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SERMON TITLE

Close Encounters of the God Kind – Gideon’s Story

SERIES

DATE

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KEY SCRIPTURE

Judges 6

SYNOPSIS

Gideon’s encounter with the Lord emboldened, equipped, and encouraged him.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ Close Encounters of the God Kind – Gideon’s Story

Judges 6

11 The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.

Gideon is just trying to survive. Because the people of Israel had rebelled against God, he had allowed them to be invaded by the Midianites. The Midianites, along with the Amalekites were extremely oppressive and wiped out the crops and livestock all the way to Gaza, leaving the Israelis severely impoverished.

Midian = strife

Amalek = valley dweller

Gaza = strong

Gideon = hacker; one who hews down

Gideon’s story comes when the nation is experiencing strife and feeling depressed. This certainly was not a mountain-top experience. Instead it was during a time of trouble. The enemy had brought the nation so low and caused so much strife that even their best strengths were depleted.

Down in the valley the valley so low; Hang your head over, hear the wind blow

I know that many can relate to this scenario. You’ve been depressed, experienced strife, and your strength is all but gone. It’s amazing that you’re even here. You’re just trying to survive. Gideon’s God-encounter was in just such a time. It’s a reminder that God has not forgotten you. Whether you got yourself into this mess like the Israelis, or you just simply have been the target of the ☞ enemy, **God has not forgotten you.**

12 When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."

God calls Gideon as he sees him. We will see in the next few verses that Gideon doesn’t think much of himself, but that is not what God focused on. He sees what Gideon can and will be. Actually, Gideon’s name says something about who he was meant to be. He was meant to be a hacker – one who chops down. One who takes the enemy down. So, God calls him mighty warrior.

God sees beyond the moment, filled with turmoil and strife. God sees the days coming when Gideon will boldly lead the Israelis in victory over their enemies. So, God calls it as he sees it.

How have you been thinking about your situation? How have you been thinking about yourself? Now, let’s see **what God says about you.**



John 1:12

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become **☞ children of God**

Romans 8:1

☞ there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus,

Ephesians 2:10

☞ For we are **God's workmanship (his masterpiece)**, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

☞ If you are a believer, the Bible says that you are **loved by Jesus**; you are loved by the Father; you **belong to God**. You are no longer a slave to sin; you are a **new creation**; the old has gone, the new has come. You have been born again. You are part of the body of Christ; through Christ, you are now considered **holy** by God, and he has given you everything you need to live out that holiness. Angels are ministering to you; serving and assisting you. You are a **citizen of heaven**; an **ambassador** for the Lord. You are part of the **family of God**, which makes you a son or daughter of the King above all kings, and as a child of the King, you are a **joint-heir** of his kingdom. You will rule and reign with him in eternity.

☞ **A God-encounter emboldens**

13 "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian."

Here's a typical human reaction. We all struggle with the "why" questions. I certainly have. In the natural, there are a lot of things that don't make sense. I'm a lot like Gideon here, wanting to see the wonders of God. However, unlike Gideon, I don't believe that God has abandoned us. But I still struggle sometimes with the "why" questions. But notice that God does not answer the "why" question. Instead...

14 The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"

God doesn't have to defend or explain himself. He simply tells Gideon to go because he is being sent. If you're a follower of Christ, you are called to go as well. Regardless of the circumstances ☞ of your life, **you are called by God to go and make disciples**. Remember, you are an ambassador of the Lord.

15 "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."



Classic. Many of us think exactly like this. “How can I go and make disciples? I’m not a theologian. I’m not a public speaker. I’m not, I’m not, I’m not...” But God says, “Go in the strength you have...” What is your strength? Maybe it’s not public speaking; that’s ok. What *can* you do? God asked Moses, “what is that in your hand?” Perhaps you can be the person who helps someone in time of need. Maybe you’re the one who is always available even if it’s just to be there when someone is down. Maybe you’re the one with a joke or a smile that lifts another ☞ person. **Just be available for the Lord. And as you have opportunity, tell people about Jesus.**

16 The Lord answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."

Here’s the good news. Whatever you do for the Lord, he will be with you. **God equips those that he enlists.** Gideon would go in his own strength, but then God would enhance his abilities, **and God’s power is limitless.**

Romans 8:31

If God is for us, who can be against us?

☞ **A God-encounter equips**

17 Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me."

Gideon asks for confirmation, which is not necessarily a bad thing, because the Lord agreed to it. Gideon was all alone, but we usually aren’t, so one way to get confirmation is to ask for advice from godly counsel.

Proverbs 15:22

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

Because he lacked confidence and was uncertain, Gideon asked for a sign. We might think he was weak, but God honored his request. Then in the next few verses we see that this was a process. Gideon prepared a young goat and made bread from scratch. In those days, this would have taken a considerable amount of time. During that time, the Lord waited patiently. And then, when the time was right, he provided the confirmation Gideon needed. And he did this several ☞ times. In fact, it’s sort of a theme with Gideon that **God continues to confirm his calling.**

21 With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the Lord touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the Lord disappeared.

☞ The Lord did a miracle with Gideon’s meal offering. **God is still in the miracle working business.** He can take what little you have to offer and do something amazing with it. Moses only



had a staff; Samson had a donkey's jawbone; David had a sling; a little boy had 5 loaves and 2 fish. What do you have that God can use?

22 When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the Lord, he exclaimed, "Ah, Sovereign Lord! I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!"

When Gideon really understood what was happening, it overwhelmed him. That is often what happens when God is on the scene – it can be overwhelming. That's why people often bow down or at least get weak in the knees. God's presence is powerful.

23 But the Lord said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die."

Here is God's heart for his people. He wants us to know peace and not be afraid. This world is so full of troubles and fear. Fear is constantly being promoted. There is always some new thing that you are supposed to be afraid of. But God says, "Do not be afraid." **With God, there is no need to fear.**

Psalms 46:1-3

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

Then, from verse 25 on, we see that Gideon began to walk out God's calling. He started small and needed even more confirmation, but God was with him as promised and gave him success. God then calls him to even more difficult challenges and gives him amazing victory. At God's leading, he triumphs over an army that outnumbered him 450 to 1. It's one of the greatest victories recorded in the Bible. This demonstrates the power of God at work. And he's the same God at work today.

The primary theme of Gideon's story is that God uses the weak and small to accomplish his purposes. Gideon was from the weakest clan and he was the least in his family, but God called him anyway. Then God took a small band of soldiers and defeated an enemy that vastly outnumbered them. Being weak and small is not disqualifying in God's eyes.

A God-encounter encourages

God wants to encourage you today. He will equip you for the task at hand. He knows who you are and what you can be. God loves to take the insecure and insignificant and do something great with them. Maybe you can relate to Gideon. I know I sure do.

Feeling inadequate? Unqualified? You need a God-encounter. God sees what can be.

Feeling unable? Ill-equipped? God gives the strength needed.

Need confirmation? Need reassurance? Need peace? God encourages.

So, look to the Lord. Draw near to him and he will draw near to you.