

Judges 8

And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply.

² And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? ³ God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.

1. Ephraim – relatives mad that they didn't get invited earlier. Real mad – chide = strive against
 - a. Their pride was hurt because they couldn't share in the glory.
 - b. Right after this great victory....people after this wants to complain and clown. They didn't come when the trumpets blew. Not there when risk was high, only interested now after the enemy was on the run.
 - c. Should have been happy with the victory. Instead of being happy with the victory, they complain over the strategy. They didn't do it the way they wanted it done so instead of celebrating.....they are now complaining. You better be careful. Ephraim was brother to Manasseh (Gideon's tribe) and had pre-eminence in Jacob's blessing. So there was jealousy over honor and glory. Be careful, see this in ministry. Who baptizes more people, stop arguing and celebrate that people are getting saved. Should have been chasing the enemy rather than fighting each other. This kind of foolish pride will cause you to stop or hinder what you really need to be doing for God or God's will. Can't truly be rid of the enemy like that.
 - d. Carnal man complains because it wasn't done their way, celebrate that God did it.
 - e. Mad because they didn't get the glory of leading the battle. Didn't get a formal invite. Now you know why.....God knew what they were about....glory seekers.
 - f. Verses 7:24-25, he did invite them, just after he had the enemy on the run. Was following divine directions, not what the relatives wanted.
2. What have I done in comparison to what you are doing now? Uses questions.
 - a. Answers them wisely. Doesn't try and defend his position. Didn't get mad with them!!! Proverbs 15:1. Soft answer turns away wrath. Proverbs 13:10
 - b. He states the left-overs (gleaning) of Ephraim is better than the produce of his folks.
 - c. Meaning, they did in getting the princes was greater than what he did from the initial attack. That's humility and wisdom. Didn't care who got the glory...as long as God is honored.
 - d. Puts God in it by reminding them and giving the glory to whom truly deserved it, because it was God who gave them the victory.

3. God delivered the leaders/princes into your hands, be happy with that victory. It was a greater victory in comparison to what he had done. Then they calmed down after he said that. Phil 2:3.
 - a. Asked questions of them. Right questions that made them think about why it was stupid to be mad over what they're mad about.
 - b. Sometimes you have to remind people that you are not the enemy and both on the same side....otherwise, you will both get distracted from pursuing after what God really assigned you to do.

⁴ And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them. ⁵ And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.

⁶ And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army? ⁷ And Gideon said, Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers.

⁸ And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him. ⁹ And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.

¹⁰ Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword.

¹¹ And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host; for the host was secure. ¹² And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host.

4. Passed over Jordan, still had 300 he started with. Didn't suffer loss, gained a victory
 - a. They were tired. You can get tired doing God's work. You will get tired of stuff related to or resulting from your participation in the battle.
 - b. Didn't let getting tired or discomfort keep them from pursuing their goal and chasing and defeating the enemy. Tired but still in pursuit. Marriage, job, kids, etc.
5. Request of Succoth = booths, I need some biscuits can you help us out? Not can you fight with us, just support us as we fight. Critical, if you are not going to pursue the enemy, at least invest in or help those who do.
 - a. Remember, they only carried as much food as they could carry in their hands.....gives others the opportunity to bless them and receive a blessing rather than a curse.
6. You ain't caught them yet; they are still at large so why should we risk ourselves helping you.

- a. Requirements for me giving you my biscuits; you better have the enemy on the run and doing the work of God. We ain't giving you supplies because it doesn't look like in your condition that you are going to make it or be successful. It is not a good thing to not support the plan of God or the people of God who are executing the plan....watch out.
 - b. They ignored the victory and progress they made so far and instead looked at a defeated enemy that still outnumbered them but now on the run, and instead of celebrating them and supporting them and how far they have come....they turned their back on them and made fun of him.
7. Since they wouldn't help, he promises them that when he completes this victory, he'll pay them back. There is a price to pay for not supporting the plan and people of God.
 8. Went to Penuel = facing God, and asked them the same thing and got the same rejection and results.
 9. Tells them he will break down their tower. Gonna tear some stuff up. Doesn't execute the judgment right away....gives them time to repent. 15K left out of 135K of the enemy. Problem defeated but still has some resources left. If you don't take the problem all the way out it might regroup and come back on you.
 10. Went a different and unexpected way and fought with them; enemy thought they were secure. Enemy didn't expect him to follow after them like that. When your enemy is down, make sure the head gets cut off. Getting the victory is one thing....keeping it is another.
 - a. Special note: They didn't let the lack of support from their kin-folk to discourage them from continuing on with completing the mission. Someone shared this point with me, "when you expect your help to from others rather than the Lord, you can become discouraged. Instead, put your trust in God.
 11. Took the enemy kings which discomfited the rest of the enemy. Take out the head and the rest of your enemies and problems will get shook up.
 12. The problem they were trying to resolve, the enemy they were trying to drive out, was taken care of by morning. By the time the sun came up, problem was dealt with.

¹³ And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the sun was up, ¹⁴ and caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him: and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even threescore and seventeen men.

¹⁵ And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary?

¹⁶ And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taugth the men of Succoth. ¹⁷ And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city.

13. 77 men and leaders of Succoth about to get a beat down. Make sure you know who you're after.
14. Gideon recalls their earlier conversation when they upbraided him...taunted him.
15. Took a switch to them.
16. Beat down the tower and took out some folk. Penuel = facing God. Matt 10:15, 11:23 – just a thought for why they got spanked harder.

I want to be careful reading too much into these passages. Several commentaries and scholars point out that these were relatives and part of the tribes of Israel. They correctly note that sometimes people you would expect to support you in your Kingdom work may not. Don't be discouraged.

I support the idea and application that Succoth and Penuel were unwilling to provide support unless the victory was clearly in Gideon's hand. We should be careful to be willing to support the work of the ministry when the opportunity is presented. It is too our benefit to invest in Kingdom work (reference the parable of the talents).

I do not know why Penuel is punished harder than the others. Perhaps it is because their sin was greater in that their trust was in the tower. The scripture doesn't clearly explain why. I do see when comparing the parables of Jesus in the New Testament clearly there are consequences when we are insensitive as believers to the needs of others.

¹⁸ Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king. ¹⁹ And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother: as the LORD liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you.

²⁰ And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he was yet a youth. ²¹ Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks.

18. Asks Zebah and Zalmunna, what type of people did you kill at Tabor. They killed people who looked like Gideon. Asks a question to confirm what he suspected. Be careful who you are killing, they may be related to Jesus.
19. They find out that they had killed his relatives, so he will return the favor. Reap what you sow.
20. Tells son to kill them but he was afraid because he was young. Training his son to learn how to take out the enemy. Wanted him to experience it. Son didn't do it though. Why. Fear and he was young. Some young saints maybe afraid and inexperienced to totally kill the problem.
21. Gideon does it instead. Several opinions on why the princes wanted Gideon to kill them, either a taunt, less painful, more honor, etc.

²² Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.

²³ And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you. ²⁴ And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.)

²⁵ And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey. ²⁶ And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks.

²⁷ And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.

22. People want him to rule and give credit for the victory to him. This is a logical move. The one who delivered you to rule you. Jesus.
23. Puts the credit where it should be and remains humble.
24. Asks instead for the earrings they got from the enemy. Be careful....this was Aaron's mistake.
25. They collected the gold and gave it to him.
26. Gideon takes the gold.
27. Makes an ephod, a priestly garment worn by the priests. Good man trying to do a good thing the wrong way. Good man that makes a mistake.
 - a. Result, put it in the city of Ophrah and they ran to it rather than to God. The good thing he did turned out to be a trap.
 - b. Ephod connected to urim and thurim which they used to determine God's will.
 - c. Afterwards....meaning it wasn't a problem at first.
 - d. Ark was in Shiloh which was in Ephraim and instead, he set up an item of worship and consultation in a different place. In time, the people went for that rather than the Ark or deserting God's altar.

²⁸ Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon. ²⁹ And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. ³⁰ And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives. ³¹ And his concubine that was in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

³² And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. ³³ And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon

was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baalberith their god.

³⁴ And the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: ³⁵ Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.

28. 40 years, time of probation, enemy defeated and they enjoyed peace. Judges mostly ruled for 40 years, Samuel and Saul also 40 (Acts 13:21), David 40, Solomon 40.
29. Gideon lives in his house, retires.
30. 70 sons and lots of women. Notice, when he was in battle, he was doing well, but now that the victory is won, he drops his guard and pulls away.
31. Abimelech = my dad is a King. This boy goes crazy. Outcome of his concubine....can mess up your family.
32. Gideon dies old.
33. Soon as he's gone, they turned again and have a relapse and went back to Baalim. When the one who delivers you is out of the picture.....you'll run after the wrong thing. Soon as probation was over, they tripped.
34. Forgot about the Lord. Ingrates. Didn't remember when God delivered them when they were surrounded. That's a problem.
35. They were not kind to Gideon.
 - a. Ingrates
 - b. Ingratitude is a problem