



April 7, 2024 - Sunday Sermon Study Guide

Lead Pastor Brian Bales

The Power of a Name: *Shalom (Peace)* - Judges 6:11-24

6 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. ² And the hand of Midian overpowered Israel, and because of Midian the people of Israel made for themselves the dens that are in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. ³ For whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. ⁴ They would encamp against them and devour the produce of the land, as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel and no sheep or ox or donkey. ⁵ For they would come up with their livestock and their tents; they would come like locusts in number—both they and their camels could not be counted—so that they laid waste the land as they came in. ⁶ And Israel was brought very low because of Midian. And the people of Israel cried out for help to the Lord. ⁷ When the people of Israel cried out to the Lord on account of the Midianites, ⁸ the Lord sent a prophet to the people of Israel. And he said to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I led you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of slavery. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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.”

Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. ¹² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.” ¹³ 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.” ¹⁴ And the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?” ¹⁵ 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.” ¹⁶ And the LORD said to him, “But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.” ¹⁷ And he said to him, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. ¹⁸ Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you.” And he said, “I will stay till you return.” ¹⁹ So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the terebinth and presented them. ²⁰ And the angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them.” And he did so. ²¹ Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. ²² Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon

- What are the facts in the story? How does Gideon respond to the Angel of the LORD's statement that he is a Mighty Man?

- "*Seeing is believing.*" Is that phrase always true, or is Gideon being asked to believe what God is telling him and what God knows about him before it becomes evident?

2. What was Gideon's view of God before this encounter? How had his circumstances shaped his understanding of who God is and what He can do?

- Gideon and his people felt abandoned by God. Think of a time when you felt as if God was distant or not even aware of your circumstances. Looking back, what did you discover about God?

- The angel reassures Gideon, but he still has doubts and asks for a sign (vs 17); what does Gideon do next and how does the LORD respond to him?

3. Gideon asks for a sign and then is overwhelmed at the answer. *But the LORD said to him, “Peace (shalom) be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die.”* vs 23.

- In John 14:27 Jesus tells his disciples; *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.* Why do you think Gideon, and also the disciples, were given peace, rather than strength or some other quality or attribute?

- The life of Gideon was complicated, like ours. Consistent, long-term obedience is hard. Where can we find help in our journey?

3. How do we live from the truth that God is *Shalom*?

- God has said he will supply or provide for our every need (Phil 4:19) Where in your life do you need peace today?
- Like much of our Christian experience, where we choose to put our FOCUS can determine whether or not we experience God's peace. What steps can you take today to realign your focus?
- Cornelius Plantinga Jr. writes this; *The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is what the Hebrew prophets call shalom. In English we call it peace, but it means far more than just peace of mind or ceasefire between enemies. In the Bible shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight—a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as the creator and savior opens doors and speaks welcome to the creatures in whom he delights. Shalom, in other words, is the way things are supposed to be.*
- How does this definition of Shalom reflect the teaching today central to Gideon's story and viewing God as *Shalom*?

MAKING IT REAL

This week consider where in your life are you distracted? Will you allow God to help you refocus on Him and the *Shalom* that He can supply?

