

# Lessons from Gideon (Part 1): Hard Times

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Judges 6:11-14

Gideon lived during a time when the Midianites oppressed the Israelites. The people cried out to God, and an angel called Gideon to deliver them. Gideon believed God had abandoned them, and that he was the last one who should be called upon to deliver the people. Yet he was persuaded to answer the call. Gideon was a hero of faith (Hebrews 11:32), but he was not a perfect man. His example can inspire us to do great things for the Lord, while also serving as a cautionary tale showing how easy it is for God's people to sin and lose faith.

## ***Why do hard times come?***

### **Suffering of the Israelites**

- Deborah and Barak delivered the Israelites from the Canaanites – there was forty years of peace (Judges 5:31); this cycle was repeated throughout the book of Judges (sin, oppression, crying out, deliverance)
- Israel fell back into sin, and God gave them over to the Midianites (Judges 6:1) – they had to hide in mountains and caves to escape destruction (Judges 6:2-5); God delivered them from Egypt (Judges 6:8-9), but now He allowed them to be terrorized by Midian
- God gave the reason why this happened – “But you have not obeyed Me” (Judges 6:10)

### **Why We Suffer Today (possible reasons)**

- Sin (Proverbs 13:15) – there are consequences in this life for sin (1 Peter 4:15)
- Foolishness (Proverbs 19:3; 18:6) – we suffer for bad decisions we make
- Oppression (Ecclesiastes 4:1-2; 5:8) – even when systems are set up to prevent this, they often do not work
- Persecution (2 Timothy 3:12) – in this case, we suffer for doing what is right (1 Peter 4:16; 3:17)
- Calamity (Job 1:13-19) – sometimes bad things happen inexplicably (cf. Luke 13:1-5)

### **Where Is God When We Suffer?**

- Gideon wondered this (Judges 6:12-13) – this is understandable given his limited perspective; the same can be true for us; sometimes we just have to endure hardships and rely upon God's grace (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)
- God is in the same place He always was (cf. Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8) – if we suffer unjustly, He is still with us (2 Timothy 4:16-17); if we suffer justly, our sins have separated us from Him (Isaiah 59:2)

- Rather than asking where God is, we should ask where we are... did we contribute to the current situation? – if so, repent; if not, remain faithful
- Regardless of the reason for our suffering, we have to deal with it, and possibly even help fix it – if God is with us, we can accomplish more than we think, just like Gideon (Judges 6:14-16); we “overwhelmingly conquer” through Christ (Romans 8:31, 37)

### **Conclusion**

- Why do hard times come? – there could be several reasons
- Regardless of the reason, they should remind us of our need to turn to God
- They also show us that it is not in this world where our hope should be – instead, we must look to the reward that God has promised