

**SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS**  
**Commentary by Michael Sigler**  
**September 13, 2009**

**Gideon: A Deliverer for the People**

Judges 6:1-3, 7-14

**Key verse:** “Then the Lord turned to [Gideon] and said, ‘Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian; I hereby commission you’” (Judges 6:14).

Bryan Chapell tells the story of a young man who called a pastor late at night and asked if he would meet him the next morning. They met the next morning at a restaurant nearby.

The young man told his pastor that, on a recent business trip, he had stayed late at a hotel bar with a woman colleague. Alone together far from home, with alcohol lowering their inhibitions, the two had ended up in bed together. Now this young man, who had a wife and children, had come to ask his pastor what to do about this sin he had committed.

The pastor, wanting to help the young man think biblically about his situation, asked: *Have you prayed to ask God’s forgiveness? Have you confessed this sin to your wife and asked her forgiveness? Have you had an AIDS test, because otherwise you will be endangering your wife and the child she is expecting?*

The young man listened to each question without comment. Then he pushed his breakfast plate away, leaned back, and said, “I came for grace, not for discipline. You disappoint me, Pastor.”

That pastor went away wondering, “What would lead an intelligent, capable man such as this to believe *the promises of grace mean we will never have to face any of the consequences of our sin?*” (Bryan Chapell in *Holiness By Grace*, Crossway Books, 2001).

The Book of Judges demonstrates both the consequences of sin and the promises of grace. “Judges” is the name used for Israel’s leaders from the time of Joshua’s death until the time of Israel’s monarchy. The main purpose of Israel’s judges is given in Judges 2:16 – “Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of...raiders.”

Judges 17:6 describes the underlying cultural condition that led to the need for God to raise up judges: “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.” In this climate of moral and spiritual anarchy, the people repeatedly turned away from God and worshipped the pagan idols of the surrounding peoples. This sin would inevitably lead to tragic consequences. Israel’s sin would remove them

from God's protection, and they would be oppressed by their surrounding neighbors. Then the people would cry out to God and God would raise up a judge to deliver them.

In this week's text, Israel's apostasy and idolatry has led to their being oppressed by the Midianites. God, in his mercy and grace, raises up a young man named Gideon to deliver the people. We see in Judges 6 a pattern that repeats itself throughout the Book of Judges: 1. God blesses the people. 2. The people turn away from God and fall into apostasy and idolatry. 3. Sin brings tragic consequences. 4. The people call out to God. 5. God raises up a judge to deliver the people.

The application to our culture today is pretty obvious, isn't it? We live today in a culture that, largely, has rejected God—so there is “no King” to guide us, and everyone *does as he sees fit*. Over time, the consequences of our culture's apostasy and idolatry bring tragic consequences. (W.T. Purkiser once said, “Sin would have few takers if its consequences occurred immediately.”)

Still today, however, God in his grace offers forgiveness and deliverance to any and all who will turn to Him in repentance and faith. God's “amazing grace” still flows from Jesus' nail-pierced hands. And the kingdom of God is like a great city hospital whose doors are never closed. However late the sick or injured may arrive, they will find that preparations have been made to minister to their needs.

Judges is a parable for our world today. When we live as if there is no God and no Christ, doing just as we see fit, tragic consequences result. The promises of grace do not mean we will never have to face the consequences of our sin. But God's amazing grace is always available to any who will turn to Him in repentance and receive Christ. Thanks be to God!

(Contact Michael at [msigler@fumcfwb.com](mailto:msigler@fumcfwb.com).)