



We tackled the second half of Judges 8 this week. Last week we saw how Gideon's military strength and approach to justice/vengeance made him inadequate as a saviour for Israel. This week we see how his wisdom and godliness also fall short of the mark. It's tough reading, but just as last week it's important to remember that in the pattern of the book of Judges the failings of Israel's leaders always point us forwards to a leader who will **never** fail us in these ways, and to a God who remained stunningly patient with his people throughout this bitter history.

In this passage we see:

- Gideon and Israel's failings in public life. Israel asks for a king, rejecting their covenant relationship with the Lord as their king. Gideon rightly refuses, but seems to then live with all of the benefits of kingship and none of the responsibilities. In setting up an ephod in his hometown he side-lines covenant worship at the ark of the covenant (which was in Shiloh, or possibly Bethel at this stage), and leads Israel into another form of idolatry.
- Indications that Gideon's home-life is equally off kilter, especially when we compare his conduct to the attributes a king should have in Deuteronomy 17:14-20

All of this left Gideon deeply compromised, and we see by the end of chapter 8 that Israel's redemption is short lived... we're left longing for a better saviour, and a greater redemption.

### Questions for discussion:

*Read over Judges 7:22-35*

- What are your initial reactions to this passage?
- What do we see here about Gideon's attitude to:
  - Authority/power/responsibility
  - Wealth
  - Family
    - What is positive/negative in the attitudes we see in Gideon?
- How would you sum up what goes wrong for Gideon in a single sentence?
- Where are we at risk of mirroring Gideon's attitudes?
- The fabulous news of Judges is that God is faithful beyond his people's failings, and that in Jesus we have a far greater saviour. Reflect on the qualities required of a king in Deuteronomy 17:14-20... how do we see this fulfilled in Jesus? Spend some time in prayer for each other and praise of the one who meets our need in a way that Gideon never could.