Turn to JUDGES 6 (7th book in Bible - right after Joshua)

1. **Next few weeks looking at Judges 6-7**
   A. Watch how God moves Gideon from a state of apathy and lukewarmness
      One who hadn’t seen God move in so long he felt “forsaken”
      1). To one who is spiritually alive - experiencing God - making an impact for God

2. **Why is this study important for us?**
   A. I want to see the same thing happen here at SGCC for each one of us
      1). We want to experience God moving in our lives - in our midst
         We want to make an impact in our community and in this world
         a). We want our lives to count for Him
   B. In Judges 6-7 see principles how God brings this about in the lives of His people
      1). So instructive - may He open our hearts to what the Spirit is saying to us

3. **Background - Judges 6:1-10**
   A. Israel is being disciplined by God because of their sin
      1). He’s handed them over to the Midianites are brutally oppressing them
         They are living in fear - hiding in the mountains and in caves
   B. Eventually they cry out to the Lord for help - deliverance
      1). God answers that cry by raising up Gideon
         To lead Israel in a decisive victory over the forces of Midian
         a). Result = Israel enjoys 40 years of peace under his leadership

   **Transition:** That’s the end result - but how does God work in his life to prepare him?
   A. The story starts in v. 11 - we’ll be jumping around in chapter 6 this morning

4. **Outline**
   A. God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things
   B. Hindering the Power and Presence of God in our life
   C. God does Extraordinary things in ordinary places
   **Transition:** First one very encouraging for ordinary folk like us

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I. **GOD USES ORDINARY PEOPLE TO DO EXTRAORDINARY THINGS**

**INTRO:** Gideon was a very ordinary man - nothing unusual at all
A. Not mega-talented - ultra-charismatic type - oozing self-confidence
   He’s fearful - timid - uncertain - Kind of like US
   **Transition:** Let’s look at this man God chooses to use - encouraging

1. **Gideon was a fearful - timid man**
   A. This is characteristic that surfaces most in this chapter
Jdg 6:11 (ESV) Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth (Oak tree) 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.**

1). You don’t thresh wheat in a wine press - But that's where we find Gideon - Why?
   a). He’s hiding because he’s afraid of the Midianites
   b). When they would plant their crops the Midianites would take them

B. V. 14 angel tells Gideon God wants to use him and assures him “God Himself is going to send you”

1). Does he reply “Fantastic! Can’t wait!” - No - only has excuses why can’t be used

Jdg 6:15 (ESV) 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.”

C. Later timidity crops up again - God commands him to destroy an idol in father’s house

Jdg 6:27 (ESV) So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him. **But because he was too afraid** of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

**Point:** I want to encourage all who aren’t Spiritual Rambo’s - not afraid of anything

A. God calls ordinary, timid, fearful people just like us to work through - You qualify

**Transition:** Let’s see another characteristic we can probably relate to

2. **Gideon was an uncertain man**

A. Vs 14 and 16 - God says I’m going to use you Gideon to deliver my people from Midian
   1). I am sending you AND I will be with you

B. Gideon’s response - wants to make sure it’s God speaking to him = reasonable

Jdg 6:17 (ESV) 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.

1). V. 21 Angel confirms it’s God in miraculous way

2). Gideon is CONVINCED he’s dealing with God

Jdg 6:22 (ESV) Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon said, **“Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face.”**

**Thought:** But he’s uncertain - unstable - doubt creeps back in

A. This is where famous story of Gideon’s fleece occurs

B. He says “I NEED something more - another sign”
   1). Lay wool fleece on ground - if fleece gets wet but ground stays dry

   I’ll know this is from God - you have called me to this work and it will succeed

   2). God does it - Now the issue must be settled in his mind - NO!

C. Just in case that was a coincidence - let’s reverse it
   1). This time fleece stays dry - ground gets wet - AGAIN God does it

**Thought:** I love this about God - He’s calling Gideon out of comfort zone into service

A. He understands Gideon’s not a hero at this point - has a lot of fear
   1). So He doesn’t get man - patiently works with him - moving him along gently
B. Is there is anybody here - experiencing this same thing
   1). You feel that tug to do something that frightens you
      You’ve asked God to confirm it - He has - You’ve asked again - He has
   2). He’s been so patient - kind with you
      a). But like with Gideon there comes time you have to trust and step out
         If God is calling you - it really is a matter of obedience

Transition: But what can hold us back from stepping out?
A. I see something Gideon does we’re all prone to - something that hinders us

3. **Gideon misunderstood the enabling that comes WITH the call of God**

   A. God tells Gideon “I want to use you - I am sending you - I will be with you”
      1). This is why you’ll succeed - Not because of you - Because of ME!
         a). Principle - God always enables us to do what He calls us to do

   B. Notice where Gideon’s focus is - On God? NO! On SELF!
      **Jdg 6:15 (ESV)** And he said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? (Here’s the reason why I can’t) Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.”
      1). He hears call - immediately looks at his own abilities to see if he can do it
         a). Obvious conclusion will ALWAYS be - No thanks! This CAN’T WORK
            I’m not gifted enough - spiritual enough - talented enough… SO NO!

   C. This is exactly what Moses did when God called him to lead Israel out of Egypt
      1). Moses does the same thing - immediately fixes eyes on self
         **Ex 3:11 (ESV)** But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”
      2). God says “I’ll be with you - you’re not going alone”
         Then explains that he would be God’s spokesman - “Here is what you are to say”
         a). Again Moses can only see his inadequacies - why this CAN’T WORK
            **Ex 4:10 (ESV)** But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.”
         b). Many believe Moses stuttered
            “Lord, I think you’ve called the wrong boy to be your spokesman. You could do much better. I don’t talk so good!”

      4). Notice God’s reply - Remember this whenever God calls you into something
         **Ex 4:11–12 (ESV)** Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.”
         a). Moses when was any of this EVER dependent upon your abilities?
            The only thing I want is your availability
         b). You JUST GO! Trust me to enable you to do what I’ve called you to do
Point: Way it always works - You’re NOT adequate to do what God has called you to do

Paul put it this way: 2 Co 3:5–6 (ESV) Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, (6) who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant...

Thought: Here is A KEY you need to understand in serving God
A. When God calls you - it’s usually a call out of comfort zone - into things beyond us - new
   1). There is usually a sense of inadequacy - regardless of your education - training
      a). There are still so many NEW things you haven’t done = scary
   2). Therefore it will ALWAYS take faith to step into God’s calling
      Trusting Him to enable us to do what He’s called us to do - whatever will arise
B. Encouraging thing - I’ve noticed in my life - and we’ll see it in Gideon’s
   1). God develops us along the way - AS WE OBEY - as we step out in obedience

Transition: To see this dynamic in action - look at v. 12

4. Mighty warrior - What!

Jdg 6:12 (ESV) And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.”

Jdg 6:12 (NIV) … “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.”

A. God sees Gideon much differently than Gideon sees himself
   1). He’s anything but a MIGHTY WARRIOR at this point
      He’s afraid - timid - hiding in a wine press threshing wheat
B. What’s happening here? God is looking beyond what Gideon is at THAT moment
   1). He sees what he’s GOING to become through God’s work in him
C. AS HE steps out in obedience in answer to God’s call
   1). God’s going to transform this weak - timid man into a MIGHTY WARRIOR
   2). God will be directing each step - each circumstance - each trial - each test
      a). Using them to train him - strengthen his faith - remove his independence
   3). AS HE GOES Gideon will become the kind of man he needs to be

Point: God loves to do this - take ordinary people - transform them and use them
A. I wonder how many He sees this morning and says “Mighty warrior”
   1). But all you can see is your own inadequacies - your own weakness
B. But if you will take the risk - step out into His plan
   1). He will change you - transform you - use you
      a). Your Christianity that can seem so dull will come alive
      God will be more real in your life
      b). This is exactly what we will see with Gideon next week!!
C. This is my prayer - this church will be filled with risk takers
   Who will say to God “You tell me what to do and I’ll do it”
   1). I don’t want to settle for mediocrity - I want to KNOW your power
   I’m tired of letting my fear and inadequacies stop me
a). I’m ready to follow you - trusting you every step of the way
2). What could God do with a church filled with people like that? Let’s find out!

**Transition:** So God uses ordinary folk like Gideon - like you and me

**A.** Who are willing to trust God - step into His plan
   Even though we see how inadequate we are - we trust Him to enable us

**B.** I want to show you one thing that I really like in Gideon’s character - very positive trait

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### GIDEON’S GOOD DESIRE

#### 1. Interesting response to God’s encouraging word

**Jdg 6:12 (ESV)** And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.”

**His Response:** **Jdg 6:13 (ESV)** And Gideon said to him, “Please, sir, 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.”

“If the Lord is with me THEN why am I living in fear of the Midianites? Why am I threshing wheat in a wine press? Where are all the wonderful deeds our fathers told us about when God was with them? You want to know how I feel? I feel abandoned by God. Forsaken!”

**A.** He just wants something real - not willing to settle for mere words
   Nice words about God when He isn't experiencing God at all! No thanks - not interested

**B.** He remembers another time when Israel was being oppressed by Egypt
   What it looked like when God was with them
   1). He recalls Moses challenging Pharaoh - “Let my people go”
      When Pharaoh refuses - He remembers how God bent him to do His will
   2). How Israel was delivered by the mighty hand of God = 10 plagues
      How His power was seen at the Red Sea as it opened up for God’s people
   3). He looks around at what he’s experiencing and says
      “God is with me?… look at my experience - sure doesn’t seem like it”

**Point:** I love what Gideon is saying here - I WANT SOMETHING REAL

**A.** I don’t want to settle for spiritual sayings - clichés - that have no reality behind them

**B.** If God is with me I want it to change my life - I want to experience Him and His power!

1). All I can say is AMEN Gideon! I desire reality - really experiencing God
   a). I don’t just want to talk about Him being my Father - me His child
      I want to experience all that means - the intimacy - security - love
   b). I don’t want to just talk about His power - I want more of it in my life
   1a). I don’t want religion - I want something real

**Transition:** There’s something that could be holding this back? I see two things in Judges 6
II. HINDERING THE POWER AND PRESENCE OF GOD IN OUR LIFE

1. Lack of prayer

Jdg 6:7 (ESV) When the people of Israel cried out to the LORD on account of the Midianites,
A. See over and over in Scripture - when God’s people finally cry out to Him - THEN He moves in power
B. How many revivals start like that? - small group of people gather - desperate for God
   “This is NOT good enough - we NEED YOU”
   Like Isaiah: “Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down…”
   1). God move amongst us - forgive our sin - wake us up
   2). Visit us in soul converting - addiction breaking - family restoring
      Sin conquering - Heart igniting POWER

Thought:  God has commanded His people to pray without ceasing - but we have ceased to pray
A. Is it any wonder why we don’t experience Him as we should?
   Is it any wonder why the church seems so weak today?
B. I’m praying God will call us all to prayer - THEN He will move!

Roy Hession: Revival is not going down the street with a big drum; it is going back to Calvary with a big sob.
   1). God move us to do that! NO PRAYER = NO POWER

2. Lack of obedience - Sin - keeps us from experiencing God

A. Gideon wanted to know why they weren’t seeing God moving in Israel - God tells us
   Jdg 6:1 (ESV) 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.
   Jdg 6:10 (ESV) 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.”
   1). The sin of the people was keeping them from experiencing God - Always does
   2). See same exact thing in Isaiah 64:7

   Isa 64:7 (NIV) No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins.

Point: There is a cost to experiencing God and being used
A. It costs us our sin - our idols - Putting God first

Transition: This is exactly what we see in Gideon’s life - but notice where it starts

OBEDIENCE STARTS IN GIDEON’S HEART AND IN HIS HOME

Jdg 6:25 (ESV) That night the LORD said to him, “Take your father’s bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it
A. Before God could use him - he had to do something in his own heart - in his own home
   1). He had to remove an idol that was competing for the affections of his heart
   a). To be used by God greatly - God would have to be Number 1
**Point:** So we start with our own heart - we start in our own home

A. How do I act there? How do I treat my spouse?
   Is there holiness behind those closed doors when nobody is looking?

B. God says before I can use you in the world - I need to make some corrections in the home
   1). Start there - deal with the sin there

C. So easy to talk about being God's mighty man in the world
   1). A lot harder to be holy/loving in the home - but that's where it starts

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**GIDEON'S RESPONSE**

**Jdg 6:27 (ESV)** So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

A. Notice he's still afraid - trembling - but he chooses to obey

**Thought:** How important this choice of obedience is?

A. He says “NO” = whole process ends right there
   1). Keeps living in fear and oppression - feeling abandoned by God

B. OR he says “YES” and enters into a process where God begins to transform him
   1). He begins to come alive spiritually - begins to experience God wonderfully
   2). His life begins to count for eternity - He lives the adventure!!!
      a). So much hinged on this decision!

C. If God is dealing with you in an area - let Him! Obey Him! Trust Him
   1). You want to experience him - a PERSONAL revival in YOUR life
      a). You must let Him deal with your sin - obedience is essential

**Transition:** God uses ordinary people - where does He use them at?

A. We can study this and tune out - Doesn’t affect me - I'll never be used to deliver a nation
   1). I’m not even in full time ministry - what does this mean to me?

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**III. GOD DOES EXTRAORDINARY THINGS IN ORDINARY PLACES**

1. **He wants to use you right where He’s placed you**

A. He has you in your neighborhood - your job - your school for a reason
   1). Much more than just to earn a paycheck - get an education

B. He has you there as His ambassador - representing Him
   He has you there as a full-time missionary reaching others for Him

**Point:** He wants to do extraordinary things through ordinary people in those ordinary places

A. Jesus goes to a well in Samaria (John 4) - ordinary sort of thing
   1). Strikes up conversation - she’s saved - whole village affected
   2). That’s the way to live! He’s excited
      a). Disciples return after getting food “Rabbi eat something”


**His reply: Jn 4:32 (ESV)** “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”

1a). I think He’s saying - I’ve been FEASTING spiritually! I’m satisfied
The Father’s just used me! A person has just been saved!

B. And THAT can happen anywhere - supermarket - gym - pumping gas (tracts)
1). God can use us in so many exciting ways - in so many different ordinary places
   If we’ll just start looking for the opportunities He brings our way
   a). Seeing ourselves as missionaries here - ambassadors
2). Let’s not waste our life only on the things of this world
   a). God uses ordinary people in ordinary places to do extraordinary things
   b). That place you spend most of your time is a MISSION field
   He wants to fill your time there with purpose

**Transition:** What have we seen about God preparing Gideon for service so far?

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**CONCLUSION**

1. **God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things**
   A. Feel so ordinary? GREAT! You qualify

2. **God uses ordinary people who are serious about Him**
   A. Let’s get serious about prayer - crying out to Him - Lord move in power
   1). Move in a way that amazes us - stuns us - like we see you move in the Bible
      a). In a way that leaves us with no doubt **YOU** have done something
      That that was done by the hand of God!
   2). God call us as a church to trust you for great things
      a). For things that go beyond our abilities - our resources
      **F. B. Meyer:** We never test the resources of God until we attempt the impossible.
      1a). But that’s out of comfort zone - we like to plan well within our resources
      Never attempting anything that is beyond what WE CAN DO
      2a). That’s not faith - that’s not God honoring - God glorifying
   B. Let’s get serious about obedience and holiness
      1). We saw so much hinges on this
      a). Gideon could continue on like he was - in fear - boring rut
      b). Or He could put himself into a place where he begins to see God move
      A place of growth - change - adventure

3. **God uses ordinary people in ordinary places to do extraordinary things**
   A. He wants to take us from a place of indifference - apathy - carnality
   1). Deal with those issues that hold Him back - if there are any there
B. Then He wants to cut us loose in those places HE HAS placed us
   1). Turning the mundane into something that has eternal purposes
   2). Where we’re no longer just going through the motions of life
      But were really living life - where He is involved
         a). He sends us into the work place - neighborhood - school AND He goes with us
C. Then He will also begin to call some of you to minister in other ways
   1). Gary and Stella in the retirement village
   2). Chris and Mary Jane going to the Philippines
   3). Who knows what He will do with you - can’t wait to find out!

Summary: He uses ordinary people - WE qualify!
A. Now we need to get serious about Him - Prayer - Obedience - Word - holiness
   1). So we can be used!
B. Where do we start to be used - right where we’re at - don’t wait for a mission trip
   1). Start looking for opportunities in your daily life
      To begin to do extraordinary things in the ordinary places - affairs of life