

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, March 24, 2014

Gideon's Fleece

Judges 6:1-40 (*selected verses*)

Context:

- *Just before this passage:* Dark time in Israel's history, doing evil and following gods of the people around them, periods of peace, periods of renewal, periods of judgment. Before the angel appears to Gideon, the people had been oppressed by Midian for seven years, hiding in caves in the mountains, and began crying out to God for help.
- *Just after this passage:* Gideon goes into battle with 300 men, blowing trumpets and smashing pitchers, and routs the Midianites with God's help, rules Israel for 40 years, then Israel returns to idols after Gideon dies.

Major Segments:

- Angel comes to Gideon
- Gideon tears down Baal
- Midianites come to battle
- Gideon lays out the fleece

Segment Questions:

- Consider what Gideon must have felt when addressed by the Angel as a mighty man, given the conditions under which the people were living. Why might be some reasons God would choose someone like Gideon?
- While Gideon prepared the sacrifice, what might have gone through his mind? What would give him confidence that this was God's direction for him, what might you have been looking for if you were in his shoes?
- Gideon obeys and destroys the altar to Baal, but does it at night. Why might he have done it at night?
- Gideon's father is presented a challenge and Gideon's obedience cost him too. Put yourself in his position, do you think he responded well? What might have been some of the considerations he had to grapple with?
- The fleece. Gideon had already tested God once, he had already obeyed at great cost. What was he facing that made him look for this extra sign before going into battle against the Midianites?
- God doesn't rebuke Gideon, he responds. Gideon is listed as a man of faith in Hebrews 11. Are there any lessons here that are applicable for us when we look for God's direction?

Action Questions:

- What are some characteristics of Gideon that you would want to have found in yourself?
- Can you think of any obstacles in your life and in the life of those under your care that need to be removed for God to work freely, even if it comes at a cost?

Judges 6:1-40

From: www.btstories.com

A man named Gideon was hiding from the Midianites and had to thresh his wheat in a wine vat instead of an open threshing floor. The Angel of the Lord came and sat under an oak tree nearby. He said, "The Lord is with you, oh mighty warrior. I'm sending you to deliver Israel from the Midianites"

Gideon questioned this statement because he couldn't believe God would allow all these bad things to happen. He longed for miracles and for God to again fight for them. Gideon lacked confidence and felt like a nobody even though God promised victory.

Gideon said, "Lord, I need a sign that you're really talking to me. Please, stay here while I prepare a sacrifice."

The Lord promised to stay and Gideon rushed off and prepared a sacrifice for him. When it was ready, he put it on a rock. The Angel of the Lord reached over and touched the sacrifice with the tip of his staff. Fire came up from the rock and burnt it up. And then the Lord vanished.

Gideon feared for his life have felt that he could not live after seeing the Angel of the Lord face to face! The Lord reassured him and said, "Don't be afraid. You're not going to die. Do what I say. Your father has an altar of Baal. Tear it down and build an altar to God. Then offer a burnt offering to the Lord."

Gideon obeyed, but did it at night. He was afraid of his family and the men who lived in his city.

In the morning, people found Baal's altar torn down. They saw the altar to the Lord built in its place, and the ashes of the burnt offering on top of it. Soon they learned Gideon had done this.

The men of the city went to his father's house and said, "Give us your son! We'll kill him because he tore down Baal's altar."

Gideon's father said to them, "Show me the man who is defending Baal. He'll be dead by morning! If Baal is really a god, let him defend himself."

Once again the Midianites came into Israel and camped in a valley. The Spirit of the Lord filled Gideon, and he sent out messages for people to come, ready to fight.

Then Gideon prayed, "Lord, give me a sign." He then put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor and said to God "I'll know you'll deliver us if the morning dew is only on the fleece, and all the ground is dry."

He got up early in the morning and found that the fleece was soaking wet, but the ground was dry.

Gideon said, "Lord, don't be angry with me. Allow me one more test. This time let the fleece remain dry, and the dew be all over the ground." In the morning, the fleece was dry, and dew was all over the ground.