

2010 JULY 18 PROMISED LAND HEROS- GIDEON A RELUCTANT LEADER Judges 6: 1- 14

Last week we heard how Judge Deborah
Had delivered the people from their enemies, the Canaanites.
The people of God had returned to the lord,
And experienced 40 years of peace,

But a new generation of God's Chosen people rose up.
They merged into the pagan world of the fertility gods,
They intermarried into pagan families,
They disobeyed the Lord their deliver.

Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD , Judges 6:1a

Do you know that God wants to save you and your children so much,
That he will deliver you into the hands of the world
He will close the door of your personal hope,
He will break your joy
He will even allow your health to falter.
To move you to return to him.
Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord, And

God delivered his people for seven years into the hands of the Midianites. Judges 6:1b

I. GOD'S LOVE KNOWS NO OBSTACLE

The good thing about God's love is
That he doesn't turn his back on us in the far country,.
Or in the city sewers.
He only allows what will bring about change.

The Canaanites rode and conquered in their 900 chariots,
The Midianites rode and conquered on their swarms of camels.

They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count the men and their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it.

Judges 6:5

For seven years God allowed Israel to be terrorized
Until they had no homes to live in ,
No communities to shop in ,
No schools, church to attend,

² Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. Judges 6:2

they fled to the hills.

When the Israelites planted their crops

Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. ⁴ They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. Judges 6:3-4

Apparently, the only lesson that Israel had learned
thus far in their history,

was that when things became unbearable,
they called upon Jehovah and He rescued them.

Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.
Judges 6:6

The Lord sent his angel to Gideon.

¹¹ The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. Judges 6:11

II. GOD'S REDEMPTION KNOWS NO BOUNDS

Gideon was the youngest son of Joash the tribe of Manasseh.

And Joash, Gideon's Father

was involved in being a cult leader of Baal.

He had synchronized the worship of Jehovah and Baal.

It's like what happens in many countries when Christianity

Is brought in but not followed.

Like in the Caribbean's where they have a blend of Catholicism and Voodoos.

Shines and rituals, superstitions and creeds

But no distinct clear path to Jesus.

¹² When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." Judges 6:11-12

Ever feel like you were unqualified for a job?

That the job before you was more than your gifts available.

More than your abilities?

The challenge of life's task terrified and panicked you?

A few years ago a minister with a family of seven children moved to a new city. He and his wife didn't want to buy a home immediately. They wanted to rent a townhouse until they could get a feel for the area and choose a home where their kids would be in good schools and be conveniently located.

They found plenty of rental townhouses that were large enough, but the landlords always objected to having a family of nine occupy the place.

It was becoming an obstacle that seemed impossible to overcome.

In frustration, one day the father asked the mother to take the four youngest children and go visit the local cemetery. She was puzzled by his request, but went along.

He and the other three children headed off to investigate another townhouse they had found. The place was perfect and the father told the landlord he would take it. Then came the usual question, "I see you have children. How many are there in the family?"

The minister gave out with a deep sigh, then said, "Seven ... but four are with their dear mother in the cemetery." He got the townhouse.

Gideon was facing a great obstacle.

He was from the smallest tribe.

He had never been a general

Or even a warrior.

He was a farmer

Even his name meant: hewer of wood.

But isn't it good that God sees what we often miss.

The angel said:

The Lord is with you, mighty man of valor. Judges 6:12

Gideon asked a question.

"But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Judges 6:13

If Gideon was aware of Israel's apostasy and sin,

Then he wouldn't have asked the question.

But if he was unaware of Israel's idolatry.

It was a good question.

Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.'" Judges 6:13

Gideon looked back and remembers what the Lord had done

In rescuing them out of Egypt.

Could it be that God could use his weakness

To redeem the people?

III. GOD'S PRESENCE KNOWS NO LIMIT

Could it be that God wants to use us to redeem our family?

To save a neighbor?

To lift up someone brokenhearted and destitute?

You say I can't do it.

¹⁴ The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"

Fear keeps us from great things

A daughter was to get her mother to fly out for a visit.

But her mother was afraid to fly.

"No way am I getting on an airplane,"

Finally the daughter said: "Look, Mom, when it's your time to go, it doesn't matter if you're on the ground or in the air."

Her mother said, "I know, I just don't want to be that far off the ground when it's the pilot's time to go."

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

Trust me.

Isn't this just what God is asking of us.

He knows our strength and our weakness.

He knows what we can bear.

But he also knows what he can do thru us.

If we will but trust him.

¹⁶ The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together." Judges 6:16

Now Gideon did something we should not do.

He asked for a sign.

If I have found favor ... then show me a sign"} (Judges 6:17).

This refers back to Moses and the burning bush.

God gives him three signs.

First of all he causes fire to come out of a rock and consumed the offering

²¹ With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared.

That must have been impressive –fire from a rock.

Second- He asked that a piece of wool fleece he put on the ground

In the morning the fleece would be wet from the dew,

But the ground would be dry.;

And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew-a bowlful of water. Judges 6:38

Third- he asked that the wool fleece be dry in the morning and the ground would be wet.

That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew. Judges 6:40

"This demand by Gideon is reminiscence of Moses and the burning bush.

In our present time, we should not ask God for a sign as did Moses and Gideon, because we have the "perfect" revelation from God certified unto us in the sacred pages of the Holy Bible. That which is perfect" indeed has come.

We should not say:

God if you really want me to take this job, then you will give me a clear sign.

We don't need a sign of a flower blooming,

Or a rainbow in the sky,

Or a parking place in front of K-Mart

To know God loves and cares for us.

God has given us his Word.

God has given us a good mind.

A good spouse, and counsel of Godly friends.

If the Bible says he will be with you he will.

If it says he will give you peace, he will.

If it says he will offer you forgiveness, he will.

If you feel like moving, then trust God and move.

If you feel you need to buy a house,

Look and discern and read God's word.

If it isn't in contradiction with holy Scripture were free to do it.

But don't ask God if it is his will to marry an unbeliever?

Or to get into a business deal with an ungodly partner.

Or cosign a note with a rebellious or irresponsible child.

Or don't ask God if you should compromise with the standards of the world,

God's word covers that.

Sometimes God want us to exhibit tough love.

Or separating love or sacrificial love.

Then it says he will enable you to do all things.

The only thing we lack is what Gideon lacked,
That is confidence in the word of the Lord.
Once you trust God,
And take his word seriously.
Then we discover our victory.
That even our inadequacies our weakness,
Is enough in the hands of God.

How does Gideon, with a handful of men,
Defeat the Midianites who joined forces with the
³³ Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. Judges 6:33

Now that is the way it sometimes works.
Just when you said yes to God,
It seems suddenly the problems get bigger.
Satan will try to stop us from leaving our house to do ministry.
If he can keep us at home,
If he can keep us quiet
If he can keep us full of fear and doubt.
He wins.

But we have Gideon didn't have that is the Holy Spirit, and
If were willing, God will do the rest.
Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. ³⁵ He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them. Judges 6:34-35

Even with the Spirit of the living God,
Gideon is smart enough to know he will need the help of his family.
And his tribe.
In other word his spiritual community.
to join him.

Too many of us try to go it alone.
To handle our addictions alone,
Our problems, and troubles.
Family secrets can kill us.
Steal our joy.

But not Gideon.
He asked
They came.
The only problem was they got too many men.
God wanted Israel to see that this was His victory, not man's.
The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, Judges 7:2

The Lord said

Send home any who are afraid.

Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead." So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained. Judges 7:3

Woo Gideon just lost 2/3 of the Basketball team.

22,000 men, only 10,000 stay.

I'm sure he was thinking Lord this is a small group.

But then God said there are still too many.

Take them down to the water and

"Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink. Judges 7:5

and there were only 300 lappers.

The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place." Judges 7:7

Then at night with the Holy Spirit in them.

They divided into three companies of 100 men.

With a trumpet and a torch in a jar. Trumpet and flashlight

Funny things to fight a war with.

They surrounded the 135,000 Midianite men of war.

And at the middle watch.

The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" Judges 7:20

The 135000 Midianite soldiers.

Turned on one another killing one another and fleeing the scene.

Jehovah set every man's sword against his fellow, and against the whole camp. Judges 7:22

And all Israel was called out to battle.

And God defeated and annihilated all the enemies of the Israelis.

And Peace came to the land.

All because of one man.

Who was willing to take a chance with God.

Reluctant though he was.

Became faithful and obedient.

Will you take a chance today with God,

Reluctant though you may be,

And let his Holy Spirit have a part of your life?

God will never give up on his people

If we will turn back to Him.

It is never too late.