THE HIGH COST OF LOW LIVING

**DATE: 6/2/2013 pm**

**TEXT: Judges 6:1-10**

**INTRODUCTION**

As we move through the book of Judges, a clear pattern emerges

The children of Israel would serve God as long as they had a Strong Leader

When that Leader passed, they fell back into sin

When they sinned, God used the pagan nations to chasten them

He allowed their enemies to afflict and oppress them …

To show them ***… “The High Price of Low Living”***

In **chapter 6** we are introduced to a man named Gideon

His name means *he who cuts down*

Gideon is an unlikely choice to be a Deliverer

Look at **v.11**

When Gideon appears, he is hiding in fear of Israel’s enemies

Gideon was guilty of being both, Fearful and Faithless

But he was God’s choice to be the next judge of Israel

And we’ll find, that God uses him in a wonderful way

But before we get into the specifics of Gideon’s Ministry

We are going to consider these first 10 verses

These verses set the stage for his ministry

They also hold some Powerful Lessons

These verses serve as a parable that speaks about …

***“The High Cost of Low Living”***

They teach the Great Truth … that Disobedience to the will of God …

Carries a price higher than we would ever want to pay

Let’s pray and then notice the *lessons* that we can learn

… And how they can be applied to our daily lives

As I preach on the subject -

***“The High Cost of Low Living”***

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. THE “SIN THEY EMBRACED” – v.1a**

The Bible simply says that **“*the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord*”**

We don’t know what their sin was …

But I would guess that it was the same sin they had been guilty of in the past

**Judges 2:19; 3:5-7 …**

- They were prone to walking in their foolish ways

- They were guilty of falling into the same trap

Israel was surrounded by pagan nations with false gods

They were surrounded by people who were continually trying to draw them away from God

As long as Israel had strong leadership, they were able to live right

When that leadership was gone, they wandered away from the Lord

The people of Israel were weak; they had trouble staying right with the Lord

**A.** Let’s not be too hard on them, though …

For I’m preaching to people who have the same problem

Every one of us deals with certain areas of weakness

There are areas where we seem to be in a constant struggle for righteousness

**Hebrews 12:1** refers to these areas as -

**“*the sin which doth so easily beset us*”**

The words **“*easily beset*”** means *to skillfully surround*

Our old natures love sin

Our enemy, Satan, is shrewd

He knows how to exploit our weaknesses

He knows how to Entice us and Draw us away unto evil

Satan can lay a trap for us because he knows what makes us tick

**II Timothy 2:25, 26 …**

**James 1:12-16 …**

**B.** Every person here has an area that causes them trouble

Areas where we are weak

- Some have problems with their language

- Some have problems with stubbornness and submission

- Some have problems with gossip

- Some have issues with immoral thoughts

- Some have a tendency toward alcohol and drugs

People struggles in many different areas

- We all know where we are weak

- We know, that given the right circumstances …

We would have trouble overcoming temptation

**C.** If we want to succeed in the fight with our old natures

Then there are a few definite steps we need to take

**1.** Don’t Play near the Trap

If you know there is an area of danger in your life

Stay away from that danger

Joseph –

**Genesis 39:12 – *“And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out”***

**II Timothy 2:22 – *“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart”***

**Ephesians 4:27** – ***“Neither give place to the devil”***

Satan is out to get us, so keep your distance

**I Peter 5:8 – *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”***

**2.** Look for the Avenue of Escape

**I Corinthians 10:13 – *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”***

God will make a way out, but it is up to us to use it!

**3.** Learn to Consider yourself Dead to Sin and its Influences

**Romans 6:11 – *“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord”***

**Colossians 3:3-5 …**

**4.** Determine in your heart to serve God and Him only

**Romans 6:13 – *“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God”***

**I Corinthians 6:19, 20 …**

Sin is a constant problem for every saint

But it does not have to Dominate and Control our lives

We can have victory through our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ

**Romans 6:7 – *“For he that is dead is freed from sin”***

**THE “SIN THEY EMBRACED”**

**II. THE “SUFFERING THEY ENDURED” – vs. 1b – 6**

Our text chronicle the terrible price Israel paid for their foolishness in leaving God out

What they suffered serves to remind us, that we to, will not get away with it!

We might think we can get by

We might think no one will find out

The truth is, God knows, and in His time …

… He may expose it for what it is

**Numbers 32:23 – *“But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out”***

**Luke 12:1-3…**

Let’s examine what Israel endured because of their Disobedience

As we do, let’s remember that the same judgment, or worse, might come upon us, if we fail to live for the Lord

**A. They Suffered ‘Invasion’ – vs. 1b -2a**

Israel was oppressed by the Midianites

Israel’s History with the Midianites

**1.** The Midianites were the descendants of Abraham just like the Israelites were

They descended from a man named Midian

Midian was the son of Abraham and Keturah

**Genesis 25:1-6**

Abraham married Keturah after Sarah died

The Midianites appear from time to time in the Bible

**2.** Moses married a Midianite woman

Her name was Zipporah

He married her after he fled from Egypt

**Exodus 2:21** – ***“And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter”***

**3.** Midian and Balaam

In Numbers, the Midianites were counseled by Balaam to seduce the Israelite men and turn their hearts toward idols

It worked and over 24,000 Israelites died as a result

**Numbers 25**

**4.** The word **“*Midian*”** means *strife*

The Midianites are a clear picture of the conflict we have with the world

They are a picture of a corrupt world …

… And its desire to draw us away from God

The only reason the Midianites had power over the people of God

Was because the people of God were unfaithful to the Lord

Their disobedience lowered the wall of separation between them and the world

Israel got into trouble because they refused to walk with the Lord

**Truth:** When we won’t stay close to God …

... And live according to His Word,

We open doors and most often

Our troubles come directly from our foolish decisions

Our disobedience translates into weakness

Our weakness invites the enemy to attack us

Our weakness often results in our being Invaded, Attacked, and Overrun by the world, the flesh, the Devil

**They Suffered ‘Invasion’**

**B. They Suffered ‘Imprisonment’ – v.2**

The oppression of Israel by the Midianites resulted in Israel losing its will to fight

They ran away and hid in the mountains while the enemy overran their land

Their Disobedience made them weak

It caused them to lose their will to fight

It left them utterly defeated!

**Truth:** When we allow sin to reign over us, we’ll find the same thing is true

Sin robs us of our character

It leaves us unwilling and unable to fight

When we allow sin to rule in our hearts …

We become Listless, Lifeless and Lethargic in our Christian life

Sin causes us to hide in fear while the enemy takes everything we value!

People have allowed their carnal life styles to dominate

They have lost their will and ability to fight against sin

We are prisoners of our own life styles

We hide in fear from actions we think we cannot control

The fact is, Jesus has the power to set you free

**John 8:36 – *“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed”***

But, at the same time, you cannot hide in fear of your sin and enjoy the Lord’s freedom!

If you’re to be free, you must deal with your sin!

- We must confess it

**Proverbs 28:13 – *“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy”***

**I John 1:9 – *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”***

- We must repent of it

**Luke 13:5 – *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”***

- We must forsake it

You can be free, but you must be pro-active

It simply doesn’t just happen by itself

**They Suffered ‘Invasion’**

**They Suffered ‘Imprisonment’**

**C. They Suffered ‘Impoverishment’ – vs. 3-6**

**v. 6** tells us that Israel was **“*impoverished*”**

This word means *to make slack or feeble*

It comes from a root word that was used to speak of …

“*a bucket dangling from the end of a rope*”

It’s a picture of Helplessness and Hopelessness

It’s were we get the phrase *“at the end of your rope”*

It’s a picture of a people at the very end of themselves

Israel saw everything they loved taken away from them

- We see in **v.3** they planted their fields, and their enemies came and took away their crops

- In **v.4** they saw all of the livestock taken away

They were left with no sustenance

They were literally made weak

They were literally “*at the end of their rope*”

Everything they valued was taken from them

Everything they needed to sustain life was gone

They were left with nothing!

**Truth:** That’s what sin does!

It strips us of everything we Value and everything we Live for

It leaves us slack, weak, at the very end of our rope

If you choose to live your life your own way …

Don’t be surprised when you look around and see the things you value taken from you

- Some people have chosen sin over a spouse and their marriage is gone

- Some people raise their children to be the best, have the best and do the best, but they fail to raise & teach them to love the Lord

Often, those same parents see their children walk away from the Lord

- Some people live for material things, forgetting that this material world is transient

When they end this life, they have nothing!

- Some people are caught up in getting their own way all the time

They forget that they’re stepping on the feelings and needs of others to get there

There may come a time when people like that will look around and find that they are all alone!

I don’t know what you are investing in today?

But I do know that investing in anything but Jesus, pays dividends you don’t want to reap

**Galatians 6:7, 8 – *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”   
“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”***

I do know that investing in Jesus, pays off in dividends that are eternal

**Matthew 6:19-21…**

Where are you investing?

**THE “SIN THEY EMBRACED”**

**THE “SUFFERING THEY ENDURED”**

**III. THE “SECURITY THEY EVADED” – vs. 7-10**

When the oppression of Israel became too great, they again called on the Lord

And Again, God heard their cry

Isn’t God gracious to us?!!!

- No matter how many times we fail Him

- No matter how many times we go our own way

He is always there to Forgives, Receive, and Restore us...

That is His promise to His people

**I John 1:9 – *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”***

Thank God for His Grace, Faithfulness and Mercy!

God heard their cry – **vs. 8-10**

But He did not give them a deliverer immediately

God sent them an unnamed prophet instead

He sent them *a man of God* with *a word from Heaven*

- This prophet’s message was designed to remind them of who they were

- It was a message designed to confront their Failure in light of God’s Faithfulness

- The prophet’s message was designed to remind them of how good the Lord had been to them

- It was designed to remind them how they should have been living because of their relationship with the Lord

Let’s examine this message

**A. They Are Reminded of God’s ‘Deliverance’ – vs. 8b-9a**

God had supernaturally delivered them from their bondage in Egypt

God gave them a deliverer named Moses

God demonstrated His power over the Egyptian gods through the plagues

God parted the Red Sea, and allowed them to walk over on dry ground

If for nothing else, they should have been faithful to God because of His grace and salvation in their lives

**Truth:** God’s grace has been even more real in your life and mine!

He has never sent plagues for me

He has never parted a sea for me

- But, He did give His Son on a cross for me!

- He did put me in His plan before the world began

- He did love me in spite of my sin

- He save me when I wasn’t even looking for Him

- He change my life when I called on Him by faith

For that reason alone, He deserves my Faithfulness, my Love and my Devotion

- I shouldn’t have to be coddled to get me to come to church

- I shouldn’t get upset when I don’t get my way all the time

- I shouldn’t whine, gripe and complain about my lot in life

- I shouldn’t have to be begged to serve the Lord

I was on my way to Hell when He saved me by grace!

He should have my absolute, undivided attention!

Think back to how the Lord saved your soul!

Does the fact that He saved you mean anything to you?

It should mean everything!

**They Are Reminded of God’s ‘Deliverance’**

**B. They Are Reminded of God’s ‘Deeds’ – v. 9b**

Not only did God deliver them from Egypt …

But God went with them every step of the way

He Drove out their enemies, He Led them, He Fed them

He never Failed them, even when they Failed Him

He gave them a good land and blessed them far beyond what they deserved

They should have been faithful to Him because of His blessings on their lives!

**Truth:** Look around! Look back! Look up! Look in!

All around, we can see the evidence of God’s blessings in our lives

He has been good to us!

He has blessed us Materially, Physically, Financially, and best of all, Spiritually

He has been faithful to us and He has given us the best!

I believe that we ought to be faithful to Him out of gratitude for all the things He has done for us!

I wouldn’t have anything if it wasn’t for the Lord!

Every good thing in my life has come to me through His hand

**James 1:16, 17 – *“Do not err, my beloved brethren”   
“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning”***

Look at your blessings, Name them one by one!

Hasn’t the Lord been good to you?

Doesn’t He deserve your best in return?

What if He took it all away today?

I would hope I still would say that I am blessed

He has been so good to me!

**They Are Reminded of God’s ‘Deliverance’**

**They Are Reminded of God’s ‘Deeds’**

**C. They Are Reminded of God’s ‘Demands’ – v.10**

God reminds them that He, not the gods of the pagans, is their God

His words here remind us that He is a **“*jealous*”** God

**Exodus 20:5; 34:14**

***“Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me”***

***“For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God”***

He will not allow those He has redeemed to go after other gods

Israel is made to see that they are suffering because they failed to keep God in first place

They have allowed other things to come ahead of Him

And now they are paying a high price for their low living

**Truth:** God has not changed! He is still a jealous God

If He has chosen you, saved you by grace and entered into a special relationship with you

He expects you to live for Him alone

- He does not expect that you will live for yourself

- He does not expect that you will live for things

He expects that you will Walk with Him, Love Him and Live according to His will

When you do, He will bless you greatly

When you don’t; there is a price to pay

If you belong to the Lord, you can expect to pay a high price when you live below His standards

**Revelation 3:19 –** *“****As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent”***

**Hebrews 12:6-12 …**

Look at your life right now, Who’s first in your life?

If it is anyone or anything other than God, you are headed for trouble!

**CONCLUSION**

Low Living carries a High Price!

I hope this stand has a Warning to us

What price are you willing to pay for your own way?

Whatever it is, it’s not worth what it will cost you in the long run!

If the Lord has spoken to your heart about any area of life,

Maybe it would be a good time to bring it to Him

- Are you saved?

- Are you living close?

- Are you living clean?

- Are you faithful?

I think this is a good time to have an invitation

Come to Him right now and deal with the areas of your life that He has spoken to you about!

**THE “SIN THEY EMBRACED”**

**THE “SUFFERING THEY ENDURED”**

**THE “SECURITY THEY EVADED”**