Intro: I vividly remember the very first day I was a PAID "Pastor" !!! Glendale Community Church, Jacksonville Florida Moved all my things into my office, set up my library, checked out my desk, made sure I had all the supplies I needed. Then I promptly did 2 things:

- 1. Leaned back in my chair, put my feet on the desk and felt this amazing sense of "This is right for me!"
- 2. Thought about it for a minute, was struck with sheer terror, "realized I had NO idea what I was supposed to do" I KNEW I was called by God, I KNEW I was to serve and lead people...but I also KNEW...I wasn't up to job!

That is where Gideon is in Judges 6-7. Page 174 Gideon is called by God to deliver the Nation of Israel, and Gideon is afraid! Ch 6:11-15 Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you! Vs 14

1. BACKGROUND OF GIDEON:

- Gideon was a Judge: Defined The men and women that led Israel AFTER Moses and Joshua, but BEFORE the OT Kings. They were commissioned by God to deliver the Israelites from the oppression of their enemies, usually by war, and then to rule the people during the time of peace and prosperity that followed. (12 in the book, perhaps more)
- Gideon's life and ministry followed the typical pattern of all the Judges. (Number 5 of 12) • Cycle in Judges: Rest; Rebellion; Retribution; Repentance; Restoration

Applic: Why is it important for us to understand the history and background of Gideon's life? These things (OT Events) happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the 1Co 10:11

ages has come.

- Negative pattern of sin at work in our lives • ~True pattern of what happens in our lives individually!!! How many times have YOU walked that road? We should learn from what has gone before us...so we don't continue to fall into the same spiritual traps.
- Positive pattern of Obedience: Gideon not included because of his lack of faith, but because of his obedience!

2. When we meet Gideon, GIDEON IS AFRAID ... OF EVERYTHING!

Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you! Vs 14 When you look at the fears that Gideon had, they are no different from the kinds of things WE are afraid of today.

- Vs 11: Afraid of the ENEMY: Midianites: ENEMY (Threshing wheat in winepress) One of the enemy countries • We fear enemies as well: People, Spiritual Opposition, Circumstantial Opposition, Culture
- Vs 13: Afraid he/they have lost the PRESENCE of God: Afraid God is not WITH him (Israel) any longer "If He is with us, why has all this happened?" "But now the Lord has abandoned us!" Lit = "to push away; to cast off and let fall" We are afraid that God has finally given up on us because of our Sin!
- Vs 14-15: Afraid God's POWER wouldn't be with him, wouldn't be enough Weakest: Family; Clan; Tribe "Go in the strength you have!" "I will be with you! We are afraid we don't have the spiritual strength to follow through on what God calls us to.
- Vs 16: Afraid of God's CALL in his life: Gideon knew what God was calling him to...He just was afraid of it! "I will be with you and you will strike down all the Midianites. We are afraid we aren't up to the task, the call, the opportunity that is in front of us.
- Vs 17 24 Afraid He wasn't HEARING God correctly! "Let me make offering,... and then Realized it was the Lord" **Realized:** Lit = to perceive; understand; to discern the reality of something We are afraid we didn't hear God right...Or we heard the pizza from last night, our own desires, others agenda
- He was Afraid of what others will think and do Vs 25-32 Vs 27 He destroyed false altar of Baal at night because he was afraid of his family and men of town. We are no different...Just Like Gideon we sometimes don't speak up...don't take a stand because others
- Vs 33-40 Afraid he couldn't finish what he had started! Blew trumpet to assemble army. Then Got cold feet! Needed two different signs to go to war! Ever been there? I so remember the day we were building one of the buildings...not going well... Darlene, always my rock, always my supporter, always on my side...Came home exhausted

- Ch 7:-1-12
 - Afraid God didn't know what He was doing! Vs 2: Too many men: 32,000 vs 135,000 Vs 4: Still too many 10,000 vs 135,000

Afraid?22,000 left10,000 remainedLap water9700 left300 remain450 to 1!Just about right!

Favorite verse! 7:9-10 Go and attack the camp...I'm with you...but if still afraid...Go listen So Gideon got up and went down to the camp to listen!

300 vs 135,000

Again, You and I are just like Gideon...God I HEAR you....BUT...I don't think you know what you are doing!

3. What Do You Do When You Are AFRAID Like Gideon?

This is the good news of the account of Gideon. We find a number of very specific actions that will help us spiritually These are the things that Gideon did...and the things we need to do when we find ourselves in that place of fear! This is what you do to move from AFRAID...to UNAFRAID!!!

a. <u>Express your fears to God.</u> Don't hold them back, don't try to "gut it out" don't fake it until you make it! *1 Peter 3:6* "...do what is right and do not give way to fear."

God is big enough to handle your insecurities and your fear.

You are not the first person to hear God and respond in fear...and you won't be the last.

Over and Over again Gideon voiced his fears to God: Vs 13, But sir...Vs 15, But Lord...

b. Ask God for something to verify His direction in your life.

GOD SPEAKS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH THE BIBLE, PRAYER, CIRCUMSTANCES, AND THE CHURCH TO REVEAL HIMSELF, HIS PURPOSES, AND HIS WAYS."

Gideon did it at least 3 times...more if you count multiple times with the fleece!

~Offering to the angel, Fleece, Going down to listen at the camp

~If you are unsure...It's OK to ask God, can you make this clear!

~Now, some things, you don't have to ask about...When He has given clear direction in His word...Just do it!

c. Do EXACTALLY what God tells you to do. Work and Walk through your fears.

2 Tim 1:7 "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."

~You can't use your fear as an excuse for disobedience. Sometimes you KNOW God has spoken,

Issue isn't you don't know WHAT He is directing you to, Issue is...you just don't want to out of fear At that point...you have to pray, believe and walk forward through your fear.

Illus: It has been 13 years...Still clearly remember the anesthesia mask coming down in Cuba!

I had done EVERYTHING humanly possible to avoid it happening...but no longer an option God does that with us sometimes...we simply run out of options!

d. Don't stop halfway! Follow through to the end.

Half a dozen times along the way Gideon stopped and looked for an opportunity...any opportunity...to quit But notice this. He Never did. Despite his fears, anxieties, his doubts...He kept being obedient, step by step 1 Cor 10:31 "...whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

e. Honor God every step of the way as you work through your fears and doubts.

That is what Gideon did. In the middle of his struggles, doubts, fears, he continued to Submit, Obey, and Honor God. ~Language ~Destroying false altar

~Offering ~Obedience: (Reluctantly...but over and over again...followed through. Never NO Regularly...I don't know about this...but never NO!

Gideon is not included in the bible as an example of doubt and fear...but one of faith and obedience in SPITE of his fear!

CONCL:

Is God calling you to something this morning that you are afraid of?

~Sharing your faith?

~Serving in an area of ministry?

~Stepping out and up financially?

~An Act of obedience in relationship

~New job

~New deeper spiritual Commitment

~Stuck in that Cycle of Sin...Ready ONE more time to seek help to break that pattern...

Don't let the fear of what is ahead hold you back, shut you down...keep you from following God, stepping out in faith You can be like Gideon...Afraid of what is before you...yet UNAfraid to follow God.