



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

God is Our Rescuer Series, Lesson 20

Lesson Title: Who Will Take a Stand for the Living God?

Take Home Point: Put God first.

Warm-Up:

Most of us know the accounts of how Christians were cruelly killed in the Coliseum in Rome by fire, starving beasts, or gladiators. But did you know that the Coliseum persecution killings were stopped by one man who took a stand for the Lord? One day as the "games" were underway, a man named Telemachus jumped from the stands and cried out for Caesar to stop it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. So shocked was everyone that all paused and turned to see what Caesar would do. Caesar gestured "thumbs down", and a gladiator killed Telemachus on the spot. Telemachus died, but from that day on, the "sport" murder of Christians in the Coliseum stopped.

Read: Judges 6:1-32

Observation (What happened?):

Why did the angel of the Lord say Gideon would defeat the Midianites?

How did Gideon obey God in preparation for leading Israel, even though it caused hostility among other Israelites?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why do you think the Lord visited Gideon directly to declare him as the one who would lead Israel against the Midianites?

Why do you think Joash wasn't upset about his son's actions in tearing down and burning the center of his idol worship?

Insight:

It is common to find that people view the God of the Old Testament as different from the God of the New Testament. But the Bible is remarkably consistent from front to back in both the revealed character of God and how he deals with individuals. For example, in this week's reading in Judges, Gideon is directed to destroy an idol prior to leading Israel in throwing off the oppression of the Midianites. How different is that from the words of Jesus in the parable of the servants in Matthew 25? The angel of the Lord agreed to give Gideon a sign to prove he was from God. How different is that from the response Jesus gave to Peter's request in Matthew 14? God's patience, mercy, and power to act in his name are always the same, as real now as it was then.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

Is God calling you to turn away from an idol receiving more of your attention, energy, and resources than your relationship to him? What are you going to do about it?

Where is God directing you to take a public stand for him in a world hostile to his truth?