

THE SELF-DESTRUCTION OF GIDEON

--JUDGES 8:4-35--

INTRODUCTION:

In the last three messages we have watched as Gideon moved from hiding from the enemy as he tried to thresh grain in a winepress to becoming the valiant warrior and leader that God wanted him to be. His trust and confidence in God defeated the fear that plagued his life up to that point and when that confidence in God took control of his life this is when we see Gideon at his absolute best. It is this time in his life that makes his introduction into Hebrews 11 understandable, at the end of last week he was definitely a hero of faith. This is not true in our passage this morning, as we will see.

- I. CROSSING THE JORDAN (Judges 8:4)
 - a. Many of us _____ rivers everyday just driving and do not think anything of it.
 - b. Some crossings have a much greater _____.
 - c. Our passage this morning also begins with a crossing, Gideon crosses the _____ in the opposite direction that the children of Israel did under Joshua.
 - d. Among those who _____ the sword and made it over the river before the blockade by the Ephraimites are the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna.
- II. WHAT HAPPENED TO GIDEON? (Judges 8:5-21)
 - a. The first sign that something is not quite right is the fact that Gideon does not have the _____ that he had before crossing the river.
 - b. Second, notice that Gideon is not as _____ as he was earlier with Ephraim.
 - c. Third, in this chapter the LORD is no longer _____ to what is happening.
 - d. Finally, in verses 20-21 we see the _____ that Gideon has become.

III. SELF-DESTRUCTION (Judges 8:22-28)

- a. Everything that has happened since Gideon crossed the Jordan in verse 4 leads us to what happens in verse 22. *“Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, ‘ _____ over us, both you and your son, also your son’s son, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.’”* (Judges 8:22, NASB95)
- b. Gideon recognizes that what is happening, what they have requested of him is too much and he tries to _____ their misdirected praise.

IV. THE ROOT CAUSE (Judges 8:18-19)

- c. What was the _____ cause to this tragic ending to Gideon’s career?
- d. What is it that changed to cause him to _____ so differently when he crossed the Jordan River?
- e. The answer to those questions I believe is revealed in what he says to the two _____ of Midian before killing them.

CONCLUSION:

This passage is filled with warnings for all of us, but even more specifically this passage is to leaders, those called to lead God’s people. First, this passage is a reminder of how easy it is for a good man to go wrong. Second, there is the reminder that some boundaries should never be crossed. Most of these are moral boundaries and we all have a good idea of what they are. The safest way to avoid crossing them is to always stay well away from them. Finally, there is a warning here about idolizing leaders. If you want the life of Gideon to inspire you make sure that you find that inspiration in chapters 6 and 7 of Judges. It is in those chapters that we see the faith that Gideon is described as having in Hebrews 11. Better even than drawing inspiration from Gideon is to fix your eyes on Jesus. He not only started well, He also finished well. He never crossed any of the boundaries that he shouldn’t have, and He is the only leader we can follow absolutely. May God help each of us to do just that, so that if he entrusts us with leadership, we can truly bless those we lead and not damage them.