



ANOINTED SINNER

Pastor Mark Driscoll

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All right. You ready to go? Alright, welcome to church. So good to see you guys. Hey, we're in an Old Testament book of the Bible called Judges. We're in chapter eight. We're looking at the final scene of the life of a man of God named Gideon. And so I want to tell a little bit of a story. Uh, when I was a little boy, I was really excited 'cause I got my first kite. Remember flying kites as a kid. Uh, I can still remember when I was a little boy. I put my kite together and I thought, this is gonna be a great day. So I go outside, took me forever to figure out how to get the kite up. I'm running around till I'm exhausted. I can't get the kite off the ground. Finally, I figure it out. I figure out how to work against the wind, let the lift serve me. Well, finally my kite goes up. I start letting out the string. I'm super excited. And then for no reason, it just nose dives, crashes right into the ground, broke my kite. And the point is, life is like that. Um, right? That how many of us we work so hard to get our life up. Like finally, I got my marriage up. Finally, I got my career up, finally. I got my family up finally. I've got my income up and it's so hard to get it up. And it's very complicated to keep it up. And if we don't have wisdom and we're not paying attention, suddenly everything we work for can just nose dive and crash. And as we look at the story of Gideon, we're gonna see that his life has really been blessed by God. The Holy Spirit has really put a tailwind behind him. After seven years of oppression, he gets a word from God. He meets with Jesus. He gets clothed in the Holy Spirit. He heads off to war. He defeats enemy boast at this point. His kite is soaring. All the string is out and he is just flying high. He is a national hero and celebrity. Uh, he has the support and the love and the adoration of everyone in the nation. And now we're gonna see the final scene of his life. And the question is, is he gonna keep his kite up or is he gonna come nose diving down and he's gonna have seven tests that he needs to take. And let me say this, these seven tests, they're the same tests that you and I are gonna take. These are seasons in our life where we're gonna stay up or we're gonna put the nose down. And in every one of these seasons, there's an opportunity. That being said, we're just gonna jump right in. You ready to go? Here's Gideon seven tests. These are the seven tests that you and I face. Then the men of Ephraim, judges eight one through three said to him, what is this that you have done to us not to call us when you went to fight against midn? So he had defeated the enemy. Most of the foes were defeated and also deceased. So they had killed 120,000 enemy combatant soldiers. By God's help, they're now chasing the remaining 15,000. And there's a few people that are complaining 'cause he didn't do it right. Don't you love these people? You're like, Hey, thanks for the victory, but you didn't do it right. Um, these people are probably on Twitter right now. And they accused him fiercely. Yeah, for sure. They're on Twitter. And he said to them, what have I done now in comparison to you is not the gleaning of the grapes of ephraim better than the grape harvest of azer. God has given into your hands the princes of Midian or ze we looked at, he defeated them and they beheaded them. What have I been able to do in comparison with you then? Their anger against him subsided when he said this. So they're angry at him. Here's this first test, the fear of man test the proverb. Proverbs 29 25 says that fear of man is a trapper, a snare. The beginning of the book of Proverbs says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And if you don't fear the Lord, you're gonna fear someone or something else. Someone is going to take God's place and you're gonna live for their approval. You're gonna do what they command you to do. You're gonna avoid seeking their displeasure or punishment. And at this point, he has a fear of man test. He had operated in the fear of God and he marched forth in battle with just 300 soldiers up against 135,000 enemy combatants. He operated and acted with full integrity and fear of the Lord. And now people are coming against him. And the question is, will he fear those people or his Lord? And let me say this, there's always gonna be people in your life. They're gonna give you their opinion. Here's a question. Did

Gideon ask for their opinion? No. Okay. So you know these people like I didn't, I didn't ask for your opinion, but you're going to offer it. And they have two issues with him. They're angry at him. It says for two reasons. They're jealous of him and his success and then they're critical of him. And the reason is, when Gideon went off to war, he invited certain other tribes members of the nation that extended family to join him in the battle. But apparently he didn't consult these guys. He didn't invite them in, he didn't ask for their opinion. And all of a sudden he wins a great victory. So the whole nation is blessed, but their jealousy is this, Hey, we don't get any of the glory. We didn't get to participate. You didn't include us. In addition, they criticize him. Yeah, a few of the decisions that you made, we feel like you could have done better. And had you involved us and included us and had us give you our opinion, we feel like we could have corrected those errors that you strategically made. Have you met these people? Okay, yeah. Send 'em a text right now. Say, Hey, we used to be friends. Okay? Um, and these are the people. They're not there when it's hard. They're there when it's easy. They're jealous of your success and they're critical of your leadership and decision making. And so what Gideon has to decide is, am I going to listen to them? Am I going to engage them? Instead, what I love is he gives them, uh, he gives them a riddle. That's what this is. It's an ancient riddle. And they're not very smart. So they think it's a compliment, right? You know what this is like when you give someone a compliment, but it's actually a backhand, a compliment, but they're not smart enough to know. They're like, wow, you're really interesting. They're like, you think so? Yeah. It's another way of saying weird, but they didn't interpret it that way. So you just go with it. And what he's doing here is he's also dealing with family. So this tribe is extended family. Now, true or false, you notice it got quiet. I was like, ha, family. Okay, so, okay, so you understand this. How many of you have family that are jealous and critical and they demand to be involved in your life decision making and affairs, but you have decided that they're not the most helpful? Okay, we have a whole series called Leave and Cleave accepted in your heart. Alright? That's what he's dealing with here. He's dealing with extended family members and friends who are jealous of his success and they're critical of his decision making. But rather than engaging with them, he dismisses them in a way that sort of subdues the conflict. They're, they, they think that he's complimenting them, he's not. And as a result, they're able to move on. Let me say this, success is hard to manage. And oftentimes in the Christian life, we teach people how to endure failure. But equally difficult is enduring success. Amen? Success and failure are both difficult to navigate for very different reasons. When you fail, people have compassion on you. When you succeed, people are critical of you. When you fail, people identify with you. When you succeed, people become jealous of you. And so you just need to know that if you obey the word of God and you live under God's anointing and blessing, at some point your life is probably going to go well. You're not gonna get divorced, you're not gonna be addicted, you're not going to self-destruct. And in those moments, there are gonna be people who are jealous of your success and critical of you. Not because you've done anything wrong, but because you chose not to include them. And so you just need to know, as a Christian, there are two tests that come. And what we're seeing here, there are two forms of the test. The fear of man test. One is success and one is failure. And sometimes it is hard to succeed and maintain your fear of God and not given to your fear of man. He passes this test. The next test comes, uh, judges eight, four through nine. Gideon came to the Jordan, crossed over, he and the 300 men were with him. Small little military fighting unit of 300 men. And what's the word? They're exhausted yet pursuing. So he said to the men of sa, ancient town, please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me. He's asking the citizens of the nation to feed the soldiers question, should citizens of a nation be grateful for and generous

toward their soldiers? Yes, yes, yes. For they are. What's the word? Here we are again, exhausted. And I'm pursuing after Zeba and Zelman, the kings of Meridan. These are the kings of the bad guys and the officials of second. This is a local town that is supposed to be friendly. Said, are the hands of zeba and zulema already in your hand that we should give bread to your army? He's like, we won't give you bread until you've won the victory. So Gideon said, well then when the Lord has given zeba and zal moona into my hand, he asked Faith, in God's promise, I will flail your flesh. Some of you're like, I have my new life verse. I get to whip my enemies. Just hold that thought. Hold that thought. We'll get there. I will flail your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with the briars. And from there he went up to penal another town, spoke to them in the same way. And the men of penal answered him as the men of suck at that answered. And he said to the men of Penuel, when I come again in peace, I will break down this tower. I'm gonna trash your city. Here's the second test, the exhaustion test. It says that he's exhausted, his men are exhausted. When you are exhausted, oftentimes it is hard to be the best version of yourself. Right? You're just done. He's been at war. It's been days of fighting. They are chasing enemy combatants on foot. It's 300 men chasing 15,000 men. As those men scatter, the 300 men are having to do the, the mop up duty of the remaining and fleeing army. This is exhausting. They're in rugged, rough terrain. They've not slept in days. They're dehydrated, they are frustrated, and they stop. And they ask people who are supposed to be helpful, Hey, we're fighting for you. We're fighting for your freedom. We're trying to liberate our nation. Can you feed us? No, there's always some disgusting people in every culture that have disdain for those who serve in the armed forces. And they don't treat them with a dignity, honor and respect that they should. And that's what happens here. It's a dishonor, a disregard, and a disrespect. And, and this is the exhaustion test under this exhaustion. How is Gideon going to respond? And what he does is, uh, he doesn't exactly pass this test. Um, because what he, uh, what he says is, uh, to the one town, I'm gonna come back and I'm gonna whip you publicly. Okay? Now it, what this brings to mind is somebody else in the Bible was whipped publicly. Who was that? Jesus. Jesus. So if you're the guy doing the whipping, you're probably on the wrong side, okay? So they whip Jesus, and this is before the coming of Jesus, and he's gonna whip them like later. The Roman soldiers would whip Jesus. So what he's doing here is not right because in addition, uh, he's going to publicly humiliate people who are part of his own nation and part of his own religion. And instead, um, what we see here as well, this is in the two towns of eth, which it had to, I mean, you knew these guys were gonna blow it, right? You're like, Hey, he went to eth. They're like, I am sure they're no good. You know, they probably eth, you know? Um, so we just, we kind of saw that coming. But eth it means booths or tents. How many of you like to camp? Okay. The Feast of Booths or tents was when they all went camping, okay? And so this was an ancient feast named after this town. And in this place, uh, eth, which means booths or tents, it's where Jacob and Esau met face-to-face in Genesis. And so they established something called the Feast of Booths, where they'd go camping together and they would worship God as a holiday. So this was a place that God's people were very familiar with. And it was a place where they would go for the holidays and they would go to worship. God. Question, does Gideon stop and worship God? No. No. He's exhausted. Lemme say this. Sometimes when you're exhausted, you don't feel like worshiping God, but that's probably the time you need to worship him the most, right? Come, and Gideon is thinking, I've got so much to do. I've got a battle, I've got requirements. And people depending on me, I don't have time to stop and worship. Well, you're gonna make a lot of bad decisions if you're exhausted and you don't stop to worship. In addition, uh, he then stops at the town of Penwell, which literally means the face of God. And it means that's where

you meet face-to-face with God. And it's where Jesus and a guy named Jacob back in Genesis, they wrestle. And so Jacob came face-to-face with Jesus Christ. And so literally, this is the place where ultimately God's people created a, a worship center. And they would come from all around the nation to peniel, to worship God and to come face to face with their God. So these two sites are denoted for worship. They're places that God's people would come to worship in this instance. Question, are the people there led by their leaders? Are they worshipping God? No. God's servants, God's soldiers show up and he's asking something very simple. Could you feed the army that is fighting for you? Answer is no, because they have fear of man. They are now feeling the test that Gideon just passed. And what they say is, have you won the victory yet? Because if the victory is not yet won, if we support you and you lose, then we're gonna have a fight with the Midianites. What they're trying to do is play both sides of the fight. If you win, we'll support you. If you lose, we won't. There are many people like this in our world. These are the Fairweather fans. These are the swallow Christians that leave when winter comes. These are the people who don't want to come out of the proverbial closet and say, I belong to Jesus Christ. Instead, what they're gonna wait and see is where does the wind of culture take them and what will cause them the least trouble? They're, they're cowards. So they're not worshipping. But in addition, when Gideon arrives with his 300 men, does he lead his men in worship? No. No. The point is this, just because you're in a broken, disgusting culture doesn't mean that you can't worship there because someone needs to. The best thing that Gideon could have done here, he could have stopped and said, ETH penwell, you are known for worship and you're not worshipping God. But me and my men, we are now going to worship God. Whether you worship him or not, and you can join us or not, he doesn't do that. Previous chapter six and seven, he meets with Jesus. He prays, he hears from God, he gets clothed, the Holy Spirit, he builds an altar and he worships God. Chapter eight is the only chapter of the three chapter narrative of Gideon where he doesn't stop and worship God, let me say you this. Sometimes we forget to worship God when we're exhausted. It's the end of a long day. You're like, I haven't prayed all day. You've had a hard long week, and you're just sort of spent, you're like, you know what? I'm not going to church this week. I'm just too tired. Or you've got little kids and they're up all night. And I don't know why people say, just by the way, I've got grandsons I love with my whole heart, but people say like, I slept like a baby. It's like, well, you've obviously never met a baby. Um, 'cause they're up all night. They're very small vampires. They're, they're only asleep during the day, okay? And so you can be in life. And how many of you, we've come to a point where even for a season we're just overwhelmed and exhausted. We just forget to pray and read our Bible and spend time in God's presence and come to church. That's right. This is gonna be the beginning of his problem. In addition, there is a counterbalance to this story. There was a previous war that we looked at in the days of Deborah and Barack in judges, just a few chapters prior. Deborah, the mighty woman of God, and Barack, the man who served alongside of her, they led a mighty war as Gideon did against enemy invaders. They prevailed with prevailed rather with victory. For those of you who were with us, judges chapter five, right after the victory, what did Barack and Ju and Deborah do in Judges five? They stopped and the whole chapter is a worship event. Amen. They stopped and they said, you know what? God gave us a victory. So let's just stop right here and thank God and, and let's honor God. Let's publicly give God the glory. Come on. And that's what Deborah and Barack did. But that's not what Gideon did. Test number three then comes, uh, judges eight 10 through 24. Now, Zeba and Zal, Muna were in car core. The whole thing sounds like a cling on invasion, uh, with their army, about 15,000 men. So to catch you up, there was 135 enemy terrorists invading soldiers. They were,

um, conquered by God with just 300 civilians, 120,000. It's gonna tell us here are dead. 15,000 men are still alive. All who were left of the army, of the people of the east for there had fallen 120,000 men who drew the sword. And Gideon went up by the way of the tent dwellers east of Nova and Joha and attacked the army. For the army felt secure. They thought they had a safe space, but when God is on your side, you can defeat anyone or anything anywhere. And Zeba and Al Muna fled and he pursued them and captured the two kings of Midy and Zeba and Zal Muna. And he threw all the army into a panic. Earlier when we met Gideon, what, what emotion denoted his life. Fear and cowardice. And now he is faith filled and courageous. Then Gideon, the son of Joe Ash, returned from the battle by the ascent of Harris and he captured a young man of eth and questioned him. He's gonna interrogate him. And he wrote down for him the officials and elders of eth who's in charge here, 77 men. And he came to the men of Sacca that said, behold Zeba and Aluna about whom you taunted me saying, are the hands of Zeba and aluna already in your hand, that we should give bread to your men who are exhausted. And he took the elders of the city and he took thorns of the wilderness and briars and with them, the men of sucker wife, a lesson. This is a public shaming and humiliation. And he broke down the tower of penal in addition and killed the men of the city. And he said to Zeba and Zal, Muna, where are the men whom you killed at table? He is like, I killed a lot of guys. What were you guys doing? Oh, you were home blogging about it. I get it. You didn't do anything. They answered as you are. So we, uh, so were they. Every one of them resembled the son of the king. And he said, here's his anger. This is why he's frustrated. They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. His brothers died in battle as the Lord lives. If you had saved them alive, I would not kill you. So he says to tither his firstborn, a young boy rise in, kill them. But the young man did not draw a sword for he was afraid. We understand this is a public event, and Gideon is saying, you need to kill these political leaders here on camera, because he was still a young man. He was a boy. Then Zeba and Aluna said, rise herself and fall upon us for as the man is. So, as his strength and Gideon arose and he slaughtered him, Zeba and Zuna. Were they fighting back? No. Were they captured? Yes. Were they prisoners of war? Yes. Were they in imminent danger? No. And he took the crescent ornaments that were on the next of the camels. And then I jumped to verse 24, and I'll pick this up. They were ishmeelites. So what we see here is the grief test. At some point in your life, grief is gonna come for you. Some of you are in it right now. Some of you are passing through a season of grief and some can see it on the horizon. And his grief is, men that I love died in battle. That's his grief. When grief comes, you've gotta process your grief and you've gotta process it with the Lord. And you've gotta get through it to a place of being healthy. Otherwise, what you're going to start doing is causing damage and harm to everyone, including yourself. He's got a lot of grief. Do you understand that? Yeah. I mean, is there seasons where you just kind of broken hearted? And oftentimes the grief is around loss. Here it's the loss of family and friends. He's, he's seen men that he loves just get killed by enemy combatants in a war situation. For some of you, the grief is that, um, you were in love and now you're divorced. You started a company and then it went bankrupt. You had a good friend, and then they betrayed you. Um, you served in a ministry and then it failed you. Um, we've all got grief. We've all got grief. And when grief comes, this is our opportunity to either bring it to the Lord and get better or not bring it to the Lord and get bitter. He doesn't bring it to the Lord to get better, and he gets bitter. And what you're seeing here is bitter vengeance from a man who is not, not rightly processing his grief. Now we already know that he's exhausted. He's just done. You're a human being. And there are gonna be days when you just hit the limits of your humanity. You just don't have any more emotional, physical, mental, spiritual energy. And sometimes you will come to that point of

exhaustion, uh, because of the approachment of grief. Say, I, I can't deal with this anymore. I can't process this anymore. I can't cry anymore. I can't, I can't push anymore. I, I'm just done. And so we can understand his grief and we can sympathize with his grief. Men that he cared about, his brothers died. They were killed in battle, but he doesn't respond in the healthiest of ways. First and foremost, they died in battle. Let me just say this. There's a difference between murder and death. In combat. Murder is an innocent civilian. Death in combat is two soldiers go to war and they are taking the risk that one of them is not coming home. So this isn't exactly murder. In addition, his response is bitterness. And what he does as a result of his bitterness, he starts, uh, pillaging cities and towns in his own country. Anytime you are doing violence against your own nation, you've really got a question whether you're on the right side of the fight. People that are out looting and attacking and rioting and destroying cities, those are people that are disobeying God, that we should have conflict with our enemies, but we should seek for peace among our citizenry. In addition, um, he is now attacking fellow believers publicly. He's taking the elders of the city out and he's flogging them. The same thing that the Roman soldiers did to the Lord Jesus. Elders would mean older men in the culture who are regarded as spiritual authorities. Let me say this, you've really gotta check your heart. If what you're doing is attacking believers publicly, their whole I, they call themselves ministries. They're, they're counterfeit ministries. All they do is they just exist to attack Christians and leaders and cause divisions and factions and rumors in gossip and clickbait. And every once in a while, uh, the Bible will have a shepherd naming a wolf to protect a sheep. But as a general rule, uh, sheep don't get to go around attacking shepherds. And so what we see here is what Gideon is doing is not healthy behavior. He's, he's exhausted. He has grief, he's bitter, he's not processed well. He's not forgiven from the heart. He is threatening publicly. He is attacking citizens and he is causing damage to property. He's, he's not doing well. Now, today, you know, if the report was on the news, he would be a victim and we'd talk about his trauma and how we can excuse all of this. And let me say this, it doesn't matter what you've been through. Your response is your responsibility. Even if you've been through hardship, pain, grief, and loss, even trauma, and he's in the middle of a war, your response is still your responsibility. And what he is doing, he is taking his grief and his pain and he's causing pain and more grief. In addition, he then includes his son. And this to me is horrifying. His, his firstborn son, uh, Jeter. And here's what he tells his boy. So he gets the two enemies that he doesn't like. And now there is a, there's a number of witnesses present. And he looks at his little boy and he says, and I quote, rise, kill them. See what he's doing? He's trying to put a generational curse on his son. See, there's something in a son that really wants to be like their father. True or false? Most children grow up assuming their father is a good man, until, until there is sufficient evidence that would convince them otherwise. And there's something in every child, especially a son that has a, a dad who's a leader or a believer and they want to see their father as a great man and they wanna be like their father. And here, Gideon's a man of God, but he's having a bad day and he looks at his son, he says, take your sword out and slaughter those two grown men, those political leaders. And what it says is he was, he did not draw his sword. He was afraid because he was young. What if this boy would've done what his dad asked him to do? Number one, he would have a bounty on his head for the rest of his life. Like if a little boy slaughters a political leader from an enemy nation, you know there's gonna be a bounty on his head for the rest of his life. In addition, this would've been a generational curse. He would've been bringing the bitterness that was in his father into his future. Lemme say this, if your father has bitterness, don't allow your father's bitterness to go with you into your future. His father is bitter. He's not forgiving. And ultimately the best thing

that Gideon could have done, he could have stopped and worshiped God like he did in judges six and seven. And he could have forgiven his enemies and let God deal with them. See, when you forgive someone, you're not letting them get away with anything. You're letting yourself get away from everything. And when you choose vengeance, what you're doing is you're taking a conflict that someone has with God and you're putting yourself in the middle. Stay out of it. Let God deal with them. Lemme just ask you this question. Has God proven himself faithful to get vengeance on Gideon's enemies? He just killed 120,000 of them. Gideon at this point should say, you know what, God, you've proven yourself. You just killed 120,000 of our enemies and I've got a few enemies in front of me, but you know what, I'm gonna let you deal with them. And here's what he should have done. He should have grabbed his son and said, son, uh, here, here, here's what forgiveness looks like. These are bad men, but we have a good God. And these men have done evil, but we're gonna bless our enemies and we're gonna let God deal with him. Son, wait and see what our God does. He doesn't. Instead what he says is, son, I'm bitter. Be bitter. I want vengeance. Execute vengeance. Take my bitterness and make it your generational curse. Let me say this, friends, when we're exhausted and grieving, sometimes we're capable of things that we don't think that we're capable of. And sometimes we include our, our family and our children and our legacy and our brokenness. The story continues, and I don't know if you caught it, there was a line here. Gideon took the crescent ornaments that were on the neck of the camels, that's of his enemies. And then it says they were ishmaelite. It seems like a little throwaway line, doesn't it? This is very, this is very significant. This will be test number four, the purity test. Is he gonna remain pure in his devotion to God? Or will he combine his worship of God with images and idols to other demons and other, other demonic gods? So first it talks about the ishmeelites. The ishmeelites. If you remember, go back to Genesis 16 through 24. We hit this previously in a sermon. Uh, everything started with Abraham and Sarah. And God calls them to leave their home, their demon, God, their family, to a land that he promises them called the promise land, the nation of Israel. That's where Gideon was in that day. Now previous to Abraham and Sarah seeing the fulfillment of God's promises, they were told by God, you're gonna have a son. Your son is gonna have a nation. That nation will be the nation of Israel. And on that land, your people will dwell. Those are the Jewish people, and through them will come the savior of the world, Jesus Christ. And rather than trusting God, they waited for some years and God didn't provide. Some of you, you feel like God has given you a word or a promise and it's not come to pass and there's something stirring in you of impatience or maybe a lack of faith. Abraham and Sarah struggle with that. Where is our son? They were elderly and she was barren. It was gonna take a miracle. So Sarah came up with the idea, uh, Abraham, why don't you take my my servant girl, Hagar, marry her, get her pregnant, she'll give you a son that'll give us the son that we want and this will end. Uh, they lived happily ever after. How many of you wives can just anticipate that's not how it's going to work out, right? A girlfriend having a baby is not the same as a wife having a baby. Can I get an amen? Okay. And so my wife, she was first to lead that charge, so thank you baby. Uh, so so what he does, he Abraham's like a girlfriend. Great, you know, praise the Lord. So he, he marries Hagar. Polygamy is always bad in the Bible. They give birth to a son named Ishmael. She's Egyptian, he is Jewish, and now Ishmael is the son. And it says of Ishmael, uh, that he would be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone. He is going to be the father of the fighters. He is the father of the Arab people. Then God fulfills his promise. Sarah gets pregnant, gives birth to a son named Isaac. Isaac means laughter 'cause God always gets the last laugh. Now the problem is you got two wives and two sons and one covenant, one promise. And so they reject Abraham, Sarah, and God, Ishmael, they choose Isaac because that was God's

choice for Abraham and Sarah. And this leads to bitter conflict between these two boys and between the nations that descend from them into the Jewish and Arab nations. Today, in addition, Gideon is in the middle of a war in Israel, in the region of Gaza where there is a war. Today we are 3000 years removed, but it is the same descendants that are having the same battle in the same region. When I chose to preach this book over a year ago, um, there was no war in Israel. And then in October war hit in Israel. It's the first war in 50 years. And it is the ishmeelites, the Palestinians, the Arabs who are at war against the Jews, the Israelites, uh, the descendants of the family of Isaac through Gideon. All we're seeing is just an ancient war playing itself out yet again, deeper level of prophetic insight. And so the war in and around Gaza in the days of get in was about 3000 years ago. It says when he defeated them, he took the crescent off of their camels, which was the symbol devoted to their demonic, pagan counterfeit God. And he took it with him. 1500 years later, an ishmaelite decided that it was time to found a religion for the Ishmeelites, the Arabs, his name was Muhammad. He founded a religion called Islam. He worshiped a demon God named Allah. And today the primary religion among the Arabs, the ishmeelites is the worship of a demon God with a symbol that is a crescent. What Gideon took from the ishmaelite was the symbol of their demon God, that today is the exact same symbol of Islam and worshiped by the descendants of Ishmael, the Ishmaelite and the Arabs. I'm telling you that that crescent, it is the demonic symbol that points to the demon God of the Ishmaelites. So what we're seeing, even in our day with the crescent being the global symbol of global jihadism was prophesied with the prophetic act of Gideon defeating not just the enemy combatants those who were also ishmeelites, but then taking the symbol of their defeated God and bringing it with him. Today we would call this syncretism, it's Christianity plus another religion or God. You see that? So what Gideon is doing here, he is failing the purity test. He was supposed to remain wholeheartedly committed and devoted to the God of the Bible. But he takes the symbol of the demon God of their defeated foes. And what's really curious is here we are 3000 years later and many have picked up that same symbol. I just feel inclined to say this. If you see any church that has, you know, an upside down broken peace sign and a cross, if you see a quote unquote church that has a cross and a prayer labyrinth, if you see a church that has a cross and a crescent moon, what you're dealing with is syncretism and the demonic, they're failing the purity test. If you see a church that has a cross quote unquote church with a rainbow flag or a BLM flag, it's the same thing. They're failing their purity test. That's right. Gideon here is failing his spiritual purity test. The story then continues. Uh, judges 8 22 through 28, then the men, men of Israel said to Gideon, rule over us, be the king. You and your son and your grandson set up a dynasty. How many of you, this would be tempting. Like I've always thought I'd look good in a crown. I get a little one for my grandson. I got grandsons. I'll tell you, they'd be, they'd be cute in a crown. I'm just saying that for you have saved us. Oh, I didn't even catch this when I was studying. I just caught it. Who saved us? You did. God said at the beginning, you're going up, I guess 135,000 soldiers. You can only bring 300 men. Otherwise God says they're not gonna give me credit for it. And they don't. They don't. You have saved us. No he didn't. Here's what Gideon did. He blew a trumpet. Okay, just, just so play the tape back. They're like that. That is not a big deal. Just so you know, you've saved us. From the end of Midian, Gideon said to them, I will not rule over you and my son will not rule over you. Who will the Lord? So Gideon's doing better with this test. And Gideon said to them, let me make a request of you Uhoh, every one of you give me the earrings from his spoil. For they had golden earrings because they were ishmaelite and they answered, we will willingly give them, they spread a cloak and every man threw in it the earrings of his spoil. And the weight of the golden earrings

that he requested was 1700 shekels of gold. There's a debate on how much that is. Ancient weights and measures varied from time to place. Some commentators would say it's 40 pounds of gold besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple garments wore by the kings of Midian. And besides the collars that were around the necks of their camels, should he take any of this? No, no. It's all demonic. And Gideon made an EOD of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah and all Israel hoarded after it there. And it became a snare to Gideon and to his family. So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel. And they raised their heads no more. And the land had rest 40 years in the days of Gideon. Lemme summarize this for you. This is the character test. At some point we're all gonna have these tests. There's the fear of man test the exhaustion, test the grief test the purity test. This is the character test. They come to Gideon and they say, we would like to give you some things that God doesn't want you to have. This is the character test. Are you gonna take something that God isn't giving you but others are willing to give to you? He passes half of the test, he fails half of the test. A couple of things I just wanna summarize here. And this is a test in his life. Do nothing out of need, want, or opportunity. Only do what is God's will for you? Do they need a king? They do. Do they want him to be the king? Yes. Is this a great opportunity? Absolutely. Is it God's will? No. God didn't tell Gideon you're gonna be the first king. And so ultimately he passes this character test. But really what they want, they want him to set up a dynasty. They want to worship him. You delivered us. He didn't. God did we want you to be the king. And when you die, we want your son to be the king. And when your son dies, we want your grandson to be the king. This is a monarchy. God's going to establish a kingship, but not with Gideon. Number two, to be a good leader, you must first be a good follower. Here's what the people say, we want you to lead us. And Gideon says, no, no, no. First you need to follow the Lord. He needs to rule over you. The point is simply this. Gideon needs to follow God's leadership. And then the people need to follow God's leadership. As Gideon is leading them, he's following God. This is the problem in our day. I just, lemme just verbal process with you. Our world is lacking leadership, politics is lacking. Leadership culture is lacking Leadership. The church is lacking leadership. Business is lacking leadership. What we don't need is leaders. What we need is followers. Yeah. People who will seek the face of God and find the will of God. And if people will follow God and live under his rule over their life, then they'll be ready to lead. 'cause people won't just be following them. If they're following God, who will the people be following God? And that's the problem in our day. We have people following leaders, but we don't have leaders following God. And so what Gideon tells him, he's like, you don't need a leader yet. You need to follow God. You need to know his will for your life and seek to obey it. Come on. He says the Lord will rule over you. Number three, blessing and cursing flows down from those leading. Um, there were seven years of oppression until God raised up Gideon and then God creates a victory for his people. And then it tells us that there are 40 years of peace. So there was seven years of cursing a leader and then 40 years of blessing. Let me say this. Blessing and cursing flows down from those who are leading. If you're a husband or a father, you're a leader. Blessing or cursing is gonna flow down from you. If you're in management or leadership at your company or in a ministry, blessing or cursing flows down from you. And at the end of the day, people want things to change. But without a godly leader, nothing changes. Number three or number four, I should say, hear me in this. This is a significant point in the life of Gideon. We're not using him, uh, to criticize him. But as a case study, and here's what we see, uh, the last enemy to subdue is yourself. I dunno if you heard the line here. It says that God used Gideon to subdue Midian. So through God's grace, Gideon subdued an army, but he's not yet sub subdued himself. Let me say this, the greatest threat to you. I I love you. I'm

your pastor. I'm not picking on him. I'm just trying to help you. The greatest threat to you is you. That's right. The greatest enemy to you is you. Lemme make it a little clearer. The the greatest enemy to me, it's You. It's me. The greatest threat to me is me. The person who can destroy me quickest and easiest is me. So I need to subdue me. Come On. So what Gideon has done here, he's subdued everyone but not himself. Okay? You ever met anyone like this? Everyone. There are people that can rule companies and they can't rule their pants. There are people that rule nations and can't rule their addictions. We live in a nation where there's lots of people who are doing a lot of subduing, but they don't start by subduing themselves. That's right. So he has dominion but not over himself. He's gonna make some bad decisions. Number five. And then we'll look at the last scene of his life. Do not aspire to spiritual leadership. That's God's choice. We don't choose leaders, spiritual leaders, God, the Holy Spirit does. My belief is that God, the Holy Spirit chooses the leader. God raises them up. The people look and say, that's our leader. And then the leaders lay hands on them and confirm, yep, we agree with the Holy Spirit and the people That's a leader. Anyone who walks in and says, yeah, I have the gift of leadership. No, first you need to get the gift of humility, you know, and put your hand down and stop nominating yourself. Um, because if you really are a leader, that means you're a shepherd. And the sheep are gonna be like, well that's our shepherd. They're gonna trust you and follow you. What Gideon is doing here, he is appointing himself to spiritual leadership that God didn't appoint him to. This is a dangerous thing. A lot of people are like, I wanna be in ministry, I wanna be a leader. I wanna be up front. It's like, look, if God hasn't called and anointed you, that's a dangerous place for you. That's right. And it's a dangerous place for everyone else. So what he does here he is, tells him, he is like, alright, here's what I want. I don't wanna be your king, but here's what he's saying. I do wanna be your priest, so I'm gonna need an eod. An EOD was, uh, sort of the hardware of the priest. They'd wear it around their neck. And what he's saying is, I'd like to have a golden eod. Well, he's not a priest. God didn't call him to be a priest. He's calling himself to be appraised. God didn't anoint him to be a pastor. He's just raising his hand saying, I'd like to be the pastor. And when he asked for their gold, does this sound familiar in the history of Israel? So they were slaves in Egypt, the Book of Exodus. God delivered them in the middle of the wilderness. They got all their gold together and made a golden calf, which is a young bull, also called a Baal. They were worshiping Baal. God then delivered them, got them to the promised land. That's how Gideon and the people ended up in the promised land. And after God delivered them again, Gideon is repeating the same old sin and he's saying, Hey, how about everybody? Give me your gold plus all your other demonic idols and your Buddhist statues and your dream catcher and your peace symbol and all your other nonsense. Lemme take all of that. And then he creates a golden ephod so he can wear it. Can you see what Gideon looks like? Now? He looks like a hip hop priest man. He's just, he is, he is blinged out. He is. It's all, this is a giant gold breastplate on Gideon. And he's walking around like, I'm the man of God. No, God didn't call you to that. And as a result, he creates this efo. And then the people place the eod up and then it says that they hoard after it and it became a snare. Um, one of the things that offends God the most is when people say things like, well, that worship works for me. Um, you know, that theology works for me. Um, that's how I experience God. Um, that's how, that's how when I do my spirituality, it it really helps me and it works for me. And God would look at you and say, then you're worshiping you. And good worship is not worship that works for you. Good worship is worship that works for God. Okay? So every once in a while people come to church and I love you. We're crowded. We need to free up some seeds. I'm gonna say this, but um, people come and they're like, I didn't really like the worship. It wasn't for you. Did you ask the Lord if the Lord was like, I liked it.

Well then like it. Okay, okay. People go, it's too loud. God likes it loud. He just does. He just does. I asked him, he likes it loud. He actually thinks we should buy more subs. And I'm not even joking. We need more low end the Holy Spirit. He loves the base. And so, um, but what's happening here is that Gideon is choosing to be a spiritual leader and he is choosing to set up a spiritual object of worship. And it says the people hoard after it. Let me, let me explain this to you. So the Bible says that, uh, Jesus Christ is like a groom. And the church is like a, a bride. And worship is where the bride uniquely expresses her devotion and affection to her groom. Now, if you have a bride that expresses affection and devotion to men other than her groom, she is horing. It's adultery. When say, I belong to Jesus and I chase money or fame or sex or power, or pagan spirituality or idolatry or some sort of philosophy or social justice cause. And as an act of worship, I devote my time and my energy and my passion and my money to those things. God says, you're committing adultery on our covenant relationship. You're supposed to be devoted to me like I'm devoted to you. And you keep running around with all of these demons. It's horing. This is the primary problem in most churches, especially those that are in the main line liberal Protestant denominations. They are horing. It's Jesus plus social justice. It's Jesus plus progressive Marxist agendas. It's Jesus plus Buddhism. It's Jesus plus spirituality. It's Jesus plus whatever the consumer wants. And the church exists to worship the consumer. And the church doesn't exist to teach people to stop worshipping themselves and to be wholeheartedly devoted exclusively to Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior. That's the problem. And it became a snare. Last test, Abel Judges 8 29 through 35. The Son of Joe Ash went and lived in his own house. So Gideon's retired. Now that's retirement. How many of you're retired? Gideon just retired here. Gideon had how many sons? 70. 70. Do you think that was one woman? Okay. You don't Yeah, I'm just gonna say it. I think Father's Day was awkward. I think Mother's Day was really awkward. His own offspring for, he had many wives. They're like, how many? Like, we can't even count. We can't even keep up with this guy. Let me just say this, man, if you retire, don't do that. Volunteer at the church. Find something else and do with your energy and his cocky concubine who was in Shechem? A concubine is like a girlfriend, baby mama, drama lover. It's a situation who was in Shechem also born a son. He called his name a bi molecular, like that's weird. They're 70 sons. Why do we know the name of Juan? I'll explain. And Gideon, the son of Joe, died in a, a good old age, was buried in the tomb of Joe's father at Oprah of the aby rights. As soon as Gideon died, as soon as he died, like they went to the funeral. And on their way home, the people of Israel turned again and hoed after the Baals and made Baal beith. Baal is a demon God. And then Baal Beith is a lower level demon God, that's a regional deity. And beith, they chose a demon God and the people of Israel did not what they did not remember the Lord their God who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side. So they, they forgot to put it in the history books in the public schools. So they edited God out of the curriculum And they did not show steadfast love to the family of Drbo that is Gideon in return for the good that he had done for Israel. Here what we see with Gideon, number six, it's the pleasure test. When he's at war, he doesn't have time for girlfriends. He retires. Now he is got money, he's got time, he's got peace. He's got staff, decides he's going to spend his final years enjoying pleasure. I've lived a long life. I've been through some literal wars. I've done some good things. It's me time. Probably went to the casino. You do you All of a sudden Gideon is failing the pleasure test and this is at the end of his life. Um, couple of things I want to note here. Number one, godly leaders hold back. The flood of evil says that there was peace only when Gideon was ruling. And as soon as he stopped ruling the flood of evil broke through the dam of God's leader. And then evil just overwhelmed the nation. We live in a day that hates leadership,

but God requires godly leadership. That's why children need parents. Employer employees rather need bosses. Students need teachers. Citizens need police officers and nations need soldiers. We need leaders. We need leaders. Yeah, what happens here, Gideon dies. There's no leader. Evil. And just so you know, we're living in a day I'll show something controversial 'cause we've reached that point in the sermon, uh, after all these uplifting, encouraging, save for the whole family insights. So, uh, there is a, a group called, uh, something live, something else I can't say 'cause I'll get kicked off the internet. Um, and they are now putting out curriculum for schools including, uh, coloring books for children. Um, and this is the first one. And if you read on the right counselors, not cops, we're literally taking five year olds and saying, police officers are bad. You don't need, you don't need to be subject to the law if you're doing criminal activity. Instead, you need a counselor who will sympathize with you, not a cop who will deal with you. We've just put this in the fabric of our culture and it leads to destruction because what we're living in is the days of the judges judges 2125, the last line that sort of summarizes the whole book. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes and nobody did what was right in the eyes of God. So they decide we don't need leaders. And what happens is when there's not godly leaders, there's a leadership vacuum and evil doers fill that gap. Number two, we're always one generation away from the end of the church. They saw God deliver them and then they forgot about 'em. We're always one generation away from the end of the church. For those of us who are Christian parents and grandparents. It is our solemn duty to raise our children and grandchildren in the fear of the Lord, to teach them the word of God and repentance of sin. And not to do what is right in their own eyes, but to do what is right in his eyes. Amen. In addition, for those of you who grew up in Christian homes or you have Christian grandparents, you are blessed. And even if you didn't have great, awesome, wonderful parents and grandparents, if they knew the Lord and tried, then take what you can from them. Honor it and build upon it so that the legacy of your family is better for generations. And then number three, sexual sin causes generational crisis. See, Gideon in his day would've said what? We're consenting adults. We just do tolerance and diversity. Uh, June is our favorite month. Me and my girlfriends, we all wear tie dye and go on very bizarre group dates. And he would've said, we're not hurting anyone. We're just having fun. And it feels good. And yeah, me, the women are all adults and consenting, and I'm an adult and I'm consenting. And who are you to judge? We're not hurting anyone. Yeah, you are, you're hurting your children and then your children grow up to hurt other people. The name here of the one son is Aek. Let me close with this. Um, ab bialek Gideon son. He had how many sons? 70. 70 Ab Bialek. He has a father wound. We just read it because his mom was a concubine, wasn't even a wife. So you look at all the sons, you're like, at least Gideon married their mom. He didn't even marry my mom and he sent us away to live in another city. What this means is ab bialek sired sons, he didn't father them. That's the massive cultural crisis we're dealing with today. We have men who sire sons, but they don't father them. They're there to conceive them, but not to raise them. Ab bialek, Gideon's son ruled over Israel three years. There was not supposed to be a king. And God sent an evil spirit. He allowed a demon between the bialek and the leaders of Shechem. And the leaders of Shechem dealt treacherous with the bialek that the, the violence, it's the Hebrew word for Hamas. The same demon who is at war today in Israel, done to the 70 sons of durable might come and their blood be laid on a bich. Their brother, who what killed them, he killed 68 brothers. He slaughtered 68 brothers and on the men of Shechem who strengthened his hand to kill his brothers. So here's what happens. This is Gideon's legacy test. Okay? If you read chapter six and seven, you'd be like, amazing. Chapter eight. You're like, ah, ah, he passes some, he fails some. The legacy test he has 70 sons. How many of

you men would think with 70 sons, we have a future? Oh yeah, you have a future with 68 funerals and one murderous son, and then one son who ran for his life and didn't get murdered. What we see here is that ultimately, if you read the story in judges nine, God has ab bialek killed in a shameful way. He's outside and a woman sees him. She's awesome. She drops a millstone on his head. She's awesome. And as he's dying, he's like, I can't die in shame killed by a woman. So he tells his sword, bearer, run me through the sword. My wife is laughing, pray for me. Um, and so I gotta watch out for millstone. So Let me bring the band up. You ready to worship? Let me, let me get you there. Um, first and foremost, if there's hope for Gideon, there's hope for you and there's hope for me. Amen. See, what I love about the story of Gideon, is he a perfect man? Mm, he's a saved man. But he is not a perfect man. Ultimately, Gideon has his faults, flaws and failures. But God uses him and God forgives him and God will use you and me and forgive you and me. What's kind of crazy about the story of Gideon? There's a chapter in Hebrews 11 and it lists all the heroes of the faith. And he made it. I mean, he made it because there was grace for him. And there's grace for you and there's grace for me. And as we are closing our study of the life of Gideon, I know that in hearing these seven tests for you, like for me, it's pretty easy to to realize the tests that we failed. There were some tests that he passed. There's some tests that you've passed. There were some tests that he failed. There's some tests that you failed me too. And I want you to know that Jesus Christ is Gideon's God and he's our God. And all of these wars was to preserve this nation and to preserve this family so that through these people in this place would come Jesus Christ. And I need you to know that Jesus is perfect and he doesn't fail in passing every test. And he never sinned. And he took those tests for you. And he took those tests for me. He died to pay the debt that we owe God for our failures. And he rose to give us new life and to open up his grace and his presence and his eternal kingdom. Come on. And so I need you to know that all the tests that you've failed Jesus passed. And what he's going to do is he's gonna forgive you for all of your failures. And he is gonna help you to retake those tests. He's gonna help you to pass them so that your life, your life can be filled with God's grace. That your past doesn't need to define your future. That, that Jesus is the one who determines what the future holds for you. Amen. And I would just encourage you, as we come to a time of worship for all of us, let's just look at the story of Gideon and say, I, I covenant and commit not to have sex outside of marriage. I, I covenant and commit not to sleep with or to marry an unbeliever 'cause that's where generational crisis came for his family. But I want you to know whatever test you failed to pass, it's not too late for you. Two things happen in the book that make all the difference. Number one, over and over, the people reach a point where they have failed their test and they cry out to the Lord. Lord, forgive us. Lord, save us. Lord, deliver us Lord, heal us. Lord, help us every time in the book of Judges that the people cry out to the Lord. The Lord hears and answers their cry. Amen. In addition, I need you to see that Gideon had a life that was going much better when he was regularly stopping to worship and pray. Chapter six and seven. He has this rhythm of prayer and worship. Worship is where we pray together in Psalm. And when he was stopping to worship and pray, Jesus met with him. The Holy Spirit clothed him. And then he would march forward with courage and also holiness in the times when he didn't stop to pray and didn't start, stop rather to worship. Those were the moments in his life where literally he started to crater and to crumble and to crash. This is our altar. This is our time to meet with Jesus. This is our time to cry out to him. This is our time to invite him into everything that we are dealing with. So I'm gonna pray for you 'cause I love you and I appreciate you giving me the honor of teaching you God's word. But this is where now you need to do the one thing that Gideon did in chapter six and seven, but he didn't do in chapter eight. He didn't cry to the Lord,

he didn't pray, he didn't worship. We're gonna do that now. And if you need to come forward, come forward. If you need to kneel, kneel, if you need prayer and someone is near you, ask them to pray for you. If you need to take communion so that you can remember the broken body and shed blood of Jesus and come back into right relationship with God, we love you and we want that for you. This is your time to meet with Jesus. Father, I thank you for an opportunity to study the life of Gideon and God, I pray that that as we look at these tests, that it wouldn't be condemnation for us, but it'd be conviction that we can repent, that we can be forgiven, that we can retake our test. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you're the greater Gideon, you're the leader we really need. You're the king that we really need. You're the deliverer that we really need. Holy Spirit, we invite you now to clothe your people as you clothe Gideon, as they take the time to pray to you and to worship you and to hear from you. And God, I pray right now for deliverance. I pray for healing. I pray for revelation. I pray for encouragement. I pray for the breaking of generational bondage and curses. And God, I pray that your people would experience the fullness of freedom that you intend for them as your sons and daughters. In Jesus' name, amen. Love you.