Judges 7:9-25.

Notes