

**INTRO**

- With one word, how would you describe your feeling towards 2021?

This series is about posturing our hearts towards the goodness and greatness of our God. In each biblical encounter, there is a particular name and characteristic of God that is revealed in the encounter. Today, we are introduced to **Jehovah Shalom—The Lord is Peace**.

**READ**

Judges 6:11-24

**REFLECT & RESPOND**

These were dark times full of uncertainty, disorder, and disobedience for God's people. Despite this, God remained faithful to his people and raised up flawed judges like Gideon to rescue his people time again. Gideon's story is our story in so many ways given his situation, struggle, scarcity, and looking for signs of God's favour.

Throughout it all, God remains gracious and patient with Gideon until he finally becomes aware of God's presence and God's peace. **God's presence brings God's peace into his present situation and changes everything!**

What can we learn about encountering God's shalom/peace in our lives from this narrative?

**PRESENCE > ABSENCE**

Shalom is more about the presence of something greater in our lives rather than the absence of all conflict and difficult circumstances. Shalom says, "All is well"—it hints at what ought to be & what one day will be.

*Qu: when you think of peace, do you think of it more as the absence of conflict, war etc. rather than the presence of God in your midst? Why?*

**INTERNAL → EXTERNAL**

While we long for our external worlds to be filled with peace, our greatest need is for God to fill our internal world with his peaceful presence.

Gideon became more attentive to God's presence & peace than the fear and oppression of the Midianites. Our circumstances may not change or we may not have the power to change them, but everything changes when we encounter God's peace internally.

*Qu: Have you encountered God's presence like this before where your internal world became bigger than your external world?*

**PEACE ≠ PASSIVITY**

Like Gideon, God's presence and peace calms our inner turmoil and leads us to courageous actions of worship, trust and obedience despite what's going on around us.

*Qu: what courageous action/s might God want you to take in 2021? Can we pray for God's peace to help you in that?*

No matter your situation right now, turn your eyes on to Jesus; become aware of His faithful presence with you; and allow his peace to fill you with new possibilities and realities, "you mighty warrior, I will be with you!"

**May God's Presence bring God's Peace into your Present.**

**PRAY**

- Pray for one another especially in light of the last question.
- Pray for a greater awakening and encounter of God's presence in 2021.