

WHEREWITH SHALL I SAVE ISRAEL JUDGES 7:1-23

Text: Judges 6:15

Judges 6:15

¹⁵ And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

Introduction:

James councils men against the foolishness of making plans without consideration for the will of God in the matter.

James 4:13-17

¹³ Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: ¹⁴ Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. ¹⁵ For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. ¹⁶ But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. ¹⁷ Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

James is saying that you and I can make any plans we wish to make, but God always has the final say in the matter.

When we learn His plans for the situation, and we make our plans based on His plans, we find out that He had the best plan all along!

However most people want to make their plans, they want things to go the way they want them to go.

Illustrations:

When Peter and the others had fished all night without catching a fish, Jesus told them to out into the deep water and they would catch fish, Luke 5:4-8.

Luke 5:4-8

⁴ Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. ⁵ And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. ⁶ And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. ⁷ And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. ⁸ When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

Peter's plan was to forget fishing for that day and go home. But, when he obeyed the Lord, he found out that the Lord had the best plan!

When Jesus told His disciples that He was going to die, Peter rebuked the Lord, Matt. 16:21-23.

Matthew 16:21-23

²¹ From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

²² Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. ²³ But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Peter thought he had a good plan, but when Jesus went to the cross and paid for sins forever, Peter found out that the Lord had the best plan.

When Israel sent spies into Canaan and saw the giants that lived there, Num 13-14, they made plans to find themselves a new leader to go back to Egypt. But, over the next forty years, as they died one by one in the wilderness, they learned that God has the best plan.

We have in this story a man who is the most heroic of the individuals seen in the book of Judges. He is the only one whom the Angel of the Lord appeared.

In the Old Testament there are over eighty references to the Angel of the Lord and of these twenty are in the book of Judges. Of these twenty seven are connected with Gideon.

Israel had been oppressed for seven years by the Midianites. The Midianites were wild nomads who raided their neighbors to steal their crops and cattle. Greatly impoverished the Israelites cried unto the Lord sent an unnamed Prophet to rebuke them for their past rebellion.

Judges 6:7-10

⁷ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, ⁸ That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; ⁹ And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land; ¹⁰ And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

While God sent one to reprove and rebuke, He was also preparing one to lead their deliverance. That one was Gideon.

Gideon stands as a great example of seeking the Lord for direction, and deliverance.

Remember God's plan may not be the easiest plan; it may not be the most popular plan; it may not even seem like the smartest plan; but God always has the best plan!

Note:

1. THE REALITIES OF GOD'S PLAN

A. God's Plan is a Different Plan

Judges 7:2-7

² And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. ³ Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. ⁴ And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with

thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. ⁵ So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappedh of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappedh, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. ⁶ And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. ⁷ And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.

- Gideon had already learned that God had called or commissioned him for this task. Not only had God called him but God had also equipped him for this task.
- But God's plan was different than Gideon's.
- Gideon planned to march into battle with 32,000 soldiers, but God had a different plan!
- When we make our plans for our lives, we always try to make them so that things fall in our favor.
- That is human nature! However, God will usually have a different plan.

- The plan of God will bring honor to Himself, not us.

B. God's Plan Is a Declared Plan

Judges 7:9-14

⁹ And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. ¹⁰ But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: ¹¹ And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. ¹² And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. ¹³ And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. ¹⁴ And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.

- Here is Gideon, he has seen his 32,000 man army reduced to just 300 men. He is getting ready to attack a force that is many times larger than his own.

- God is not asking for a leap in the dark, he is asking for a clear step of faith.

C. God's Plan Is a Distinct Plan

Judges 7:15-23

¹⁵ And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. ¹⁶ And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. ¹⁷ And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. ¹⁸ When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. ¹⁹ So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. ²⁰ And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. ²¹ And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. ²² And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to

Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath. ²³ And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.

- Gideon's men were to surround the enemy, 300 hundred against thousands! They were to sound their trumpets, shout for the battle and break a little clay pitcher containing a candle. God said that this would give them the victory, and it did!
- Had Gideon and his men not been willing to follow God's plan, they would have missed out on God's best for their lives!
- There are times when the Lord will lead you in directions you never imagined. He can come up with plans for our lives that are very distinct! Yet, when we go His way, we find out that He always has the best plan!

2. THE REQUIREMENTS OF GOD'S PLAN

A. God's Plan Requires Surrender

- Gideon was a man with 32,000 followers! But, by following God's plan, he saw his army reduced,

his rank lowered. He was reduced from a general to a private.

B. God's Plan Requires Submission

- For God's plan to succeed, Gideon and his army had to submit to God's plan. Gideon had to watch when first 22,000 men and then 9,700 men turned and went home, taking their weapons and their potential with them.
- Gideon and the 300 who remained had to walk in obedience to God's plan for the battle or none of them had a chance of survival!

C. God's Plan requires Steadfastness

If Gideon and his army were to experience the victory, they would have to humble themselves under God's hand, surrender to His plan, obey His will and proceed in faith!

It took great faith for 300 to go out against thousands!
It took great faith for them to take no weapons!

It took great faith for them to blow their trumpets, break those pitchers and shine those lights, but God answered their faith by giving them a resounding victory!

3. THE RESULTS OF GOD'S PLAN

When God's people submit to God's plan and carry it out for His glory, there are certain results they can expect!

A. God's Enemies Are Vanquished

Judges 7:21-22

²¹ And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. ²² And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath.

- The Midianites and the Amalekites turned on one another in fear and fled the scene. Israel saw their enemies defeated because Israel followed God's plan!

B. God's People Are Victorious

Judges 7:23

²³ And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.

- Israel enjoyed a great victory because they chose the best plan!

C. God's Name is Venerated

Judges 7:2

² *And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.*

Judges 7:15-23

¹⁵ *And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. ¹⁶ And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. ¹⁷ And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. ¹⁸ When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. ¹⁹ So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. ²⁰ And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. ²¹ And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried,*

and fled. ²² And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath. ²³ And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.

- Because the victory was won without a great army and without a fierce battle, God got all the glory for the victory!
- Neither Gideon nor his army could go home and brag about what they did not the field of battle.

Close:

God has the best plan for living. His will when followed always produces victory.