**RISE UP** in 2021

March 28, 2021

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**The Lighthouse Effect**

**The Reluctant Lighthouse**

Judges 6-8



**Let God’s Light Shine** – on all that is good, on all that is faithful, on all that is humble and yes, let **God’s light shine on all that is possible!** **Let God’s light and life be ours … and let it shine!**

Are you a lighthouse or **dark** house?

It only takes a **little** light to bring hope in the dark.

We **rebel**.

*The people of Israel* ***did what was evil in the sight of the Lord****, and the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian seven years.* Judges 6:1

We **suffer**.

*… the people of Israel made for themselves the* ***dens*** *that are in the mountains and the* ***caves*** *and the* ***strongholds****. … the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East …* ***devour the produce of the land*** *… and leave no sustenance in Israel and no sheep or ox or donkey. … they would come like locusts in number, both they and their camels could not be counted …* Judges 6:2–5

We **cry** out.

*…* ***And the people of Israel cried out for help to the Lord.***Judges 6:2–5

God **responds**.

***…*** *“Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel:* ***I led you*** *up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of slavery. 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****.”* Judges 6:8–10

Problems can be out **there** … or right **here**.

**Out There** – the *Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East*

**Right Here** - *The people of Israel* ***did what was evil in the sight of the Lord*** *…* ***you have not obeyed my voice!***

*As long as you think the problem is out there, that very thought is the problem.* -Stephen Covey

*No, in all these things we are* ***more than conquerors*** *through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Romans 8:37–39

**Gideon - A Reluctant Lighthouse**

*… beating out wheat in the winepress* ***to hide it from the Midianites****.* Judges 6:11

*…“The* ***Lord is with you****,* ***O mighty man of valor****.”* Judges 6:12

God sees in **us** what we cannot see in **ourselves**.

*And Gideon said to him, “Please, my lord,* ***if the Lord is with us****,* ***why then has all this happened to us****? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying,* ***‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?****’ But now the Lord has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.”* Judges 6:13

**Honest words from Gideon.** Under the oppression of his occupiers, he was experiencing every kind of fear possible. Maybe you have asked the same question … **where is God in my situation?**

**Where are you Lord?**

*…, “****Go in this might of yours*** *and* ***save Israel from the hand of Midian****; do not* ***I send you****?”* Judges 6:14–16

**Who? Me?**

*And he said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the* ***weakest*** *in Manasseh, and I am the* ***least*** *in my father’s house.”* Judges 6:15

*And the Lord said to him, “****But I will be with you****, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.”* Judges 6:14–16

**God with us. Emmanuel. With Him, all things are possible.**

Probably one of the most powerful verses in the Bible is simply …

*… If God is for us, who can be against us?* Romans 8:31

But give me a **sign**.

*Then Gideon said to God, “****If*** *you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. 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****.” And* ***it was so****.* Judges 6:36–38

*When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water.*

**Let’s try this again …**

*Then Gideon said to God, “****Let not your anger burn against me****; let me speak just once more. Please let me test just once more with the fleece. Please let it be dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground let there be dew.” And God did so that night; and it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.* Judges 6:39–40

**We want to test God**; we want God to remove all our fear, reluctance or hesitation. What does God have to do for you to listen to him … die for you? Give you a holy inspired book full of His divine plan and wisdom for all of eternity? Put His very spirit in your life to lead you? Give grace, forgiveness, mercy and salvation?

Even after all that God has done, we still question, doubt, fail and fall … and God hears our cries and is merciful, kind and steadfast in His love toward us.

Okay God, let’s do this! You and me and 22,000 people … let’s kick some … what? That is not the strategy; your strategy is …

Victory by **attrition**.

*The Lord said to Gideon, “The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand,* ***lest Israel boast*** *over me, saying, ‘****My own hand has saved me****.’* Judges 7:2

**That is so much of our problem.** Our own hand. We love to do it ourselves.

**Go home if you are scared** – 12,000 left: this was the test of … do you even want to fight?

**Drinking water test** – 9,700 failed: this was the test of situational awareness.

**Left to fight** – **300**

What was he up against … we find out after the carnage is over   
that the camp held 135,000 men. That is 450 men to every ONE of Gideon’s.

God hears the **cry** for help.

God knows the **reluctance** of His people.

God gives you and me the **assurance** of His presence.

Gideon would have been perfectly content to stay where he was … but God saw what he could not see and God heard what he could not hear and he took light into the darkness of a people’s oppression, captivity and shame.

Are you tired of watching on the sidelines as you hide, minding your own business, and hoping the enemy won’t bother you or take what you have?

Gideon's faith grew from a field hand to a fighting warrior all because he trusted what God said.

It begins by letting the light of Christ’s love bring you out of the darkness. If you are in a dark place this morning, I want you to call   
out to Jesus …

All I **have** … is all God **wants**!

It only takes a **little** light to bring hope in the dark.