

Gideon #4: The Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ

by Ed Miller

The sermon emphasizes the importance of relying on God's Holy Spirit in Bible study and the role of the remnant in bringing the victory of the Lord to the people of God.

Duration: 1:12:49

Scripture: Genesis 45:3, Jeremiah 1:12, Matthew 6:33, John 14:26

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Jesus Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit for Bible study. He states that the purpose of studying the Bible is to see Jesus and experience the living Word. The speaker uses the story of Joseph in Genesis to illustrate this point, highlighting how Joseph longed to reveal himself to his family but they were still strangers to him. He compares this to the longing of Jesus to be at the same table with his followers, serving them.

Transcript

Well, good morning, brothers. Let me share with you a principle of Bible study that is absolutely indispensable, and that is total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit. We did not come to this weekend to study judges.

We came to see Jesus. Praise God for every part of His Word. But it's the living Word that our hearts thirst for, and we long to see Him.

When our brother Bill was sharing about the table, a passage came to my mind, a very precious passage. It's sort of beautiful, and yet it is a little bit sad. It's Genesis chapter 43.

Remember how Joseph pictures our dear Lord Jesus. In so many ways, that's a message all its own. But how, like Jesus, He had a dream that someday He would be Lord of all, and that everyone in His family, from the oldest to the youngest, would bow down and acknowledge His Lordship.

But His own family had become strangers to Him. He longed for Genesis chapter 45 and verse 3, for the day He could say, I am Joseph. He wanted to reveal Himself so much.

And sometime He would go backstage and weep because they weren't ready. And in chapter 43, there's a story about a table. You were talking about the table.

And I say it's a beautiful story, but it's a sad story. And as they came closer and closer to the revelation of Christ, first He feeds them from a distance and He gives them a bag and they have to go and carry it home. But in chapter 43, they're getting close to the revelation.

They're not there yet. They're still strangers. He hasn't yet said, I'm Joseph.

But they're in a big room and He sets a table. And this is the sad part. They're in the same room, but they're at different tables.

That's the sad part. He longs to be at the same table. But the Bible says that He got up from His table and He kept going to their table and He kept serving them at their table.

It's a glorious picture, really. But then finally He said, I'm Joseph. And when He revealed Himself, His whole family was brought to the table.

The Lord is ministering Himself unto us. It would be a shame, brothers, to be in the same room, but at a different table. He's called us to the same table.

And symbolically, after this is over, we're going to celebrate that at the table. But let's all be at the same table. Praise God, He still serves us, no matter where our table is, but oh, if we could only be at the same table.

All of that to say, as we come to this table, He longs to say, I am Jesus. He longs to reveal Himself. He wants to feed us.

He wants to minister unto us. But it's in the revelation of Himself. And only He can do that.

I've studied this. But you're not going to get a thing out of my study. Only as God gives it.

So let's pray again. I know you've already applied the indispensable principle, but I'm a legalist when it comes to this. And so let's do it again.

Our Father, we thank You so much that Your Holy Spirit, our resident Bible teacher, the One who lives inside of us and delights to unveil the Lord Jesus, we ask You again to shine upon us and open our eyes, open our mouths, open our ears, anoint, we pray, this precious Word. Minister unto us. You have promised to watch over Your Word, to perform it.

Now we ask You to do exactly that. We claim all the will of God for this session. Not most of the will of God.

Not pretty nearly all the will of God. But we claim all the will of God for this session. We can't ask for more than that.

And we will not dare to ask for less. And so in the name of the Lord Jesus, unveil Yourself. Say, I am Jesus.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. I think, brothers, that we've come pretty far in our little study to have a practical review.

I think you know where we are and what we've done. Let me just pick up the biggest points just to carry the flow, and then we'll look again into God's precious Word. Don't get disturbed if you don't see me open

that Bible.

Everything is dependent on this. But the older Lillian gets, the worse my eyes get. And so you see a lot of pages here, but I promise you there's not much on every page.

Just enough I can glance down and see. And it's big. And I've taken all the Bible verses and I've enlarged them.

That's the only thing I know how to do on the computer. And I can cut and paste. And so I do.

I cut. And so all my Bible verses are here. It's from here.

But don't think I'm just neglecting that book because it's here. Anyway, by way of review, you know this glorious story of Gideon and how God's people, because of their rebellion and their sin, they turned from the Lord and God in His grace and His goodness sent a chastening unto them. And God's people, as the story opens, were in bondage.

The oppressor had driven them to live like animals in the holes of the earth, in the dens and in the caves, away from God's light and in the darkness, far beneath their inheritance. This was not God's plan. And Gideon was burdened about that as he looked out and he saw the people of God living away from God's sunshine and in these dark caves.

And so he struggled to help. He had a wonderful heart, this man. And he did what he knew to do.

He didn't know what to do. He wanted to help. And so he figured out a way to salvage some of the fruit, some of the harvest from the enemy.

And he began to beat his wheat against a rock in the winepress in the foothills. And God looked down from heaven and He saw that wonderful heart. And He bowed to heavens and He came down in the person of the Angel of the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

And He came down and He ministered to Gideon and He said, The Lord is with you. And immediately, Gideon expressed his burden. I know the Lord is with me.

I have provision. But them, look at the flock. Look at the people of God.

They are living in the darkness and in the caves. And then the Lord began to deal with Gideon and establish this wonderful truth that Gideon already knew but needed to know by revelation. And that is that the Lord's presence is where the blessing is.

And Gideon, if you're ever going to be a blessing, if you're ever going to allow the Blessor to bless through you, then you must be where the blessing is. And it's in the presence of the Lord that there's fullness of joy. And so, because of that ministry in his life, Gideon took his own ministry, his own desire and method of blessing, and he laid it on the rock before the angel of the Lord.

And the angel of the Lord took the tip of his staff and consumed the ministry. And in a puff of smoke and in ashes, Gideon stood there fearful. And then God gave him peace about what he had done.

And he named that place, God is Peace, Jehovah Shalom. And now that he had peace, he didn't know what to do. And God began to draw him into His presence.

And the deeper Gideon went into the presence of the Lord, the more God began to bless the people and to deal with the enemy. And first, as he was brought into God's presence, he was taught that Christ must have the high place, the preeminent place, not the prominent place. And in close connection with that revelation, it's not by might and it's not by power, but it's by my Spirit, says the Lord.

And then the Lord separated unto Himself a band of 300 people, those who had volunteered to be the instruments of God's life and of God's blessing. And we saw last evening how in a dramatic way, armed with trumpets and pitchers and torches, God illustrated that His life must shine through broken vessels. And as the 300 stood among the shards, standing with the light flaming and the trumpet sounding, God began to do a wonderful work among the people and to the enemy.

Now this morning, we come to the end of the Gideon story and the question arises, where do we go from here? If you've seen the preeminence of Christ, He's a one and only. And if God has dawned on you, it's not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit. And God has brought you to the place where as a volunteer to be His instrument, you have allowed Him to break you in such a way that His life is released.

And when it's released, you give Him the glory for it. That's what it was all about. God's brought you there.

You say, where do we go from there? God said, Gideon, you must press again into My presence. Now I'm going to ask you to look please at chapter 7, verse 2, as a starting point. The Lord said to Gideon, the people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, My own power has delivered Me.

And so the reason, or one reason, that God reduced the number of volunteers to this handful is implied that when God does give the victory, they will not be boastful. They will say, to God be the glory. It's the glory of the Lord who's done this.

They're willing to be His channels. He chose a remnant that would give Him the glory. This is who they are.

And they'll never be anybody else but who they are. This is who the remnant are. They are those who have seen that Christ is a one and only.

They are those who know it's not by might or by power, but by My Spirit. They are the volunteers who have been called and chosen to be instruments of God. They are the ones who have allowed the Lord to break them in order that His life might be released.

And they are those who give the glory to God. They're living unto His pleasure. That's who they are.

Now the remnant have to continue to be who they are. That's who they are. They can't back off from that.

God has shown them that. And they must forever be who they are. We've been watching Gideon respond as God drew him into His presence.

It's almost as if God is over here, and Gideon's here, and God's saying, come, come into My presence. You want to bless them? Come! And so Gideon comes in and God shows that He is the preeminent One and has the high place. And then God says, come! Come! Closer! And Gideon comes again and he sees that he must be broken and be made of nothing, and God must shine through him.

And now what? And Gideon... It's almost as if he's waiting saying, now what? But God doesn't say, come, come. God's over here. And he hears a voice behind him saying, this is the way.

Walk in it. He says, come! Come! And Gideon was so used to pressing into the presence of God in this direction, it surprised him. And he turned around.

And God was not there, but God was there. Where's there? If you'll know My glory, God says, if you're going to press in all the way, you must enter into My glory. And My glory is where the people are.

And God appeared suddenly among the people of God. And He called Gideon to turn around and press into the glory of God, but now God was in His people. And He said, that's where the do is.

You've got to be who you are. I pray that there's many remnant here. I pray you're all remnant.

You've got to be who you are. It's a one-time event, but it's an everlasting principle. You're broken, and the life must come through you.

Now, in order for God to send down His do, to bless the people, to answer the burden that was on Gideon's heart, He sends the remnant, who you are, to the people, who they are. And there's a big difference between who the remnant is and who the people are. And now He says, if you're going to really know My glory, and if you're really going to have your burden answered, you must now press into My presence in the people of God.

Remember, brothers, who we are. We are those who have seen the Lord, who have understood His preeminence, who have made Him a one and only, who know it by His Spirit, who have volunteered to be His instrument, who have been broken, from whose life the life of Christ is released, who say, to God be the glory. It's His glory.

That's who we are. God says, you go with who you are to who they are. Now, if you'll look, please, at chapter 722 to 825, we have in the end of the story an illustration of the remnant returning to the people of God.

I'll just say in passing that there is a temptation for the remnant, when they become remnant, to pull away from the people of God. To isolate themselves from the people of God. The remnant is an enjoyable band.

Let's start a remnant assembly. Let's have just those who have seen these things in the remnant, let's detach ourselves from the body. Live aloof.

Isolated. Separated. Spiritual hotshots.

So thrilling to have a remnant heart and to experience the benediction that comes from pressing into the presence of God. It's almost like that story at the Mount of Transfiguration. Remember how glorious it was to be there? Let's build a couple of tabernacles.

Are you familiar with Matthew 17, 15? That's the verse that follows the transfiguration. The verse that follows said, Behold, a lunatic. When they came back from the mountain, the first thing they met was a lunatic.

They'd rather stay up there. I don't want to return to the lunatics. I want to just enjoy the glory of God.

But God calls us now. The Lord has made us something new. Gideon, don't forget those days when the enemy spoiled the people of God, took their crops and took their animals, drove God's beloved into the caves to live like animals.

Gideon, don't forget those days when you were beating wheat against a rock and when your heart burned in agony. But what about them? I've shown you a lot, but don't lose your burden. What about them? That's how it started.

And then God did such a wonderful thing they can get all wrapped up in a wonderful thing and forget where it all started. What about them? The body. His people.

They're still out there. And they're still hurting. And they're still oppressed.

And they're still in darkness. And they're still in the caves. And so God says, now let's go back.

You've got to be who you are and you've got to meet them as they are. The record as it's given in Judges divides the body of Christ into four representative groups. Four groups that represent the whole body, but now the remnant must come in contact with these groups.

How do you do that? How do you respond to these different groups? It might feel better to stay withdrawn, but God's victory is through the 300, not for the 300. It's for them indeed, but it's also for the body. It's for the people of God.

And so these representative groups are those now that God sends us. If we're going to bring down the dew of heaven, we must turn around and go where God is now. And God is in the midst of the churches.

That's where He is. And so now we must press into the Lord, into the glory of the Lord. That's where the glory is, where the people are.

Let me give you an overview of the section, and then we'll try to break it down. The first group that the remnant must relate to is in chapter 7, 22 and 23. It's those volunteers that were sent away.

They're called back. Same group. That's the first group.

Second group, chapter 7, 24 to 83, illustrated by the tribe of Ephraim. Third group, chapter 8, verse 4 to 17, illustrated by the borderline tribe of Gad. More especially, Succoth and Penuel on the eastern side of Jordan.

And then finally, chapter 8, 18 to 35. Everybody else. The rest of the people.

Now, you may not agree with these divisions, but just for the sake of analysis, and so you can humor me and follow our discussion this morning, let me suggest these titles. Group 1, the volunteers, the legalist. The remnant has to come in contact with the legalist.

Group 2, the tribe of Ephraim, the self-seeking. The remnant has to come in contact with the self-seeking. Group 3, the men of Gad, the carnal, the fleshly.

The remnant must come in contact with them. Group 4, everybody else. All of Israel, whatever's left.

We'll see as we get into that. See, the legalist is the one who tried to get it on his own. And the self-seeking is the one who tried to get it for the wrong reason.

And the carnal are those who don't want it. And everybody else is the big band that just doesn't seem to get it. At all.

That's what we want to look at. That's where the glory of God is. You can't avoid it.

We read all these wonderful things about Christ's preeminent, and it's by His Spirit, and it's coming into Him, and it's being broken, and it's letting His light shine. And that's where the victory is. And it is! But they don't all see it that way.

And so what are you going to do? Go off in a monastery somewhere? God has called the remnant to bring the victory of the Lord to the people of the Lord. They're not going to the people. They're going to the Lord of glory.

They're pressing into Him. But that's where He is. That's where the rubber meets the road.

May God help us as we look at that. Now, that's the burden on my heart. I want to show you how the remnant touches each of these groups and make a principle or two, observe a principle or two.

But before I do, there's another item that I want to touch on. A wonderful truth that runs all through the story of Gideon. And it doesn't make sense unless you're remnant.

But once you have understood by God these principles, it makes glorious sense. The Gideon story not only reveals the secrets of how God brings His blessing to the entire body, the whole people of God, but it is a great section of Scripture on spiritual warfare. There's much about the enemy.

Much revealed about the enemy in this glorious story. And what our attitude should be toward the enemy in the light of our revelation of Christ. In addition to the foundational principle.

And you know the foundational principle. 2 Chronicles 20-15 The battle's not yours, but God's. That's the foundation.

Exodus 15-3 The Lord is a warrior. The Lord is His name. See, that's foundation.

He's the one that does it. Psalm 27 Some boast in horses and some boast in chariots, but we will boast in the name of the Lord our God. In addition to that big truth that God's the one that does it.

And He's the one that fights. And He's the warrior. He's the victor.

The battle is His. It's the sword of the Lord. His right arm has gotten the victory.

In addition to that, there's another truth that's graphically illustrated in this record. And it answers the question, if God has really taught us these things, how should we view the enemy? I'd like to suggest seven principles. And I'm not going to spend time developing them.

I'll just mention them. And they're obvious. Seven times the enemy's mentioned in the Gideon story.

Maybe eight. But I'm not dealing with what happens after in his family. There's another possibility there.

But these seven times, as Gideon goes deeper and deeper into the presence of the Lord, and as God dawns more and more light upon him, here's how the enemy's revealed in the Gideon story. The first time we see the enemy is in chapter 6, verses 1 to 5. I won't take time to read it, because I think we have a

pretty good idea. But let me just mention it.

The enemy here is spoiling the pastor of God, the people of God, driving them into caves, stripping them of their inheritance, taking away their food and their livelihood, making them survivors instead of livers, and bringing them into the darkness. That's the enemy before Jesus shows up in the story. The second picture of the enemy is in chapter 6, verse 31.

Joash said to all who stood against him, Will you contend for Baal? Will you deliver him? Whoever will plead for him shall be put to death by morning. If he's a god, let him contend for himself. The second picture of the enemy in the Gideon story is he can't defend himself.

That's a glorious picture. He can't defend himself. Glorious revelation.

Only the remnant can see that. He's helpless to lift one finger in his own defense. It's sad.

It's pitiful to see God's people cowering before an enemy, running and frightened, when if they would just put Christ on the high place, they would discover that he can't even defend himself. That's God's picture of the enemy. The third picture of the enemy is the revelation that we looked at last night when Porah and Gideon went down into the camp and listened to the dream.

It's in chapter 7, 13 and 14. The enemy knows he's defeated. He's well aware of that.

He's scared to death. It's a tragedy to see God's people so frightened and so limp before the enemy. They're the ones who are frightened if you have seen the Lord.

They know they're defeated. The fourth picture of the enemy is in Judges 7, 21 and 22. And we saw this last night.

What a glorious picture this. As Christ is released from the life of those who are broken, the enemy self-destructs. Isn't that a glorious picture of the enemy? Self-destructing.

They're disintegrating when Christ is manifested in the light of Christ. Brothers, when you study Christian warfare, don't neglect these great truths. Once Jesus shows up, the enemy is exposed.

And he's nothing. He can't defend himself. He's scared to death.

When Jesus shines, he self-destructs. Isn't that a glorious picture of the enemy? The fifth time we see him is in chapter 9, verse 22 to chapter 8, verse 17. Now we haven't looked at these verses, but you'll see, this is the enemy on the run.

Now they're on the run. They're not chasing God's people as they started off chasing God's people. God's people are chasing them.

We read this thing la, la, la, but it is a beautiful picture. The 300 are weary. They're exhausted yet pursuing.

Remember that verse? Exhausted yet pursuing. They're not exhausted from losing. They're exhausted from winning.

And the enemy is the one that's on the run, not God's people. The gates of hell won't prevail against us. We're the aggressor.

Those are the facts. The enemy. Once you see Christ, I'm not trying to tone down the reality of the enemy, but once you see Christ, you discover that the enemy is really helpless.

And the enemy is really frightened. And the enemy is confused. And the enemy is self-destructing.

And the enemy is on the run. The sixth revelation of the enemy is illustrated by Ziba and Zalmunah. And that's the last of the Midianites, chapter 8, verse 20 to 22.

In the record you read, at that point, a child could have killed him. But he was too afraid to do it. And so Gideon kills him, and the war is over.

This is the final victory. The enemy in the hands of God's people. And God will bruise Satan shortly under your feet.

And there's one final picture of the enemy. It's how it ends in chapter 8, verse 21 to 27. Remember how the story began? The enemy was spoiling God's people.

Here's how it ends. God's people are spoiling the enemy. They're taking the spoils of the enemy.

Brothers, may God help us to be Christ-centered when we speak of this whole issue of spiritual warfare. I think sometimes we exalt the enemy too much. The enemy is so proud, even if you say bad things against him, he's happy as long as you talk about him.

When I was at Bible school, they said, for every ten looks at Jesus, give one to the devil. I give all eleven looks to Jesus. I think you ought to give all eleven looks to the Lord Jesus.

Once you see the Lord, the enemy is done. He cannot defend himself. He's frightened.

He self-destructs when Jesus shines. He's on the run. He's in your hands.

And God means for you to spoil His goods. Now the story of Gideon gives us, I think, a healthy approach to Christian warfare. Now let's get back to the burden that's on my heart.

Victory through the remnant, but to the people of God. I know the Lord's with me, but what about them? Without any question, without any doubt, you know where the victory was won. You read the record as well as I read the record.

The victory was won through the remnant as they were broken vessels and the light was shining through them. But the Lord desires that all of His children share in that victory. It was won up there by the remnant.

But God wants every one of His children to be involved in the victory. And so the first group, the remnant encounters, are these volunteers. Chapters 6, 34 and 35, the first time Gideon blew the trumpet.

We had these volunteers from Manasseh and Asher and Zebulun and Naphtali. They volunteered, but they volunteered for the wrong reason. They volunteered to do the work, not let God do the work.

They volunteered to fight the enemy, not let God fight the enemy. They volunteered to get in the arena and not just be an instrument through whom God could get in the arena. They wanted hand-to-hand combat rather than letting the Lord do it.

And so God separated the remnant from them. Those who were fearful had to leave and so on. And those who were just loyal soldiers and so on, they were separated.

They were separated, but only in terms of showing how the victories won. Now that it comes time to share the victory, God says, don't you separate from them. They seem to represent to Me the workers and the servants of the Lord, those who are more given to ministry than to the Lord, but their hearts are beautiful.

They want to labor. They're doing it for God. They're doing it for the Lord.

And they were sent away. Sent away as to illustrating how it's won. But as soon as the victory was won, Gideon was to blow the trumpet and call the volunteers back.

I think that's such a glorious picture. The remnant working hand-in-hand with the legalists. Working together, fighting the same enemy, sharing the same victory.

Chapter 723, the men of Israel were summoned from Naphtali and Asher and all Manasseh. It must have felt good to them to be sent away and then say, He wants me back. And to involve them.

They're called back. God wants them to share in the victory. Chapter 724, illustrated by the tribe of Ephraim.

Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim saying, Come down against Midian and take the waters before them as far as Beth-be-arah and the Jordan. And so all the men of Ephraim were summoned. And they took the waters as far as Beth-be-arah and Jordan.

And they captured the two leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeb. And they killed Oreb at the Rock of Oreb. And they killed Zeb at the winepress of Zeb.

While they pursued Midian, and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeb to Gideon from across the Jordan. Chapter 8, verse 1, the men of Ephraim said to him, What's this thing you've done to us? Not calling us when you went to fight against Midian. And they contended with him vigorously.

And he said, What have I now done in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of a beezer? God has given the leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeb, into your hands. What was I able to do in comparison with you? And their anger toward him was subsided. Who are these men of Ephraim? They're the ones that want the personal glory.

They were offended. How come you didn't call us? We are such good workers, and we're so gifted, and we could have done so much. We've been ignored.

We've been neglected. We're jealous. In chapter 8, verse 1, they claimed that Gideon didn't call them.

I'm not dead sure about that. And the reason I say that is because there's a sequel to the story. I don't know if you're familiar with it.

Japheth was another judge. And Ephraim had the same problem. Judges 12 will tell you the story.

They came to Japheth and they said, How come you didn't call us? Why don't you involve us? We've got something to offer. How come you didn't call us? And Japheth said, I did. And you didn't call.

So I don't know if that's the same thing here. Gideon was a lot more tender than Japheth was. You know, Japheth responded to that by slaying 42,000 of the Ephraimites.

That's because Japheth was not the remnant. That's not how God deals. God looks at those who want glory and who want self-praise and all of that, and who say, Why don't you include me? God sends the remnant to them and says, Include them.

Put your arm around them. I'll tell you, they're contentious. They're vigorous.

But the remnant has a unifying influence in the body. It doesn't divide and it's not divisive. It brings together.

One evidence that Gideon's heart was set on the glory of God and the remnant is the way he dealt with those dear brothers of Ephraim. They wanted all the glory and all the praise. They didn't want to play ball, but they wanted to be in the team picture.

And they didn't want to get involved. And once the victory is done, then they say, You should have had us. You should have had us.

You know, it's God's grace to want to include His whole body in the victory that He gives through the remnant. You know what the Lord did? As the enemy's running, now I know that they're just running to get away, but God is guiding this thing and He controls it. And oreb ben zeb.

That means the raven and the wolf. That's what the words mean. And the raven and the wolf were directed and they ran right into the arms of Ephraim.

And so Ephraim just caught them. God included them in the victory. That's like capturing Ben Laden and Omar Watts' face.

They're going to get all the glory because they got the heroes and they got the leaders. And Gideon was completely willing to let them take the glory. He knew where the glory was.

He knew how God had given the glory. Even though the victory was won up there by 300 men who were willing to be broken and let Christ shine through them. They said, we want the glory.

And he said, look what God has done for you. He brings the Lord in. Look at how God has given you the leaders.

We just dealt with a bunch of book privates. You guys dealt with the leaders. You have the victory.

A soft answer, brothers, does turn away wrath. It does unite the body of Christ. You know, forever, Gideon that day threw away any possibility of taking glory for what happened.

You know, I'm amazed as I read my Bible. I looked all over for the Gideon story. And I said, how come in the whole Bible you don't hear about, except in one passing reference Paul makes, you don't hear about the vessels broken and Christ shining.

What a victory that was! And almost we got to it. When you get to Hebrews, I just went, oh no. I went to Hebrews, you know, by faith, by faith, by faith.

And then it says, time fails me to tell you about Gideon. Great! Just when I needed my information. But do you realize that Gideon and the remnant, when those brothers, Ephraim, we want the glory for this.

He said, well, God has certainly given you a privilege. Look what you have. You have the wolf and the raven.

And forever in the record of the book, when that defeat is recorded, it goes back to then. For example, Isaiah 10, verse 26. Speaking of Assyria, God says, and the Lord will arouse a scourge against him.

Against Assyria. Like at the slaughter of Midian at the Rock of Oreb. And when he gives victory, when he talks about the downfall of Midian, he goes back to that.

And Ephraim says, look, you're always going to meet those brothers and sisters in the camp that just sort of want personal glory. Tell them what God has done for them. Show them how gracious the Lord has been and how God has included them.

Don't fight for the glory. It's His. It belongs unto the Lord.

Gideon's heart was set on the glory of God. And he let someone else take the glory. Does it bother you? Don't answer this.

If someone else, who hasn't seen what you have seen, tries to take glory for what you know God has allowed you to do, oh brothers, we need to be who we are. We're the remnant. But we need to put our arm around the legalists.

And we need to put our arm around those who are seeking self-glory and include them in the great victory of the Lord. The third group in the body is probably the most difficult of all, illustrated by the tribe of Gad. You remember the tribe of Gad.

It was on the other side of the Jordan. These are the borderline Christians. These are those who didn't want to enter in.

They're the fringe. They're the ones that were satisfied with a foretaste of all that God had promised. These are the fleshly ones, motivated by sight.

It was great grace for the Lord as the enemy was being chased. God said, I'm not going to just deal with you remnant. I want you to take the legalists with you.

Now go after the enemy together and take the self-seeking and go after the enemy together. And then He said, now I want you to cross the river to the borderline people. I want to include them in my victory too.

Oh, the grace of God. And when He went across, I won't read it. It's in chapter 8, verses 4 to 8. You can read that.

They weren't asked to join the fight. These are borderline people. They weren't asked to get into the chase and to fight the enemy and to pick up a sword.

He asked for the smallest thing just to have them identify with the remnant. Can you give us some bread and water and we'll be on our way. That's all He asked.

But the borderline Christian, because he's motivated by flesh and by sight and by reason and all that kind of thing, he looks at the remnant with these eyes. Don't forget, they have been up for two days. And they are pursuing and they are tired.

And there's 300 exhausted men and they run across. And they are chasing 15,000 of the enemy. This is a glorious scene.

And the men of Gad and Succoth and Penuel look with these eyes and they say, you don't look like overcomers. You're exhausted. You're tired.

15,000 men? What if you go down there? I don't see the enemy in your hand yet. I don't see victory yet, they said, in your hand. What if you lose? And we help you? Then they're going to get mad and they're going to come back and take vengeance on us.

No, I'll tell you what. You just go do your thing. Brothers, they're in the body.

You're going to meet with those kind of people. How does the remnant deal with them? The children of Gad who are not willing to pay any cost. Not willing to take up any cost.

They're just fleshly and full of sight. God says, I want to include the legalists. Let's bring them into our victory.

And I want to include those who want self-glory. Let's bring them in. And I want the borderline people.

Go over there. Identify with them. Have them involved in this tremendous victory.

Don't forget, the victory helped them too. The victory. God wants to share it with all, but they refuse.

So now how does the remnant deal with them? Verse 7, Gideon said, alright, the Lord has given Ziba and Zalmunah into my hand. When He has, I'll thrash your bodies with the thorns of the wilderness and with briars. And if you look at verse 16, He did it.

He disciplined the 77 elders of Sukkah. Some think instead of thrashed or thrashed, it's threshed. And that He actually killed them and ground them up with the thorn.

I'll leave that for you hermeneuts to discuss and figure out whether they were thrashed or thrashed. But clearly it was a severe dealing. And for the men of Penuel, don't forget, this is the place where Jacob wrestled the Lord, the face of God.

Chapter 8 and 9, He spoke to the men of Penuel saying, when I return, I'll tear down your tower. We know He did tear down the tower. Verse 17, and we know the men of the city were killed when He did.

Probably because they heard what happened at Sukkah and they went up to defend the tower. And they resisted the discipline and the chastening. And they had to die.

Now, I want to apply this, brothers, but I need your patience. I want you to look up this verse. I'm not just going to quote it.

I want you to look up Micah 5. This is one of my favorite remnant passages. Micah 5, verse 7, verse 8. This describes the ministry of the remnant. Verse 7, The remnant of Jacob will be among many people like dew from the Lord, like showers on vegetation, which do not wait for man or delay for the sons of man.

Isn't that a glorious picture? Look at the next verse. The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, among the people like a lion, among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep, which if he passes through, tramples down and tears, and there is none to rescue. Thank you.

The remnant will be like dew. You say, Amen, Lord. Yes, praise God.

That's me. I want to be refreshing and reviving and quickening. I want to be a blessing to the people of God.

I'm remnant. Make me like dew. That's part of it.

Here's the other part. Micah 5, verse 8. The remnant will also be like a lion that tears and uproots, and there's none to deliver. Usually, I'll be honest, brothers, when I pray to the Lord, Lord, I want You to use me.

I don't say it, but in my heart, I'm saying, like dew. That's what I mean. Lord, I want You to use me like dew.

But what if the Lord wants to use you like a lion to tear up? Are you willing? See, that's part of the remnant. On the one side, we're to be like the dew, but on the other side, like a lion. Those whose hearts are set on the glory of God are willing to be the dew or the lion.

And for the borderline, for the fleshly, for those who will not identify in any way, there needs to be discipline. And the discipline needs to come through the remnant. Gideon's 300 had to be used as a lion.

I don't mean that the Lord has called us literally to thrash the elder, Rick Baker. He came up to study some of this with me, and most of what you've heard has been his light. But when he came up to study, he said, I can't wait to get home and thrash the elder.

Now you're in trouble. But I'll tell you what, the principle is true. In our ministry, we can't back off from who we are.

God has shown us light, and He's given us the revelation of Christ. And in our message, the message of the pure grace of God and the preeminence of Christ, that message tears at the flesh. It does.

And it knocks down their towers. It does. They're trusting in their towers.

And we've got to stand up and be bold and tear at that flesh and knock down their towers. I was also privileged to have Brother Kevin come up, and we went through some of this. As we were looking at this and praying and asking the Lord, the Lord dawned a wonderful truth on his heart.

It's not only judgment and chastening, but there's a redemptive aspect to this. And God brought to Kevin's mind, there was another one who had a thorn in his flesh. Right? And for what end that he might know that the grace of the Lord is sufficient.

And even when we have to deal severely, there's this grace of God. God says, I want My body blessed. I'll use the remnant, but lay hold of the legalist.

Don't kick him out. Don't push him away. He's part of this victory.

And lay hold of that self-seeking brother. And go across the river to the borderline and try to include them and identify with them. Tear down their tower.

Tear up the flesh. They're going to need that. Because maybe that thorn in the flesh will teach them that My grace is sufficient for you.

This is all the grace of the Lord to include the whole body. Let's close by looking at the last. Everybody else.

Chapter 8, verse 22, The men of Israel said to Gideon, Rule over us, both you and your son, and your sons' sons, for you have delivered us from the hands of Midian. They just don't get it. They just don't get it.

They think Gideon did it. And now they're going to look to a man. And they said, Now we want you to be honored.

You're our hero. You're the one. God has chosen you.

You're gifted. You've done it. You're the one that has brought us to victory.

Rule over us. Be our king. They not only offered him the throne, they offered him a dynasty.

You and your sons, and your sons' sons, forever your family will be a royal family in our eyes. Now Gideon was the one who had seen. The Lord is preeminent.

He's everything. It's not me. It's by His Spirit, says the Lord.

I'm nothing. I'm a broken vessel. I'm a barley cake.

I'm a dog. I'm nothing. It's the Lord that has done it.

Verse 23, Gideon said to them, I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you. The Lord shall rule over you. Those who don't get it, we need to keep telling them, it's not us.

Don't look to men. Don't look to people. It's the Lord.

And so he tries to turn their eyes away from man unto the Lord Himself. He's your King. And in order to drive home that point, you know the record, he did something that backfired.

I think when he did it, his heart was right. I think when he did it, his intentions were pure. Chapter 8, 24 and 25, you can read it.

He asked each of the body to donate some of the spoil. What a pile of spoils he collected. The Bible said there were 1,700 shekels of gold.

That's more than 50 pounds of gold that he gathered. And there were camels innumerable. And on each camel, there was this crescent ornament and a neck band.

He took all of those. And he took the garments of the kings and the rulers of the priests. You can't believe the pile of stuff he had.

And with that spoil, he fashioned an ephod. You know what an ephod is? Probably the priest's ephod. Though the prophet had one too, and so did King David when he danced before the Lord.

But it's pretty clear that he was fashioning the high priest's ephod. Now, of course, here's the question. Was that a mistake for him to do that? Did he do right in making that ephod? You know, all the way through, he said, I don't trust Gideon.

I don't trust Gideon. Show me a sign. Show me a sign.

We don't even see that he prayed this time. It seemed like he didn't ask the Lord. Was he invading the priest's office? We know what happens in the Bible when someone steps on the priest's office.

Is that what he was doing? Did he do something even more dangerous and promote a drawing away from the established testimony in Shechem and say, we're going to have our own church up here, our own testimony, and draw them away? Is that what he did? Was he covetous for all of this stuff? Once again, the elder said, if you have any questions on that, see them. I know his heart. I know his heart.

And his heart was to fashion this beautiful ephod based on Exodus 28. The ephod was the outer part, the top part of the high priest's garment. And it was that part.

Remember the shoulders? They had the stones representing six tribes and stones representing six tribes and jewels representing every tribe over the heart. And there on that, they had the Urim and the Thumim so that they would know the will of God. And I think this is Gideon's heart.

Gideon was saying, he didn't say this part, you dear idiots. That's my part. But he just said, you're looking at the man.

The Lord will rule over you. I'm not your king. God did it.

I didn't do it. The Lord did it. The Lord will rule over you.

And in order that they might have an everlasting memorial of that, he made this amazing ephod. If you take the Bible literally, that he used all those materials to make an ephod, you have an ephod that is out of proportion to even some of the big brothers that are here. It's out of all proportion.

Nobody can wear that ephod. This was a giant ephod. Probably the most elaborate ephod ever made based on the high priest's ephod.

And what Gideon's heart was saying is, stop looking to men. Look, no man can wear that. I can't wear that ephod.

My son can't wear that ephod. My son's sons can't wear that ephod. The remnant can't wear that ephod.

The Lord will rule over you. You've got a burden. The Lord carries you on His shoulders.

It's the Lord that carries you over His heart. You want to know the will of God? It's the Lord that's going to guide you. The Urim, the Thumm, and they're with Him.

That was Gideon's heart. But the heart of man, those that don't seem to get it, if they don't look to man, well, my goodness, they'll look to the works of His hands. They'll look to His ministry.

The remnant has to deal with all of these parts of the body of Christ. We know according to chapter 8, verse 27, that later on all Israel played the harlot with that ephod. And instead of looking to that emblem of a spiritual reality, they began just to look to the emblem and they started to worship that thing.

But here's the reality. Gideon was constantly giving glory to God. And I don't know if he made a mistake or not.

I think if he made a mistake, I might be way out of order saying this, but I think he made the same mistake Jesus made. I think Jesus made an ephod when He gave us the Lord's table. He gave us a physical picture of a glorious reality.

And this might be too bold for some of your holy ears, but I think some have played the harlot to the Lord's table. I really think they have. Because it was never His intention to look to the picture, but to see the Lord and to look through that thing.

Well, the end of the story is this. For 40 years, until Gideon died, there was victory in the land. Brothers, God has called us into His presence.

He's called us to be a remnant. In the last chapter of that is we need to take the body of Christ, the legalist, the self-seeking. Even if we have to deal harshly by ripping up the flesh and tearing down the tower, we need to deal with the borderline.

Bring them all in. And those who keep looking to men and keep looking to ministry, we've got to keep turning their eyes away and turn it back to the Lord. God used Gideon and his generation.

And He wants to use you in yours. Are you familiar with this passage from Isaiah? Unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given.

Let me close by giving you the context of that glorious prophecy. Turn to Isaiah chapter 9 if you would. Are you there? Alright.

Verse 2. The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. Let me paraphrase that. The people who live in caves will see a great light.

Those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. You will multiply that nation. You will increase their gladness.

They will be glad in Your presence as with the gladness of the harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. Do you see Judges 6 there? How about this? Verse 4. You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian. Verse 6. For a child will be born to us.

A son will be given to us, and the government will rest on His shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace on the throne of David and over His kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. The background of this wonderful prophecy is the victory at Midian. And God is saying, I want to do it again.

What I did then, I want to do it again. And you say, how can He ever do it again? Unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given.

The government is on His shoulders. It's Him. He wants to do it again and a light to shine and bring those people out of the caves.

Well, brothers, I hope these little meditations have helped you to see the Lord in a fresh and a living way. Let's bow together and just ask the Lord to clench it in our hearts. Father, we thank You so much for Your precious, precious Word.

We ask You, Lord, to forgive us for being so blessed in Your presence that we try to exclude ourselves from the whole body. We try to be separate and not to involve them in the victory. Give us grace, Lord, as You bring us into contact with those who are inclined to a legal spirit.

We ask You to give us grace as we come in contact with those who are contentious and dividing and who are inclined to take the glory for themselves. We ask for Your grace as we come in contact with Your people, the body, who are borderline and seem to be so carnal and fleshly and won't identify and won't pay any cost to be with the people of God. Grace us to be due.

Grace us to be a lion according to Your will, to tear up the flesh and to tear down the tower. Oh, will You grace us for these things and then help us forever to turn people's eyes away from ourselves and away from our ministry unto the Lord Jesus. We ask in His name.

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