

Reconciled to God According His Purpose

A. Judges 6:1-6 ¹Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years He gave them into the hands of the Midianites. ²Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in the mountain clefts, caves, and strongholds. ³Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites, and other eastern peoples invaded the country. ⁴They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a single living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. ⁵They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of Locusts. It was impossible to count the men and their camels; they invaded the land and ravaged it. ⁶Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.

- **Why did God allow Midian to impoverish Israel?**
- **The Bible tells us in the last verse of this text that it was not until Israel looked at themselves and realized that they were impoverished, crippled, poor, and destitute they chose to cry out to God.**
- **Before they cried out to God, in their own strength they were trying everything they could to keep the Midianites from taking what they needed to live. It wasn't until they realized that they could do nothing of any significance on their own, that they cried out to God. In other words they didn't rely or trust on God until they had come to the end of themselves.**

I believe that the church today is imitating Israel of old.

- We, like Israel know of God. He has shown himself true to who He says He is.
- We know Him because of how He has shown Himself and proven himself to us, yet we retain this knowledge in our minds and do not live it in our whole heart.
- Israel knew who God was, yet they still tried to combat an enemy greater themselves apart from God.
- The bible tells us that apart from Him we can do nothing.
- Yet we like Israel try day after day, after day to be over-comers of our condition in our own strength.
- It is not until we come to the end ourselves that decide okay God, I am choosing to do more than just remember who you are.

- **Israel was impoverished by the Midianites because they chose comfort in the flesh rather than comfort in the Spirit.**

They chose:

- **Comfort in the flesh = trusting in the provision of things that can fade away or be taken away by man or circumstance.**

Rather than

- **Comfort in the Spirit = trusting only in God for provision that no man or circumstance can remove from you.**

So how does this translate to the church of today?

- We may believe in Jesus and all that the word of God tells us that He is with part of our heart and all of our head. But this just isn't good enough.
- You see what we know with our head is fleshly comprehension.
- What we live with our heart, is spiritual understanding.
- The church today, many of us, we have been trusting in our head knowledge not living with all of our heart's spiritual understanding of who God is and who he has called us to be. The result is a bunch of people who believe in what they understand but do not believe in what who they believe tells them to do, or be, or say.

But how does this "spiritual understanding" work?

- When we hear the word of God often we think in terms of the flesh. What understanding does our faulty humanness lend to comprehending the word of God, rather than looking deeper. We look at in terms of what God said way back when instead of in terms of what God is saying right then to you, and I. I don't know about you but I still believe that the word of God is living and active. Amen?
- We look into the word or perhaps even in our prayer time and God tells us to do something that is bigger than our own understanding and ourselves. He asks us to have faith not just belief.
- You see that is our flesh looking at the circumstances the limitations of fleshliness and calling God's purpose or mission for us impossible.
- But God does not stutter nor does He stammer. He does not call you and I without a reason or power. God calls us beyond mere belief. God calls us to faith! It is His spirit that is speaking to you calling you, telling you, showing you and I.
- But in the flesh, we cling to what we understand and can comprehend, what we can believe, because it makes us feel secure, safe, and comfortable. This is why we must be at the end of ourselves everyday in order to give God total ownership of our lives. In order to add action to our beliefs. Action that steps where we cannot see; action that is called faith!
- In trusting God we are living in the certainty of what we do not see, yet still trust with our lives, spirit and soul. In this we walk not by the flesh but according to His Spirit.
- We claim to trust in God, yet we try to trust Him according to our flesh. You see we believe with our heart, with our flesh, but we have faith in our spirit.
- In Isaiah 55:8, God tells us, "Your ways are not my ways, your thoughts are not mine."
- This means God sees things differently from you and me. Because he sees and knows what we do not.
- **It is time that stop worrying about what we are incapable of seeing**
- **and start trusting in the One who has already sees how all things are going to work out** and yet tells us in promise that the we can "KNOW that all things... God works of the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

According to the scriptures being called by God is to “be given a name.”

- This verse tells us that we are called according to purpose, we are **named** by God’s purpose for our lives. Our identity is found only in God’s purpose for us.
- You say I don’t know God’s purpose. There is one purpose that is universal. To know Him (through worship) and to make Him Known.
- Notice that the reference in scripture here is to His purpose, not ours,
- We may not see or understand His purpose, but as long as we love Him, He will call us into that purpose. And it is that purpose often that causes us to run from God or live for Him with our head and not our hearts. This is why the relationship we have with God is one of reconciliation.

So then, we must understand the definition of the word reconcile. According to the random House College Dictionary it is:

- 1. to cause to cease hostility or opposition. 2. to cause (a person) to accept or be resigned to something not desired. 3. to harmonize or settle (a quarrel, inconsistency, etc.) 4. To restore to communion in a church

1st. To be reconciled to God according to His purpose is stop opposing Him just because we don’t see where He is going.

2nd. It is to follow God even though our flesh tells us not to, we assert the Spirit of God with in us over the flesh, our sinful weak nature. It is being willing to follow where you have not been and may want to go, simply because He says, “GO.”

3rd. It is asking him to make His desires our desires.

4th. We do this in order that we might be in perfect communion or relationship with Him.

I am not saying that the relationship is then perfect, rather that the terms on which the relationship takes place becomes perfect because they are His terms, and He is perfect.

B. Read Judges 6:7-12 “(7) When the Israelites cried to the Lord because of Midian, (8) he sent them a prophet, who said, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (9) I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. (10) I said to you, ‘I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.’ But you have not listened to me.’ (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. (12) When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, ‘The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.’”

Five times we see God make reference to Himself and whom He has shown himself to be. He starts off in the past at verse 8 and by verse 10 God is talking in terms of the now.

And then He asserts His word in terms of the now, by telling them that they “have not listened to Him,” not even now when they need Him. In hearing God we can identify Him; in listening we can KNOW HIM.

You see they were just remembering who God is, but not living in who He is. They just believed in God without having faith in God. The Israelites were walking in the flesh not according to His Spirit. So here is this person that God chooses to show some purpose.

Gideon, and he is threshing wheat in the wine press.

He was breaking the husks off of the grain so that it could be used for food.

Explain the anatomy of a wine press.

- Wine presses were often sunk down into the ground. And had a sub-floor beneath the press where the wine could be collected for use. They usually had a great stone basin in which the pressers pushed a great stone, crushing the grapes both with their feet and with the stone.
- Gideon was using the press because it was hidden. He was trusting in its covering to keep the fruit of his harvest safe.

Explain the anatomy of threshing.

- Threshing was the practice of breaking the husks of grain away from the usable part. In those days the threshing was accomplished by beating the grain with heavy rods or crushing them with weighted sleds pulled by animals.

But there is a Spiritual Principle in operation here. God does not do things the way world does.

In the wine press the quality and juiciness of the fruit is tested.

It is likewise the place where the juiciness of our fruit is tested.

It is where the depth of our relationship with God is exposed, so that our lives can be used to feed those who need feeding.

Grapes are not wine until they are crushed.

You see when wine was being made it was time of celebration, because the laborers got to enjoy the fruits of their work. Making wine was often accompanied by great festivities and singing of songs.

How many of you know that witnessing, testifying, living for Jesus, is nothing more than celebrating the fruit God has grown in us,

and the taste of the wine demonstrating the use of the fruit He puts in you. Isn't what God has done you reason enough, to do a little shouting, a little celebrating?

Here we see God operating a spiritual principle in the tangible of our lives. He uses a wine press, something commonly used to destroy the fruit, in order to get some use out of it. He uses a winepress to make the life of the grain worth while.

Gideon was hiding the grain for threshing in the winepress. When the enemy comes against us the truth of our relationship with God is identified. How much we really trust Him. We think of trials and tests as times when our character in relationship with God is built.

See I think God allows trials for testing he does not create them. Oh but God does not work according to the world. WE tend to fear them because we think we have to be smashed like the grapes in order for God to use us.

We think of trials and tests as bad, because crush us (here we go trying to perceive in the flesh what God is doing in the spirit). But they don't, they just break the flesh off of us. They just separate the husk from the fruit.

God uses the wine press to thresh. (*Refer to OT threshing/destruction symbolism*). But God looks at the winepress as the time and place where He separates us from the flesh. The place where breaks off our outer husk, so that our lives can find a newer deeper meaning and purpose in him.

Our purpose in worshiping Him and trusting in Him the Lord our God is let Him break off the flesh so that we can live by His Spirit within us. He uses what was intended for to bring us death to show us life.

I have heard it said that God does not permit trials to come our way to build our character and relationship in Him.

He does it to expose it, to show the world and us His glory still showing himself true in our lives.

You see there is a double principle at operation here.

I like to call it the **“Double Principle of Winepress Threshing.”**

- 1) The winepress measures the quality of the fruit (the Fruit of the Spirit/our relationship with Jesus) and the flavor of the relationship.
- 2) Threshing exposes the heart of the relationship and its readiness for use
- 3) It is the farmer who knows when the grain is ripe, it is the farmer who knows when it is time for the husk to be broken off, it is the farmer who knows when the grain is useful for the purpose for which it was planted.

The master is calling church. We don't just look good on the stalk, but we can feed the masses.

Look at verse “(12) When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “ ‘The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.’ ”

God called Gideon according to His purpose. Gideon at first denies God’s purpose on his life saying in verse 15 that the Lord has abandoned them because they are not seeing the great works that their fathers saw and again in verse 15 saying that he is from the weakest clan and the weakest in his family.

God replies by telling Gideon in verse 14, “Am I not sending you?” and in verse 16, “I will be with you.” And again confirming himself yet again and again through all of the tests that Gideon asked of him.

If you continue to read you will see that the Lord uses Gideon to conquer the enemy and to bring his people back to God.

Gideon may not have seen how God could use him but when he became certain of who his God was, the how didn’t matter. It was just the **Who** that mattered. We may not be able to see God’s purpose but we are certain that He is God and that He has a purpose. Look at verse 23 and 24.

- We may not be able to see it.
- Or understand it
- Or comprehend it but God gives peace in knowing Him.

He gives

- Peace in denying the flesh and asserting His Spirit.
- Peace in trusting God to be God. Peace in reconciling ourselves to his purpose that we might be called his.

It is His promise that, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him.”

1 Corinthians 2:9

- It is time to submit to what we have not conceived for ourselves.
- You want God’s power and blessing to be an active tangible reality in your life?
- Then be reconciled to what Jesus Christ has conceived for you, in His purpose.
- Be called by the name he gives you, in His vision, His power, His blessing, His purpose. Amen!