

## WELCOME

### Our Mission is to . . .

- Connect you to Jesus
- Connect you to His community for discipleship
- Connect you to your mission and purpose in life

**We are not here to tell you what to wear, eat, listen to, vote for, or even believe. These are things you must determine for yourself if you want to have real faith. We are here to give you truth, facts, tools and point out that every choice, every belief, and every action you make is tied to an outcome in your life. You can't do life without developing a strong foundation and becoming a person of substance. This is your journey, your discovery, and you will reap the benefit of the work you do.**

**FHNew** - Our mission as a church is to do everything we can to help you grow your faith. If you would like to get to know us a little better or begin or continue your journey of faith, text **FHNew** to **53123** and we will send you a link to a few short videos about Foothills Church, or stop by the **Connection booth in the Atrium.**

You can also fill out a **Connect card** using the QR code on the screen or the actual card on the back of the chair in front of you. If you have a **PRAYER REQUEST**, this is a good place to write it out and place in the ORANGE offering box in the back of the Sanctuary.

**FHBaptism** - One important step in your faith journey is being baptized. To learn more about baptism, text **FHBaptism** to **53123** and we will send you the teaching on Believers' Baptism.

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## ONGOING/UPCOMING

- [Moms groups](#) (links)
- [Bible Recap](#) – read through the Bible

## INTRODUCTION

This is a story about God, not about Gideon. The actions God takes and the plans He sets in motion show us who He is.

### God's Nature: God is JUST and He is MERCIFUL

**Judges 6:1-10 (NIV)** *The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. 2 Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. 3 Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. 4 They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. 5 They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was*

*impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. 6 Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.*

*7 When the Israelites cried out to the Lord because of Midian, 8 he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 9 I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. 10 I said to you, 'I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me."*

- We see at the beginning that God is just, he allows the Midianites to harm Israel because the Israelites are doing evil. God shows his justice, even against those he has chosen

**Judges 6:11-14** *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 winepress to keep it from the Midianites. 12 When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."*

*13 "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 they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian."*

*14 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?"*

- God is also merciful: The Israelites come to him for help, and instead of continuing to pour out justice upon them, he raises up a Gideon to rescue them.

**Romans 8:28** tells us God works his plans for our benefit. We see here that God's people do evil, so he brings justice upon them, but once they turn to him for help, he is merciful and will use the situation to teach them

*28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

### **God's Nature: God opposes the proud, but shows favor to the humble (James 4:6)**

**Judges 6:15-18** *"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."*

*16 The Lord answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive."*

*17 Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. 18 Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you."*

*And the Lord said, "I will wait until you return."*

- Gideon “tests” God. Is this not like the Pharisees in Matthew 16:1-4? Why does God respond positively to him, but negatively to the Pharisees? The Pharisees are proud, and they challenge Jesus and his power. Gideon does not challenge God’s power, but requests confirmation of his direction and brings an offering. When Gideon sees the angel of the Lord, he does not argue with him, but seeks understanding and sacrifices to him, despite his misunderstanding. Does not Gideon show humility? God quite literally exalts him, but humbles the Pharisees.

**Judges 6:34-40** *Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. 35 He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them.*

*36 Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised— 37 look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.” 38 And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.*

*39 Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew.” 40 That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.*

- Gideon again asks for confirmation of what he should do. Is he pushing it here? Possibly, but notice how he is still humble. He is following God by preparing an army, but he is still unsure. He has followed God though, and so when he asks for a sign, he is not rebuffed like the Pharisees

### **God’s Nature: God is sovereign**

**Judges 7:1-22** *Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. 2The Lord said to Gideon, “You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, ‘My own strength has saved me.’ 3Now announce to the army, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’” So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.*

*4But the Lord said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out for you there. If I say, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go; but if I say, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ he shall not go.”*

*5So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the Lord told him, “Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink.” 6Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.*

*7The Lord said to Gideon, “With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home.” 8So Gideon sent the rest of the*

*Israelites home but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.*

*Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley. 9During that night the Lord said to Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands.*

*10If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah 11and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp." So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp. 12The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore.*

*13Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying. "A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed."*

*14His friend responded, "This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands."*

*15When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down and worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The Lord has given the Midianite camp into your hands." 16Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside.*

*17"Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. 18When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, 'For the Lord and for Gideon.'"*

*19Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. 20The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" 21While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.*

*22When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the Lord caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.*

- God pares his army, considerably, twice. He shows Gideon that he will defeat the Midianites. He defeats the Midianites, he is the savior of Israel, just like he is our savior. He did not need Gideon to defeat the Midianites, but out of his mercy towards Israel, justice towards Midian, and opposition to the proud and exaltation of the humble, he uses Gideon to accomplish his plan.

**In the Lord's prayer, we say, "Thy will be done". Gideon acted upon God's will and allowed God to use him to enact his plan. Will you allow him to use you?**

**What does this mean to us?**

**Psalm 102:27** *But you remain the same, and your years will never end.*

- God is unchanging! He is the same as when he defeated the Midianites through Gideon. He continues to dispense justice and mercy. He continues to humble the proud and exalt the humble. He is continually sovereign and rules over all things.

**Do your actions recognize these traits of God?**

- When you pray, how do you see yourself before God? Are you strong and combative, do you push God for answers, or do you take a place of humility, recognizing that God is working and knows more than you?
- Do you ask God for a sign to prove himself to you, or do you ask for confirmation of direction? This is a huge one in our culture. There is a continual emphasis on asking God to show he is there. This is a challenge to him! Trust that he is there, follow him, and then ask for confirmation of direction, not for him to prove himself to you.
- Do you recognize the justice and mercy that comes from God? When you feel wronged by someone, you must recognize that God dispenses justice, and while there may be work to do towards a resolution, you must forgive whatever wrong has been done to you. Do you understand that sometimes justice is done to you, when you have wronged another? Seek justice and love mercy, they are important to give and to receive. Do not employ a double standard for yourself.

**Think on these pieces of God.** They do not describe his whole nature but point to parts of who he is. Do you live in accordance with who he is, or do you attempt to push your own opinions of him onto Him? Many people have misbelieved in God, not understanding who he really is and, therefore, never grow close to him.

**You must accept who he is to grow close to him**, so my encouragement to you is **“to practice justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)**

<b>DISCUSSION QUESTIONS</b>
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1. What does God’s sovereignty mean to you?
2. How does God balance his justice and his mercy?
3. In your relationship with God, would you consider yourself proud or humble? Why?