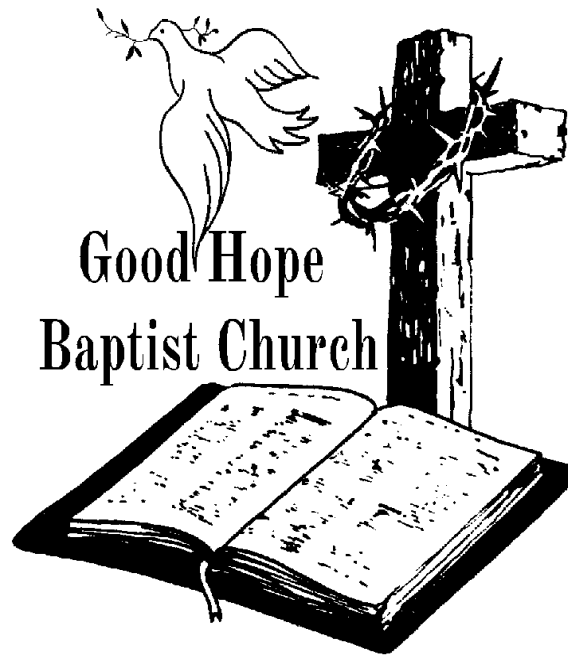


# Fear Not The gods

Judges 6



Living Together In The Love Of God

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**FOCAL Read Together** Judges 6:10 <sup>KJV</sup> ... I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

**Opening Illustration** Bob was used to walking home from work in the evening, and he often took a short cut through the cemetery. One evening it was quite dark, and as he passed through the cemetery he stepped into a freshly prepared, 7 foot deep hole. Bob tried and tried, but he just couldn't get out of the hole. Giving up he sat down, figuring that when day came the custodian would find him and help him out. About an hour later a hunter was out looking for raccoon. He, too, passed through the cemetery, and fell in the same 7 foot deep hole. Bob had fallen asleep, and the hunter didn't know anyone was in the hole with him. As the hunter struggled to get out of the hole - and kept failing - something happened that made the impossible possible. The hunter struggling woke up Bob, who in turn reached over and laid a hand on the hunter's shoulder. Bob said, "**You can't get out of here**", but guess what? The hunter did!

When God designed us humans He designed us with the capacity to feel fear. Fear is a good thing when you control it and it doesn't control you. You will never find a great soldier who hasn't experienced fear and, controlling it, did a heroic act One of the greatest leaders of World War 2 was **General George S. Patton**. In 1944 Patton assumed command of the **United States Third Army**. Under his leadership the Third Army had an amazing record. These men under Patton's leadership **advanced farther, captured more enemy prisoners,**

**and liberated more territory in less time than any other army in military history** (Wallace, Brenton G., *Patton and his Third Army* pp. 194-195). Patton was a no nonsense, hard charging military man. You wouldn't think he ever experienced fear. When Patton and his beloved Third Army took Sicily an official praised him for his courage and bravery. Patton replied:

**“Sir, I am not a brave man... The truth is, I am an utter craven coward. I have never been within in the sound of a gunshot or sight of battle in my whole life that I wasn't so scared that I had sweat in the palms of my hands.”**

Years later, when Patton's autobiography was published, the General made one of my favorite quotes. He said:

**"I learned very early in my life never to take counsel of my fears."**

Brave men and women through the ages have realized that fear - if not controlled - can cause you to do foolish things. **Eddie Rickenbacker**, the winner of *seven Distinguished Service Crosses* and the **Congressional Medal of Honor**, was once asked if he ever experience fear. He said:

**“Courage is doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared.”**

### **1. We Are To Fear God, But *Not* the gods**

The Lord told His people:

**FOCAL** Judges 6:10 <sup>KJV</sup> ... I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites ...

Israel as a nation was in a bad way because they *feared the wrong things*. They **feared the gods of the Amorites**, which are nothing but idols, creation of man's hand. On the other hand they **had no fear of the genuine God Who brought them where they were**. The Bible tells us that:

**Proverbs 1:7 <sup>KJV</sup> The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of knowledge: [but] fools despise wisdom and instruction.**

**Word Study** The word translated "fear" is a Hebrew word YIRAW or YAWRAY, which means "to have a reverence for, a dread of, a great fear of". God tells His people "do not revere, hold in high esteem, or fear as you would a father the gods of the Amorites. They are not real, but I AM!" Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

**Matthew 10:28 <sup>KJV</sup> And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**

It is God Who gives life, and God Who takes life. It is God Who casts in hell or elevates a soul unto Heaven.

Our every breath and heartbeat is governed by the Lord God Who made us - and we should have respect and yes, fear for Him! We live in a day when many - even

professing Christians - have no fear for God but *great fear* over offending anyone else.

We *fear* to tell the one who will not believe the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that they are condemned without faith in Him - and do not fear offending Him Who died on the Cross so that all could be saved. **We don't like** the Bible stories that speak of **Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon**. We try and explain away the disciplining hand of God, preferring to believe that God is Love and nothing more. Yet the Scripture tells us - and especially the Christian - that

**Hebrews 12:6-8** <sup>KJV</sup> .. **whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.**

God punished His people when they got out of line in the Old Testament, and He punishes today. He punishes us *because He loves us*, and does not want us to be consumed by the world. God wants us to win the land for Him, and to build His Kingdom on this earth. If we're going to do that we *must follow the Lord Who saved us*.

## **2. As God's Children .....**

I want to say that the Lord does not, as a general rule, expect the lost to follow Him. He calls the lost to salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The lost are

spiritually blind, and wander in darkness. The Believer is not supposed to be that way. Yet God's people sometimes **do evil**. This was the case with Israel, for the Scripture says:

**Context Judges 6:1** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.**

How sad it is when God's people do evil and depart from the Word of God! God's people are called to be light. The last verse in the previous chapter says:

**Context Judges 5:31** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **... let them that love {God} be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years.**

Think of that beautiful phrase. "**Those who love the Lord are to be as the sun going forth in his might**". When the sun "goes forth" it brings with it LIGHT and GROWTH. It blesses where it touches. Listen Beloved:

God puts His people in contact with unbelievers no so that we can become like them, but so that they can see the light of Christ in us.

We are to obey our Lord where ever He puts us. When Israel was placed in the land of Canaan by God He did so in order that His people would win others to His Kingdom. They - and we - are to be ...

**Matthew 5:14-16** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **... are the light of the world. .... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see**

your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

We who love the Lord honor the Lord in all that we do.

**a** As God's Children we are to honor and respect our God, or He may remove our blessing.

The Bible says that Israel dishonored God by doing evil, so the Lord "**delivered then into the hand of Midian seven years**". It was like God said, "You want to be like a Midianite - well, be like one!". How very sad! If you are saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ then you are ....

**Galatians 3:26** <sup>(KJV)</sup> ... **children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**

Children of the King should live in the blessings of the King. Children of the King do not live in the gutter, but they live in the palace. That's where God wants us to reside - in the palace!

God loves His people, and wants to bless His people. But if His people habitually will not obey Him, the Lord can and will *turn His people over* to that which they are serving. God told the **Church of Ephesus**:

**Revelation 2:4-5** <sup>KJV</sup> Nevertheless I have [somewhat] against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

We who are saved - be we Church or Israel - are called to live for the Lord Who loves us. If we live for Him we will shine for Him. If not, He may **take our candlestick away**. We'll be like Israel, bound under the hand of Midian!

**b** As God's Children we are to honor and respect the Lord our God, or we may lose our homes.

It amazes me that the economy is so bad in America at this time, and yet the local Church is still half empty.

Listen Beloved, **my strength and my refuge is in God**. When God turned Israel over to Midian rather than repent the Bible says:

**Context Judges 6:2** <sup>(KJV)</sup> ... **the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.**

Israel ran to the mountains. They set up forts and caves in the mountains. Did this help them? No, for the Bible says:

**Context Judges 6:3-4** <sup>(KJV)</sup> ... **when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against**

them; 4 And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass.

Israel ran to the mountains to get away from the Midianites, and ended up contending with the Amalekites and the children of the east as well. You can't run from evil - but you can rest in God!

Together these three took everything that Israel farmed or planted. Wouldn't it have been better that they *repent, and run to the arms of God?* The Psalmist said:

**Psalms 46:1** <sup>KJV</sup> .... **God [is] our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.**

and

**Psalms 46:5** <sup>KJV</sup> **God [is] in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, [and that] right early.**

The best place to be is to be in the shadow of God. When you advance in the shadow of God, like Joshua, we have His promise that ...

**Joshua 1:5-7** <sup>(NIV)</sup> **No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. ... Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.**

**We are not to turn from God's Word to the RIGHT or the LEFT. We are to obey Him explicitly. We are not to add to His Word (the RIGHT) nor take away from His Word (the LEFT). We ask, "What saith the Lord?"**

We are to obey Him Who saved us. When we do, He will bless. But obedience always comes before blessing. As soon as Israel **cried unto the Lord** the Bible says that He sent a Prophet to the people - and He raised up Gideon.

### **3. God Is The Potter, We Are The Clay**

God's Word is a powerful force! The Bible says ...

**Psalms 33:6-9** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. 7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. 9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.**

God's Word is powerful. God has the ability to take nothing, and make it into something. If you will give yourselves over to God, He will lead you to greatness.

Gideon wasn't a great man when God called him to service. The Bible tells us that he **was threshing wheat by the wine press, to hide it from the Midianites.** (verse 11). This was not brave man, but he was wily.

You wouldn't expect anyone to be threshing wheat where a wine press was, and so Gideon was here in this unlikely place. He was *hiding* when God called him. The great prophet **Moses** was hiding out in the **Desert of Midian** when the Lord called him out of a burning bush. God doesn't call us based on our abilities, but based on His ability. He emphasizes this by telling Gideon:

**Context Judges 6:12 (KJV) ... The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.**

**"Mighty man of valor"**? This man is hiding from the Midianites. God isn't speaking to Gideon as he now is, but as what he will one day be. Just as no child comes from the mother's womb walking and talking, so no Child of God starts out running for the Lord.

We are not called to perfection, but to obedience. God is the Potter, and we are the clay. The clay yields, the Potter works.

**a** Clay is only useful when it is pliable in the Potter's hands. When we submit to God all that we are, He uses us in *because* of our weakness. Gideon doubted God when he was first called. He said:

**Context Judges 6:13 (KJV) ... if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us?... now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.**

How did the Lord answer Gideon's complaints? He

didn't! He ignored what Gideon said and replied:

**Context Judges 6:14 (KJV) ... the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?**

God said, **"Go in the strength you have. I have sent you! This is enough."** My strength is sufficient if God has sent me, blessed be the Name of the Lord.

So often Christians are afraid to tell others of Jesus.  
**Did He not send you?**

We are sent with a Gospel message, and a promise from our Creator.

**Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.**

God is with those whom He has sent. We must trust in Him! God is with those whom He sends. Gideon didn't understand this at first. He said:

**Context Judges 6:15 (KJV) ... Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.**

Moses made similar claims when God called him. **"I**

can't go - I stutter when I speak". God calls us as we are, and sends us as we are. God told Gideon:

**Context Judges 6:16 (KJV) ... Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.**

The power that a Christian has is that God is with him. The Apostle Paul said:

**2 Corinthians 12:10 (KJV) ... I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.**

The very reason that God called Gideon was that he was weak. God works in the weak and in the submitted to make us into what He wants us to be.

**b** Clay that is not pliable cannot be used to make either a saucer or a larger vase. God will not bless you with a greater thing if you will not be faithful in the smaller. God didn't start out by asking Gideon to go against Midian. He just asked Gideon to ....

**Context Judges 6:25-26 (KJV) ... throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: 26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.**

Gideon was to deal with the idolatry of *his own family*

before he dealt with the greater idolatry of Israel. He was to destroy the pagan altars and build a place to the Lord God of the Scripture. Be faithful in that which God has given you. In the New Testament the Lord established two positions of *servant-leadership* in the local Church, the **office of the Pastor (Bishop) and the office of the Deacon**. God says that *before* a person be considered for either of these positions that they must **first be examined as to whether they rule their own houses well**. The Scripture says:

**1 Timothy 3:5 (KJV) (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)**

The principle: unless you are faithful in the small thing that God has entrusted to you, do not expect to be blessed with the greater. (see also **1 Timothy 3:12**). Be accountable with what the Lord has given you. The Bible tells us that:

**Context Judges 6:27 (KJV) ... Gideon ... did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night.**

Gideon did what God told him to do - **but he did it by night** because he was afraid. God never condemned Gideon for this fear. The Lord understands our weaknesses, and works with us to grow us into what He wants us to be. But Beloved, we *must* be obedient in the small thing before He will give us the greater.

**C** **Clay that hardens itself through the heat of fear becomes useless to the Potter.** God will alleviate our fears, if we will but seek His face. **Eugene Peterson** wrote:

**"There is an enormous gap between what we think we can do and what God calls us to do. Our ideas of what we can do or want to do are trivial; God's ideas for us are grand."**

We lose so many good things because of fear. Never take counsel of your fears. Take your counsel from God and His Word. Bury yourselves in His Word. What does He say?

Gideon wanted to do what God told him to do, but he was afraid. I understand that fear, and so should you. It is so much easier to stay quiet and let the evil go forward than it is to *stand apart from the crowd and say "no"*. That's tough! Think about what Gideon and his position. His *own family* was in idolatry, following the gods of the Amorites. His friends and neighbors had submitted themselves to the gods of the Amorites. Even those who were against this idolatry would not stand up publicly against it. The Irish Philosopher and Politician **Edmund Burke (1729 - 1797)** said:

**"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."**

The reason good men and women do nothing is because

of fear. The "what ifs" drive us to go with the pack, and to stay with our peers.

I just read that, for the first time in U.S. history, that now **53% of the population supports the concept of homosexual marriage**. How did we get to this place?

How did the morality of our country become so far away from the Biblical standard? **Good men and women do nothing, while those who would do evil trumpet loudly that their evil is good.** God said that the beginning of the destruction of a nation is when we **call good evil and evil good**. The Scripture says:

**Isaiah 5:20-24 <sup>(KJV)</sup> Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! ... as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.**

Gideon was frightened, but he wanted to do what God asked him to do. Gideon was a farmer, and he knew all about the morning dew. So he asked the Lord to do something for him. He said, **"Lord, I'm going to lay a lamb skin on the ground. If you really are with me, let the ground be dry in the morning, but the fleece be filled with dew."** (Judges 6:36-38). Did God answer that prayer? Absolutely! When he woke up the next day

the ground was dry, but the fleece was so filled with dew that it made **a bowl full of water when wrung out.**

Was Gideon done? Did he immediately move as God directed him to do? No, for he was still fearful. So Gideon went back to God (**Judges 6:39-40**) and said, **"Lord, please do this one more time, but this time let the fleece be dry and the ground be wet"**. I have heard many speak about Gideon as being a man of little faith, and I suppose he did have little.

One thing impressed me about his requests and the nature of our God is that our Lord *never condemned Gideon* for asking for a fleece.

The Lord just did as Gideon asked. He made the ground wet, but kept the fleece dry. God gave Gideon the confidence he needed to go out and do what He told him to do.

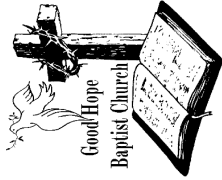
A father had a son who was terribly sick, and he brought that boy to Jesus, begging the Lord to heal the child. The Lord told him: **"If you can believe. All things are possible to him who believes"**.

It is our faith in God that will give us the victory and restore our nation. It is our willingness to obey the Lord that will turn the tide when it seems as if all hope is lost. If we are going to persevere, we must have faith in God. We must follow His Word. We must do His Will.

God is calling you. He is calling you to salvation. He is calling you to step outside of your comfort zone and

**believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, you and your whole house.** God is calling you to His Word. Until you are faithful in your own households, you will not be able to do the greater thing. Like Gideon, you must cast down the idols and golden calves, and follow the Lord. God is calling you to make a difference. Live your lives as lights in this world. Quite being part of the problem, and be part of the solution. God is calling you to a committed relationship with Him.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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