

Cadet Shannon Rogers

“Putting Out the Fleece”

Scripture Reference: Judges 6:7-40

Background Information: Gideon was an Israelite that was settled in the land of Canaan. The Israelites had been under Midianite oppression and cried out to the Lord for help.

Introduction: Have you ever been asked to do something you thought was impossible or too daunting? Have you ever tried to test God? In today’s Scripture we are going to take a look at how God proves Himself faithful through the tests of Gideon.

I. Division Statement – v. 7-24 – The First Test

(Sub Points)

(A) Explanation

- a. In this portion of the passage an angel of the Lord comes to Gideon. He tells Gideon that the Lord is with them, which Gideon finds hard to believe because of the trials they had been through at the hands of the Midianites that were settled in their land. The angle gives Gideon the mission of deliverance, but Gideon asks for a sign. Gideon brings meat and broth out to the angel, who then shows Gideon a sign by having fire devour the meal and disappearing. This was more than just a magic trick, and Gideon realized that he had indeed been speaking with an angel of the Lord.

(B) Argument

- a. Our God is a sovereign God and faithful to fulfill whatever promises He makes to His people. Gideon, upon hearing that he was given the task of setting the Israelites free from the Midianite oppression demanded a sign from the angel. It wasn’t until he saw the angel perform the sign that he believed.

(C) Application

- a. When God gives us a task to do, He will always equip us for it. He has a plan and will do whatever it takes to fulfill that plan. We, as people, are generally hard headed and stubborn. We need to see proof and to know what’s going to happen before we agree to do something. That is not always what happens when God asks us to do something for Him. Like Gideon, we have to go on faith, maybe with no signs at all, and trust in the sovereignty of God.

(D) Illustration

- a. “There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God's sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that sovereignty overrules them, and that sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children ought to more earnestly contend to than the doctrine of their Master over all creation--the Kingship of God over all the works of His own hands--the Throne of God and His right to sit upon that throne...for it is God upon the Throne whom we trust.” - C.H. Spurgeon.

(E) Transition Statement

- a. As a result of Gideon’s trust in the Lord at this sign from the angel, he was able to go boldly and respond to God’s next request.

II. Division Statement – v. 25-32 – God’s Request

(Sub Points)

(A) Explanation

- a. After Gideon receives the sign from the angel, that very same night God gives him a more short-term task to do. God commands Gideon to tear down the idols of his community. Gideon was worried about the fall out and consequences so he waited until the night, and did as the Lord asked. When the people found out what he had done, they demanded his life. Joash, Gideon’s father, defended him against the people and claimed that if Baal really was a god, he would deal with Gideon.

(B) Argument

- a. What God asked Gideon to do required bravery. The Israelites were commanded when they were sent into the Promised Land to rid the land of all the inhabitants, and they had failed to do so. This resulted in the Israelites getting sucked into the idol worship of the inhabitants of the land. They had turned their backs on the true worship of God and instead bowed down to idols and erected poles and altars in their communities. In this portion, Joash makes a powerful statement about Baal, one of the chief gods the people worshiped. He stated that if Baal really was a god, he would defend himself when someone broke down his altar. We know that God is the Lord of lords and that there is no other God but Him, and this is the point that Joash was trying to make.

(C) Application

- a. Here we don’t find Gideon testing the Lord, we see him actively obeying the command of God, even at great personal risk. He knew that God was faithful and would protect Him. Our God is all powerful and the Supreme Being. He can be trusted and is, as our doctrine states, “the only proper object of religious worship.”

(D) Illustration

- a. Hudson Taylor, the great man of faith who founded the China Inland Mission, integrated faith and risk. He said, "Unless there is an element of risk in our exploits for God, there is no need for faith." - Paul Borthwick, *Leading the Way*, Navpress, 1989, p. 153.

(E) Transition Statement

- a. Even though Gideon had already seen God at work, he still had uncertainty and doubt.

III. Division Statement – v. 36-40 Another Test

(Sub Points)

(A) Explanation

- a. Even after Gideon had seen the sign from the angel, and completed a task that the Lord had given him, he was still a little wary of the major task he had been given. He asked God for another sign, and if that sign came through, he would believe the promise that God had given him that Israel will be saved through him. Gideon puts out a piece of fleece and asks God to let the dew only fall on that piece while the rest of the ground around it to remain dry. God does as Gideon asked, but Gideon still wanted another sign. The next night, Gideon asks that the fleece remain dry but the ground around it to be wet. Again, the Lord placated Gideon by granting his request.

(B) Argument

- a. God knows us, He created us. As people, we are skeptical and find it hard to trust. I think we can all identify with Gideon in needing a sign from God to accompany such a great promise. Gideon tests God with the fleece not once, but twice in an effort to discern whether this promise was really true.

(C) Application

- a. I don't suggest running out in your yard and leaving your blanket on the ground in an effort to test if what you're hearing is from God or not, but it is important to not just blindly accept every thought that comes into your head. Listening to God is a difficult thing to do in our society. We spend much of our prayer time talking, and not very much time listening. I find that when I listen to God I am easily distracted, and when I do hear something I can't tell if it actually was from God or something my rattled brain came up with on its own. There are some ways to test and see if what you're hearing is from God: making sure it lines up with what Scripture says. What God asks of you will never be contradictory to what is written in the Bible. You can also test by asking others to come alongside you to listen and affirm. These are modern day ways to "put out the fleece."

(D) Illustration

- a. "'Duties are ours, events are God's; When our faith goes to meddle with events, and to hold account upon God's Providence, and beginneth to say, 'How wilt Thou

do this or that?' we lose ground; we have nothing to do there; it is our part to let the Almighty exercise His own office, and steer His own helm; there is nothing left for us, but to see how we may be approved of Him, and how we roll the weight of our weak souls upon Him who is God omnipotent, and when we thus essay miscarrieth, it shall be neither our sin nor our cross."

Samuel Rutherford, quoted in *Prodigals and Those Who Love Them*, Ruth Bell Graham, 1991, Focus on the Family Publishing, p. 106.

(E) Transition Statement

- a. When we trust in the sovereignty of God to fulfill His promises, we know that He will do what He says He will do.

Summation:

Today we took a look at how God proved Himself faithful to Gideon after he asked for signs and tests. God is sovereign and all powerful and will equip those He calls for the work He has for them to do. From Gideon's lesson we can learn that trusting in God is what will lead to success in His plans for us.