



ANOINTED SON

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All right if you've got a Bible, do you got a Bible? Yes. If you don't have a Bible, pick one up on the way out, we'll give you one or find a fake one on your phone. Uh, but go to uh, judges chapter six. It's an Old Testament book and we're gonna get to know a guy named Gideon. Let me tell you a little bit about the Bible before we jump in. And we look at this whole chapter of the Old Testament. This is the word of God. We believe it is perfect. It's the only perfect thing on the Earth. And we believe if you want a word from God, you open the word of God. Not everyone views the scripture that way. Some people think that the Bible is irrelevant. I wanna prove to you today it's not others think that we need to make the Bible relevant because since we live so many years removed from what the Bible records, that it's no longer relevant to us. Here's what I want to tell you. The Bible is relevant. We don't make it relevant. God makes it relevant. And the Bible teacher's job is to show the relevance of the Bible. So that's what we're gonna do today when we jump into the Book of Judges. And part of what can make studying the Bible a little difficult is the time gap. So Judges was written about 3000 years ago, but what's very curious is that the days in which they were living were just like our own. They had the same difficulties and behind them, the same demons that we do, we're gonna look at the Old Testament nation of Israel, but the book of Judges, it's a historical look at 300 years of their history. Now the United States of America we're almost 250 years into our history. And so what we can do, we can take judges and their 300 year history, we could take America and our 250 ish year history and we can look at the patterns that are similar between the two. And what they had in their day was a few things that are much like our own day. Number one, the theme of judges in chapter 17 and 21. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes. No one regarded God's authority, governmental authority. No one regarded uh, the police or rule of law or good political or spiritual leadership as having any authority over them. Number two, the result was every generation things got worse. And you ask yourself, can things get worse? They can. And every generation things got worse. And this is exactly what we're seeing in our own day and in our own culture. The same demons and the same decline. And then on occasion God would rise up an anointed spirit-filled leader. They were both a political and a spiritual leader and they were called the judges. And the judges would be used of God for two things. Reformation in the church and revival in the culture. God's people are supposed to bring the word of God to the world when God's people no longer believe the word of God. There's no hope for the world. So before we can have any change in our culture, we need churches to stop being woke and weak and apostate and corrupt and progressive. And we need them to return to the word of God. And once the church returns and there is reformation of the church, then there's revival through the church. But invariably from one generation to the next, eventually the people go back into sinful fall and rebellion. So let me make one more connection before we jump in between ancient Israel and modern day western culture, especially America. They were in a culture that I would say is negative toward faith, negative toward faith. The days of the judges there was hostile and open opposition to God's word and God's people in every area and facet of society. The same thing is happening today. And so as we read judges, we're dealing with the days of the judges, I'll, I'll explain this to you. There is a, a magazine called First Things it, it sort of remarks itself as quote, America's most influential journal of religion and public life. There was an article not long ago, and this is the basic summary it said in America or the Western world, that we were in a positive world toward the church and the Bible pre 1994. Then we went to neutral world from 1994 to 2014. And then from 2014 to present we are a negative world. Lemme explain this. Positive world is when the culture looks at the church and sees the church as a helpful, valuable asset. It's when people generally believe, uh, that believing in God is a good thing. Going to church is an

admirable thing and the morality of the Bible would make our culture better. So it's positive. If you wanna run for political office, you need to say you believe in God. And if you want to have a good marriage, you probably should have that marriage in a church building. That was the positive world. Then we came to the neg to the neutral world. And the neutral world was, there wasn't any benefits to saying you were a Christian but you weren't necessarily attacked for it. People weren't for the church, they were just indifferent toward the church. And the result is that there became two primary modes of ministry. One was the religious right, Ty trying to take back the culture and fight to go back to that positive position. And it was led by something called the Moral majority, which today sounds funny if you think about it. The majority is definitely not moral. Uh, in addition there was seeker sensitive Christianity and that was people did like church but now they're not coming to church 'cause it's outdated and irrelevant. We need to make it more seeker sensitive and sensible. We need to not talk about hard things or make it difficult to enter into church. And we need to bring people back in a less spiritual environment from 2014 on. Now, Christianity is not just positive or neutral, it's seen as negative and the word of God is seen as negative. And what that means is if you love God, there's gonna be a lot of pressure for you to surrender to the culture rather than surrender to Christ. That's what was happening in the days of the Judges. And in addition today, people see the word of God as immoral, evil and wrong. Now if something is just wrong, you can ignore it. But if it's evil, you're morally obligated to stop it. So we call this social justice. Social justice is a cultural attack on the word of God. Declaring that the word of God is in fact evil. This is exactly what was happening in the days of the judges. We'll get into it and I wanna show you one more uh, news story. This came out from the uk, which tends to be about a generation ahead of us spiritually. But a recent study in the United Kingdom found that nearly a quarter of young Brits are open to banning the Bible, agreeing with a ban on books. Whole generation is saying it's not just that we disagree with the Bible, we judge it and it's immoral and wrong. And the God of the Bible is evil. That's a negative world. That being said, this brings us to Gideon and the days of the judges. We'll just jump right in. If you've got a Bible, we're gonna deal with all of judges chapter six 40 verses it'll only take a few hours. And now we begin. Alright, judges six, the new people laughed. Okay, uh uh. So here's where we begin. The people of Israel did uh, what was evil in the sight of the Lord. Not evil in their own eyes. They did right in their own eyes, but it was evil in the sight of the Lord. And the Lord gave them into the hand of midn. Seven years. That's an enemy nation and the hand of Midian overpowered Israel. And because of Midian, the people of Israel made for themselves the dens that are in the mountains and caves and strongholds. They all became preppers and moved off grid for whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites, the malachite, the ites are always the bad guys. And the people of the east would come up against them. They would encamp against them. This is an invasion over their border and devour the produce of the land As far as Gaza, there's still a war there today. And leave no sustenance in Israel, no sheep or ox or donkey, you're looking at a great depression For they would come up with their livestock in their tents. They would come like locusts in number. Both they and their camels could not be counted so that they laid waste the land as they came in. And Israel was brought very low because of Midian, moral, spiritual, financial, discouragement, despair, and depression. And then finally, here's where things turn and make a note of this in your own life. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord for help. They finally hit rock bottom when the people of Israel cried out to the Lord on account of the Midianites. The Lord sent a prophet to the people of Israel and he said, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel. I led you up from Egypt and brought you outta the house of slavery. You were slaves in Egypt. I made you free. I brought you

to the promised land and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all who oppressed you and drove them out before you and gave you their land. And I said to you, I am the Lord your God. You shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell, but you have not obeyed my voice. So what we're dealing with here is cause and effect in their culture. Like ours, people will see themselves as victims, not villains. The culture is dark, people are evil. Uh, cities are in decline. We've defunded the cops, the border is open. Literally that's everything that's happening in the days of judges. And the people just felt like victims, we deserve better. And what God says is your cause is your sin. They want deliverance. But before God delivers them, he sends a preacher to preach repentance. And so ultimately, here's the big idea. The people did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. And again, they didn't feel that they did evil in their own eyes and their own eyes. They're like, we're good people. We're living good lives. We're making good decisions. Uh, those who are political pundits and those who are social commentators and those who are professional educators, they've all told us that the way we see the world and we see ourselves, it's in fact good right and true. And God says, no, I wrote a book, I judge you by it. I find you guilty, you're a sinner. And so ultimately the root cause is sin. And sometimes sin has personal implications and applications. Sometimes sin has national implications and applications, sometimes we're suffering because of our sinning. A couple of things I wanna note on this. Number one, God rules whether or not you believe he does God rules whether or not you believe he does. And somebody be like, I don't believe that God judges you. Will you will I promise you this, you will die and have a very bad day if you don't come to this truth before that day. And the problem in their day, like our own day, they didn't regard any external authority. All they regarded was internal authority. Everyone only did what was right in their own eyes. The external authority is not your eyes, it's God's eyes. It's not just how you see yourself, but how God sees you. So you need to know your feelings, your beliefs, your opinions, your hopes. Those are not authoritative. God is. And so authority is not internal, it is external. It is found in God as revealed in the Word of God. And God said, everyone did what was evil in my sight. Number two, you are under God's authority whether you like it or not. Some people say, well I don't believe in the Bible and I don't believe in the God of the Bible. He still created you and he will stand before him and give an account to him and he will judge you for heaven or hell. Whether or not you believe in something doesn't bear on whether or not it exists. Some people may not believe in gravity, but it doesn't accommodate them. It exists despite their unbelief. God is like that. Number three, sometimes the victims are also the villains. Their economy is depleted, their culture is declining, their lives are devastated. But to use the language of the Bible, they are now reaping what they have been sowing. We're a nation a lot like that. We're we're a nation of indulgence and entitlement and we're a nation in decline. And people just want to talk about how they are victims. And no one talks about how they're villains. Everyone likes to repent of everyone else's sin without acknowledging their own. Those are the days of the judges. Number four, sinners want their lives to change, but God wants the sinner's heart to change. So the people cry out and they're like, God changed things. He's like, okay, let me start with you. Before I fix the world, I need to fix my people before I change the culture, I need to change the church. Number five, if you want deliverance, preach repentance instead of tolerance. Their whole culture was dealing with demonic counterfeits and temptations and deductions and seductions and the pulpits were just preaching tolerance. And all, all of a sudden they cry out to God and they're like, God, we want things to change. He's like, great, let me send a preacher. He'll preach repentance and preaching. Repentance is the opposite of preaching tolerance. Any church that preaches tolerance of sin instead of repentance of sin is an apostate church doing evil

in the sight of the Lord. And so ultimately what a lot of people want is deliverance. I want our culture better. I want our land healed. I'd like better political candidates for options I'd like, uh, better opportunities for my children's education in future. Well if you want deliverance, preach and practice repentance. And if you get tolerance, you don't get deliverance. In addition, number six, be beware of counterfeit anointing. One of the mega themes of the Bible is what God creates Satan counterfeits. And so God, you're gonna see this in the life of Gideon as well as other judge, uh, as well as other judges like uh, Deborah who we studied previously and Samson who will study uh, in a few weeks. There is an anointing on them. The Holy Spirit comes upon them in power. And in the Old Testament when God would anoint someone, it was symbolized with oil being poured on them and then flowing down from them. Well ultimately the anointing of the Holy Spirit is like that. God anoints a leader with the powerful presence of the person of the spirit. And then the anointing is to flow from the leader to the people to bless them. The counterfeit of that is a demonic quote unquote anointing. Certain people have the power of evil at work in their life. These are the people who tend to have a lot of influence in culture and education and entertainment and politics. And they're working by demonic power. And here what God says are these are the Amorites. What he says is don't fear the Amorites are their gods. Historically we know that the Amorites were a surrounding nation and they were very large blonde-haired, blue-eyed people. They're like Nazi 1.0. That's who these guys are. In addition, he says, don't fear them or their gods. The word there for gods means a divine being in the unseen realm, it's a demon. And so in addition to God and the Holy Spirit and the angels, there is Satan and demons that are unholy spirits. And just like God sends an anointing to empower his people to live by the spirit. So Satan sends demons to empower people to live by the power of unholy spirits. If you ever look at culture like why are they so successful? Why are they so rich? Why are they so powerful? Why do they continue to win despite doing evil? Well, they have a counterfeit anointing. They have their gods. And so the backdrop here is this, the people of God in a negative culture that was against them, they did two things that are happening in our own day, syncretism and apostasy. Syncretism is where you're no longer purely or wholeheartedly devoted to your God. You compromise. You make a few concessions. All of a sudden you've got you believe some of what the Bible says. But there are other parts of the Bible that you disagree with or ignore. I like the parts about loving your neighbor and not judging. I don't like the parts about sin and hell and wrath and death. So instead, I'm gonna turn Jesus into just a social justice warrior and not a sinner savior. And what happens in syncretism, you're taking God and Satan truth and lies. You're taking the Holy Spirit and un holy spirits and you're trying to reconcile them. Beware of those who only preach a ministry of reconciliation because what does light have to do with darkness? Nothing. They're not supposed to be reconciled. They're supposed to be separated. The result of syncretism is it leads to apostasy. Eventually you're, you don't have any interest in God or the word of God and suddenly you just have lost any sort of recognition of God's authority over your life. Uh, technically this is caused by rebellion and it leads to defection. And that's what they were doing. They were doing evil in the side of the Lord. Now let me explain how this happens in our own day. And these are the great cultural forces and pressures that work. That's why in everything from entertainment to education, to politics to business, to social media platforms, there is this avalanche of pressure for Bible believing worship preserve God to practice tolerance, syncretism and apostasy. It's already happened in the mainline denominations. They're gone. It's over. They are antichrist. And what we're seeing is a lot of pressure even on those churches and denominations and traditions that have historically been committed to the word of God. And the reason that the collapse is so strong in our day is

because the pressure is to make one concession for one person. Lemme explain this, most people don't wake up if they are a Bible believing Christian and say, today I'm going to practice tolerant syncretism and apostasy. And if you do, you need help, you're in a bad place. Instead what happens is most people wake up and they meet someone who has practiced tolerant syncretism and apostasy and they love that person. And then that person says, if you really love me, you need to tolerate me and my syncretism and my apostasy. In addition to Jesus, I wanna be involved in other religious practices in addition to the Bible. I want some sort of social justice theory or cultural Marxism or feminism or some other ism. I would like you to attend my same sex marriage because I'm your uncle or your cousin or your grandchild and I want you to love me. And then there is great pressure. You can feel it in the room, can't you? Yeah. We all have these relationships. You're like, I love you, but what you're doing is wrong in the sight of God. Yes. And now there's pressure from you, pressure from family, pressure from friends, pressure from culture to lay my hands on something that God would never lay his hands on and bless. That's right. So the result is in those moments you've gotta decide, are you going to be loyal to them or loyal to him? Loyal to him. And you have to be loyal to him. And let me say this doesn't mean you don't love them, but your ultimate loyalty is to him. And it means I can't compromise my convictions because if I love you, two things. Number one, if I really love you, I want what's best for you. Yeah. And number two, what's best for you is not for me to follow you in sin but you to follow me in repentance of sin. Amen. That's Christianity and Christian Love. And then there'll be this judgment from the world. Well, the Christians are just mean and intolerant and unloving and hateful. And you're like, you know what? I kind of feel like that's how you're treating me. Because when I say no to them, it's because I want to say yes to him. And I love them so much that I want them to be with me and I want us to be with him. And so ultimately this is where the cultural pressure begins. It's usually not in the philosophical but in the personal. And here's the backdrop for what is going on in judges. Tell me if this doesn't sound familiar. 'cause again, people will say, the old book 3000 years ago doesn't have anything to do with us. Well, here's what they had. They were a nation that God and his grace established and they didn't secure and protect their border In Arizona. I know this is something that we can't even conceive of as a hypothetical possibility, but just bear with me momentarily. They didn't secure their border. So all of these nations invaded enemy nations just walked right into their nation. And then they didn't have enough police to defend their cities. The result was that crime was rampant. Demons took over strongholds in the culture. The culture went into decline. They had economic devastation. And it got to the point where people couldn't even live in the cities because they were uninhabitable. And instead they fled to rural areas and to the mountains and they started to live off grid just so they could have peace for their family. Now if you're visiting from the mountains, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Okay? And so what happens is true or false, we're seeing the same thing in this current administration. We've seen 7.2 million illegal aliens come into our country that we know of. Most of them are military age males. And we know that many come from enemy nations and people are wondering, they're wondering like, well, what's gonna happen? Read the book of judges, cultural collapse, spiritual oppression, economic devastation while fools run the government. And I, I just, I just feel like saying this 'cause I'm just going to say whatever I think. But um, in our day there's a lot of pastors who are like, well, we can't talk about politics. Are you kidding me? If you preach through books of the Bible, it's usually the government that is opposing God and oppressing people. And it was a government that murdered our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And at the end of the day, we don't wanna be people who are primarily political, but we do believe that the Lordship of Jesus Christ

is over everyone and everything. And if we're going through the Bible and the Bible talks about it, we're gonna talk about it because God has something to say. So what we see here in the days of the judges, it kind of reminds me of uh, the series of movies called The Purge. If you've not watched it, don't watch it. I'm not endorsing it. But the purge is this storyline every year for 12 hours, there are no laws enforced and there are no emergency services available to quote judges. Everyone gets to do what's right in their own eyes. You can go murder someone, rob someone, assault someone, uh, harm someone. And for 12 hours it's complete lawlessness. And if you don't believe that human beings are evil, just remove law and wait a while, things don't get better, they get worse. This is where the myth of progressivism is a lie. The myth of progressivism is, we're good people give us less laws and more time we'll get better. No, no. The Bible says it got worse and worse as everyone did what was evil in their own eyes. And then it reaches the point where here's the guy Gideon, you're gonna see him in a moment. He's literally hiding for his life, just trying to survive because they have decided that the purge is not a movie, it's a lifestyle. Some American cities are already well on their way. And what we see in judges over the course of this 300 years is what the scholars will call the judges' cycle. And we see it in our own nation because the Bible doesn't just tell us what happened, but what always happens. So here's the judge's cycle. Number one, God's people do evil and syncretize with demonic counterfeits, we just looked at that in the life of Gideon two, God becomes angry and hands them over to an enemy. We just saw that in judges six God's people cry to him for help. We just saw that as well. God raises up judges who deliver them from their enemy. That'll be Gideon as one example. But then over time, God's people return back to demonic apostasy. So here we now come to this conclusion that I really wanna share with you. Once God sets you free, you have to decide whether you will live free. Just because God set you free doesn't mean you live free. You need to decide to live free. Here in Judges six, God told them you were slaves in Egypt and I delivered you and set you free. And I gave you the promised land, a brand new home. And now you've decided that you're gonna live as a slave. Some of you God has set you free. He's forgiven your sin through Jesus Christ. He's delivered you from generational curses. He has healed you from addictions, he has opened your eyes to the truth. And some of you are going back to choose a life of slavery. We live in a nation that is founded on the pursuit of life and liberty. And we have a lot of people who are destroying their life because they are forsaking their liberty. And so the point is this, it's not just being set free, but living free. If you wanna enjoy the life that God has for you, come on. So now we jump in and you're gonna meet uh, Gideon. And here's the good news. Jesus shows up and the whole story turns when Jesus shows up. And here Jesus is called the angel of the Lord. Angel means messenger and angel of the Lord is a created being an angel. The angel of the Lord is the messenger of the Lord or the word of the Lord Jesus Christ coming down from heaven. And Gideon is gonna say that he met Jesus when at the end he says, oh my goodness, I've seen the Lord face to face and I didn't die. So now we're gonna see this significant moment. Here's the big idea. Nothing in your life changes until Jesus shows up. Nothing in your life changes until Jesus shows up. Here's the day that Jesus showed up in the life of Gideon. Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terrant at Oprah, which belonged to Joe Ash, the aite, while his son Gideon was beating out weed in the wine press to what to hide. He's scared and fearful from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, the Lord is with you. And here's his, you know, new t-shirt, almighty man of valor. He's not looking the part, Gideon is not the guy that we would expect his face to be on the T-shirt with the word hope. Uh, but that's kind of what God is saying he's going to do. And Gideon said to him, please my Lord, if the Lord is with us, he's timid and scared. Why has all this happened to us? And

where those are his two questions, why and where and where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us saying, did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? He said, God used to do stuff but we haven't seen him in a while. Now the Lord had forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian. And the Lord turned to him and said, go into this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian. You don't like the oppression? Get an army and go defeat them. Do I not send you? And he said to him, please Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold my clan is the weakest in Manasseh. Our family's the littlest and poorest and I'm the least in my father's house. I'm the run of the litter. And the Lord said to him, but I will be with you. There's the key, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man. And he said to him, if now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. He's still scared. Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you. And he said, I will stay till you return. So Gideon went into his house, prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an EF flower. This is a big gift for a guy who's in the Great Depression. The meat he put in a basket and the broth he put in a pot so Gideon can cook. Uh, your wife wanted me to point that out and brought them to him under the terrant and presented them. And the angel of God said to him, take the meat and the unleavened cakes and put them on this rock and pour the broth over them. Now it's gonna be a worship sacrifice. And he did. So then the angel of the Lord reached out, the tip of the staff that was in his hand touched the meat and the unleavened cakes and fires sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. Jesus does barbecue. And the angel, that's your big takeaway man. And the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight. Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the Lord. He's like, oh my goodness, this was Jesus. And Gideon said, alas, oh Lord God, he calls the angel of the Lord God. It's Jesus. Gideon's. God is Jesus and our God is Jesus. For now I've seen the angel of the Lord face to face. But the Lord said to him, peace be to you. Do not fear. You shall not die. Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and called it the Lord is peace. To this day, it still stands at Oprah, which belongs to the abides. So Jesus shows up, everything changes when Jesus shows up here, Jesus comes down for one sinner years later he's going to come to live and die and rise for sinners. And what we see here is that Gideon was not looking for God. We we have this language in our day seekers, ah, God's the seeker. People like, yeah, I was looking for God. No you weren't. God was looking for you. That's the story of all of us. Gideon isn't looking for God, but God is looking for Gideon. And lemme say perhaps that's why you're hearing this. God is looking for you. That may be why you're here. And where he begins with God is not a good place. And quite frankly, none of us begin with God in a good place. He is a complainer and he's a coward. His complaints are why God, why is all this happened? We're good people. Hey God, where where were you? We read that you can show up and do things and you haven't. It's as if he sees himself as a victim and God is a villain. God, you've not, you've not been a good God. I I I'm, I'm gonna give you your performance review, your your report card and, and I find your performance lacking. And he's also a coward. He's hiding. And where he finds himself is in a wine press threshing wheat. So here's how it works. If you want to thresh wheat, you need to be outdoors, not indoors with a lot of space, not limited space 'cause you throw it in the air and the wheat in the chaff separate. He is so scared that he is literally hiding for his life. And it says that he's afraid. And you need to know this. This will be a constant struggle for get in throughout the course of his life. He's going to struggle with fear. And I told this to the men at uh, at real men this week. But what happens is fear in the mind leads to anxiety in the body. And your body will give you signs that your mind is fearful. Um, racing mind all of a sudden scattered thoughts and can't stop thinking about things or shut your brain down. Uh, racing heart, your heartbeat is up.

You feel anxiety, you're in that fight or flight mode and churning gut. You get a stomach ache, you get sick. Your digestive system is telling you that you are carrying a lot of anxiety. And so what he struggles with is fear and anxiety, something if we're honest, we all struggle with a couple of things on this. Ongoing fear leads to spiritual oppression. The Bible says in the New Testament, God has not given us a spirit of fear. With fear comes the demonic spirit that oppresses you. If you welcome fear over time, you lead an oppressed life. Gideon has accepted the spirit of fear and an oppressed life. My life is terrible. Nothing will change. God isn't gonna show up. I just need to withdraw, retreat, and hide in addition. Number two, it's not a sin for fear to visit you, but it is a sin for you to move into the fear. Now think of it in this way. Fear will come upon you but you can't let it in you. Once you let it in you, it will destroy you. But fear in and of itself is not a sin. It's the natural response to one who is in danger. I'll give you an example. The Lord Jesus Christ, many years later, the night before he died on the cross in our place for our sins, he went to a garden called Gethsemane. Was he afraid and anxious? Yeah, he was up all night, couldn't sleep. He was on his knees in prayer, crying out to the father. In addition, he was sweating like drops of blood. He's in the struggle. But he moves from his fear to faith. And he eventually says, your will be done. And he surrenders not to the spirit of fear, but to the lordship of God. And he goes into the destiny that God has for him. And here's the big idea. His fear was real and God didn't deliver him through it. God walked with him through it. Sometimes you're gonna look at the future and you're gonna be like, I can't handle that. And God's like, you're right, but I'm gonna get you through it. I'm not gonna get you around it. And so the number one command in the Bible, some of you have heard me say this, you think of the scriptures and everything that the Bible says, what theme would God repeat? Most often here it is fear or not. That's the most frequent command in the Bible because people struggle with fear. We look at the future and we wonder if God is going to be there. And what almost always happens when the Bible says in some form or fashion, fear or not, in the similar orbit of that verse, it says, for I am with you, I've looked every single one up. Jesus says the same thing here. He says, fear not. And then he says, I will be with you. The point is this, it's not the absence of the problem, but it's the presence of God that brings peace to the believer. And so what we see here is that that ultimately Gideon meets Jesus and then he stops and he overcomes his fear and he begins to activate his faith and he builds an altar. An altar is a place for personal worship. When we get together for church, this is corporate worship. We're glad you're here. We love you and we want you in addition to having corporate worship, to have personal worship. And that requires building an altar. And once Gideon builds the altar and he begins to worship Jesus, he says, quote the Lord is peace. See, there's no peace until after you've worshiped. When fear comes, the only way to remove the spirit of fear and have it replaced with the spirit of God is to worship. And then the peace comes with the presence of the Lord. So lemme just ask you this, what are you afraid of? Who are you afraid of? What is causing you anxiety? And then my next question is, do you have an altar where you worship a place that you meet with God, you give him your burdens and he gives you his spirit? The old Celtic Christians have a phrase and a line that I've always enjoyed. They would call these the thin places. There's heaven and then there's earth. And then there's a thin place where those of us who are on earth, we feel a little closer to heaven. For some people this can be out in God's creation. For some people, this can be a private place where they meet with God, maybe even in their home. There was an article in the Wall Street Journal recently that talked about, uh, there is an increase of people building private places for worship at their house or residence. Little chapel in the backyard just to read your Bible and pray or maybe a designated room in your house that's just for prayer and worship. You turn your

technology off and you tune your soul into the presence of God. And so lemme just ask you this, um, do you have an altar? Do you have a thin place? Is there a place that you go to meet with God? And I would encourage you, your soul needs this more than you think. For me personally. I'll give you some examples. This would be my study or library. My library has always been a place that I meet with God. I sing, I pray I'll kneel. I'll walk around and ask for revelation. I'll pray over the scriptures. Sometimes I'm in tears. I repent a sin. It's my place to meet with God. My library is my thin place. In addition, uh, before I preach, and I've done this for more than 30 years, I kneel and I pray and I asked God to use me and for our church to be a thin place. I've got a chair up in my office. I sat in that chair. It was an old wooden chair that belonged to my wife's Uncle John. And I sat in that chair the night before I married Grace and I prayed to the Lord and I now keep that chair in my office and I kneel before it. That's a thin place where I meet with God before I preach. And I just kneel and I pray for you every time I preach a sermon and I kneel at that place. I also like to drive and take the top off the Bronco so Jesus can see me and put on worship music and just talk to God in verbal process and pray. And one of my favorite things is to walk with God in the woods. I hike and I like to go in the woods and there's a series of places that are thin places for me. I'll literally put it on my calendar. I'll turn off my phone and I'll just start hiking in the woods and I'll talk to the Lord and listen to the Lord and get time with the Lord. It's interesting too because there was a counseling survey that recently came out and counselors and therapists are now using what they call walk therapy. They find that if somebody sits in an office on a chair or a couch, it causes anxiety. But if the client and the therapist or counselor get up and go for a walk outside in fresh air, it creates a non-anxious environment. And they have better success rates with the counseling. And it's interesting because the Bible talks about a relationship with Jesus as are walk with Jesus. And I do believe that that should include some walks with Jesus. Just get outside in his creation and talk to the Lord and give me your fears and anxieties and listen and praise him and thank him. And here's what'll happen for you. The same thing that happened for Gideon. Things won't change, but you will. And the good news is this, the world may never change, but God's children can always change. The story then continues now. He has been worshiping God. Now the worship of God will be tested. Lemme say this, as soon as you decide, okay, I'm a believer I'm gonna worship God, then God is going to test your commitment to him. And here's Gideon's test that night very quickly, judges 6 25 through 31, the Lord said to him, take your father's bull and the second bull, seven years old and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has and cut down the Asra that is beside it and build an altar to the Lord your God, on top of the stronghold. That is a demonic stronghold in the house, in the family. That is the demonic stronghold of a multi-generational curse with the stones laid in due order. Then take, uh, the second bull and offered as a burnt offering, worship me with that bull that was designated for evil and deism offering with the wood of the Asra that you shall cut down, cut down the asra, set it on fire, and then sacrificed the bull in me on it. So Gideon took 10 men of his servants. Now he's starting to become a leader and he has followers and did as the Lord had told him. But because he was what? Too afraid fear's gonna be a constant issue for him as it is for you, as it is for me. He was afraid of his family. That's fear of man and the men of the town to do it by day. So he did it by night. Everybody's in bed, good time to obey God when no one is watching. When the men of the town rose early in the morning, behold the altar of bale was broken down and the Asher beside it was cut down and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built. And they said to one another who has done this thing. And then after they had searched and inquired, they said, Gideon, the son of Joe Ashe has done this thing. Then to the mound, the men of the town said to Joe Ash, here's, here's an incredible

line. Bring out your son that he may die. See, our God doesn't ask us to sacrifice our sons. He sent his son to be sacrificed for us. Bring out your son that he may die for. He has broken down the altar of veil and cut down the ASRA beside it. But Joe asked, said to all, who stood against him? Will you contend for bail or will you save him? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by mourning. God's gonna deal with you. If he is a God, let him contend for himself because his altar has been broken down. Here's what he's saying. If you gotta defend your God, he's probably not that impressive. A really powerful God could take care of his own issues. Here's the principle of remove and replace. Gideon can't just worship God. He needs to remove demonic strongholds in his family and replace it with a worship of God. You need to remove demonic strongholds in your family and replace it with the worship of God. Amen. Jesus has a principle I call the principle of seven demons. What he says is, if somebody has a demon and you cast the demon out, if the Holy Spirit doesn't come, they get seven more demons. So you can remove evil, but unless you replace it with good, all you get is worse evil. And so it's not just enough for him to worship God in his family, he needs to make sure that his family stops worshipping the demonic. And so what he does, he sacrifices it's curious. A 7-year-old bull, which is the same duration of their oppression, they had been oppressed by the Midianites. We learned at the beginning of the chapter for seven years. This bull was the same age as their judgment. And what we see here as well that behind these uh, actions are demons. And one is named Baal and the other is named Asra or Venus. I, I've dealt with him in the story of, uh, Deborah. We dealt with him last week in Get In, there's a free study guide that gets into ASRA and bail in great detail. But let me summarize it for you. Bail was considered the chief male deity. He is the antithesis and he's about money and wealth and power and status and possessions. Asra or Venus was considered to be female, all about pleasure and sex and beauty and seduction together. They had a very vulgar sexual relationship. It's depicted in ancient poetry and also ancient imagery. And the beginning of the porn industry was Baal and Asra. And they would then sacrifice their children to another demon God, uh, a demon God in Canaan called. So it's men who worship power and money and sex and women who worship beauty and seduction and manipulation. And then they have a child and they sacrifice it as a counterfeit of the death of Jesus Christ, the son of God and their sacrificing their children to demon gods. And that's the beginning of Planned Parenthood in the abortion industry. See, when you see the same things happening from one day to another, just wonder what demon is at work behind the scenes. Now that being said, the incarnation of this today would be dirty, rich, powerful, perverted old men who are with beautiful, sensual, manipulative young women that look like their granddaughters. That would be the incarnation of Baal and Asra. The entire playboy lifestyle of Hugh Hefner is nothing more than a Baal with a harem of women working out ancient paganism. Let me ask you this, a couple questions for you. And this is looking at the life of Gideon and then using it as a mirror to look at our own life. Do you live your faith in front of your family? See, Gideon was okay to worship God as long as his family wasn't watching. Sometimes the hardest people to go public with your faith to come out of the proverbial closet is with your family. Do your family know that you love Jesus? And if they do, are they going to have some negative response as his family did? Number two, is there a generational curse on your family that can only be broken by you removing that worship and replacing it with the worship of God? You can't have both. 'cause that syncretism, that leads to apostasy in a few weeks, pastor Jimmy Evans, one of my pastors will be here to preach. I invite him every year and we're honored to have him and I, I, I asked him to pray and I said, whatever the Holy Spirit lays on your heart, he said, I wanna preach a message on breaking generational curses in families. So that is coming. But look at your family. Is there a history of

violence or abuse or criminal behavior or demonic activity? Is there a history of adultery or divorce or perversion or anger or violence or bitterness? If it goes from one generation to the next, it may be a generational curse that needs to be broken. And that's what Gideon does. He cuts down that which is evil and he replaces it with the presence and the worship of God. Lemme ask you another question. Where's your altar? See, the altar that Gideon tore down was in their house. And let me say this, every house has an altar. Uh, I'll give you an example. Some years ago when I was a little boy, I grew up in Seattle, Washington, right next to the airport. It was an international hub. So people would fly in from all the nations of the world and then they would get off the plane and they were legally entering the United States of America. But they're just getting started. So in the neighborhood I grew up in, literally it was like the United Nations, all the nations, all the languages, all the religions, everybody was there. So I grew up with a lot of different kids as friends. One of my friends, he was Hindu. It was a kid who lived up the street. First Hindu kid. I remember meeting, I was little, maybe 8, 9, 10. His name is Bra. And he's like, Hey, you wanna come to my house? I went to his house, I walk in the door and they've got their chair set up in the living room. And then on the mantle they've got a little altar. It's a little shrine, it's got fruit around it and money and candles and incense. And I remember looking at it creep me out. I'm a little kid. I'm like, what's that? He's like, that's our altar. I was like, that's what do you mean the altar? He's like, well, that's where our God lives in our house to bless us. So we give fruit and money and time to our God and then our God blesses us. I said, that is really weird that your family sits around and looks at an altar. He's like, your family has an altar? I said, no, we don't. He said, you have a tv. He said, and your your family sits and just looks at it. And he said, it's the center of your home and you spend a lot of money for it and you give a lot of time to it went home. I was like, we're Pagans mom and dad. I hate to break it to you're digital pagans. We're just here. We're just, we're gonna worship a lot of gods. You know, like, yeah. And so let me ask you this. What's the center of your home? Um, is it the liquor cabinet? Is it technology? Is it the kid's sports? See, what's the center of your home that everything rotates around? And what do you make sacrifices for? Time and energy. That's your worship, that's your altar. Lastly, do you worship God in public as well as in private? Gideon had no problem. He had no resistance, no objections, worshiping Jesus privately. As soon as he went public, they tried to kill him. The same demonic oppression of Baal and Asher is still at work in our world. Jesus is Lord of your heart. He's not Lord of your life. Faith is private, not public. Keep that to yourself. Don't let your faith influence your politics. Don't let your faith influence the education of your children. Don't let your faith influence your business. Don't let your faith influence your moral decisions. And heaven forbid that you disagree with the world. Just keep that to yourself. We don't want your faith to be public. It needs to be private. As soon as you go public with your faith, you're going to get opposition and resistance. And the temptation will be to practice tolerance, which leads to syncretism, which concludes an apostasy. And just, I'm just telling you this, some of you need to just be honest at work and tell the HR department, I believe the Bible and I can't agree to that. Some of you need to just come out of the closet at the university. I do believe in Jesus. So please stop trashing Christianity. I find it to be very intolerant of the most tolerant people who tend to be the most intolerant people. And sometimes you've gotta just go public with your faith and say, no is no. And Jesus is Lord. And I believe the Bible. And you need to know that I am not going to change my mind because God is not going to change his word. And that's where Gideon finds himself. Last section judges 6 32 through 40. Therefore, on that day, Gideon was called Abel. He got a nickname that is to say let bail condemn against him because he broke down his altar. It's amazing how one person tearing down a stronghold can

encourage other people to tear down their strongholds. One person breaking a generational curse can encourage others to break their generational curses. Now all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of East came together and they crossed the Jordan and they encamped in the valley of Jezreel. This is enemies surrounding preparing for war, but the spirit of the Lord, let tell you this, it doesn't matter who's against you, if the spirit of God is upon you, the spirit of the Lord cloth Gideon, he gets anointed in the spirit and he sounded the trumpet. The same thing that'll happen at the second coming of Jesus. A trumpet is sounded showing that God is showing up for battle and the Abba rights were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers throughout all manasses. And they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to these are various tribes that are supposed to support him, Asher Zeum and Naftali. And they went up to meet them. Then Gideon said to God, if you will save Israel by my hand, he's now going to be lead leading a counter offensive. He's going to be a military general, as you have said. Behold, I'm laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor and he's asking God for a sign. If there is dew on the fleece alone and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will save Israel by my hand. As you have said, he's testing God. And it was so when he rose early the morning and squeezed the fleece, he rung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. Then Gideon said to God, uh, one more, one more sign, please let not your anger burn against me. Please don't burn me to the ground. Let me speak just once more. Please let me what test Just once more with the fleece. Please let it be dry on the fleece only and all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night and it was dry on the fleece only and on the ground there was dew. So he already has a word from God, but now he wants a sign. He wants a sign. When you have a word from God and you're asking for a sign from God, you're venturing into dangerous territory. Uh, Jesus says in the New Testament, quote, A wicked and adulterous generation seeks a sign. It was the religious leaders who were opposed to Jesus and showed up to mock him and said, show us a sign. So we need to be careful when God has spoken. And sometimes people will ignore the word of God and then they'll just wait for a sign. Well, God, if you want me to not live with my girlfriend, give me a sign. Just so you know, I just gave you one. Okay, there you go. So, um, you know, but if God has already spoken, you don't need a sign. You need to obey the word. But here Gideon is struggling to obey the word. So he asks for a sign. Now, God can give signs and signs point to something greater just like a sign on the street points to a destination. So a miracle or a sign. And we're gonna get into these by the way. I'm gonna do a series coming up on the miracles of Jesus and we're gonna get into the signs that point of the kingdom. But what he's asking for here, he's asking for a miracle. He is asking for a sign. And what I love about this, God is gracious, I don't believe that what Gideon is asking is all that reasonable. But God is very good and kind and patient. He's like a dad with a little kid who's immature and a little fearful and not doing so well. And it's like a dad saying, okay son, let me, let me walk with you here. And so ultimately he's either a brand new Christian, so he's immature, maybe he's an immature Christian, and some would say he's asking for a sign so that when he tells all the other guys God said, go to war, he's got a miracle to back him up. I don't know. Here's what I do know. The scholars critique Gideon because he doesn't have full confidence in going to war. I read a lot of the commentaries and they're like, I can't believe his lack of faith. Well, lemme just say this, most theologians are weak. They live in libraries, they're indoorsy. They've never been in a fight other than syllogisms. And so it's very easy when you're a scholar to be like, I can't believe he didn't trust the Lord and go to war. Like you're probably you. Like if you tuck your shirt in your dockers, you're probably not built for war. You probably are not built for a Nerf gun war. Okay? And so the guys who critique Gideon, they're not the toughest guys. So let's give Gideon just a

little bit of, you know, benefit of the doubt. How many of you have been in a fight where you thought you were gonna die, right? How many of you have been a soldier off to war? You're like, it's a thing. Gideon's a civilian and he's gonna lead men into war who are also civilians against soldiers. What he is like, he's like, God, can we triple check this? Which if you think about it kind of makes sense 'cause he started as a coward and now he's gonna be a general. And, and I'll just tell you this, when you're in a fight and you might die in hand-to-hand combat, it'll change your life. I can still remember the first time that I thought I might die. I think it was nine or 10 years of age. Literally. I dunno why you're laughing. I was gonna die at nine or 10 years of age. What the heck? Like, oh, pastor Mark, we love you. We're so worried. They're like, ha, okay, fine, whatever. That was different. So I was nine or 10 and there were some high school boys that wanted my bike. So they pulled knives on me and I thought, oh, this is the first time I thought I might die today. When when you're faced with, uh, hand-to-hand combat and death, it's a scary thing. That's where Gideon finds himself, um, to, to quote that great theologian, Mike Tyson. Um, he said, everybody's got a plan until they get punched in the face. Gideon's about ready to get punched in the face. But what I love about this is that, uh, Gideon is God's son, but he's an anointed son. And this is where I want to conclude. Do you know what changed? Everything for Gideon? This simple line, the spirit of the Lord clothed, Gideon, everything changes when you meet Jesus and you receive the Holy Spirit and then he becomes a differentiated leader. He is not like all the other leaders. He's different 'cause he has the Holy Spirit and now people are gonna follow him. Men are gonna follow him. You know what? Our world is looking for differentiated spirit-filled leaders who are loyal to Jesus. Our world is lacking that once you meet someone, you're like, you're different. You're loyal to Jesus and you have the Holy Spirit, then that awakens courage in people starting with men to make change, and he then becomes God's anointed military leader. And sometimes God anoints people for combat and for battle and for conflict. If you're living in a negative world, sometimes you need an anointing to be up for the fight. In addition, the story of Gideon is a little story that's part of the bigger story, the Bible. And Gideon is a little type or picture or portrait or sign pointing to Jesus Christ. Gideon here is anointed in the spirit. Jesus comes as Jesus Christ. Christ means anointed, anointed. And ultimately Jesus Christ comes as the greater Gideon. He came the first time as judge and deliver. And he's coming the second time as warrior. All of this is foreshadowed in the story of Gideon. First coming, Jesus came as judge and he judged us for our sin on the cross where our God who is without sin took our place and paid our price. And he determined that we were guilty, but we were forgiven. And that because of him we would be delivered. When you see Gideon as judge and deliver, remember Jesus came to die for us and he was judged in our place for our sins to deliver us. And then as Gideon is heading off to war, you'll see this next week. So Jesus comes, uh, a last time, a second time. We're waiting that time as a warrior to declare war on evil doers and enemies and to make every inch of creation his dominion. I'm gonna bring the band up at this time and lemme just conclude. And I want you to think of yourself. And as we read the story of Gideon, I want you to put yourself in the story just to ask, okay, am I like Gideon? Or how am I like Gideon? Or when am I like Gideon? And what can I learn from Gideon? Lemme ask you a few questions, friend. Has fear caused you to withdraw, hide and accept an oppressed life like Gideon? If so, Jesus wants to meet with you right now just as he met with Gideon, like Gideon, have you overlooked your sin and blamed your God? Well then this is where God wants to meet with you and you can repent of your sin and acknowledge that you're not just a victim. You're also a villain like Gideon. Are you a combination of faith and fear? He's the scared guy who goes to war. If we're honest, we're all a little bit like Gideon. Our

faith is not perfect and it is mixed with fear. Here's the good news, friend, as we prepare to worship like Gideon, Jesus has been looking for you. Some of you're wondering, why am I here? Because Jesus is looking for you. Amen. Uh, God works through his word. You've heard about Jesus from the word of God, and I just felt inclined in the Spirit as I was praying for you today. Some of you, Jesus has showed up recently with a sign there was a miracle, a healing, an event, a provision, a revelation, maybe even something supernatural. It was a sign. It was from Jesus. And he's looking for you in addition, like Gideon, Jesus loves you enough to take you as you are, but he loves you too much to let you stay where you are. Jesus met Gideon exactly where he was, but he moved him forward. God has that same intent for your life today. Last few questions, my dear friend, like Gideon, are you in a season where you feel overwhelmed, fearful, and anxious? Are you looking at the future and wondering how you're going to make it? Well, the good news is lastly, like Gideon, you can receive a fresh anointing says that the spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon. And I believe he wants to clothe you. See, Gideon was about to do something that he had never done. So he needed a fresh anointing to do it. Some of you are looking at a future, you're looking at a season, you're looking at an obstacle or an opportunity and you've never been there before and it's bigger than you and it causes some anxiety and some fear. I want you to name that and then I want you to ask God to anoint you for that. And just as the spirit of God anointed Gideon, I believe the spirit of God can anoint you. And I want this to be our time both collectively and personally to meet with God. And I want this place to be our altar. And I want this to be the time when you cry out to God. You could do so in prayer. You can do so in worship. We're gonna sing together, which is a way of corporately crying out to God. And if you need to kneel and make that chair an altar, kneel, if you need to go to the back and take communion to repent of your sin, and remember the sacrifice of Jesus, make that an altar. If you want to come forward, 'cause you need some space to just kneel and be in God's presence, you're welcome to do so. But I'll just close with this and then we'll, we'll put it, we'll put it into practice as an act of faith. Here's what the Lord Jesus says, Luke 11, 11 through 13, you fathers, any fathers in the house, he says, you fathers, if your children ask you for fish, do you give them a snake instead? Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not. So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him, I'm gonna ask you to do that right now. Father God, we come to worship you right now. We know that that Lord God, as you were sovereign and good as a father over the life of Gideon, you're the same yesterday, today and forever. Your heart has not changed. Lord Jesus. As you came down to meet with Gideon, we invite you to come down and meet with us. And Holy Spirit, as you cloth Gideon and anointed him for the life to which you have called him, we invite you. Now come down, holy Spirit, anoint us, empower us, strengthen us, lead us, guide us, save us, transform us. And God, we say right now that this place is an altar and this is a place that is consecrated and dedicated to you and God, I ask that right now you would meet with your people in a supernatural and profound way as you did Gideon. And we ask for this grace in Jesus'. Good name. Amen. Please stand and worship.