

6.23.2024 Sermon

The Lord is With Us | Judges 6:11-16

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

gideon, god, lord, feel, sits, winnowing, molech, threshing floor, presence, midst, straw, blows, mighty warrior, sees, means, harvest, talking, wine, crushing, life

Speaker

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Good morning. I'm a visual learner, so I figured I'd bring y'all some help. I feel like the worship team already preached my sermon. So, I really ain't got much to say no more. But we'll give this a try. I am Sandra Anderson and I am happy to be with you this morning. If you have been joining with us or if it's your first time, we are in the book of Hebrews, still, and we are at verse 32. And we'll be here for a minute. I think Kevin started at 32. Yeah, so this is the third round of 32.

And today I am going to speak on Gideon. I have Gideon. So, let's get into it. Judges 6, verses 11 through 16 is going to be my scripture that I'm going to reference today. And it reads, "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 wine press to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, 'The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.' 'Pardon me, my lord,' Gideon replied, 'but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when he said, Did not the Lord bring us out of Egypt? But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hands of Midian.' 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?' 'Pardon me, my lord,' Gideon replied, 'but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh and I am the least in my family.' The Lord answered, 'I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.'"

So today, just to give you a backstory of what's happening in this story, we enter this text in a bunch of chaos. The Midianites have linked up with the Amalekites, and they are fierce warriors. They are brutal. Even in battle, their focus is starting with killing women and children and the weak. They ordered utterly destroyed everything that the Israelites have. So yet again,

God's chosen people are in a situation. And the last sermon I preached, we were just dancing around Jericho, and they just got to the promised land. And these are the great-great-grandchildren of these people. And now they are in a situation where the world around them is total chaos.

For them, everything that they have is being taken away. And they run and hide in the mountains because every time that they get a harvest, or every time something good happens in their lives, the Midianites come and take their harvest, take everything that they have. So just to give you a mindset of what's going on in the world around Gideon. So, when you find Gideon, he is in this wine press threshing wheat. And it starts off by saying the angel of the Lord came. And that was so profound to me because what this means is, in Hebrew, this is translated into 'the Malach Yahweh', which means God himself, in human form, came down to meet with Gideon.

So, the God of the universe, the God that holds the stars together, the God that's busy, making sure we have everything we need, has stopped everything that he has to do, to come down to see about one person. And this is the God that we constantly see, the God that leaves the 99 to come find the one, and that's what I want to talk about today. The presence of God, that when we feel the same, that everything around us is going on and we feel that, 'Hey, where is God in this situation? Why is all this stuff happening to me?' And we think that God is not with us. For seven years, this is what's happening to them. I think of what's happening just in our world today. And every time we turn around, turn on the news, something has happened. And we're saying, 'Where is God in the midst of all of this?'

But that's what we do. But even then, God doesn't chastise him. He doesn't turn his back on him. He looks at him and says, "I am with you." And he calls him a mighty warrior. Gideon thinks that he's nothing but a mere farmer.

The Lord sees him and calls him and says, "I'm going to tell you who I am." And then, "I'm going to show you who you are." If only you really knew who you were, as someone you know who you are but refused to be who you are.

This sermon could have gone so many ways on identity. But God's presence and being with us is why I felt he wanted us to know that, regardless of what you may be going through, regardless of how angry you may be in your wine press where you feel tucked away and hidden that nobody sees you. My job doesn't see me. They don't value me, a spouse doesn't see me, my kids don't see me. Nobody values me. But God is saying that, "I see you." And "I'm with you." And he's calling you into more.

The wine press was a place of transition. And the wine press is where the grapes realized that they can turn into more. And Gideon is in this place where he's actually doing the opposite. He's threshing wheat in a wine press, which should have been done at a threshing floor. The threshing floor is a place of separation and revelation. It's a place where the harvest was prepared by separating the grain from the useless straw for the purpose of exposing and collecting the most valuable part of the crop. Once the harvest is gathered, the practice of threshing begins with intentional destruction. This technique typically involves crushing the crop under the weight of a sledge or grinding wheel attached to the heavy hooves of oxen. Then the mixture is tossed into the air, allowing the wind to separate the straw from the seed. This process carried the light pieces of straw away and allowed the seeds to fall and collect on the ground. This process is called winnowing. And that's what I feel the invitation that God is showing us today that you can be just this. This is cute. I got this from Michaels, I would have been on the side of the road, but then I thought, you know, I probably would have got ran over trying to get wheat from the side of the road.

This looks good. But if only you knew this could be so much more. And sometimes we're comfortable being this. Because we don't want to go through the process of being crushed in transition. And we see this where the threshing happens. And sometimes we've been brought up to think that God does this to us. God crushes us. But it's not God. The world does enough of caution us and breaking us and beating us. What God does in this is in the process of winnowing. You pick this up and toss it in the air. The wind, if you're on a threshing floor, blows this useless chaff away.

And it leaves this seed. This small seed is what's left that I put in here. This is the most precious part of all of this. But you can't see this being covered in this. So, when we're going through our crushing and our pain, and we wonder where is God in all of this? God is in the process that when the winnowing happens. And he blows his breath through it, the breath, the life of God is in the wind. Every time you go outside and you feel that breeze, that's a reminder of the presence of God, his life. And that's what God does, he blows away this useless chaff. This stuff that we use to cover us, the stuff that we don't want to expose who we are at our core. But that's what the winnowing does, it blows away all that stuff we don't need. So, you can reveal who you really are. And with this small grain, the threshing floor is when the grapes realize it can be bread to feed people. We can do more than just be a grain of straw. We can multiply and produce and feed other people if only we got to our core to see who we really are. So, in the midst of feeling crushed, and amidst wondering where is God when all this stuff is happening to us know that the Moloch Yahweh sees you and he stops the world. And he comes and sits and dwells with us. And he blows his life into us and transitions us from wheat to grain so that we can be all that he's called us to be.

The Lord is with you, mighty warrior. So, when you feel alone when you feel abandoned when you feel that where is God? He did it for my ancestors. He did it for everybody else. Why isn't he doing it for me? And sometimes that's where a lot of us wind up in a cave wondering where is God while all this stuff is happening to me. And this story reminds us that if God could see Gideon, God has no respect for a man that he can't see you too. That he won't come down to be with you in the midst of what you're going through.

So, the invitation today is to come to the threshing floor. All who are weary, all who already feel all beat down and broken, all who feel abandoned. God is with us. And he's ready to blow his fresh breath on us that the old things fall off, and behold, a new thing. A beautiful thing he's ready to make out of you. So, whether you come I have the old, and in this series, it's like we've been looking at the past, to be in the present, so that we can see our future. So, I want you to grab hold of these so you can see the past of who you are. Be in this present moment. And feel God's presence as he sits with you. And grab a hold of your future of this new thing that he's created in you. So that you can take this to look back, to be present, to have hope and faith in your future that God is with you. So, go in the strength that you have, mighty warrior, Amen.