

## Judges, Sermon #24

Judges 6

Studying the life of Gideon

Gideon blows the shofar and 32,000 Israelite men rally to his side to fight the Midianites.

However, the enemy has an army of 135,000 plus camels

Imagine looking across the plains and into the Valley of Jezreel where their camp was set up.

As Scripture says, they were as thick as grasshoppers—a frightful, terrifying sight.

Gideon begins to doubt God's promise.

So, before he led the attack, he asked God to give him two signs—just to make sure.

This is a well-known story in the Bible

I've entitled tonight's message "No Peace in the Fleece"

Judges 6:36

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

Judges 6:36-40

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

## No Peace in the Fleece

The phrase "putting out the fleece" is a familiar one in religious circles. It means asking God to guide us in a decision by fulfilling some condition that we lay down.

"Putting out the fleece" is a way that some believers seek to find the will of God. People look for signs in order to determine God's will.

We must not become *sign-seekers*, but students of God's Word.

I've met all kinds of people who have gotten themselves into trouble by "putting out the fleece."

If God will do this, then . . .

People are very superstitious and try to read things . . .

### **I. "Putting out the fleece" is not a Biblical method for determining the will of God in our life.**

Rather, it's an approach used by people like Gideon who lack the faith to trust God and obey Him.

Twice Gideon reminded God of what He had said

Look at the end of vs. 36 and 37

Gideon knew what God said—should there be any more questions?

The Lord appeared unto Gideon and promised victory over the Midianites through his leadership.

Yet, Gideon is still not convinced of the Lord's promise.

Gideon's problem was not a lack of knowledge.  
Instead it was a struggle with faith and obedience.

Gideon's faith was not constant; it knew moments of uncertainty as well as heights of greatness.

However, the Lord very graciously accommodated Gideon's request – vs. 38a and vs.39

The fact that God stooped to Gideon only proves that He's a gracious God who understands fully the frailty of human nature (Ps. 103:14—that we are but dust).

## **II. "Putting out the fleece" is not only an evidence of our unbelief, but it's also an evidence of our pride.**

Who are we to tell God what conditions He must meet after He has already told us what to do?

Gideon's job was to obey God, not dictate to Him.

God has to do what I tell Him to do before I'll do what He tells me to do!

Gideon tested God by asking for a wet fleece and then for God to reverse the process the next night

## **III. Seeking signs is not evidence of faith, but unbelief**

Note this fact: Gideon knew that his testing of God was wrong, for he asked God not to be angry with him.

**Vs. 39**

Then, why did Gideon ask God again?

Gideon struggled with the exact same things Christians are struggling with today—taking God at His Word and believing, trusting, and obeying His commands and promises.

Struggling with doubt and disbelief causes some to ask God for signs to determine a course of action that has already been made clear.

#### **IV. The seeking of a sign from God doesn't solve problems.**

It doesn't produce certainty of God's direction.

Gideon asked for a wet fleece and he got what he asked for.

Vs. 38 – “And it was so” . . . “a whole bowl of water”

Yet, he is still in doubt because he wonders if this is a coincidence, happenchance

He found no peace in the fleece, so in his uncertainty, Gideon asked for another sign.

People do the same thing today.

There is still doubt. *There is no peace in the fleece.*

God does give us guidance for He wants us to know and do His will.

The Bible says in Ephesians 5:17, “*Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*”

How can I know God's will?

God's basic will is found in Scripture.

God's will is God's Word, and God's Word is God's will.

This is where we find guidelines for knowing and doing what is pleasing to Him.

But what about the specific leading of my life?

Although His plans and directions for each believer are not found in Scripture, the general principles for understanding them are there.

God gives us every possible help, both to know and to obey His will.

God's will for our lives is first of all to belong to Him through Jesus Christ.

His first and primary will for every person is that he be saved and brought into the family and kingdom of God.

1 Timothy 2:3-4, *"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."*

We experience God's will by being sanctified. "This is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3) – also through submission to the Lord.

Through spiritual growth, we discover God's will for us.

Hebrews 13:17, *"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls . . ."*

- ◆ God has provided us with a guide. Our guide is the Holy Spirit.  
John 16:13, *"Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth . . ."*
- ◆ Guidance comes from the principles of God's Word.  
Psalm 119:105, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."*
- ◆ Guidance is confirmed through the peace of God.  
Colossians 3:15, *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts . . ."*

- ◆ Guidance comes from the desires God gives to us.  
Psalm 37:3-4, *“Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”*
  
- ◆ Guidance also comes from the counsel of godly parents, spouses, and pastors.  
Proverbs 11:14, *“Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.”*

In the absence of wise counsel, people fall.

Do we desire to know God's will? If we know His will, will we obey it?

Matthew 4:4, *“But He answered and said, ‘It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’”*

Romans 15:4, *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning . . .”*

I Corinthians 10:11, *“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition . . .”*

God had begun a great work in Gideon's life.

Is God at work in our life?

If we are a baby Christian, immature—we will waver, doubt, fall, and fail.

How do we know whether to go forward, backward, or stay put?

If we are too cautious, we may be hesitant or too slow to accomplish what needs to be done.

If we are not cautious, we may become reckless and end up messing up what we are trying to achieve.

If the will of God is already revealed in His Word, the Holy Bible, we are to believe the Word of God and live by it.

We are to sincerely pray and seek God's will.

*James 1:5-8, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."*

Romans 14:23b, ". . . for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Whatsoever is not of strong conviction and reliance upon Christ is sin.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Is there a specific thing that God has spoken to us about that we are not obedient in?

Not followed through?

Are we looking for signs, for answers?

Are we still immature so that we cannot make good decisions?

God's will is for us to be saved. Are you saved?