

The Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan

# THE BIBLICAL WILD

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wilderness.

We find ourselves on the campus of Saginaw Valley State University. In the Marshal M. Fredrick sculpture museum a wide range of collection of over 2000 works of Marshal M. Fredrick's, a prominent 20th century sculpture, A native of Detroit and one whose sculptures has been characterized as manifesting works of spiritual intensity, lighthearted humor, and a warm and gentle spirit.

In the book of Judges we encounter old and remembered tales of heroes who intervened in the star crossed public life of Israel. Some examples of these heroes whose stories have come to us in the book of Judges the story of Ahu the left handed freedom fighter. Of Deborah whose song is an early rendering of Israel's faith. Of the Abimelech son of Gideon who has out size political ambitions. And the list goes on and on and on.

For our purposes today we are going to center on Chapters 6-8 which tell the story of Gideon.

Judges 6: 12-17

Gideon is negotiating with God. He is trying to come to some terms to what it is God is calling him to do and he needs some proof that this is in fact a call from God. So Gideon went into his house and he began to prepare for a sacrifice a kid and some unleavened cakes and he takes it outside and the angel of the Lord appears and uses his staff and strikes it and causes it to be consumed in fire. Then Gideon responds "Help me Lord God for I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face". Gideon, like so many of us responds faithfully to the call. He is obedient to what God has invited him to do and he engages in battle, defeats the Midionites, and puts that as the crowning achievement of his life. But then Gideon begins to be seduced by all of his accomplishments. The focus becomes .... well on Gideon and not on Yaweh, the Lord his God. It's a story of faithful response of obedience a fall and restoration. The cycle repeating itself over and over again. And part of our task in these days is to look into Holy Scripture and see how that scripture intersects with our own lives. In Gideon's call we see a reflection of our own call. A call where a still small voice comes to us where friends, family, and neighbors encourage us, perhaps people in our congregation encouraging us to respond to God's faithfulness with our own obedience. But we resist, we are not quite sure that it is God or we are being asked to do something that seems complicated, a daunting task or something quite frankly that we really don't want to do. And so, we resist we negotiate, we go back and forth. It's an act of theological re-imagination that enables us to place our own sense of call in the stream of the biblical narrative of call and also in our own particular context.

WEEK XIII: Joshua 19-21 / Psalm 77

From Psalm 71, let us pray.

In you, O Lord, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame. In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me and save me. Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress, to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. Amen.

I'm Todd Ousley, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan. And this is the Biblical Wild, pioneers in the Christian

As you approach the scripture this week, remember your own call from God.

How did you resist?

How did you negotiate?

And ultimately how did you respond faithfully to that call?

And also in what ways do imagination and re-imagination figure into your own call?

God Bless you and I will see you next week.