Judges 6-7

Review...

- Chapter 1-2 The cycle of sin...
 - o The cycle of sin God let them be conquered by their enemies the would repent...
 - o God would raise up a Judge to save them they would follow God for a while...
- Chapter 4-5 Deborah the judge...
 - o Israel rebelled a 4th time God called a woman to be the judge of Israel...
 - o She called on Barak to raise up an army of 10,000 to free Israel from bondage...
 - o Barak with Deborah at his side defeated the armies of Sisera...
 - o Sisera fled to the tent of Jael was killed in his sleep by a tent peg peace for 40 years!

GIDEON - THE 5TH JUDGE OF ISRAEL... (5 THINGS)

- 1st The 5th time around... vs. 1- Read: Judges 6:1-6
 - o 1st Israel rebelled against the Lord so God let Midian conquer them for 7 years...vs. 1-6
 - In the first 4 rebellions Israel had been in captivity anywhere from 8 to 20 years...
 - Each time they rebelled the term of the captivity had increased until now...
 - Yet even though this was the shortest of the captivities it was by far the worst...
 - The Midianites were so cruel Israel resorted to hiding in the mountains and in caves...
 - And whenever they planted raiding parties would come and steal their harvest...
 - They would swarm in like locusts and devour all the food in the land!
 - Starving to death Israel finally cried out to the Lord to save them...
 - Trials can come in many different shapes and sizes...
 - The worst trials of life may not necessarily be the longest trials...
 - Going a day without food can be much worse than a cold that lasts for a week...
 - But no matter what the shape or size every trial always has only one purpose...
 - To get our attention and get us to turn our lives back to Jesus!
 - o 2nd God sent a prophet to Israel... vs. 7-10
 - He spoke to them for God showing them why they were starving...
 - God had brought Israel out of Egypt and conquered the people in the Promised Land...
 - But God warned them not to bow down to the pagan gods and they did not listen...
 - Just as God had promised in **Leviticus 26** they were suffering the consequences...
 - Haggai 1:6 "Wages disappear as though putting them in pockets filled with holes."
 - When things go wrong in life we are quick to blame others...
 - When the consequences of our sin find us we often look to blame others...
 - If we are unfriendly find we have no friends we blame others for not liking us...
 - If we are not being blessed we think it is God's fault for not giving us more...
 - It is far easier to see the faults in others then to look at our own shortcomings...
 - If the problem is with others than we do not have to change / repent...
 - But until we admit we are the problem there is nothing God can do to save us!

- 2ND THE MAKING OF A MIGHTY WARRIOR... vs. 11-24 READ: JUDGES 6:11-16
 - o 1st An Israelite named Gideon was threshing wheat in a wine press... vs. 11-13
 - The only reason to 'thresh' in a 'wine press' is to hide because you are scared...
 - You thresh wheat on top of a hill to catch the wind separate wheat from chaff...
 - A wine press is at the bottom of a hill so that it can catch the grape juice...
 - God sent an angel to this terrified man and said 'Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!'
 - He replied 'My family is the least in my tribe / I am the least of my family!'
 - Often when the Lord calls us to serve Him we wonder 'why choose me'...
 - We look at ourselves and think we have nothing to offer the Lord we are 'nobody'...
 - But God does not see us as we are He sees us in light of what He can do through us!
 - Gideon added 'If they Lord is with us why has all this happened to us'...
 - When we face the consequences of our actions it can feel like God has left us...
 - I remember when I did something bad when I was a child my Dad would spank me...
 - I thought for sure he did it because he hated me in anger I would even tell him so...
 - The truth was he punished me because he loved me wanted me to learn to be good...
 - We are 'punished' by the Lord because we are His kids Hebrews 12:5-6
 - God desires to teach us His kids how to live a pure and holy life!
 - o 2nd Then the LORD turned to Gideon and said... vs. 14-16
 - Notice it is no longer 'an angel' who is talking this is Jesus talking to Gideon...
 - The Lord was not only 'with' him He was right there talking to him!
 - God never leaves us we do not see God because we are to focused on our problems
 - Even in the darkest hour if we look up we will find Jesus is right there beside us!
 - Go with the strength you have you will rescue Israel because I am sending you!
 - Most people assume before God can use you you have to be perfect (or close to it)...
 - Before I teach a Bible study I need to be doing everything I am teaching...
 - But God does not look for a perfect person to use for His purposes...
 - Like Gideon God just looks for someone who is willing to go...
 - God is more than able to do the work He wants through us in spite of us...
 - The only thing that can stop God is us being unwilling to step out in faith!
 - o 3rd Seeking a sign... vs. 17-24
 - Gideon wanted a 'sign' to prove what the Lord was telling him...
 - He asked the angel to stay while he went and prepared a meal for him...
 - The angel waited while Gideon cooked a goat / soup / and bread without leaven...
 - Gideon placed them on a rock the angel touched it with his staff burnt it all up!
 - The angel disappeared Gideon realized then it was an angel of the LORD!
 - Gideon built an altar there called YAHWEH SHALOM God is our peace...
 - If we are not sure of our calling want to find out what purpose God has given to us...
 - You could try cooking and placing it on a rock but my guess is it will not burn up...
 - A better option is to step out and try try to teach / try to evangelize / try to help...
 - If it does not work if there is no fruit no problem just try something else!
 - But keep in mind it takes time to grow in any calling you are not perfect in a day...
 - When we are doing what God has called us to do it will be obvious!
- 3^{RD} Standing up for God... vs. 25-40 Read: Judges 6:25-26, 36-39

- o 1st The Lord told Gideon to tear down his father' pagan altars... vs. 15-32
 - The Canaanite religion centered on 3 gods El / Asherah / and Baal...
 - El was the 'father' / Asherah was the 'mother' / and Baal was their son...
 - There were the false gods Israel had begun to worship instead of the Lord...
 - Gideon was to replace the pagan altar with one to the Lord offer a sacrifice...
 - The wood for the fire was to come from the pagan Asherah poles...
 - Gideon did as the Lord commanded but at night for fear of his family...
 - Before Gideon could free a nation he first had to free his family...
 - We look around and see a world caught up in sin and wonder what we can do...
 - The answer is often start at home reach out to those who are closest to you...
 - Acts 1:8 "Be witnesses [of Jesus] in Jerusalem, and Judea and Samaria, to the end of the earth."
 - We start in our backyard and go out from there till the whole world knows!
 - When the people of the town found out they wanted to kill Gideon...
 - But the father of Gideon Joash defended his son (remember they were his idols)...
 - 'Why are you defending Baal let him defend himself if he can...'
 - From then on Gideon was know as 'Jerub-baal' let Baal defend himself...
 - It can be scary to stand up for Jesus before family they will not like it at first...
 - They WILL make accusations attack us try to convince us WE are wrong...
 - But as God is with us there will be some (*maybe just one*) who will stand with us!
- o 2nd Having reached his family it was time for Gideon to save a nation... vs. 33-40
 - Midian an the children of the east gathered in the Jezreel valley (Armageddon)...
 - The spirit of the Lord came on Gideon and he called Israel to gather for war...
 - But Gideon still doubted and he asked the Lord to prove Himself...
 - He put out a fleece 'he wanted it to be wet in the morning but the ground dry'...
 - The next night he put out the fleece 'he wanted it to be dry but the ground was wet'...
 - The Lord did as Gideon asked then he had the confidence the Lord was with him!
 - I like that Gideon full of the spirit still had doubts and needed to be reassured...
 - No matter how long you have been walking with the Lord there are always bad days...
 - And God is always willing to meet us where we are and build us up in our faith!
 - But the Lord makes it clear as a rule we are not to 'test' the Lord...
 - Matthew 4:7 / Deuteronomy 6:16 "Do not test the Lord your God."
 - The only reason why we would test God is because we doubt God / His Word...
 - When we find ourselves questioning our calling we do not need to 'lay out a fleece'...
 - We go back to the Lord back to His Word to get our faith strengthened!
- 4^{th} Choosing an amry...vs. 1-7 Read: Judges 7:2-6
 - o 1st Gideon gathered with 32,000 men at Mt. Gilboa at the spring of Ein Harod...
 - The spring overlooks the plains of Jezreel also called the Megiddo valley....
 - The Lord told Gideon there were too many men- some had to go home...
 - If God gave the victory they would take the credit and think they won the battle...
 - Gideon gave the order for anyone who was scared to go home 22,000 left...
 - This is understandable they were facing an army like 'the sands of the sea'...
 - If they entered into the battle and in fear ran it would mean defeat for Israel...
 - o 2^{nd} God said 'there were still too many men' (*I am sure Gideon disagreed*)...

- Gideon had all the men take a drink from the spring...
 - Those who lapped the water went home / those who scooped the water stayed...
 - Two possibilities those who scooped kept a watchful eye better soldiers...
 - Or those who scooped were too old to bend down they were the least of the men!
 - God does not pick the youngest / strongest He chose the old guys! I Corinthians 1:26
 - There is a common misconception that God only uses the 'elite'...
 - In order to be used by God you have to have a 4-year degree PhD in theology...
 - That is the wisdom of men a worldly idea that has crept into the church...
 - You do not see any Bible colleges or seminaries in the Bible you just see sinners...
 - Sinner are exactly who God chooses to go and preach the message of the cross!
- In the end there were only 300 men left to fight an army of hundreds of thousands...
 - God will often allow a situation we are facing to look impossible...
 - That way when He gives us the victory there is no doubt it was all God!
- 5^{th} Victory for Israel... vs. 8-25 Read: Judges 7:16-21
 - o 1st Dreaming of the victory... vs. 8-15
 - That night Gideon snuck down into the enemies camp overheard a conversation....
 - A soldier had a dream a loaf of bread rolling down the hill knocking over his tent...
 - His friend interpreted his dream 'this can only mean God has given Gideon the victory!'
 - When Gideon heard the interpretation he worshiped the Lord...
 - The dream was not important 'dreams about rolling bread' do not mean much...
 - What was important was the interpretation it showed the fear of the enemy!
 - God can speak through dreams...
 - Joseph Had two dreams that he would rule over his brothers and family...
 - Daniel Interpreted the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar Daniel 2
 - And it is not just limited to the men of the Bible God says He will give us dreams...
 - **Joel 2:28** "I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions."
 - So I suppose that means if you admit to having dream from the Lord you are old...
 - For myself I only have 'visions' though sometimes with my eyes closed...
 - In truth I cannot say I have ever personally been directed by visions or dreams
 - But we need to be careful of dreams...
 - God speak to us through dreams but that does not mean all dreams are from God...
 - Ecclesiastes 5:7 "Much dreaming and many words are meaningless."
 - Your dream from last night might be from the Lord or from pancit canton...
 - If the dream contradicts the Word of God in any way reject it it is not from the Lord...
 - Before you make any rash decision based on dreams make sure they are from God!
 - o 2nd Winning the battle without a fight... vs. 16-25
 - Gideon divided the 300 men giving each horn and a jar with a torch inside...
 - They encircled the enemies camp and just after midnight / at the signal...
 - They all broke their jars blew their horns and shouted 'For the Lord and for Gideon!'
 - The enemy assumed they were surrounded and in confusion turned on each other...
 - And God conquered an army like the sand of the sea with just 300 men!
 - God does not need an army to accomplish His work He just needs those who are willing...