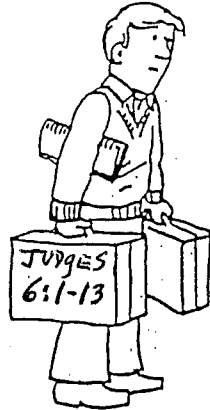


# THE COURAGE OF A DISCIPLE

(When You Ask “Why?” And Answers Don’t Come Easy)

Judges 6:1-13A; 7:2; 8:28



- ◆ The Slavery Of Sin
- ◆ The Sadness Of Heart
- ◆ The Supplication Of Prayer
- ◆ The Savior Of Us All

**“And Gideon said unto the angel, if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? (Judges 6:13A)**

**Bill Kirk**

September 16, 2001 – The Sunday  
After The New York City  
Terrorist Attacks.

# “THE COURAGE OF A DISCIPLE”

**Text:** Judges 6:1-13A

**Subject:** “Courage When Answers Don’t Come Easy” (or simply) “When You-Ask Why?”

1. The book of Judges takes its title from the 13 Judges who served from Joshua’s death to Samuel.
2. The theme of Judges is the grace of God in recovering and restoring God’s people.
3. Judges is a picture of the great declining and then the great deliverance of Israel:

## (Here’s The Process)

- ◆ Israel serves the Lord wholeheartedly.
- ◆ Israel does evil in the sight of the Lord.
- ◆ Israel is delivered into the hands of their enemies.
- ◆ Israel suffers the consequences of sin.
- ◆ Israel cries out to God while in distress.
- ◆ Israel’s prayers are heard by God.
- ◆ Israel again makes a decision to serve the Lord.

## (And The Process Repeats Itself Over And Over Again) (The Setting Of Our Text)

1. In Judges chapter 6, we come to the 4<sup>th</sup> of the 13 Judges.
2. It is the account of Gideon being used of the Lord.
3. It is a picture of America that is real and relevant:

**Question:** How is Judges 6 a picture of America and Binghamton, New York?

**Answer:** Because millions of Americans have asked that one question this week, the question found in V. 13: “Why?”

**Ask:** Why were thousands of people buried in debris in Manhattan and at the Pentagon? (4,972 still missing this morning)

**Ask:** Why were husbands, wives, sons and daughters burned to death this week?

**Ask:** Why did God allow death and destruction to kill more civilians in one day this week, than any other day in the history of America?

**Ask:** Why did it happen in a nation that has written on its currency “In God We Trust?”

Like Gideon, millions have asked this question: “Why?”

- ◆ In Psalm 10:1, the Psalmist asked, “Why do you stand so far off, O Lord? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?”
- ◆ In Psalm 42:5, “Why are you cast down O my soul? And why are you disquieted in me?”
- ◆ Job (in Job 3:11 asked) “Why did I not die in the womb?”
- ◆ In Job 7:20, Job asked, “Why have you sent me as a mark against you, so that I am a burden to myself?”

(There are over 300 questions in the book of Job, and most of them are never answered)

- ◆ Was there ever a question as desperate as the one which came from the cross? (When the Son of God cried out:) “My God, My God, Why have you forsaken Me?”

## Illustration

Last night my grandmother (dying of cancer in Virginia) whispered to me on the phone, "Will you promise to preach my funeral?" (I asked myself, **Why** such suffering for a woman of such great faith and dedication?)

**Question:** How many of you have ever asked the question "**Why?**"

- ◆ If you have, you're on a boat with many passengers! (and)
- ◆ You are in good company with the majority of Americans.

**In Judges 6:12 The Angel Says To Gideon**

"The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor"

**In Judges 6:13 Gideon Says:**

"If the Lord is with us, **why, why** do we have such trouble?"

- ◆ And God paints a picture that answers Gideon's question, "**Why?**"
- ◆ It is a picture that is real in September, 2001.

**Illustration**

When England was under the threats and siege of war, Winston Churchill was asked: "What now is England's hope?" He answered "our hope is in the old hymn, "God our help in ages past and help in days to come".

**The Late General Douglas Mac Arthur Said:**

"In this day of gathering storms, as moral deterioration of political power spreads its growing infection, it is essential that every spiritual force be mobilized to defend and preserve the religious base upon which this nation is founded. There has been either a spiritual re-awakening to overcome moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster"

**(Those Words Are Powerful)**

**"Every Spiritual Force Must Be Mobilized"**

**(Some Hymns Of Truth I Reread This Week)**

JESUS NEVER FAILS  
I KNOW WHO HOLDS TOMORROW  
MY ANCHOR HOLDS  
IN TIMES LIKE THESE YOU NEED A SAVIOR  
A SHELTER IN THE TIME OF STORM  
THE SOLID ROCK  
JESUS HOLD MY HAND  
HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION  
THE COMFORTER HAS COME  
I'VE ANCHORED IN JESUS  
TIS SO SWEET TO TRUST IN JESUS  
HE LEADETH ME  
JESUS UNDERSTANDS  
ROCK OF AGES  
IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL  
A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD

## I. We See "The Slavery Of Sin"

(V. 1) "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years"

**Question:** Why was Israel exposed to great pain?

**Answer:** Because sin is in the world and it touches us all.

**Question:** What is sin?

**Answer:** Sin is a willful transgression against the known will of God.

**Question:** When did sin enter the world?

**Answer:** When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the beginning of time.

**Question:** Pastor, why are we suffering today, for Adam's sin of 6,000 years ago? (Good question)

**(The Answer Is Found In Romans 5:12)**

◆ "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"

**(In Other Words)**

- ◆ Sin entered the world by Adam's choice.
- ◆ He was tempted and chose to disobey God.
- ◆ As our federal head, sin separated man from God.
- ◆ Thus; this makes man capable of every sin, crime, evil and disobedience.

**Question:** Who is behind all evil?

**Answer:** Jesus said the devil is, in John 10:10: "The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy"

**(In Our Text)**

- ◆ The Midianites and Amalekites are a nomadic tribe.
- ◆ They were raiders who raided the crops and supplies of others.
- ◆ Their purpose is listed in Judges 6:5:

"For they came up...and entered into the land to (what?) – Destroy it"

**Question:** What is one of the consequences of Adam's sin?

**Answer:** (V. 6) "And Israel was greatly impoverished".

**Question:** Why impoverished?

**Answer:** Because of the consequences of disobedience to God.

**Question:** Pastor, did people die this week because of their disobedience to God?

**Answer:** No – Not at all!

People died this week on Tuesday, and thousands more every other day around the world this week because of Adam's disobedience to God, (causing sin to enter the world – and the wages of sin is death.)

## II. We See "The Sadness Of The Heart"

**Question:** What is one of the consequences of sin?

**Answer:** (V. 6) "Israel was greatly impoverished"

**(In Other Words)**

- ◆ Invaders left no supplies for Israel.
- ◆ The enemy of God has stolen their inheritance.

- ◆ The Midianites took the grain and foodstuff for themselves.
- ◆ And the consequences of Israel's sin are loss, pain, grief and sadness.

**Question:** Pastor, is America grieving this week because of its sin?

**Answer:** NO! America is grieving because of the consequences of Adam's first sin!

- ◆ If Jesus tarries, everybody here will die (Hebrews 9:27) at some time.
- ◆ We die (not because of some act of sin).
- ◆ We die because we were all born under the principle of Adam's sin.
- ◆ This is why there is pain in life.
- ◆ This is why there is suffering in life.
- ◆ This is why there are tragedies in life.
- ◆ This is why bad things happen to good people.
- ◆ This is why we sorrow, but not like those who have no hope.
- ◆ This is why millions are crying this week – because all creation groans.

**(Romans 8:22)**

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now”

### III. **We See “The Supplication Of Prayer”**

**Question:** Pastor, what is the best thing I can do when suffering grief, or loss, or pain, or tears?

**Answer:** Judges 6:7: “And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord”.

**Question:** What did Israel do when in need of courage and intervention?

**Answer:** Israel prayed unto the Lord!

**Question:** Why pour out my heart to God?

- #1. Because we can be honest about the pain we feel.
- #2. Because we can cry and discover that tears are nature's way of healing a broken heart.
- #3. Because we can trust God to turn tragedy into triumph.
- #4. Because we can deepen our relationship with God in times like these.
- #5. Because we can look beyond the present to the reality of heaven.

- ◆ Charles Spurgeon said, “God is too good to be unkind, too wise to be mistaken; and when you cannot trace His hand, you can always trust His heart”.
- ◆ Christopher Morley wrote in his little book entitled, “Inward Ho!”: “I had a million questions to ask God; but when I met Him, they all fled my mind, and it didn't seem to matter”.
- ◆ Joni Eareckson-Tada writes in “A Step Further” “Suffering gets us ready for heaven. How? It makes us want to go there. It moves our eyes from this world and sets them on the life to come. Heaven becomes our passion”.
- ◆ Bishop Hughes, a godly Methodist of a generation ago, told a group of his preachers, “Brethren, I am on my way to heaven and I don't intend to get lost”.
- ◆ C.S. Lewis has written, “If you read history, you will find that Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next world”.

- ◆ John Wesley, in a letter to John Smith dated June 25, 1746, wrote: “I desire to have both heaven and hell ever in my eye while I stand in this isthmus of life between these two boundless oceans; and I verily think the **daily consideration of both highly becomes all men of reason and religion**”.
- ◆ That glorious hope is expressed in one of the many hymns written by Fanny Crosby, who lived most of her life in total blindness:

“When my life work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide,  
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see:  
I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,  
And His smile will be the first to welcome me”.

#### IV. We See “The Savior Of Us All”

**Question:** What did God do when Israel cried unto the Lord?

**Answer:** God sent a savior whose name was Gideon (in v. 11)

**Question:** What did God do just before He raised up Gideon?

**Answer:** He sent a prophet (v. 8) to convince Israel of their sin and call them to repentance.

#### (In Other Words)

- ◆ God didn’t want to hear Israel’s complaints just because of their trouble.
- ◆ God wanted Israel to confess their sin in sorrow and repentance. (It’s the same today)
- ◆ God doesn’t want to hear my complaining because of my inconveniences.
- ◆ God wants to hear my sorrow over my sin that offends His holiness!

**Question:** What did God do in response to Israel’s supplication in prayer?

**Answer:** He sent a savior to deliver from the servitude of slavery.

**Question:** What did God do for us?

**Answer:** He sent a savior to deliver us from the servitude of sin.

**Question:** But pastor, I don’t deserve to be forgiven of sin – how is it that God will answer our prayers?

(V. 17) Gideon says, “**If now I have found grace in your sight**”.

**Question:** Do we in America need to humble ourselves and ask God for grace?

**Question:** In times of shaking, is it time to pray and humble ourselves before God?

**Question:** Will God respond to those who turn from their own ways to the only One who can save us?

**Question:** Did God deliver Israel from the slavery of the Midianites?

**Answer:** Yes, all by **grace** in response to humility, repentance, prayer and faith!

Altar Call

AMEN!

Bill Kirk, Pastor

“Amazing Grace How Sweet The Sound That Saved A Wretch Like Me,  
I Once Was Lost But Now Am Found, Was Blind But Now I See”.