

# JUDGES 8

## GIDEON: FINISHING WELL



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## A Soft Answer Turns Away Wrath

*Judges 8:1-3 Then the men of Ephraim said to him, "What is this that you have done to us, not to call us when you went to fight against Midian?" And they accused him fiercely. 2 And he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the grape harvest of Abiezer? 3 God has given into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. What have I been able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger against him subsided when he said this.*

- Proverbs 15:1 *A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*
- Gleaning – allowing the alien, the widow and the orphan to come and gather the grain left over from the reapers.

## Exhausted, Yet Pursuing

Judges 8:4-9 *And Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed over, he and the 300 men who were with him, exhausted yet pursuing. 5 So he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian." 6 And the officials of Succoth said, "Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?" 7 So Gideon said, "Well then, when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will flail your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers." 8 And from there he went up to Penuel, and spoke to them in the same way, and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. 9 And he said to the men of Penuel, "When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower."*

- Men of Ephraim – easily offended
- Men of Succoth and Penuel – more concerned about their security than serving the LORD and their fellow Israelites
  - Proverbs 18:10 *The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.*

## The Kings of Midian are Routed

*Judges 8:10-12 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with their army, about 15,000 men, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East, for there had fallen 120,000 men who drew the sword. 11 And Gideon went up by the way of the tent dwellers east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the army, for the army felt secure. 12 And Zebah and Zalmunna fled, and he pursued them and captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and he threw all the army into a panic.*

## The Canaanization of Israel

Judges 8:13-17 *Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle by the ascent of Heres. 14 And he captured a young man of Succoth and questioned him. And he wrote down for him the officials and elders of Succoth, seventy-seven men. 15 And he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me, saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand, that we should give bread to your men who are exhausted?'" 16 And he took the elders of the city, and he took thorns of the wilderness and briers and with them taught the men of Succoth a lesson. 17 And he broke down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.*

- Gideon set on exacting revenge
- Men of Succoth – disciplined with thorns and briers
- Men of Penuel – tower broken down and killed
- Chapter 1 – men of Israel were unwilling to obey the command to dispossess or destroy the Canaanites.

## The Motive Revealed

Judges 8:18-21 *Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "Where are the men whom you killed at Tabor?" They answered, "As you are, so were they. Every one of them resembled the son of a king." 19 And he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the LORD lives, if you had saved them alive, I would not kill you." 20 So he said to Jether his firstborn, "Rise and kill them!" But the young man did not draw his sword, for he was afraid, because he was still a young man. 21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise yourself and fall upon us, for as the man is, so is his strength." And Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and he took the crescent ornaments that were on the necks of their camels.*

- Revenge was the motive for the pursuit of the Midianite kings and army all along.

## Right Words...Almost

Judges 8:22-23 *Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian." 23 Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you."*

The men of Israel get two things right

- They have a long-term problem
- They see the connection between a deliverer and a king
- But, they get two things terribly wrong
  - God was their deliverer, not Gideon
  - Their biggest problem was their sin problem
- Gideon's answer is right: *"I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you."*
- BUT, Gideon does not correct their misunderstanding.

Deuteronomy 17:14-15a *"When you come to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,' 15 you may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose.*

## Actions Speak Louder than Words

*Judges 8:24-28 And Gideon said to them, "Let me make a request of you: every one of you give me the earrings from his spoil." (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) 25 And they answered, "We will willingly give them." And they spread a cloak, and every man threw in it the earrings of his spoil. 26 And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian, and besides the collars that were around the necks of their camels. 27 And Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah. And all Israel whored after it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his family. 28 So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel, and they raised their heads no more. And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon.*

- v24 – requests tribute from the people
- v26 – receives the beginnings of a royal treasury
- v26 - collects the royal garments and ornaments worn by the kinds of Midian.



## Actions Speak Louder than Words

Deuteronomy 17:16-17 *Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' 17 And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.*

- Gideon has become a defacto king, and one this is just like the Canaanite kings.

v27 – Gideon takes the gold and makes an ephod (see Ex. 28 and 39)

- Gideon takes the ephod and sets it up in the very place he had earlier broken down the altar to Baal.

## Consequences of Sin

*Judges 8:29-31 Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and lived in his own house. 30 Now Gideon had seventy sons, his own offspring, for he had many wives. 31 And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he called his name Abimelech.*

- Abi – “My Father”
- Melek – “The King”/“Is King”

*Judges 8:32-35 And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, at Ophrah of the Abiezrites. 33 As soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel turned again and whored after the Baals and made Baal-berith their god. 34 And the people of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side, 35 and they did not show steadfast love to the family of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) in return for all the good that he had done to Israel.*

- One of the dangers of success – pride

## Finishing Well

### Daily communion with God

- Word

*Psalms 1:1-2 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

- Prayer

*1 Thessalonians 5:17 pray without ceasing,*

*Matthew 6:6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

# Finishing Well

## One Another's

- Hebrews 10:24-25 *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*
- James 5:16 *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*
- Hebrews 3:13 *But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11 *Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*
- Galatians 6:2 *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*
- 1 John 3:16 *By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.*