

Judges, Sermon #22

Judges 6

Gideon was to destroy the false worship center built to Baal on his father's property.

Apparently, Gideon's father was an idolater.

This gives us some insight to the kind of home Gideon was raised in.

So, this assignment wasn't an easy one – the smashing of the altar was no small thing.

It was a way of life.

It was denying all that he had been taught and raised with.

God told him to destroy the altar dedicated to Baal, build an altar to the Lord.

I have entitled tonight's message "Making Changes"

Judges 6:25

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word

Judges 6:25-32

Let us pray

You may be seated

Making Changes

Gideon was to build a true altar of worship to the LORD on the very same location and then offer a *burnt* sacrifice to the LORD.

God demands a sacrifice.

From early on in the Book of Genesis, God has taught us about sacrifice—Cain and Abel

When Noah came off the ark, he offered God a burnt sacrifice.

Eventually, God called Abraham, and Abraham brought his own son—indication of a future human sacrifice—basically three central ideas for sacrifice:

1. Consecration – dedication, devoted
2. Expiation—action covering for sin – the actual atonement itself
3. Propitiation—satisfaction of God’s wrath – “And He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world” (I John 2:2)

There is no consecration (commitment) to God apart from expiation.

We cannot be right with God without the shedding of blood (atonement) – repentance

All these Old Testament sacrifices pointed to the Savior Who would do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Jesus would take upon Himself the sin and guilt.

He was the substitute sacrifice for us.

On the Day of Atonement, two goats were used.

One goat died—symbolizing an ultimate sacrifice—take his blood to the mercy seat.

The second goat lived—lay the sins upon him and send him away—scapegoat—signified the removing of people’s sin.

Gideon's offering was to be a burnt offering—that which goes up to God.

The whole offering was to be consumed by fire.

The purpose of the *burnt sacrifice* was to provide atonement or reconciliation with God.

It was established by God to provide the only way to approach Him, to become reconciled, acceptable to God.

That's what Gideon needed, Israel, America—we needed to reconcile (get right with God)

A person secured atonement or reconciliation with God through the *substitute sacrifice*.

So, Gideon was asked by God for a burnt offering.

#1 – this offering was to be the best the person could give or else it was rejected.

Gideon didn't go and get a sick cow.

#2 – the burnt offering was also to be a voluntary one demonstrating complete and voluntary surrender to God's will.

God was saying to Gideon, "I want your best! I am asking you to completely and voluntarily surrender and yield your life to My will!"

God is asking the same of us too—He wants our best.

He is asking us to completely and voluntarily surrender and yield our life to His will.

Just as the entire animal was consumed in the burnt offering, God wants all of us . . . mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Romans 12:1, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*"

How much of our money is God's? 100%

How much of our time? 100%

Most believers don't think that way—they don't think that way about their marriage

How much am I to put in?

That's not the sacrificial love of God.

Vs. 26

Since altars to Baal were built on high places, it would have been difficult to obey God's orders without attracting attention.

The offering was to be on top of the rock (hill) in an ordered place.

God wanted this altar to be seen, to be public, and not a secret.

God wants our worship of Him to be *open*, not concealed; *obvious* and not complicated and confusing; and *overt*, not covert.

The secret agent Christian is unacceptable to God.

Vs. 27a

He offers no delays, no arguments, and no excuses.

He obeys immediately and promptly.

Vs. 27b

Gideon brings ten servants with him to help destroy the altar of Baal.

Evidently Gideon was not as poor as he made it out to be—it was just an excuse (vs. 15) to not do what God had called him to do.

We exaggerate oftentimes of how bad things really are when we don't want to do something.

Vs. 27c

Gideon fears his father and the men of the city so he does his work at night where he will not be discovered or stopped.

However, when ten other men are involved, it's not easy to keep your plans a secret—a secret known to ten men is no secret

So it wasn't long before the whole town knew that Gideon was the one who had destroyed his father's idols – vs. 30

The men of the city considered this a capital offense and wanted to kill Gideon.

So, Gideon's fears were well-founded.

The townsfolk reacted quickly when they saw the devastation and this led to the demand for his death.

According to God's law, it was the idol-worshippers who should have been slain. Gideon had every right to destroy Baal worship because this is what God had commanded in His Law.

Turn to Deuteronomy 13:6-11.

After obeying God, Gideon was no doubt wondering what would happen to him, but God proved Himself well able to handle the situation.

Vs. 31

Joash, Gideon's father, had every reason to be angry with his son.

Gideon had smashed his father's altar to Baal and replaced it with an altar to God.

He had sacrificed his father's prize bull to the Lord and had used the sacred Asherah pole for firewood.

The whole town was in an uproar.

But God so worked in Joash's heart that he defended Gideon before the town mob and even insulted Baal!

"What kind of a god is Baal that he can't even defend himself?" asked Joash.
Are you going to plead Baal's cause? Strive, contend, stand up in defense of Baal?

Elijah would take a similar approach years later. See I Kings 18:27.

Elijah—"Cry louder—he is talking to someone or is on a journey; maybe he is sleeping."

"What kind of a god is Baal that he can't even plead his own cause?" Joash asked.

Joash actually pronounced a sentence upon anyone who stood up to defend Baal.
That person was to be put to death.

Joash led the public to accept his arguments (v. 32).

Gamaliel in Acts 5 did the same thing for the Apostle (Acts 5:33-39).

So, the people backed off and left Gideon alone.

However, they did nickname Gideon and call him "Jeru-Baal," which means "let Baal deal with Gideon"—declaring that Gideon could expect the judgment of Baal to fall upon him.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Is it time to make some change?

Are there any altars of Baal in our lives?

We know they are against God and they need to be torn down.

But, folks, that's not enough—we must dedicate ourselves to God
Rededicate their lives – 100%