

The Lord Laughs

16 - God's Covert Agents
Church on the Park | Father's Day Sunday, 4 SEPT 2016

Text: Judges 7:9-14; Psalm 2:1-8

Theme: The Lord uses silly things to sabotage his enemies.

Intro: After sharing about the weapon of the trumpet, I was planning to talk about the other two weapons today: the empty vessels and torches. However, the wind of the Spirit blew me backwards to Judges 7:9-14. In this part of Gideon's story we hear a dream from the enemy's camp. This whole dream reminds me of the movie Inception, when one of the characters is trying to put a seed of thought in someone else through a dream. In this passage, God puts the seed of thought in the Midian camp through a dream. Dreams are a way of God going undercover to bypass the walls we put up to hear him. It also shows he's Lord, whether you are awake or asleep.

1) The Lord has a sense of humour and even is pictured as laughing in Psalm 2 (Psalm 2:4; Judges 7:13-14).

- In our passage, we see a very **humorous dream** that God uses to put fear in the enemy.
- The Father speaks through **dreams**, but **not all dreams** are from him (Judges 7:13-14).
- Here's the **situation**: In Judges 7:9-14 Gideon is on a **spy mission**.
 - It was through this **undercover intel** that Gideon would receive the **final confirmation** that God would give him victory
 - "Behold, I had a **dream**; a **loaf of barley bread** was tumbling into the camp of Midian, and it came to the tent and struck it so that if fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat" (Judges 7:13).
 - As I said before, this is a very **funny dream**. *Why would anyone be afraid of a rolling barley loaf?*
 - Its **ironic** that this **silly, weak** and **funny** dream puts **fear** into the Midians.
 - *Why should they fear?* They have an army as numerous as the sand on the seashore. And a little loaf of bread destroys them.
- Many years ago I was praying about whether I should go down to **Lithgow**, NSW to hear **Art Katz** in person. I was blessed by his ministry, but didn't know him yet. *So, I was asking God whether he wanted me to go.*
 - To be honest, I was quite **afraid**. *Would he see me and rebuke me? Maybe he won't even talk to me?* So, I was thinking - **I better not go** down and see him.
 - And if I did that, I would have missed one of the **most precious relationships** I have had in God's Kingdom.
 - Then, the Lord gave me a **dream**. I was walking down a path with Art Katz and he had his arm around me. I took that as God speaking to me to go.
 - And guess what happen? When I met him we immediately had a **bond**. And then during the camp I was invited on the walk and then he put his arm around me as we were walking.
 - He also said something that helped **affirmed** me because at that time it seemed like so many people were attacking and slandering me. He look at me and in front of a couple witnesses said, "Behold, an Israelite in whom there is no guile."
- Again, God **speaks** through **dreams** and yet not all dreams are from God (Jer. 23:25, 32; Ecc. 5:3, NIV)
 - "A **dream** comes when there are many **cares**, and many words mark the speech of a fool" (Ecc. 5:3, NIV)
 - With dreams you need to **extract** the **precious** from the **worthless**.
 - It's like **sifting** for **gold**. Most of your dreams will probably just be from **yourself**.
 - Some of them the **enemy** trying to attack your thoughts.
 - But, a small **remnant** may be the **Father** getting your attention.
 - This whole subject of **dreams** is both **delightful** and **dangerous**.

- There is **no rule book** or **interpretation** guide, even though men have tried to make it a science. The only true **guide** we have is **Scriptural examples**.
- **Let's look at the barley loaf in this dream...**

2) Bread is so fragile that a little child can break it into pieces, and yet so powerful that it can feed nations (Judges 7:13-14).

- What at first may seem **weak** and **silly** may be quite **profound**.
- This **silly dream** of a **barley loaf conquering** one of the **greatest armies** teaches us a few things:
 - First, realise that the **enemy** is not **as strong** as you **think** he is.
 - His main **weapons** are **fear**, **intimidation**, **lies** and **accusations**. He **twists** words and **confuses**. He **tempts** people to disobey God.
 - He only has **power** as the **Lord lets** him. He's like a dog on a leash.
 - Second, God uses **the weak things of this world** to confound the wise (1 Cor. 1:26-31).
 - "His friend replies, 'This is nothing less than **the sword of Gideon** the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given Midian and all the camp into his hand'" (Judges 7:14).
 - In the same way, the **enemy** knows his time is **short (Rev. 12:12)**.
 - "Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you?" (Acts 19) - the enemy **knew Gideon**
 - Third, this **dream** is **not as silly as it first sounds**.
 - **Gideon** is a **barley loaf**. It sounds very **funny**, but it's also very **profound**.
 - Why?
 - Because, the **Lord** is like a **baker** and he needs to **knead** the **dough** for it to **arise**.
 - You need to let God do a **work in** you to **enable** you to **arise** and be a **threat** to the enemy's camp.
 - God wants to use us to **destroy** the **works** of the enemy, but we need to let the Lord **make** us.
 - Gideon **allowed** the **Lord** to **make** him.
 - At the end of this story Gideon returned to the camp of Israel and said, "**ARISE**, for the Lord has given the camp of Midian into your hands."
 - *Why does a baker knead dough?* To make it **soft**, **smooth** and **elastic** so that it may rise. The baker also is **working** the **yeast** into **every corner** of the dough.
 - *And what's the process of kneading?*
 - **Kneading** is a **repetitive process**. The baker **presses**, **stretches**, **folds** and **turns** the dough **continually**. This makes the dough **soft**, **silky**, **elastic** and able to keep its **form**.
 - It's very easy for you to get **tired** of the **process**.
 - Before you can do a work for God, you need to let God do his work in your life. First, God's work **in you** and then God's work **through you**.
 - "Another story. '**God's kingdom** is like **yeast** that a woman **works** into the dough for dozens of loaves of barley bread—and waits while the dough rises'" (Matthew 13:33, **MSG**).
 - The yeast of God's Word **is inside you** and yet it **needs** to be **kneaded fully** through you for you to arise.
 - *Maybe you are arising in one area of your life but not another?*
 - Gideon allowed God to do this work in his life of pressing, stretching, folding and turning him. In the end he became **God's bread** and that **bread scared** the enemy out of its mind.

3) Jesus is the ultimate bread of life that conquers the enemy (John 6:36).

- **Gideon's life** was a **prophetic picture** of **Jesus**.
 - **Jesus** is the **barley loaf** that went **into** the **enemy's camp** and **overturned it**.
- In the same way, **Jesus** is the **bread of life** (John 6:32-38; 53-58).
 - Jesus allowed his **Father** to **make him** (**Hebrews 2:10-18**).
 - He was pressed, stretched, folded and turned for us.
 - Though being **perfect**, **as a human being** he was pressed, stretched, folded and turned.
 - Only read his story and you see the work the Father was doing in Christ.
 - The Father wants to make **you** into **his bread**.
 - **Offer** your **life** to him and he will **break** and **multiply** it to **feed** the hungry.
 - Like Gideon, he will take your **weakness** and **fears** and turn you into a **mighty warrior**.

Conclusion: Let Jesus be your bread. And let the Father make you soft as bread so he can use you to bring life to others and destroy the enemy's works.

END NOTES

Proofing

“Proofing (also called proving or more rarely blooming), as the term is used by bakers, is the final rise of shaped bread dough before baking. It refers to a specific rest period within the more generalized process known as fermentation. Fermentation is a step in creating yeast breads and baked goods where the yeast is allowed to leaven the dough. Banneton baskets were first used by French bakers in the city of Genève, France.[1]

Fermentation rest periods are not always explicitly named, and can appear in recipes as "Allow dough to rise." When they are named, terms include "bulk fermentation," "first rise," "second rise," "final proof" and "shaped proof". (Wikipedia)

Kneading

Kneading is a process in the making of bread or pasta dough, used to mix the ingredients and add strength to the final product. Its importance lies in the mixing of flour with water. When these two ingredients are combined and kneaded, the gliadin and glutenin proteins in the flour expand and form strands of gluten, which gives bread its texture.[1] (To aid gluten production, many recipes use bread flour, which is higher in protein than all-purpose flour.) The kneading process warms and stretches these gluten strands, eventually creating a springy and elastic dough. If bread dough is not kneaded enough, it will not be able to hold the tiny pockets of gas (CO₂) created by the leavening agent (such as yeast or baking powder), and will collapse, leaving a heavy and dense loaf.

Kneading can be performed by hand (the traditional way), with a mixer equipped with a dough hook, or with a bread machine. In hand kneading, the dough is put on a floured surface, pressed and stretched with the heel of the hand, folded over, and rotated through 90° repeatedly. This process continues until the dough is elastic and smooth. The dough can then be allowed to rise or “proof”.

Similar to kneading is knocking back or punching down, which is done to the dough after proving. The dough is punched once or twice, after which it is kneaded gently for a short time. The aim of this is to remove any large gas pockets which have formed in the dough, create an even texture in the bread and redistribute the nutrients for the yeast, thus allowing fermentation to continue. The dough can then be proofed a second time. Another method of knocking back (also known as "folding") is to gently stretch and pat out the proofed dough before folding the sides in towards the centre. (Wikipedia)

Misc Personal Notes

Rev. 11

My dream with Art Katz and Father's day. Encouragement: 'Behold, an Israelite with no guile.'

My dream with a baby carriage breaking through the skyline of Brisbane city.

My dreams of the Bible School.

Now, Jesus' life is like bread to us. It feeds us. We are still feeding from him everyday.

Will you trust the heavenly Father's work in your life? Or will you give up when you are on the baker's bench?

Bakers call the bread when it rises 'proofing'.

On Pentecost the Jews offered two loaves of bread to God.

You are called to be that bread offered to God. One that the Father can break and use to feed the hungry and dying. He wants you to be like fresh bread, spreading the aroma of Christ everywhere you go. He wants to take your words like bread and multiply them.

When you offer your life to God he is able to do much more than you can ask or imagine through you.