

Day One Bible Study- The Story of Gideon

Scripture: Judges 6:1-2, 12-16 & 7:2-8, 15-22

Connection with the Gospel? This story, like many others in the Old Testament point to Christ in an indirect fashion. Boys should understand that the promise of salvation through Abraham's family was at risk when God's people were dominated by other nations. The rescue God accomplishes through Gideon demonstrates the power of the LORD to use a humble warrior to overcome a strong enemy. This is a pattern for the coming Kingdom of Christ, when Jesus overcomes all nations through the witness of the church.

Bible Story

Review these questions as you turn to the passage in your Bible.

- What part of the Bible is Judges in? The Old Testament
- What book of the Old Testament is Judges? #7

Read Judges 6:1-2, 12-16 & 7:2-8, 15-22 (NIRV) aloud to the children.

6:1-2 Once again the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. So for seven years he handed them over to the people of Midian. The Midianites treated the people of Israel very badly. That's why they made hiding places for themselves. They hid in holes in the mountains. They also hid in caves and in other safe places.

12-16 The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon. He said, "Mighty warrior, the Lord is with you." "But sir," Gideon replied, "you say the Lord is with us. Then why has all of this happened to us? Where are all of the wonderful things he has done? Our parents told us about them. They said, 'Didn't the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has deserted us. He has handed us over to Midian." The Lord turned to Gideon. He said to him, "You are strong. Go and save Israel from the power of Midian. I am sending you." "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I possibly save Israel? My family group is the weakest in the tribe of Manasseh. And I'm the least important member of my family." The Lord answered, "I will be with you. So you will strike down the men of Midian all at one time."

7:2-8 The Lord spoke to Gideon. He said, "I want to hand Midian over to you. But you have too many men for me to do that. I do not want Israel to brag that their own strength has saved them. So here is what I want you to announce to your men. Tell them, 'Those who tremble with fear can turn back. They can leave Mount Gilead.' " So 22,000 men left. But 10,000 remained. The Lord spoke to Gideon again. He said, "There are still too many men. So take them down to the water. I will sort them out for you there. If I say, 'This one will go with you,' he will go. But if I say, 'That one will not go with you,' he will not go." So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the Lord spoke to him. He said, "Some men will drink the way dogs do. They will lap up the water with their tongues. Separate them from those who get down on their knees to drink." Three hundred men lapped up the water. They brought it up

to their mouths with their hands. All of the rest got down on their knees to drink. The Lord spoke to Gideon. He said, "With the help of the 300 men who lapped up the water I will save you. I will hand the Midianites over to you. Let all of the other men go home." So Gideon sent the rest of the men of Israel to their tents. But he kept the 300 men. They took over the supplies and trumpets the others had left. The Midianites had set up their camp in the valley below where Gideon was.

15-22 Then Gideon worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel. He called out, "Get up! The Lord has handed the Midianites over to you." Gideon separated the 300 men into three companies. He put a trumpet and an empty jar into the hands of each man. And he put a torch inside each jar. "Watch me," he told them. "Do what I do. I'll go to the edge of the enemy camp. Then do exactly as I do. I and everyone who is with me will blow our trumpets. Then blow your trumpets from your positions all around the camp. And shout the battle cry, 'For the Lord and for Gideon!'" Gideon and the 100 men who were with him reached the edge of the enemy camp. It was about ten o'clock at night. It was just after the guard had been changed. Gideon and his men blew their trumpets. They broke the jars that were in their hands. The three companies blew their trumpets. They smashed their jars. They held their torches in their left hands. They held in their right hands the trumpets they were going to blow. Then they shouted the battle cry, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" Each man stayed in his position around the camp. But all of the Midianites ran away in fear. They were crying out as they ran. When the 300 trumpets were blown, the Lord caused all of the men in the enemy camp to start fighting each other. They attacked each other with their swords. The army ran away to Beth Shittah toward Zererah. They ran all the way to the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.

Discuss Bible Lesson

Bring out the following points from the Bible story. If possible use question and answer to allow the children to discover these themes for themselves. Use transition phrases such as, "What happens next?"

- Israel seems to go on a roller coaster ride with God. They follow Him and then they don't. When they didn't, God lets them have the natural consequences of their actions – they are no longer protected by God.
- God sends an angel down to talk to Gideon.
- Gideon is told that he is the one being chosen to conquer their enemy.
- God then reassures Gideon that He will be with him the entire time.

2 The Lord spoke to Gideon. He said, "I want to hand Midian over to you. But you have too many men for me to do that. I do not want Israel to brag that their own strength has saved them. 3 So here is what I want you to announce to your men. Tell them, 'Those who tremble with fear can turn back. They can leave Mount Gilead.'" So 22,000 men left. But 10,000 remained.

- Gideon gathers all of the men that he can find. After all, the Midianites have a lot of soldiers! It's only natural that Gideon should have a lot of soldiers.
- God disagrees and tells Gideon that he has too many soldiers.
- He started with 32,000, he now has 10,000.

4 The Lord spoke to Gideon again. He said, "There are still too many men. So take them down to the water. I will sort them out for you there. If I say, 'This one will go with you,' he will go. But if I say, 'That one will not go with you,' he will not go." 5 So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the Lord spoke to him. He said, "Some men will drink the way dogs do. They will lap up the water with their tongues. Separate them from those who get down on their knees to drink." 6 Three hundred men lapped up the water. They brought it up to their mouths with their hands. All of the rest got down on their knees to drink. 7 The Lord spoke to Gideon. He said, "With the help of the 300 men who lapped up the water I will save you. I will hand the Midianites over to you. Let all of the other men go home."

- God tells Gideon that 10,000 are too many.
- God has Gideon have his men get a drink of water. If they lapped it up with their tongues, like a dog, they were not to be a part of the army.
- Only the 300 men that kneeled down and got a drink using their hands would be Gideon's army.
- Men who were not afraid and who got a drink while still being on watch, were the ones who God chose to fight the enemy.

8 So Gideon sent the rest of the men of Israel to their tents. But he kept the 300 men. They took over the supplies and trumpets the others had left. The Midianites had set up their camp in the valley below where Gideon was. 15 Then Gideon worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel. He called out, "Get up! The Lord has handed the Midianites over to you." 16 Gideon separated the 300 men into three companies. He put a trumpet and an empty jar into the hands of each man. And he put a torch inside each jar.

- It's now time for battle!
- Gideon splits up his 300 men into 3 groups – 100 in each group.
- He arms them with torches, trumpets and an empty jar.
- What must they have been thinking? Where is my sword?

17 "Watch me," he told them. "Do what I do. I'll go to the edge of the enemy camp. Then do exactly as I do. 18 I and everyone who is with me will blow our trumpets. Then blow your trumpets from your positions all around the camp. And shout the battle cry, 'For the Lord and for Gideon!'" 19 Gideon and the 100 men who were with him reached the edge of the enemy camp. It was about ten o'clock at night. It was just after the guard had been changed. Gideon and his men blew their trumpets. They broke the jars that were in their hands.

20 The three companies blew their trumpets. They smashed their jars. They held their torches in their left hands. They held in their right hands the trumpets they

were going to blow. Then they shouted the battle cry, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!”

- Gideon breaks his jar and blows his trumpet.
- All of the men do the same.

21 Each man stayed in his position around the camp. But all of the Midianites ran away in fear. They were crying out as they ran.

22 When the 300 trumpets were blown, the Lord caused all of the men in the enemy camp to start fighting each other. They attacked each other with their swords. The army ran away to Beth Shittah toward Zererah. They ran all the way to the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.

Evaluation: Have the children answer the following questions.

- Who did God choose to conquer the Midianites? Gideon
- How many soldiers did Gideon start off with? 32,000
- How many soldiers did God actually let Gideon use? 300
- Why did God not want Gideon to have a lot of soldiers? So they wouldn't brag about the win – they had to know that God did it – not them
- What did they use to win the battle? Torches, trumpets, empty jars and yelling

So let's do “The Gideon”. “The Gideon” is where God takes weak, humble, sometimes fearful people and uses them to do wonderful things. You don't have to be the biggest or the toughest soldier in the battle. All you need is to be willing and obedient to what He asks of you and God will turn over your enemies. In the story of Gideon, God was at work and promised to take care of Gideon and his men. Even though the odds at first looked bad, Gideon chose to follow God and trusted in his Word. If we can be like Gideon and follow what God asks us to do in our everyday lives we can do mighty things in His name.

This Bible Study is just the beginning. It is an introduction into who God loves to use. And that is often people that others may look down on as not being overly useful! God has committed a simple message to simple people so that others may come to know Him. And He will often use our enemies to bring people to the place of weakness where they will totally rely on Him and His grace.

Depending on Time: **Craft: Make Gideon Torches**

Materials: 1 lunch bag per child, red, orange & yellow construction paper, glue

“What happened in our Bible Story today? (Allow for responses) Gideon and his small army beat the Midianites’ large army. They only used torches and jars instead of swords. Let’s make our own torches to help us remember that God will always be with us if we follow Him and what He wants us to do.”

- Have each child cut out some flames from the construction paper.
- Give each child a lunch bag.
- Let the children glue the flames to the inside of their bag – make sure that the flames are sticking out of the bag.
- Let the children color their lunch bag.
- Make sure that each child writes their name on the bottom of their bag.
- Have the children twist their lunch bag so that it looks like a torch.

Day Two Bible Study- The Story of Samson

Scripture: Judges 13:1-5, 24 & 16:4-6, 15-30

Welcome Activity: Test of Strength (Balloon Popping) – Give each boy a balloon when they come up and have them blow it up and tie it off. (For younger groups you may have to make them for the boys.) See if they can pop the balloon with just their hands. Make sure the kids are spread out as to not hurt one another. After activity transition to the bible story.

Review Question from yesterday:

- What part of the Bible is Judges in? The Old Testament
- What book of the Old Testament is Judges? #7

Read Judges 13:1-5, 24 & 16:4-6, 15-30 (NIRV) aloud to the children.

1 Once again the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord handed them over to the Philistines for 40 years. 2 A certain man from Zorah was named Manoah. He was from the tribe of Dan. Manoah had a wife who wasn't able to have children. 3 The angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife. He said, "You are not able to have children. But you are going to become pregnant. You will have a baby boy. 4 Make sure you do not drink any kind of wine. Also make sure you do not eat anything that is 'unclean.' 5 "You will become pregnant. You will have a son. He must not use a razor on his head. He must not cut his hair. That is because the boy will be a Nazirite. He will be set apart to God from the day he is born. He will begin to save Israel from the power of the Philistines."

24 Later, the woman had a baby boy. She named him Samson. As he grew up, the Lord blessed him.

4 Some time later, Samson fell in love again. The woman lived in the Valley of Sorek. Her name was Delilah. 5 The rulers of the Philistines went to her. They said, "See if you can get him to tell you the secret of why he's so strong. Find out how we can overpower him. Then we can tie him up. We can bring him under our control. Each of us will give you 28 pounds of silver." 6 So Delilah spoke to Samson. She said, "Tell me the secret of why you are so strong. Tell me how you can be tied up and controlled."

Summarized Judges 16:7-14 – Samson tells Delilah wrong ways of overpowering him: tying him with 7 new leather straps, tying him with new ropes, pin his 7 braids into a loom.

15 Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you'? You won't even share your secret with me. This is the third time you have made me look foolish. And you still haven't told me the secret of why you are so strong." 16 She continued to pester him day after day. She nagged him until he was sick and tired of it. 17 So he told her everything. "I've never used a razor on my head," he said. "I've never cut my hair. That's because I've been a Nazirite since the day I was born. A Nazirite is set apart to God. If you shave my head, I won't be strong anymore. I'll become as weak as any other man." 18 Delilah realized he had told her everything. So she sent a message to the Philistine rulers. She said, "Come back one more time. He has told me everything." So the rulers returned. They brought the silver with them. 19 Delilah got Samson to go to sleep on her lap. Then she called for a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair. That's how she began to bring him under her control. And he wasn't strong anymore.

20 She called out, "Samson! The Philistines are attacking you!" He woke up from his sleep. He thought, "I'll go out just as I did before. I'll shake myself free." But he didn't know that the Lord had left him. 21 Then the Philistines grabbed hold of him. They poked his eyes out. They took him down to Gaza. They put bronze chains around him. Then they made him grind grain in the prison. 22 His head had been shaved. But the hair on it began to grow again. 23 The rulers of the Philistines gathered together. They were going to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. They were going to celebrate. They said, "Our god has handed our enemy Samson over to us." 24 When the people saw Samson, they praised their god. They said, "Our god has handed our enemy over to us. Our enemy has destroyed our land. He has killed large numbers of our people." 25 After they had drunk a lot of wine, they shouted, "Bring Samson out. Let him put on a show for us." So they called Samson out of the prison. He put on a show for them. They had him stand near the temple pillars.

26 Then he spoke to the servant who was holding his hand. He said, "Put me where I can feel the pillars. I'm talking about the ones that hold the temple up. I want to lean against them." 27 The temple was crowded with men and women. All of the Philistine rulers were there. About 3,000 men and women were on the roof. They were watching Samson put on a show. 28 Then he prayed to the Lord. He said, "Lord and King, show me that you still have concern for me. God, please make me strong just one more time. Let me pay the Philistines back for what they did to my two eyes. Let me do it with only one blow." 29 Then Samson reached toward the two pillars that were in the middle of the temple. They held the temple up. He put his right hand on one of them. He put his left hand on the other. He leaned hard against them. 30 Samson said, "Let me die together with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might. The temple came down on the rulers. It fell on all of the people who were in it. So Samson killed many more Philistines when he died than he did while he lived.

Discuss Bible Lesson

1 Once again the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord handed them over to the Philistines for 40 years. 2 A certain man from Zorah was named Manoah. He was from the tribe of Dan. Manoah had a wife who wasn't able to have children. 3 The angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife. He said, "You are not able to have children. But you are going to become pregnant. You will have a baby boy. 4 Make sure you do not drink any kind of wine. Also make sure you do not eat anything that is 'unclean.' 5 "You will become pregnant. You will have a son. He must not use a razor on his head. He must not cut his hair. That is because the boy will be a Nazirite. He will be set apart to God from the day he is born. He will begin to save Israel from the power of the Philistines." 24 Later, the woman had a baby boy. She named him Samson. As he grew up, the Lord blessed him.

- Samson is born.
- He was never to have his hair cut.
- He was to save Israel.

4 Some time later, Samson fell in love again. The woman lived in the Valley of Sorek. Her name was Delilah. 5 The rulers of the Philistines went to her. They said, "See if you can get him to tell you the secret of why he's so strong. Find out how we can overpower him. Then we can tie him up. We can bring him under our control. Each of us will give you 28 pounds of silver." 6 So Delilah spoke to Samson. She said, "Tell me the secret of why you are so strong. Tell me how you can be tied up and controlled."

- Samson falls in love with Delilah.
- She takes a bribe from the Philistines to find out what makes Samson so strong.
- How much did Delilah love Samson?

Summarize Judges 16:7-14 – Samson tells Delilah wrong ways of overpowering him: tying him with 7 new leather straps, tying him with new ropes, pin his 7 braids into a loom.

- Why do you think Samson would tell Delilah false reasons for his strength?
- What do you think Samson thought of Delilah during this whole time?
- What was going through his mind as she kept asking him about it?

15 Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you'? You won't even share your secret with me. This is the third time you have made me look foolish. And you still haven't told me the secret of why you are so strong." 16 She continued to pester him day after day. She nagged him until he was sick and tired of it. 17 So he told her everything. "I've never used a razor on my head," he said. "I've never cut my hair. That's because I've been a Nazirite since the day I was born. A Nazirite is set apart to God. If you shave my head, I won't be strong anymore. I'll become as weak as any other man."

- She is tired of him not telling her the truth, so she keeps bugging him about it.
- She uses his feelings for her to trick him.
- He ends up telling her everything.

18 Delilah realized he had told her everything. So she sent a message to the Philistine rulers. She said, "Come back one more time. He has told me everything." So the rulers returned. They brought the silver with them. 19 Delilah got Samson to go to sleep on her lap. Then she called for a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair. That's how she began to bring him under her control. And he wasn't strong anymore. 20 She called out, "Samson! The Philistines are attacking you!" He woke up from his sleep. He thought, "I'll go out just as I did before. I'll shake myself free." But he didn't know that the Lord had left him.

- Notice how it says that "the Lord had left him".
- What really made Samson strong? God! God had been with him!

21 Then the Philistines grabbed hold of him. They poked his eyes out. They took him down to Gaza. They put bronze chains around him. Then they made him grind grain in the prison. 22 His head had been shaved. But the hair on it began to grow again. 23 The rulers of the Philistines gathered together. They were going to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. They were going to celebrate. They said, "Our god has handed our enemy Samson over to us." 24 When the people saw Samson, they praised their god. They said, "Our god has handed our enemy over to us. Our enemy has destroyed our land. He has killed large numbers of our people." 25 After they had drunk a lot of wine, they shouted, "Bring Samson out. Let him put on a show for us." So they called Samson out of the prison. He put on a show for them.

- The Philistines took him captive.
- They poked his eyes out and threw him in prison.
- They were having a party and wanted Samson to put on a show for them...and he does it!!!
- He went from killing to being a court jester!

They had him stand near the temple pillars. 26 Then he spoke to the servant who was holding his hand. He said, "Put me where I can feel the pillars. I'm talking about the ones that hold the temple up. I want to lean against them." 27 The temple was crowded with men and women. All of the Philistine rulers were there. About 3,000 men and women were on the roof. They were watching Samson put on a show.

28 Then he prayed to the Lord. He said, "Lord and King, show me that you still have concern for me. God, please make me strong just one more time. Let me pay the Philistines back for what they did to my two eyes. Let me do it with only one blow."

29 Then Samson reached toward the two pillars that were in the middle of the temple. They held the temple up. He put his right hand on one of them. He put his left hand on the other. He leaned hard against them. 30 Samson said, "Let me die together with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might. The temple came down on the rulers. It fell on all of the people who were in it. So Samson killed many more Philistines when he died than he did while he lived.

- He got the servant to put him in between the 2 pillars that held up the entire temple.
- He prays to God to come back to him. He realizes where his strength comes from! God!
- He pushes on the pillars, they fall, and everyone (including Samson) dies!

Wrap Up:

Samson realized his mistake by not following what God had instructed him to do. This only happened when he was a prisoner. He now had no eyes, so all was dark. All day, and every day, he had to work for his enemies. He made flour from grain (16:21). Samson spoiled his life. He brought dishonor to God. He did this by being worldly in thought and in life. Something was true about Samson. The same thing is true about everyone like Samson. It is this. God's desire is that each one should begin again. Let us think about how Samson defeated his enemies in the end.

Samson was overcome by grace. (This is goodness and kindness to one who does not deserve it.) Hear again those wonderful words of hope. Nobody has to feel despair. 'But Samson's hair began to grow again' (16:22). God gives yet another opportunity. God's grace is so great. He will not refuse to accept us either. Our part is to repent. (This means to turn away from evil and towards God. This choice will mean a complete change of life.)

Samson was overcome by prayer (16:28) 'Most powerful Lord, remember me. God please give me strength one more time.' When we realize our mistake, we should pray immediately. God has promised that he will help us. Samson's prayer ended with 'Let me die' (16:30). By his own death, he overcame his enemies. There is something similar for the Christian. It is probably the only way to escape from being worldly. Jesus spoke to anyone who wanted to go with him. He said: 'that person must accept his cross, and he must follow me. Whoever gives his life for me and for

the Gospel will save it.' God heard Samson's prayer. Samson gave his life. He helped to achieve God's purposes. He brought honor to God.

If time allows boys can sing "Our God Is So Big" (See Handout) before next activity.

Day Three Bible Study- The Story of David

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16 (NIV)

Goal: Students will learn that God sees our hearts and is looking for servants who are faithfully obeying Him in whatever task they have been given.

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." 2 But Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me." The Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' 3 Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate." 4 Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?" 5 Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. 6 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord." 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either." 9 Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the Lord chosen this one." 10 Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The Lord has not chosen these." 11 So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." 12 So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one." 13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

David in Saul's Service

14 Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil[a] spirit from the Lord tormented him. 15 Saul's attendants said to him, "See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. 16 Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the lyre. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes on you, and you will feel better." 17 So Saul said to his attendants, "Find someone who plays well and bring him to me." 18 One of the servants answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of

Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the Lord is with him.” 19 Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, “Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.” 20 So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them with his son David to Saul. 21 David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers. 22 Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, “Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.” 23 Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

Breakdown:

Saul didn't obey God's commands completely and as a result of his rebellion Samuel told him that God had rejected him as the king over Israel. Samuel told Saul (1 Samuel 13:14) that God had found a man after His own heart that He had chosen to be the leader over His people. Samuel was very sad about Saul's rebellion towards God and that he had been rejected as the leader of God's people. Let's turn in our Bibles to 1 Samuel 16:1 and read what the Lord tells Samuel.

It would seem that after Saul had been told that he was rejected as king over Israel he would have repented of his rebellion towards God's commands. Samuel's response to God as he thinks of having to travel through the area where Saul lives tells us a little about Saul's heart at this time. Read the first part of 1 Samuel 16:2. Because Saul did not repent of his sin towards God his actions and attitudes continued to grow more wicked. Most likely he never forgot Samuel's words that God had rejected him as king and had chosen a new king that would replace him. Saul didn't want anyone to replace him as king so he may have kept a close eye on Samuel so that he did not choose this new king. God told Samuel to say that he is going to Bethlehem to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. Samuel was God's servant and offering sacrifices was part of his job. Samuel obeyed God and trusted Him despite his fear of Saul.

When Samuel arrived in Bethlehem he asked the elders (leaders) of the city and Jesse and his sons to get ready for the sacrifice. Let's find out what they needed to do to get ready for the sacrifice in 1 Samuel 16:5. A way to understand what it meant for them to consecrate themselves would be to say that they needed to prepare themselves for the sacrifice by putting on clean clothes and making sure their heart was right before God. As believers we consecrate ourselves when we come before God and confess any known sin. By confessing our sin and searching our hearts we allow Him to cleanse our hearts and prepare our hearts to meet with Him. Do you spend time allowing God to search your heart and confess any known sin before you spend time in worship and prayer?

Jesse and seven of his sons came to the sacrifice. When Samuel took one look at Eliab Jesse's oldest son guess what he thought? Read 1 Samuel 16:6. In the Old Testament being the oldest son was a valuable position to have. The oldest son

received special honor for being the firstborn. Perhaps that may have been one of the reasons Samuel thought this man was the man God had chosen. He also saw Eliab's appearance. It wasn't too long ago that Samuel anointed Saul a very handsome, tall man. Eliab's appearance must have caused Samuel to think he would be a perfect fit to be king.

God saw Eliab differently. Read 1 Samuel 16:7. God saw Eliab's heart and whatever He saw was not what God was looking for in a king. Saul was handsome on the outside but what kind of character did he have? He was disobedient and rebellious to God's commands. His heart was not pleasing to God. A person's character is more important than his/her outward beauty. When you choose friends what is more important to you? Is it more important that they look nice and wear fashionable clothes or do you look for character traits such as honesty, loyalty, kindness, etc.?

Samuel had Jesse bring each of his sons before him. God had not chosen any of these seven sons. This must have been confusing to Samuel so he asks Jesse, "Are these the only sons you have?" Jesse had one more son but he was the youngest and he was out in the fields taking care of the sheep. Sometimes we think that God only wants to use people who seem important. David was not included in the special time with Samuel to offer the sacrifice. It would seem as though his family didn't think he was all that important to invite. But that is not how God saw David. Remember He could see David's heart.

Samuel wanted someone to go and get David from the field and bring him to the sacrifice. He said they would not start until he arrived. David was in the field-tending sheep and had no idea that on this very day he would be chosen to serve as Israel's king. When Samuel sent for David he was found faithfully tending his father's sheep. When you are given an assignment or a chore how would others describe how you do it? Would they say you faithfully worked on the task you were given or were you distracted by other things or just being lazy? God chooses servants to work in His Kingdom who are faithful with whatever task he/she is given to do.

David was brought before Samuel. Let's read 1 Samuel 16:12-13. When Samuel put oil on David's head in the presence of those who were at the sacrifice they were witnesses that David was chosen to be the king of Israel. This did not mean that David would take over the kingdom immediately but in God's timing David would be the next king. How do you think David felt when he was chosen to be the king? How do you think his brothers might have felt that their younger brother who tended sheep was God's choice to be the next king? Remember earlier we read that God sees the heart. God's ways are not man's ways. (Isaiah 55:8-9) God chooses people to serve Him that have faithful, obedient hearts and it confuses people because they think that only popular, attractive, intelligent, gifted, important people should be God's servants. (1 Corinthians 1:27-29)

What do you think David did after Samuel left? How do you think he may have behaved in his home? Do you think he told his father that he no longer would take care of the sheep because he was chosen by God to be the king of Israel? God's Word gives no indication that he behaved in a prideful manner. We can assume that he continued to live his life as he had before faithfully serving as a shepherd until God told him to do otherwise.

Meanwhile we turn our attention to the present king of Israel. What was his name again? (Saul) Because he had a disobedient and rebellious heart God's Spirit was no longer with him. Instead, he was tormented by an evil spirit. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit had not been sent into the hearts of believers. That happened on the day of Pentecost after Jesus returned back to heaven (Acts 2). In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit would come upon people but didn't stay. As believers we have received the Holy Spirit and He dwells within our hearts and will never depart as He did in the Old Testament (Ephesians 1:13). With that brief explanation we can understand what happened to Saul. He chose to rebel against God and God removed His Spirit from him. If you look back at 1 Samuel 16:13 you will see that God's Spirit had come upon David in power.

God's Spirit brings peace, comfort, courage, wisdom and power to do the things He commands His servants to do. Saul had an evil spirit that tormented him. An evil spirit would bring all the opposite feelings that God's Spirit would bring. Saul was miserable and his servants could see that he was suffering. They suggested to him that he allow them to search for a musician that would play music to help him feel better. Let's read 1 Samuel 16:17-23. As a simple shepherd boy, David had a reputation. As we look at verse 18 what were things that others knew about David? (Skillful in playing, brave man and a warrior and prudent in speech (NKJV) David was faithful in the day to day tasks he was given and over time his reputation was known by many people. As a result of having a good reputation in Bethlehem he was recommended to serve King Saul.

What are some activities that you are involved in? Do you take guitar (or another musical instrument) lessons? Do you practice the amount of time each day that your teacher asks you to? As you faithfully practice your instrument you will become better and better and one day you may use your gift of music to serve God. Maybe you don't take music lessons but you have homework from school. Do you do your homework with your best effort or do you hurry through it so you can do other things? It's important to do your homework to the best of your ability so you can learn and continue to further your education. You don't know what God's plans for your life are right at this moment but you can trust that He has created you for good works (Ephesians 2:10). Whatever task you are given you should do it to the best of your ability so you can serve God in whatever service He calls you into.

David came and served King Saul. Whenever David played his harp the evil spirit would leave King Saul and he would be comforted. David knew God had chosen him

to be king but he still was being faithful to do whatever God asked him to do until it was his time to be the king. This week what attitude or behaviors do you need to change so you can be more like David as he faithfully served God? As we close in prayer ask God to help you to be faithful in whatever task you are given this week.

Review Game:

Divide class into two teams and as each team gets a correct answer they can place an x or o on a tic tac toe board.

- Why was Samuel sad? (Saul was rejected as king)
- What did God tell Samuel to do? (Go to Bethlehem to anoint the king He had chosen)
- Why was Samuel afraid? (He thought Saul would kill him)
- How did Jesse, his sons and the elders prepare for the sacrifice? (Consecrated themselves)
- What does it mean to consecrate yourself? (To be clean and prepared to meet with God)
- Why did God say Eliab was not going to be the king? (He sees the heart not just the outward appearance)
- Where was David when his brothers and dad were at the sacrifice? (Tending sheep)
- Why was Saul tormented? (He was tormented by an evil spirit)
- How did Saul learn about David? (His servants had heard about his reputation of being a skillful musician, brave warrior etc.)

Day Four Bible Study Daniel – Praying Man

Scripture Daniel Chapter 6

6 It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, 2 with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. 3 Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. 4 At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. 5 Finally these men said, “We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.”

6 So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: “May King Darius live forever! 7 The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions’ den. 8 Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.” 9 So King Darius put the decree in writing.

10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. 11 Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. 12 So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: “Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions’ den?” The king answered, “The decree stands—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.” 13 Then they said to the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day.” 14 When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.

15 Then the men went as a group to King Darius and said to him, "Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed." 16 So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

17 A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. 18 Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep. 19 At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. 20 When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

21 Daniel answered, "May the king live forever! 22 My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty." 23 The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. 24 At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. 25 Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth: "May you prosper greatly! 26 "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

"For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. 27 He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." 28 So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Breakdown:

Daniel had an 'extraordinary spirit.' He was different and the evidence of God's presence in his life was clear for all to see and, as the saying goes, the cream always rises to the top and so Daniel soon found himself in a position of authority within the Medo-Persian kingdom, just as he had been within the Babylonian kingdom. Although this time he had a problem... the green eyed monster called 'Jealousy' was rearing its ugly head again, just as it had many times before for God's people. People often don't like people who are different... especially if they can't be controlled. And even more so if they are godly! Well, our good friend Daniel was striking three out of three on those counts. So through no fault of his own, he soon had some pretty powerful enemies. And yet, search as they could, *'they could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.'* What an awesome testimony!

The plan is hatched!

Daniel 6:5-9 Finally these men said, **"We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."** So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever! The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and **enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den.** Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." So King Darius put the decree in writing.

Try as they might, they had nothing on Daniel. So their only option was to change the laws of the land to be in opposition to God's law. An old trick but quite successfully employed even today. In fact it is an old trick that is on the increase today.

So here was Daniel... a man who shone so brightly, others were jealous and decided to try and put that light out. So off to the king they went, saying that 'all' of the kings governors had agreed that for 30 days no one could pray to any other god. Of course, the 'all' didn't include Daniel himself who was strangely left out of this decision! So a fool proof plan was hatched... they thought! It definitely would end with someone doing lunch with lions, but the 'who' is still yet to be determined!

Daniel 6:10-17 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, **he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.** Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?" The king answered, "The decree stands—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." **Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.** Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, "Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed." So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. **The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"** A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed.

Upon hearing of the new decree, Daniel immediately goes home and purposefully disobeys it! Not because he's a rebel... far from it. But God came first in his life and there was nothing that he would let come before his relationship with the Lord. Note also that he doesn't go home to moan at God about his predicament. No, he kneels and gives thanks to God! He also asks God for His help. We need to remember that Daniel was in his early eighties at this stage and as such he was a man with a lifetime of experiencing the faithfulness of his Lord. Because of this, Daniel wasn't freaked out easily! D.L. Moody said that 'character is what you are in the dark.' Well we see from this verse where Daniel's strength lay and who he was when no one was looking. He is unshakeable because of the firm foundation beneath him that held him up... and that is the Lord! But caught red handed he was none the less, practicing that oh so terrible crime of praying to God. The plan had been hatched, the trap had been set, the bait was laid, and it had now sprung on God's servant Daniel. And although the king now realized that he had now been tricked, there was nothing that he could do about it. A decree was a decree and it must be acted upon! So Daniel was thrown into the lions den!

How to shut a lion's mouth!

Daniel 6:18-23 **Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.** At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" **Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight.** Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king." **The king was overjoyed** and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, **no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.**

The king was obviously really concerned for Daniel, and, as someone has once said, fasted for the night hoping the lions would do likewise! There is a very real sense in which this is a picture for us. The New Testament tells us that *'your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith.'* We, like Daniel, need to remain strong in our faith in the midst of our difficulties. It is also important to not give the enemy reason to justifiably condemn us. We read above that Daniel was delivered from the lion because

1) He was innocent in the matter

2) He trusted in his God. As Psalm 34:7 tells us *'The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.'*

From this we can see that faith can shut the mouths of lions. So let me ask you... what lions are you faced with at the moment? What is it that causes you to worry and fear? Sooner or later we will face the lions whether they come in the form of health problems, opposition and slander, financial concerns, persecution... May we learn as Paul did that even if all else falls around our side, the Lord will still stand with us. No doubt the apostle Paul had Daniel 6 in mind when we wrote:

'At my first defence no one supported me, but all deserted me...but the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth.'
(2 Tim 4:17)

God can shut the lion's mouth, in whatever form it comes. Stand firm in your faith.

An amazing testimony of God to all the people

Daniel 6:24-28 **At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land:** "May you prosper greatly! "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom **people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.** "For he is **the living God** and he **endures forever**; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. **He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth.** He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Something usually missing from the Sunday school versions of this story is the judgement that was carried out upon the men (and their families!) who had falsely

accused Daniel. They got to spend a little bit of time with the lions themselves. The scary thing about this is that there were no angels to guard and protect those that didn't fear the Lord! They had been snared in their own trap!

But look also at the result of this trial. We can see that the strength of a person's testimony is proportional to the depth of the trial and the extent of the deliverance. God knows what He is doing if we are asked to endure such a trial. Daniel, as we have read above, was required to go through such a trial... But what a result! Not only had Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon issued an earlier personal testimony to all of the then known world praising the God of Israel (see Daniel 4), but now king Darius of the Medo-Persian kingdom has also issued a decree to all peoples that the God of Daniel must be feared and revered! Awesome! When we are down and are wondering what is happening, let us remember these words of Darius. For he reminds us, as does this whole chapter, that

God is a LIVING God.

God endures FOREVER.

God RESCUES and SAVES.

God PERFORMS WONDERS on our behalf.